

HARVEST.

The reapers sang in the shaded lane,
And the laden wagons came creaking slow,
While the kind farm mother her table spread:
For the field was bare and the sun was low—
The sun was low and the day was gone—
The toil was over and harvest done.

THE LAST STRAW.

"It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back," said Lucy, bursting into tears.
The pleasant sunbeams came peeping into the cool, stone-paved dairy, where pans of milk and cream were ranged in orderly array; great stone pots stood under the knives, and a blue-painted churn was already placed on the table, for Mr. Bellenden was justly proud of his dairy. Not a chance guest came to the house but was invited down to see it; not a house-keeper in the neighborhood but had secretly envied its many conveniences and exquisite neatness.
"And it isn't the dairy alone," triumphantly remarked Matthew Bellenden. "And you may go through the house from cellar to garret, and you'll never find a speck of dust or a stain of rust. There never was such a house-keeper as my wife!"
Mrs. Bellenden was young, too, scarcely three-and-twenty. She had been delicately reared and quite ignorant of the machinery of domestic life, until she married Matthew Bellenden.
"It's very strange," Lucy had written to her father. "The farm is beautiful. You never saw such monstrous old elm trees, nor such superb roses, and the meadows are full of red clover and the strawberries shine like jewels on the sunny hillsides. But nobody sketches or reads. I don't think there is a copy of Tennyson in the whole neighborhood, and no ever heard of Dore or Millais. All they think of is how many dozens of eggs the hen lays, and how many cheese they can make in a year. And the woman who has a new receipt for homemade pie, or a new pattern for patchwork quilts, is the leader of society."
But presently young Mrs. Bellenden herself caught the fever and became a model housewife. Example is all-powerful, and Lucy began to believe that the whole end and aim of life was domestic thrift, money saving and the treadmill of work.
"My dear," said Matthew, "if you thought you could get along without a servant this year, I might be able to afford that new reaper before the oat crop comes in."
"I'll try," said Lucy.
And after that she rose before day-break, and worked later in the night than ever.
What is the matter with your hands, Lucy? her husband asked one day. "They are not so white and beautiful as they used to be."
Lucy colored as she glanced down at the members in question.
"I suppose it is making fires," she said.
And then she took to wearing kid gloves at hersweeping and dusting and digging out of ashes.
"My coat is getting shabby," Matthew one day remarked.
"Why don't you buy another one?" asked his wife.
Matthew gave a short laugh.
"What do you think Mrs. Higgins has done?" said he. "She ripped up her husband's old suit and cut a pattern by it, and made a new one and saved twenty dollars."
"I could do that," said Lucy, with sparkling eyes. "I will try it."
"You can do anything, my dear!" said Mr. Bellenden, admiringly.
And Lucy felt that she had her rich reward.
Company began to come as soon as nice weather set in.
All the affectionate relations of Mr. Bellenden soon discovered that the farmhouse was cool and shady, that Lucy's cooking was excellent, and that the bedrooms were neatness itself.
Some of them were even good enough to invite their relations as well; and so the house was full from April to December with visitors who bought their carpet-bags and valises with that faith in human hospitality which is one of life's best gifts.
Mrs. Bellenden's fame went abroad among the Dorcas of the neighborhood in the matter of butter and cheese; she took prizes in the domestic departments of all the agricultural fairs, and the adjoining housewives took no trouble to make things that they could borrow of Mrs. Bellenden, "just as well as not."
And one day, when poor Lucy, under the blighting influence of a horrible sick headache, was endeavoring to strain three or four gallons of milk into the shining pans, the news arrived that her husband's Uncle Paul was coming to the farm.

