

HEAR THE RAIN.

Hear the rain, winter rain; hear it dripping,
sadly, sadly,
Blinding rain, cruel rain; rushing, driving
madly, madly.
Dreary day and weary heart!
Cease, oh rain, and rest, oh pain!
Clouds disperse, and griefs depart
With the rain.
Weary heart and dreary day,
And my love so far away.

Hear the rain, summer rain; hear it patter
lightly, lightly.
Gentle rain, sparkling rain; gleaming, glisten-
ing brightly, brightly.
Tender heart and happy day!
Shine, oh sun, till day is done;
Clouds dissolve and melt away
'Neath the sun.
Happy day and tender heart,
My love and I shall never part.

—H. A. Freeman.

WE WERE SEVEN.

BY MINNIE MAY LANCASTER.

People don't mean harm, they only do it; and the way we came to have a finger in Fate's pie was this:

To begin with, there were seven of us—seven demoralized young savages turned loose on a lonely farm, along with a stepmother who dealt out justice very much as Mrs. Squeers dealt out treacle, and a forlorn old father who dared not call his soul his own. He was such a big, grand fellow, such a gentleman, was my father, so genial, and accustomed to be the master in his own house (that other house where mamma lived and died) that I think it must have come "stone hard" to him in his old age to play second fiddle to our severely proper second ma. He fell along with Richmond, and when ma had brought him captive in chains matrimonial to her country home—his being confiscated—and gathered up our children from the poor relations and poorer schools where mamma's death had drifted us, she just emptied us out in her wilderness of pines and waste of sand, to scratch our way through childhood as best pleased Providence and our numerous selves.

We were gregarious little wretches, hunting together, climbing together, fishing and fighting together regardless of sex or age. If John dived off the wharf after mud oysters, the rest of the gang were expected to dive after mud oysters too. True, there were snags in dangerous plenty that only showed their black, shiny faces at low tide, but the Providence that goes about caring for fools and children, ordained that they should not interfere with our sport so far as to deprive us of our brains. If he (meaning John again) climbed up the brown ribs of the barn till he reached the eaves and then flung himself madly on the hay racks below, six interesting young followers would swarm about the tobacco plants curing under the eaves, ready to sneeze themselves off the beams and down into the hollow he had made. One morning when old black Joe (no reference to the song and chorus) came into the barn and caught us—some panting in our fragrant, yellow nests, one in mid-air curled up like a ball, and a file of five balancing on the rafters ready for a turn—how his old body quivered, and how his eyes suggested boiled eggs with the shells off, as he scratched under the straw and fished up before our demoralized eyes the farm hoe, the big rake with its cruel teeth upward, and two scythes gleaming with wicked keenness in the summer sun.

Ma was down with one of her aches and pains that day—poor dear! and papa having invited us to play away from the house, it suddenly occurred to our ambitious minds to go out boating in the scow. To be sure, there were "white ladies" riding on the big blue waves out in the channel, but they might have been witches straddling their broomsticks for all we thought or cared—for we were amphibious in those days, so far as fraternizing with water-snakes, crabs, and long-tailed sea-nettles went, or bobbing contentedly in the frothy surf, with the brown fin of a shark looming before us between the rise and fall of the waves. It was a ramshackle old boat, grimy with oyster shells, and slimy with fish-bait and scales. There were greenish crab claws plastered about her sides and floating on her leaky bottom, and the bailing-can, as a matter of course, was nowhere to be seen—neither was her rudder, neither was her anchor, neither were her oars!

Wedged in as uncomfortably as Cleopatra's crew in the picture, and unable either to row or steer, we shoved her off in the heavy surf, and being both fools and children, trusted to Providence to keep us along the shore. The first thing we did was to wobble, and as we rather like wobbling, a chorus went up to that effect in seven grateful yells. Then we rocked—the cradle in the tree-top wasn't a circumstance to the way we rocked after we left off wobbling. Then the rain beat on us in a sudden gust, and the "white ladies" foamed over the sides of the scow and into our laps with a rude familiarity to which no genuine white lady should descend. After that the deluge! I think even Baby Dixie realized that water up to our knees meant sinking, and that sinking meant death—and so there was nothing to do but shriek for poor, dear daddy, with a childish faith that he could save us, and, failing him, to make up our seven small minds to sink the very best we knew how, and all go to heaven in a bunch.

