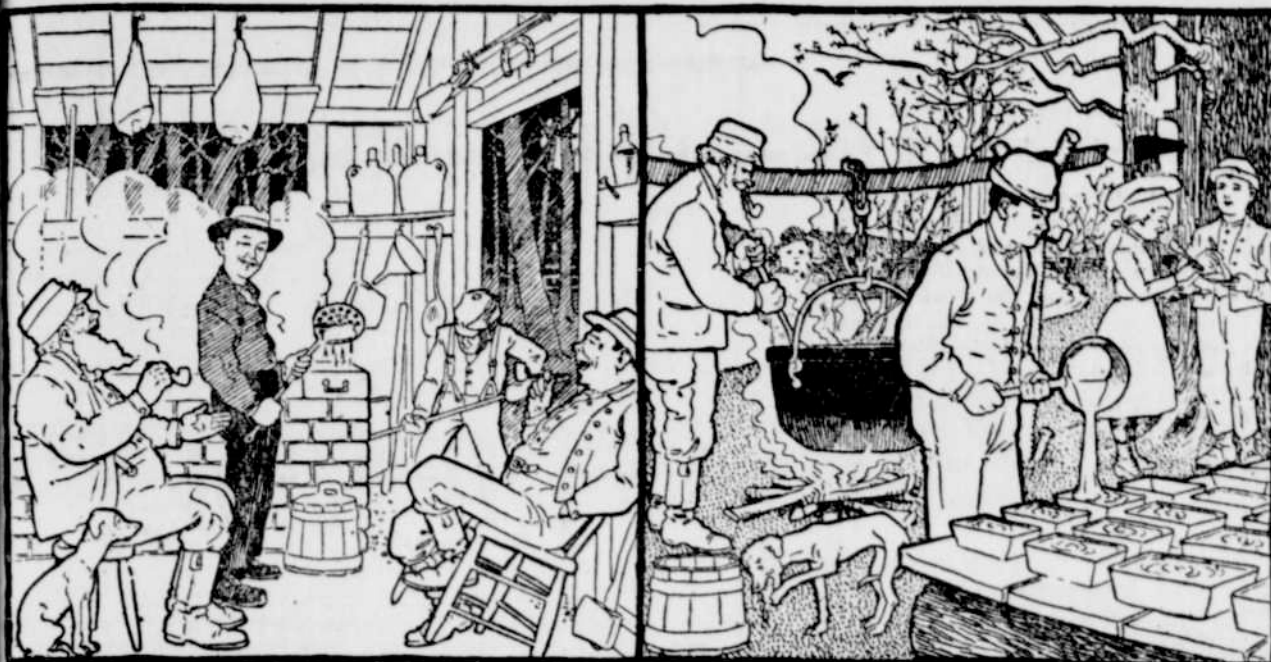


DELIGHTS OF THE MAPLE SUGAR SEASON.



THE "Caw! Caw! Caw!" of a bunch of ever-hungry robins, hopping around on the short, dull green grass, in the sheep pasture; the bluebirds, chirping in the dead branches of an old beech tree, looking over a last year's nest; a red-headed woodpecker, rapping on the dead bark of a tall hickory tree on the edge of the clearing, where the swollen creek washes its muddy waters against the lower branches of the pussy willow, just beginning to show a faint tinge of green, and the skunk cabbage forcing its way through the thin ice in the marshland. Those are all signs of spring, but the surest signs, from a practical standpoint, is when the farmer and his boy and hired man first approach the sunny hillside of the old sugar bush, where the snow still stubbornly hangs in curious-looking wet patches among the dead leaves and branches. With anger and bit, spit and pull, they proceed to snare the crystal drops of sweet sap that spring from the roots of the maple at the first breath of spring.

When all the maples in the "bush" are tapped and the pails hung, "old Nell," the oldest horse in the stable, is hitched to the stoneboat or bobbed, with barrels stacked on it, and the rounds of the camp are made, gathering the first run of sap.

The sap is dumped into a huge wooden trough, and from an iron pipe it runs into the evaporating pans over a brick furnace in the sugar house. When it freezes up hard at night, followed by a heavy thaw the next day, it produces a "big run" of sap. Then the farmer, his boys and hired man will have to stay up all night to boil down the sap before it gets sour.