"Another guest!" said Lucy, despairingly.
And then she uttered the proverb that heads our sketch.
"Oh, it's only Uncle Paul!" said Mr. Bellenden. "Don't fret, Lucy. He's the most peaceable old man in the world. He'll make no more trouble than a cricket. John's wife thought she couldn't have him because she has no servant just now."
"Neither have I!" said Lucy, rebelliously.
"And Sarah don't like company."
"I am supposed to be fond of it!" observed Lucy, bitterly.
"And Reuben's girls don't want old folks staying there. It's too much trouble, they say," added Matthew.
Lucy bit her lips to keep back the words she might have uttered, and said, instead:
"Where is he to sleep? The Bedfords have the front bed-room, and your cousin Susie occupies the back, and the four Miss Pattersons sleep in the two garrets."
She might have added that she and her husband and the baby had slept in a hot little den opening from the kitchen for four weeks vainly expecting Mr. and Mrs. Bedford to depart, and that she had never yet had a chance to invite her father to the farm in pleasant weather.
But she was magnanimous and held her peace.
"Oh, you can find some place for him!" said her husband lightly. "There's that little room at the end of the hall where the spinning wheel is."
"But it isn't furnished!" pleaded Lucy.
"You can easily sew a carpet together out of one of those old pieces from the Bedford room; and its no trouble to put up a muslin curtain to the window and lift in a stump bedstead; and you can tack together a mattress and whitewash the ceiling, and—what's that, Lucy? The cows in the turnip field! Dear me! everything goes wrong if I step into the house for a moment. And really, Lucy, these things are your business, not mine!" he added irritably.
Lucy could not help laughing, all by herself as her husband ran up the steps.
But it was a very sad little laugh, and soon changed into a sigh.
"I wonder," she said in a whisper, "if my poor tired-out ghost would haunt these stone pavements and scrubbed pavements if I were to die? I never heard of a ghost in a dairy before, but I should think that it might very easily be."
But the little bed-room was fitted up, for all that, as fresh as a rose, and Uncle Paul arrived, a dried-up, yellow complexioned old man, with an old-fashioned cravat tied in many folds about his neck, and a broad-brimmed low-crowned hat and fine gold-headed cane.
He had a polite way of half a century ago, and Lucy thought she should like him very much, if she only had time to get acquainted with him.
But she was churning ten pounds of butter a day, and there was the baby, and the company, and the young chickens, and the baking to do.
She was almost too busy to sleep. But Uncle Paul was watching her quietly all the time.
He came out to the barn, one day, where his nephew was putting a new handle on a sickle-blade.
"Pretty busy times—eh, Uncle Paul?" said the farmer, scarcely taking the leisure to look up.
"Aye," absently answered the old man. "Did I tell you, Nephew Matthew, about the reason I left your cousin Joseph's?"
"Not that I remember," said Matthew, breathing on the table and polishing it with his silk handkerchief.
"Dorothy died—his wife."
"Oh, yes," said Matthew. "Low fever, wasn't it?"
"No!" bluntly answered Uncle Paul. "It was hard work. That woman, Nephew Matthew, did the housework for eight persons. Joe didn't even let her have a woman to help her with the washing and the ironing!"
"Must have been a regular-going brute," said Matthew, tightening the handle a little.
"All the sewing, too," added Uncle Paul—"the mending and making. She never went anywhere except to church. Joe didn't believe in women gadding about."
"The old savage!" said Matthew.
"She was fond of reading, but she never got any time for it," said Uncle Paul. "She rose before sundown and never lay down until eleven o'clock. It was hard work that killed that woman, and Joseph coolly declared that it was sheer laziness when she couldn't drag herself about any longer. And when she died he rolled up his eyes and called it the visitation of Providence."
"Why didn't the neighbors lynch him?" cried Matthew, fairly aroused to indignation at last.
Uncle Paul took off his glasses, wiped them vigorously, and looked his nephew hard in the face.
"Why don't the neighbors lynch you?" said he.
Matthew dropped the sickle and stared.
"Nephew Matthew," said Uncle Paul, impressively, "thou art the man! Are you not doing the very same thing?"
"If" gasped Matthew.
"Your wife is doing the work of a household of sixteen people," said Uncle Paul. "She is drudging as you could get no stranger to drudge. She is rising early, and lying down late; she is offering up her life on the shrine of your farm and its requirements. I have seen her grow thin and pale even during the few days I have been here. I have seen her carry up Mrs. Bedford's breakfast daily to her room, because Bedford preferred to lie in bed; and cooking dainty dishes for Helen Pat-