It was quite plain the crazy old tub had made up its mind to go to the bottom, and the beautiful persistency with which she settled to her work would have sent us down with sickening swiftness, only that Providence, remembering us at the very last moment, rushed to our rescue in the shape of Captain Dan!

To say we adored our next-door farmer but shabbily expresses the devotion with which we assailed the preserver of our useless little lives. All along, we had known him simply as the man with a beard, and bothered no more about him, but now!

We beat up partridges from the russet hedges, and while his gun was smoking, hunted the stubble to bring them to him warm and wet and dead. We let him into the secret of every nest and burrow in the chaffy pines, and blistered ourselves in the corn-field fighting marauding crows. We even extended our love to the old mare that had come home from the war with him—all ribs and horsehair—and to the rusty little fishing-smack that had helped to save our lives.

He never made us feel, God bless him! that we were not delightful to gaze upon, or that we might be less aggressive in the way of teeth and nails and heels. There was always a bright sort of welcome in his brown, freckled face when we seven scampered across fields or along roads to meet him, and his was always the first cheery word, always, at least, until that unlucky evening when we met him centering from the village with the alarming announcement that Cousin Till had come.

Cousin Till meant ma's niece. She was one of those big, gorgeous-looking young women a body calls stunning behind her back—a young woman with lots of bronze hair in a demoralized state of puff, bang and frizzle, with cheeks like peach-blossoms all pink and waxy, and lips as red and tempting as ma's bush of scarlet sage.

She was rich, too, in a mild sort of way, dressed in milk-white frocks and blue ribbons for breakfast, and had a beau, ma said, for every day in the week. For the rest, she owned a big farm ten miles above us, visited ma when there was nothing better going on, and always went off in a huff. She treated us children fairly enough, considering, and all we knew or cared about her was, that she slept in mittens to keep her hands white, carried her trunk key with exasperating consistency, never tasted coffee on account of her complexion, and wished her name was Maud instead of Matilda—ali we cared at least, until that unlucky evening when Captain Dan would budge no nearer than the garden—after which I am bound to own we hated her with a hatred too genuine to put in print!

Budge! he wouldn't even look toward the house—even when we clung to his saddle flaps and swarmed about his legs, and tugged and coaxed and scolded, we could get no better satisfaction than a playful flip of his riding whip as he gave his horse the bridle and slowly rode away. That was the beginning of it. We rarely saw our preserver after that, and never once at the house—how we hated her for it, and how we wished to goodness she would have the sense to go!

At last, when things had become so desperate that Captain Dan never even scudded by in his fishing smack, nor turned his old mare's head into our road—and Cousin Till kept on being sweet as peaches—we held an indignation meeting on the back piazza and vented our wrongs in speech.

"Cut her throat and bury her in the pines," suggested John, our harmless eldest, who was addicted to uncomfortably vivid dreams.

"Wy tant we put 'ard trabs in her bed and down her wif a rope!" lisped Aggie, our Borgia of six.

"Better shave that head of hers!" advised Jim, who really gave brilliant promise of being a first-class villain—only he died, poor little lad, before he had time to work out his vocation.

And to shave our Cousin Tilly we decided.

We were very jubilant at the tea-table that night—so jubilant that ma moaned at us through her bedroom door, and papa and Cousin Till frowned us down from their end of the table—and when at last she had retired early by reason of ma's headache, and papa had catechised us from "Who made you?" down to "What became of Cain?" we, too, filed up the crooked old stairway to the three rooms allotted to our sway.

We had cast John for the barber in our thrilling version of the "Rape of the Lock," but being overwhelmed with a conscience at the trying moment, Jim assumed the part at the usual five minutes' notice, and doubtless would have performed his role with perfect satisfaction but for a tableau not down in the bill.

The harvest moon was shining like a calcium as we crept stealthily on our bare tip-toes to the door of my Cousin Till's chamber. There she lay fast asleep, like the princess in the fairy tale, and there we were face to face with—John was the first to spy it—a fluffy coil of reddish gold sprawled out on the dresser!

When we carried Captain Dan the scandalous news I think he had a wild notion to box us for our pains. He laughed, too—laughed till the fishing was spoiled, and made us promise never to raise our hands again to harm a hair of her head. Then papa, being in a proper mood, we lured him behind the granary door and confided in him as well—a confidence that led to the horrible discovery that Cousin Till and Captain Dan had been something more than friends.