Usually several neighbors will drop in during the evening, and while the boys tend the fire and skim the sap the

older men will smoke and tell stories that make the boys hug closer to the bright firelight and start at strange noises, or again the woods and slides will echo back the joyous laughter at a funny story and then come a midnight supper on ham and eggs, boiled in sweet sap, and potatoes baked in the ashes. Games and stories follow as the night wears on, till the sap is boiled down and the fires banked, and the sleepy but happy crowd trudges homeward over the frozen stubble in the early dawn.

The last sugaring-off at the end of the season is the day of festivities and hard work combined. The neighbors' children are there, gathered around the steaming kettle of sirup with their dishes and little paddles whittled out of basswood, eagerly waiting for the word when the sirup is thick enough to stir into sugar.

A patch of snow is found in a sheltered spot in the woods near by and a dipperful of thick liquid is thrown over it. It quickly cools into the form of taffy. It is fine.

That night the sticky sugar is washed from hands and faces of little children, the taffy is combed out of their hair, and they are put to bed full of sweet stuff and thoughts of an enjoyable day in the old "sugar bush."

The frost is all out of the ground on the hillside. The warm winds have dried up the sap. The soft maples are already in bud, and the pussy willows are in full bloom along the creek. The sap pails are all gathered in and stacked away. The fire in the furnace is flooded and the "sugar house" is locked up and the camp deserted.

The red squirrels chase each other over the roof and a restless bluejay scolds in the branches of the old birch tree. A flock of ducks splash noisily around in a shadowed pool of the creek trying to settle down for the night.

The full moon is rising above the swamp, while a two-horse wagon rumbles up the lane laden with the sweet spoils of the "sugar season."—E. A. Bushnell, in Cincinnati Post.

WORLD'S A-GOIN' RIGHT.

Some people are a-growin' an' a-bowlin' day an' night. An' a-rantin' an' a-railin' 'cause the world ain't goin' right. They are weepin' 'o'er its sorrows an' they keep its woes in view. An' they never note the sweetness o' the roses drippin' dew.

Some people in their frettin' are forgettin' blessings rare. They fail to breathe the fragrance that is floatin' on the air. They keep the thorn an' thistle an' the nettles eye in view. They pass the bluish roses in their haste to pluck the rue.

This world may have its fallin's, but there's good enough for all. An' we may choose the sweetness or bitterness an' all.

An' if we seek the shadows, an' if we shun the light, 'Tis we, an' not the world, friends, that ain't a-goin' right.

—Los Angeles Herald.

Won by Loyalty.

AT that time I was engaged (and very pleased to be) to a most enigmatical young person. She spoke rarely and in a way always a little mysteriously, making voluntary secrets of a hundred little actions of life, and loving solitude in an alarming manner.

All this was off-set by eyes so beautiful, by a coloring so marvelous, by an expression so divine, that I had not the courage to reflect on the singularity of her character. I loved her, and I often passed hours of the night sitting before her door-step, simply dreaming "that she lived here," and meditating on her presence as does the believer on the transubstantiation.

I did not know, in the first place, whether she loved me or not; she always refused to answer that question, referring to the wishes of her parents and her confidence in their wisdom. If I insisted, she generally ended by saying "that she knew nothing about it, but that she felt an antipathy toward me, and that, according to her ideas, was enough to decide a young girl on marriage." In vain I supplicated, in vain I tried to animate this enigmatical being; she remained as distant as the manner in which she loved, as unknown as she was dominating.

One evening as I was dreaming a little sadly of these things a commotion was heard in the house. I returned to the salon, where everything was in disorder, my hosts were distressed, their friends embarrassed and troubled, and old Mme. Laroche, horribly pale and trembling.

"What in the world has happened?"

I asked. They explained incoherently that Mme. Laroche's diamonds were stolen—old family diamonds of great value. All the servants had been summoned into an adjoining room—in short, a formal search was to be instituted. An old gentleman, M. Coppe, had been unanimously selected to direct this investigation just as I was entering, and his first proposition was that everyone should submit, or, rather, offer himself to be searched. Although the thing was rather offensive, no one protested, and it was decided that, after the servants, each person present should be examined.

To tell the truth, all this seemed of small importance beside my personal cares; and, with several others, I awaited the end of the adventure, while M. Coppe, his two witnesses and our host, began the inspection of the domestics.