erson, because Helen wouldn't eat what the rest like. No galley-slave ever worked as she does. And you, with your farm hands—whose board only adds to her cares, and your array of labor-saving machinery, stand coolly by and see her commit slow suicide. Yes, Nephew Matthew, I think it is a case for lynching!"
Matthew had grown pale.
"I—I never thought of this," said Uncle Paul. Matthew Bellenden rolled down his shirt sleeves, put on his coat and went into the house.
He told the Belfords and Pattersons that it was inconvenient to keep them any longer. He gave Cousin Susan to understand that her room was needed. He made arrangements to board out the farm hands, and engaged a stout dairy maid and a house-servant to wait on Lucy. And he telegraphed to her father to come to Silvan Bridge at once.
"She deserves a treat," he said. "He shall spend the summer with us."
And then he went to tell Lucy.
She had fainted among the buttercups, picking strawberries for tea. Poor little Lucy! The machinery had utterly refused to revolve any longer.
His heart grew cold within him.
"She will die," he thought, "and I shall have murdered her."
But she did not die. She recovered her strength by degrees.
"It is better than any medicine," she said, "to know that Matthew is thinking of me and for me."
And Uncle Paul—"the last straw," as she called him—had proved her salvation.
"I didn't want her to go as Joe's wife did," said Uncle Paul.
A Singular Industry.
Singular to say that while St. Louis has not a single gold or silver beating industry and Chicago but three, Cincinnati has four. An hour in one of the rooms of the establishments revealed a fund of curious information. The method of the Cincinnati gold-beater is a unique one. A sign over the door declares that "old gold bought." This "old gold" usually consists of pieces of jewelry, such as brooches, old watch cases, signets, rings, bracelets, obsolete coins, and so on. Upon the purchase of the stuff, it is first melted into a bar, then, it goes through a process of oxygenation, which usually takes from six to ten hours, in order to free it from copper and silver.
"How fine do you have to make the gold before it is fit for leaf?" was asked of one of the oldest gold-beaters in the city.
"We have to make it twenty-four carat before we can do anything with it. It can not be used otherwise, as it would be too hard to work. We buy the most of our old gold from the pawnbrokers. The fine gold we buy from the East, Newark or New York."
"Any new process of smelting?"
"No, the gold is put in sand crucibles of various dimensions and melted. The crucibles come from the old country and it usually takes from ten to fifteen minutes to melt, when it is fit for the acid. We use about one part nitric and two parts muriatic. After it is refined, it is put through a rolling machine till brought out to the thickness of writing paper. It is then cut into strips one inch square and then put into a catch, made out of French paper, in order to beat it to the proper consistency. It is then cut and put into a shoder, and beat out into sizes four and a half inches square. It is next put into a mold five inches square and beat out the size of five inches, then finally given to the girls to cut and put into books."
"It is sometimes put to some very novel uses?"
"Yes; pieces of the very gold which probably once sparkled in the earrings of George Washington's wife may be seen glittering on the sign-board of some milkman's wagon or attached to a circus calliope car. It is curious what a passion some people have for using it—not merely for the gilding of statues, or the edging of mirrors, but it even finds its way into the epitaph letters on the cold tombstones of the cemeteries."
"How long does it usually last, say on church steeples?"
"Oh, from ten to twelve years. It depends, of course, on the exposure. The tarnish is due to the dampness more than anything else. The sunlight has but little effect on it."
"Actresses use it very plentifully, I believe?"
"Yes, it is used by actresses for making gold hair. Forty cents worth will cover three girls' heads, and leave some for waves. Some women go in for golden curls. It is usually put on by an artist. The hair first has to be oiled, and then placed on in layers. Of course it doesn't stay on any length of time, probably for only one or two acts, and is then washed off with lukewarm water."
"How much does it take to gild a circus car?"
"Oh, from ten to twenty dollars. It depends upon how much you put on."
A New Scheme to Drive the Blues Away.
Let any one who feels limp and out of sorts go to some hilly place where there are woods to fill the air with oxygen, and there sit in a sunny spot with a narrow bag of ice on the spine. The chest will expand and the lungs put forth all their power to inhale. If there be a microbe in the system (so copiously is oxygen let in) it must almost directly be burned up. The sense of vitality is so great that one is under the illusion of being youthful again. A gentle warmth pervades all the body; the skin looks bluer, the trees greener.—London Truth.
Since 1875 the number of newspapers and periodical publications of all sorts in Japan has increased from 150 to 2,000. There are five important journals, but only one contains literary articles.

REASONS FOR HILARITY.