"Wasn't she to blame?" asked John, who had heard of such goings on as courting involves, and liked to air his knowledge.

"Well, yes, honey, I think there's no doubt about that; but young people don't need to talk of such things, so run and forget it."

Not talk, indeed! We talked of nothing else; and if Captain Dan wanted Cousin Till, we made up our minds he was going to have her, false top-knot, big farm, and sulks, too, in the bargain! How we argued, how we planned, and

how at last we made up our minds what to do and how to go about it.

Our plot began with a message. Would Captain Dan meet papa that evening at sunset by the bend? Of course he would, and for the rest of that day we confined our energies to stealing everything we could lay our hands on in the way of ropes and bridles and strings. That evening when the sun lay in golden splendor on the water, and the swamp-frogs were piping their dismal refrain, Cousin Till strided off to the beach, as usual, with a cloud of white wool over her bronze locks and a blue-and-gold "Burns" in her hand.

We took a notion to strait that way ourselves, only we made no such seductive picture with Billy's bridle between us, and the great thong of tinkling sleigh-bells dragging along in the sand. We found our chance when she stooped to pick up a pinkish pebble, and before she could say Jack Robinson, old Billy's bridle was lassoing her soft white throat, and John was strapping her arms to her sides with the string of noisy bells. I think she considered it fun of a rough sort at first, and humored our frolic so far as to let us shove her along to Dixie's fierce efforts in the way of clutching and Aggie's vicious buttings from behind.

But when she saw Captain Dan waiting impatiently before us, and when he saw her—and us—and when John handed over the bridle with the unnecessary assertion that "there she was, and no mistake!" and when they both flushed up like honey-suckles, and she hung her pretty head while he unbound her from the musty ropes and still she did not move, and when at last we left them there with the sun flooding them both with its dying blessing, how triumphantly we scampered down the beach to the chorus of

"A cornstalk fiddle and a shoestring bow. If you catch a pretty girl don't you let her go."

A simple story; yes, so simple that except for Captain Dan himself I never should have remembered. For one thing it happened so long ago. I never realized how long, until I met him face to face, and the poor dear did not know me—

So gray, so sorrowfully old—should a man look like that at forty?

And when, at last, I beat it into his memory that I was one of the seven causes of his marriage, and asked him how dared he forget, he turned on me with a most startling contempt for politeness, and with a sigh that was solemn even for a countryman lost in the noises of a town.

"Forget! Well, I've been wishing every day for the last fifteen years that I had let the whole gang of you go to the bottom. Forget you? No such luck!"

It never occurred to me before, but now I come to think of it, Cousin Till wasn't exactly the sort of woman to make a successful home, and as for him—if only he had not interfered, how much better off we would have been—at the bottom.—*The Continent.*

On Sneezing.

On the subject of sneezing regarded as an omen, there is much to be said. Speaking generally, it may be regarded as of favorable augury. "Two or three sneezes be wholesome," says an old author, and "He that hath sneezed thrice turn him out of the hospital," says the proverb. Of sneezing, however, as of other good things, it is possible to have too much. Pamanus Strada, the author of a grave historical work, has a learned digression on the subject of sneezing, and mentions one Peter Suburranus, who died of a fit of it, expiring at the twenty-fourth sneeze. In Aristotle's time men generally sneezed twice, but since then the art of sneezing, like other arts, appears to have advanced, and a triple sneeze is now, we believe, considered the correct thing. The virtue of sneezing, however, depends much upon circumstances of time and place. Sneezing from noon to midnight is good, according to Aristotle, and from night to noon the reverse, and we learn from another source that "if any one sneeze for three nights in succession it may be taken as a sign that some one will die in the house," or that some other calamity will occur. According to Lancaster folk lore a good deal depends upon the day of the week in the matter of sneezing:

"Sneezes on a Monday, you sneeze for danger; Sneezes on a Tuesday, you kiss a stranger; Sneezes on a Wednesday, you sneeze for a letter; Sneezes on a Thursday for something better. Sneezes on a Friday, you'll sneeze for sorrow, Sneezes on a Saturday, your sweetheart tomorrow; Sneezes on a Sunday, your safety seek, The devil will have you the rest of the week!" —*Tinsley.*

Misdirected Mail Matter.