Very soon I fell again into my meditation, my eyes fixed on the fireplace as though there were a fire, when suddenly a light touch on my elbow raised my head with a start, to see my fiancée looking at me most beseechingly. We were alone near the fireplace and could talk in low tones without being overheard. She murmured very low:

"If you love me, arrange that they search you first; then try to be near me and, without being seen, try to conceal the object that I shall pass you from behind."

My blood ran cold. This annoying incident became terrible, filling me with the most passionate trouble. I looked at the girl in agony, but forced myself to smile, and whispered:

"It shall be as you wish."

My knees trembled, my mouth was hot and dry. The feeling that overwhelmed me was inexpressible. It was a strange mingling of bitterness and pleasure, that my loved one should be weak to such a degree. I forced myself to have a sort of disdainful myself to let reality have best advantage, and in reality love beat ardor, strong, stern in my breast. I understood, in a flash, how beauty could become divine above baseness of soul, and how one could respect it even in dishonor—and a hundred other things in which were confused fervent love, devotion without limit, a desire noble and perverse.

Jeanne had thanked me with hardly perceptible movement of the lips; she stood by the wall with an air of indifference and pride.

"They are very long about it," she said sternly. "M. Coppe is a man of method," someone replied. And a silence followed which told more and more on one's nerves, for even the waiting in a peaceful frame of mind finished by disturbing and emptying the brain, like a pump. However, the moment arrived when the searching of the servants ended, the door opened,

disclosing our host, the two witnesses, and the old gentleman.

My heart beat furiously. I felt myself become terribly pale, but, concealing my agitation and steadying my voice, I asked to be searched first.

M. Coppe smiled at what he considered the whim of a young man, and proceeded methodically to my examination. I blushed, I became pale, without anyone finding that peculiar under the circumstances. When it was over I made two or three steps backward and found myself near Jeanne. She lowered her fan and handed me something with a coolness that was only equalled by my calmness in seizing the object and placing it in a pocket of my coat. After which I leaned against the fireplace, being now merely a witness and above all suspicious.

M. Coppe's search was unproductive of results. There remained nothing to do but to visit all the rooms and then inform the police.

Still my trouble of mind increased as I remained standing by the fireplace. My brain was in a whirl, and I felt the crime weigh on me as though I were indeed the thief.

Jeanne at last came toward me, with that undulating step of hers, and gave me a look of such passionate gratitude that it almost seemed to scorch me. Then in an imperative tone she said:

"Do you still love me?"

"I did not hesitate. I replied firmly: 'Yes.'"

"In spite of all that I have done?"

"In spite of everything."

"Will you marry me?"

"I will marry you."

She enveloped me with the same look, still warmer and more lingering. I fully comprehended the power of woman, above all law, human or natural, drawn from the fountain head and against which nothing ought to prevail.

I felt strangely happy in this equivocal adventure, and I could not throw off this happiness for which I was terribly ashamed.

As I was struggling with these conflicting emotions, exclamations were heard and I saw M. Coppe reappear holding a little box.

"We have the jewels and the guilty one!" he said very calmly.

I had only time to hear this much and to see the livid face of the valet—the guilty one—when I found that Jeanne was gently urging me out on the terrace where the shadows lay thickly. There I felt my head seized with two hands, while two pure lips were pressed to mine, as Jeanne murmured:

"The thief adores you! She has tricked you! To test your love she gave you her own jewel box!"—New York News.

POISON OF SNAKES.

The Apparatus of Defense Used by Serpents.

There exist numerous degrees in the perfection of the poison apparatus of serpents, certain species having attached to the upper jawbone two or more long teeth or hollow fangs, provided with a dropper from which the venom flows. These teeth are firmly fixed to the subjacent bone, and are immovable. The ophidians which are provided with the best poison apparatus are the solenophanes, their very short upper maxillaries being movable and each provided with a poison fang pierced with a central canal and not with a simple dropper, this canal communicating with a poison gland on each side.

These poison fangs, movable or immovable, with a dropper or with a central canal, are distinguished from others by their greater length and by their needle-like points. The canal is pierced by two openings; a circular one is found near the root of the teeth, which permits the venom to enter from the venom glands during the time the mouth is opened. The lower opening is situated at the point of the tooth, and serves as the distributor of the poison.