HUMOROUS STORIES DRAWN FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.
Gave Himself Away—A Telephone Fraud—He Was Not a Horse-Speaker and Chaplain, Etc.
"I tell you what," airily exclaimed Perkins, as he sat down to the supper table, "I was in a tight place this afternoon."
"Yes, I know you were," interrupted his wife, in clear, cold utterances that cut like a knife, "I saw you coming out of it."
And then it flashed across Perkins that he had incidentally stepped into a saloon with a friend for the purpose of examining a doubtful political statement with the aid of a magnifying glass, and his contemplated anecdote slipped from his grasp like money at a summer resort, while the supper was finished amid a silence so profound that he could plainly hear a napkin ring.—Rockland Courier-Gazette.
A Telephone Fraud.
Irate Customer—"Why can't you fellows be honest? That telephone you put in my store is a fraud. You said that words could be distinctly heard for twenty miles."
Telephone Man—"Well, they can."
"They can't, I say. They can't be heard five blocks."
"Oh, you are mistaken."
"But I am not. I yelled myself hoarse at a man last evening only five blocks and he could not hear a word I said. He said so."
"Queer, very queer; but, by the way, what was it you said to him?"
"I asked him when he would be around to square up his account."
He Was Not a Horse.
"I have heard, Mr. Wright," said a man who had traveled extensively, addressing a Kentuckian; "that you are going to move to Cincinnati."
"Yes, I am. What do you think of the change?"
"I think it's a bad one."
"Your objections, please?" asked the affable Kentuckian.
"You will find in Cincinnati," explained the man who knew, "but a moderate supply of rain water for washing purposes, and as for fresh, hard water for drinking purposes, that's out of the question."
"Water for drinking purposes!" exclaimed the nettled Kentuckian, scratching his head. Then as if suddenly comprehending the remark, he turned red with anger at the supposed insult, and exclaimed:
"Do you think I drink water? Do you take me for a horse?"
And he stalked away like a man injured to the very core.—Scissors.
Speaker and Chaplain.
Says the Charlottesville (Va.) Chronicle: Some one told a good story on a former chaplain of the University (Dr. William S. White, we presume). The story goes as follows: When J. L. Orr was Speaker of the House he spent a short time at the Warm springs, in North Carolina, where Dr. White was also. The two had been sitting for a time apart, each engaged with his own knot of immediate friends, and by-and-by the doctor arose and walked across the room with the old-time limp in his gait. Mr. Orr immediately recognized him, and asked him if he were not the chaplain at the University of Virginia at such a time, naming the year. The doctor replied that he was.
"I was there," said Mr. Orr, "a student at the time, and I knew you by the peculiar limp of your step."
"Well," said the doctor, a little severely, though with a twinkle which told he spoke jokingly, "it seems that my limping made a deeper impression on you than my preaching."
"Ah, doctor," quickly replied Mr. Orr, "I deem it the highest compliment we can pay a clergyman to say he is known by his walk rather than by his conversation."
From Jumpin' Creek.
"Say!" he called, as he walked across the street to a policeman yesterday at the circus grounds, "have you seen a slim, little chap, with a red mustache and a diamond pin?"
"I don't remember."
"Well, I want to hunt him up. If you'll help me find him I'll give you a yoke of two-year-old steers."
"What's he done?"
"Say! I'm mad all over, but I can't help but—ha! ha! ha!—laugh at the way he gumfuzzed me half an hour ago. I'm a flat, I am! I'm rich pasture for cows! I'm turnips with a head of green tops!"
"What's the story?"
"Well, I was over there under a wagon counting my money. I brought in \$13. I was wondering whether I'd better keep it in my hind pocket or pin it inside my vest, when the little chap comes creeping under and says, 'Partner, there's a wicked crowd around here. Put that money in your boot!' Say!"
"Yes."
"Struck me as the sensiblest thing I could do. It was in bills. And I pulled off my right boot and chucked 'em in. Say! d'ye see anything green in that?"
"No."
"Well, I hadn't walked around long before a chap come up and remarks that he has \$5 to bet to a quarter that he can outjump me. Say, d'ye know me?"
"No."
"Well, when I'm home I'm the tall jumpst of Washtenaw county. I jump higher and further than anything, animal or human. I kiver more ground than a