People in general have but a faint conception of the enormous amount of misdirected mail matter which passes through the mails annually. In the Boston office last year there were 49,000 letters wrongly addressed, and in all these cases the proper addresses were ascertained and the letters forwarded to their destination, and yet people wonder why their letters are delayed, although it is owing to their own carelessness. Of course the post-office officials are not responsible, but many people fail to see where the trouble lies. In further evidence of the want of care on the part of the public, it is stated that the number of letters sent to the dead letter office during the last year was nearly 4,500,000, or an average of 14,500 per day. These letters contained no less than \$40,000 in cash and checks to the amount of \$1,500,000.—*Boston Herald.*

Cat breeding is being taken up actively in England, not only for the comfortable cloak linings its fur affords, but as an article of food.

AMONG THE JERSEY COWS.

VISIT TO A MODEL PENNSYLVANIA STOCK FARM.

Butter Which Sells at Fifty Cents a Pound—Twenty Cows Worth More Than \$2,000 Each.

"Gath," in the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, gives the following account of his visit to the stock farm of Joseph C. Sibley, near Franklin, Penn.

Franklin is surrounded with the derricks of oil wells, looking like skeleton church spires, to the number of scores and hundreds, and most of these are still pumping a small quantity of oil per diem. Overlooking the tower on the opposite side of French creek is the Prospect Hill stock farm of Joseph C. Sibley, perhaps the most complete in all its appointments now in this country. Connected with it in different tracts are about six hundred acres of land, and it has a race-course used by the county agricultural society. Near the gate going in is the creamery, which manufactures two barrels of cream into butter in about forty-five minutes, and this butter is sent all over the country at fifty cents a pound. On the top of the hill is the barn, which is of an octagonal or almost circular pattern, and contains the entire herd on two floors. From the cupola of the barn, which gives the ventilation, descends a pole, around which is a winding stair connecting the two floors. In the center of each floor is a large open space, and the circle of cattle faces this in stalls, their heads all appearing above the stalls, and their troughs at their knees. Behind this row of cattle is an open corridor, also circular, around which the second greater circle of cattle stand at their stalls.

On the upper floor a portion of this second circle is devoted to the cows with calves or about to calve. The cows in calf are generally kept dry where this is possible, so that the calf can get the full nourishment; but it is exceedingly difficult in some cases to dry the Jersey cow, as the tenacity with which she makes milk is the great secret of her value. She is the most wonderful butter-making animal known to man. Other kinds of cattle run to beef, but the Jersey so assimilates her food that the globules which might make beef flow in her milk, and hence the extraordinary production of some of these cows, and their high prices in a country where the chemist has been at work with butter, and has given us various forms of wagon grease and coal-tar instead of the Alderney produce.

The importation of Jersey cattle into the United States began about seven years before the war. It has gone on with such enthusiasm that we now have about 21,000 Jerseys, either imported or born here, every one of which is registered in the Jersey herd-book, that is now assuming the proportions of a library. The Jersey cattle—by which general name is meant cattle of Jersey, Sark and Alderney—improve in this country over their condition in their native islands, and they make more cream and butter, and thrive wonderfully. They are distributed over the entire country. They are generally of a fawn color, with rather dark gray or blackish faces; the cows are very gentle, and the bulls vicious.

I was interested in two things in this stable. In the first place the cream separator, which is run by a steam engine, revolves with enormous rapidity, and the cream flows out of one spigot and the skimmed milk out of another. Then I observed the apparatus for cleaning cows, which are carefully washed and brushed once or twice a day by means of brushes operated by the engine. The cow, calf or bull is brought forward and tied to a post, and from above these brushes are brought to her body, and carefully raise every hair. The cattle like it, but their tails have to be tied up in a bag, for not long ago one of the brushes tore out a tail. The temperature in the barn is kept at fifty degrees the year round, regulated by the thermometer, and the barn is lighted with the Brush light on every floor, and at midnight is as bright as day. A storage battery is kept near the engine for this purpose. The light used is the ordinary gas bracket and small lamp.