If one of the teeth is broken the neighboring teeth supplement it, and sometimes three days after the accident the new fang is completely formed. Snake charmers, to prevent this replacement, not only remove the fangs, but also the folds of the gum in which they repose. The poison glands are the salivary glands, the upper labials, the saliva of which contains the poison. They are occasionally very large and in certain species reach the abdominal cavity, but ordinarily they do not pass the neck. At the moment the fangs rise the sacks are pressed against the temporal muscles and the secretion flows into the wound.

The venom is a limpid fluid similar to water, often colored yellow or green. Its active principles is an azotized matter which coagulates in absolute alcohol, and upon being dried resembles a varnish; keeping its dangerous power for years. It is at the same time a poison to the blood and a poison to the nervous system. —La Science Illustrée.

SMALLEST WOMAN DOCTOR

Mrs. Hada M. Burkhart of Springfield Has Good Practice.

Dr. Hada M. Burkhart, candidate before the Illinois State convention for the office of Supreme Medical Examiner to the Royal Neighbors of America, an auxiliary to the Modern Woodmen, is unique in being the smallest woman physician in the United States. She is exactly the height of her late majesty Queen Victoria.

Born in Centerville, Iowa, she comes of stock noted for longevity. Her grandfather, Samuel Lewis, lived to be



DR. HADA M. BURKHART.

101 years old, and her great-grandmother lived 115 years. Another great-grandmother died in Strawberry, Tex., aged 106. She is pre-eminently a member of orders, being a member of the Royal Neighbors of America, a past noble grand of the Daughters of Rebekah, a member of the Loyal Americans, Court of Honor, Lady Macabees, Woman's Relief Corps, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Ladies of the Globe, the Universal Suffrage Society, the Ladies' Aid Society, the Springfield Woman's Club, and the Christian Church of Springfield.

Naturalist by Trade.

The owner of a certain small farm in the Midlands is not a bad fellow in his way. Until recently he paid little heed to trespassers, so long, of course, as they refrained from doing wilful damage to his property, says Tit-Bits.

Of late, however, he has been comparing notes with his neighbors, with the result that when, early the other morning, he found a particularly suspicious looking trespasser on his land he had something to say.

"What are ye doin' on my land?" he began.

"I'm a doin' no harm," came the reply. "I wor only lookin' if I could find a few nuts!"

"Oh, nuttin' this time, eh?" dryly remarked the farmer. "Extendin' your business, I reckon?"

"I don't know what you means, Mr."

"Oh, don't you?" interrupted Farmer Drake. "Well, I'll just explain matters."

When Neighbor Bull caught you on his land you wor mashroomin', an' when he got back to the house 'e missed an owd hen! When Neighbor Hayfield saw you you wor arter brambles, an' you left his farm about the same time as a couple o' ducks! Now I ketches you 'ere nuttin', an' you'll just come along o' me while I take stock!"

Farmer Drake missed nothing that morning.

The Way of the World.

"What would you do if you were rich?"

"I'd buy what I wanted, first thing."

"No; that's where you're wrong. You'd buy no end of things you didn't want and pretend you liked them."

—Washington Times.

Public Greens in Japan.

In nearly every street in Japanese cities is a public oven, where for a small fee housewives may have their dinners and suppers cooked for them.

PAPERS BY THE PEOPLE

IDEALS OF UNIONISM.

By George H. McNeill, Labor Leader.

The violent deeds performed in an industrial battle are as a speck of dust in a cyclone as compared to the great bulk of violence performed in the name of property and law. Intimidation begets intimidation, and some of the workers having learned the lesson by bitter experience use the weapon against others, but intimidation is no part of trade union ethics, ideals or laws. The boycott of third parties may not only be justified, but may be commended. We

do not agree that laborers should work all the hours they can. Work under present conditions is a monotonous, mind-destroying operation, and a reduction of the hours of labor to eight or six would be justified if for no other reason than that such labor is destructive. Trades union ideals are exalted as human aspirations are quickened by the divine inspiration of comradeship in the old, old cause of the emancipation of labor and the achievement of equity.

PROSPERITY WILL CONTINUE ITS REIGN.

By James R. Keene, Wall Street Financier.

The prosperity of the year 1903 will, I think, in every respect keep pace with that of the years that have immediately preceded it. I have been unable to observe any evidences of retrogression in the situation. Business in every branch continues to be conducted on a profitable basis. Manufacturers are finding a growing market for their output, the farmers are prosperous and happy, and domestic trade will also increase in volume. The railroads will take care of their increased rates, and their physical condition has been brought to such perfection that the large sums heretofore devoted to betterments will now become available for the dividend or surplus account. The only difficulty in the situation is the fact that there is not enough money in the country to transact the people's business.