panther; I sail higher than a jumpin' hoss. I am open to even bets day or night, and I go out and jump 'even feet jost to astonish the children. When that ere stranger offered sich odds I looked at his legs for a minute and remarked that I was his huckleberry."
"I see."
"Say! up went the stakes, off came my butes, and I outjumped him by three feet six."
"And what?"
"And when I looked around for my butes that little hornet with the sandy mustache had made off with the one the cash was in. Say!"
"Yes."
"I live on Jumpin' creek. I'm the creek myself. I'm called a daisy when I'm home, and every time I trade hosses or shot-guns or dogs I paralyze the other fellow. I'm previous. I'm prussic acid. I'm razzor. Say!"
"Yes."
"If I kin lay my hands on that little chap, I'll make every bone crack. But it was a good one on me! Eh! Ever see it beaten? Played me fur a fool and hit me the first time. Say! If you see me—ha! ha! ha!—laughing, don't think I'm tight; I'm mad. But say! old Jumpin' Creek was too smart, wasn't he? Needed something to thin his blood, and he got it from a chap who didn't seem to know putty from the band-wagon! Say! Ha! ha! ha!"—Detroit Free Press.
How Eclipses Impress Savages.
Notwithstanding the frequent recurrence of eclipses, with nothing particularly bad after them, most primitive peoples associate with them an omen of some great danger to the earth or the moon. The Greenlanders have a personal apprehension in the matter, and believe that the moon rummages their houses for skins or victuals, and destroys those persons who have not observed due sobriety. The South American Chiquitos try to help the darkened star against a dog that has worried it till its light has been colored red, and extinguished by its streaming blood; and they shoot arrows into the sky to drive away the dog. Charlevoix give a similar account of the Guarani, except that with them a tiger takes the place of the dog; and in the language of the Tupis the literal translation of the word for an eclipse is, "The jaguar has eaten the sun." So, in Asia, the Tanguesses believe an evil spirit has swallowed the earth's satellites, and they try to frighten it away by shots at the darkened disk. In Sumatra and Malacca the fear is aroused that a great snake will swallow the sun or the moon; and the Nagas of Assam set up a great drum-beating, as if in battle, to frighten away the devouring monster. Among the American tribes are some who believe that eclipses are a warning of the approaching disappearance of the sun and the fall of the moon at the end of the world. The Pottawatamies tell of a demon in the shape of an old woman, sitting in the moon weaving a basket, on the completion of which the world will be destroyed. A dog contends with the woman, tearing the basket to pieces every once in a while, and then an eclipse of the moon takes place; others imagine that the moon is hungry, sick or dying at these times; while the Alfuras of Ceram think he is asleep, and make a great uproar to awake him.
These superstitions are not so remote as they may seem at first sight from the impressions which the heavenly phenomena make upon many persons who consider themselves civilized. Circles may be found in nearly every nation upon whom the appearance of anything unusual in the sky carries an apprehension that something dreadful is about to happen; and by whom even the most ordinary phenomena are invested with occult influence upon things that we know have no connection with them; and it is only two or three centuries since the dire portents of comets and eclipses were prayed against in all the churches.—Popular Science Monthly.
How He Became a Blood-Drinker.
"Yes, I'm a confirmed blood-drinker now," remarked a ruddy, merry engineer, "and it is quite a funny story how I happened to start at it, too. About three years ago my health was pretty bad, and my folks were very much worried about me. I got thin and hollow-eyed, and had a few night sweats. The fact is, I had consumption, and I knew it. I hadn't any other expectation than that in a year or so I'd have to give up my engine and soon after that part from my wife and little ones. I don't know that I ought to say it, but the thought of leaving my engine gave me about as much trouble as the idea of parting from my family. People kept advising me to drink blood, and cited alleged cures to me by the dozen. But there was something abhorrent to me about that kind of beverage, and I couldn't go to it. Two or three times I made an effort to down some of it, but 'twas no go. Well, one day I was running along with No. 7, as usual, and feeling pretty well down in the mouth, too. I had begun to feel weak, and I had heard the boss was making inquiries about my condition with a view to laying me off. It made me blue as my boiler jacket. Suddenly, at a country road-crossing, a fool heifer jumped right in front of us. We were going lively, and as the pilot struck her it cut her up fearful and landed her right up on the smoke-stack. I hope I may never touch my throttle again, if a stream of warm blood from that heifer didn't take me right in the mouth. My mouth was open, too, and in two seconds I had unwillingly become a blood-drinker. There wasn't anything disagreeable about it, either, and I've been drinking blood ever since. That heifer saved my life."