GAMBLING A GROWING EVIL OF SOCIETY.

By Julia Ward Howe.

I fear that the evil custom of playing for money has made considerable progress in fashionable society. Heads of families in our gay cities are sometimes made aware of the interchange between their own and other young people of checks intended to cover recent losses at cards. Young ladies are heard to boast of the gains of a season at Newport—these gains, in some cases, exceeding one thousand dollars. We hear of invitations to fashionable houses which are declined by youths of small or moderate incomes, who cannot afford losses at the card table. This feature of our time appears to me a reversion to the habits of a low stage of civilization, in which poverty of object induces the passion for games of hazard which is common among barbarous people.

The better culture attainable in modern society should

do much to eliminate this false impression. Our Western world is rich in opportunities of social intercourse. Our young men and maidens meet freely in college, in the professions and in the diversions appropriate to the season of youth. Pity were it if this innocent freedom, profitable for mutual help and good understanding, should be made subservient to unworthy tastes and dangerous passions. In this land of ours the State has prohibited the lottery system. The church has set herself resolutely against raffish at fairs.

Public opinion in either avenue ought to set itself against this cruel love of a gain which necessarily implies loss to others. It is a truism among us to-day that the exercise and enjoyment of liberty must found itself upon good sense and good morals. If we wish to avail ourselves of American freedom we must adhere to American ideas of good conduct. The standard of the Puritans may be enlarged and advanced by a culture more liberal than theirs. It should not be degraded by a course of action based upon a conceit of life poor, mean and empty.

TRUSTS ARE CHECKING INVENTION.

By James H. Raymond.

The aggregations of capital and the combinations of manufacturing interests have (1) dwarfed the peculiar characteristic, the pride, the ambition, and the successful activity of "the Yankee"; (2) to the detriment of the public good have hampered, marred, and dwarfed the public benefits of the patent system, have resulted in great financial loss to our great army of inventors, and incidentally in loss to the whole great craft of patent counsel; and (3) have, to an alarming extent, destroyed the mainsprings of the inventive genius of Americans—namely, pride of invention and hope of reward, to which genius more than to all other factors, conditions, or characteristic is to be justly attributed the great measure of our national prosperity and prestige, both past and present.

A single illustration out of many at hand will suffice. Three great concerns consolidated. The three had been in active and healthy competition and practically comprised the production of all the tools and machinery used in one of our largest and most important industries. Prior to the consolidation the president of one company devoted fully one-third of his entire activity, and was assisted by three men who were inventors, engineers, or expert machinists, and who devoted their entire time and energy to making inventions and improvements which should produce greater economy, efficiency, speed, quantity, quality, and safety,—both in construction and in operation. But after the commercial monopoly was formed, the three assistants and those of the other companies were dismissed. But after the commercial monopoly was formed, the three assistants and those of the other companies were dismissed. But after the commercial monopoly was formed, the three assistants and those of the other companies were dismissed.

Will publicity, discussion, a pronounced public sentiment, a public demand, and foreign competition restore the "Yankee" to his throne of inventive pre-eminence; or have these aggregations of capital and these commercial monopolies permanently dwarfed our inventive activity and our industrial supremacy?

A SEQUOIA FOREST FIRE.

Sublime Spectacle Witnessed by John Muir Near the Kaweah River.

In the forest between the middle and east forks of the Kaweah River John Muir met a great fire; and as the fire is the master scourge and controller of the distribution of trees, he stopped to watch it and learn what he could of its ways with the giants. He describes the impressive scene in an article on the sequoia.

It came racing up the steep chaparral-covered slopes of the East Fork canyon with passionate enthusiasm in a broad cataract of flames, now bending down low to feed on the green bushes, devouring acres of them at a breath, now towering high in the air, as if looking abroad to choose a way, then stooping to feed again, the lurid flapping surges and the smoke and terrible rushing and roaring hiding all that is gentle and orderly in the work. But as soon as the deep forest was reached the ungovernable flood became calm, like a torrent entering a lake, creeping and spreading beneath the trees where the ground was level, slowly nibbling the cake of compressed needles and scales with flames an inch high, rising here and there to a foot or so on dry twigs and clumps of small bushes and brome-grass.

One of the most impressive and beautiful sights was made by the great fallen trunks lying on the hillsides, all red and glowing like colossal iron bars fresh from a furnace—200 feet long, some of them, and ten to twenty feet thick. After repeated burnings have consumed the bark and sap-wood, the sound, charred surface, being full of cracks and sprinkled with leaves, is quickly overpread with a pure, rich, furred, ruby glow almost flameless and smokeless, producing a marvelous effect in the night.

The immense bonfires, where fifty or a hundred cords of peeled, split, smashed wood have been piled around some old giant by a single stroke of lightning is another grand sight in the night.

Perhaps the most startling phenomena of all was the quick death of childlike sequoias only a century or two of age. In the midst of the other comparatively slow and steady work of fire one of these tall, beautiful saplings, leafy and green, would be seen blazing up suddenly, all in one hearing, passionate, booming flame, reaching from the ground to the top of the tree, and fifty to a hundred or more feet above it, with a smoke column bending forward and streaming away on the upper, free-flowing wind.

To burn these green trees a strong fire of dry wood beneath them is required to send up a current of air hot enough to distill inflammable gases from the leaves and sprays. Then, instead of the lower limbs gradually catching fire and lighting the next and next in succession, the whole tree seems to explode almost simultaneously, and with awful roaring and flaming, a round, tapering flame shoots up two or three hundred feet, and in a second or two is quenched, leaving the green spire a black, dead mast, bristling and roughened with down-curling Joughs.

HERMIT CRABS ARE SQUATTERS.

They Take Any Empty Shell They Chance to Fancy and Live in It.

Hermit crabs are like squatters among men, who take any unoccupied land which they chance to find and erect

HUMAN "FREIGHT CAR" IN MEXICO.



In several parts of Mexico all freight is carried on the backs of burros. Heavy seems the burden which is resting on this patient animal's back, yet he bears it stolidly, and doubtless never murmurs at his hard fate. For many generations his ancestors have borne equally heavy burdens in this fashion, and presumably his descendants will continue to bear similarly heavy burdens until that golden time arrives when all freight will be carried by railroads.

Mexico, however, is a large country, and some time must elapse before it is thoroughly honeycombed with railroads. Meanwhile these patient freight carriers will continue to form one of the picturesque sights of the country.

a house of slabs on it. These crabs back into the best shell they can find which fits them and proceed as if it always belonged to them.

There are two species at the New York aquarium—water and land hermit crabs. They both have the same characteristic of living in shells left empty by other animals. It does not seem to matter whether it is a conch shell or a snail's shell that they creep into—they adapt themselves to the shape of either with equal facility and alacrily carry it around on their peregrinations until they find one which suits them better. It appears to be easy for them to move out of one house and take up their abode in another. Probably Thoreau would count them among the most fortunate of living things, for they appear to have no superfluity of goods to prevent them from getting out of life all the happiness there is in it.

Evidently they do not believe in neighborliness, for they enjoy a little fight—or appear to. They are armed with a claw that would cause considerable pain if inserted in one's flesh. This claw is of such a shape and size that it fits tightly over the opening in the shell and seals it against the intrusion of an enemy. When the enemy is of a size and aggressiveness that makes discretion the better part of valor, the crab pulls his small claws into the shell and locks the door after him with his great claw. This is hard as well as large, and acts as an effective barrier. The water hermit crabs are fed with bits of clam and fish. They do not wait to be fed, however, says the New York Tribune, and spend much of their time digging up the sand in the bottom of their jar and throwing it into their mouths in search for food. The land crabs eat bananas and other fruits. Their only use for water is for drinking.

What Made Him Feel Badly. Aute (finding Jackie sobbing in a corner)—Why, Jackie, what has happened to make you feel so badly this morning?

Jackie—M—ma missed some jelly.

Aute—Ho, ho! I see. And her suspicions fell upon you, eh?

Jackie—No, aute, it was her slipper.

The Difference. Mamma—I was surprised and shocked by the coldness with which you greeted Miss Boreum when she called.

Ethel—Yes, mamma, but I made up for it later.

Mamma—Did you?

Ethel—Yes, indeed, you should have seen how cordial I made her "good-bye."

His Position. Wigwag—"Are you a female suffragist?"

Henpeck—"No; but my wife is. I'm merely one of the sufferers."

High-Water Mark for Real Estate. The highest priced land in the world is that bounded by Wall and Broad streets and Broadway, in lower New