At Prospect Hill farm the barn is eighty-eight feet in diameter. There are thirty-two cattle on the inner rows and forty-six on the rear rows. The engineer has fifteen-horse power. The food given the animals is boiled and mixed, partly oats and partly ensilage, or leaves of corn plucked when the ear is full of milk. The cattle like this food very much, and it improves their butter. The Jersey cow can be relied on to make one pound of butter a day; many of them make sixteen pounds a week, and some of their performances are almost fabulous.

By the machinery used at Prospect Hill it takes thirty-five minutes only to separate the cream from the milk of forty-five cows. The separator is a Swedish patent. In one hour from the commencement of the milking the cream is in the creamery and the skimmed milk is being fed to the calves.

Mr. Sibley says that the keep of his cattle in the winter is some where between twenty and thirty cents a day, but that for a portion of the year they do not cost above eight-cents a day. There are about thirteen men employed on the herd farm, and the cost of running it is about \$17,000 a year.

At Prospect Hill there are forty-five milk cows, producing not less than one pound per diem of butter, while a good deal of the milk without being skimmed is given to the calves. There are twenty cows in the stable that \$2,000 apiece would not buy.

The czar of Russia owns personally 220,000 square miles of territory in Siberia, yielding the small annual rent of \$150,000, not much for 140,000,000 acres.

A ROMANCE OF THE WEST.

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK AND THE JUDGE'S DAUGHTER.

A Man Who Waited Six Years for a Wife and then Secured His Bride and \$25,000 of Her Father's Estate.

The following story is a true one. It is the names of the parties are not given it is because they object to publicity. The facts, however, are known not only to the employers of the husband, but to a number of friends.

Nearly seven years ago Mr. —, a native of Chambersburg, Penn., was a confidential clerk for a New York house. He fell in love with and became engaged to the daughter of a wealthy judge, who was a resident of Chambersburg. The day was set for the marriage, and all the arrangements were made by the father-in-law for a grand celebration such as he thought befitted the dignity of the occasion. Shortly before the wedding the prospective son-in-law was overtaken by misfortune. He had indorsed for a friend, the friend failed to take up his notes, and the young man lost what he had—a farm near Chambersburg with considerable money, and also all the cash he had saved up during his service in New York. The moment that he learned of his misfortune he went to the judge at Chambersburg, told him what had happened to him, and said that while as anxious as ever to marry his daughter he could not consent in view of the change in his circumstances to have a grand and costly wedding as had been previously arranged for. He was anxious to marry her on the day appointed, quietly and unostentatiously, and then take her with him to share his fortunes. The judge, however, a man of obstinacy, insisted on carrying out the programme in all its details. It was his daughter who was to be married, and he insisted that the ceremony should take place with all the pomp and parade to which she thought she was deserving. Mr. — declined, and left for New York that night. Early the next morning the young lady followed him. They were married in New York, lived together for two or three days, and then she returned to her home, he remaining at the metropolis.

Not long after the father-in-law died. By his will he disinherited his daughter, but perhaps in a moment of relenting, perhaps with a malignant desire to try their patience, he inserted a proviso that, if they should live apart for six years, never meeting, never corresponding, trying to keep no communication whatever, at the end of that time, if these facts were proven to the satisfaction of the trustees of the estate, the daughter might have a share. For nearly two years the husband lived in New York. Then, his health failing, he went to Denver. After staying there about two years he came to Chicago, entered the employ of a large manufacturing house, whose big store is on Wabash avenue, near Congress, and soon became, by virtue of his natural abilities and his attention to business, their confidential man. All this time he never saw his wife, never wrote to her, nor received letters from her. It is possible, of course, that he might have heard indirectly through his mother. But there is no evidence of this, and the wife's brothers, who were steadily on the lookout to see that none of the conditions of the will were broken, were unable to find anything which could justify the trustees in declaring that the judge's requirements had not been lived up to strictly.

During the greater part of this time Mr. —'s employers had no idea that he was married. He kept his secret to himself religiously, and it only came out last Thanksgiving day, when a dinner was given by the head of the house to his leading men, and then, the six years having expired, Mr. — felt warranted in stating to the head of the firm that he was married and had been for six years. Late last night the trustees of the estate decided that the terms of the will had been complied with, and that Mrs. — was entitled to her share of her father's estate, amounting to about \$25,000—not what is nowadays called a fortune, but enough to enable them to live in comfortable independence. Soon after that, all business matters having been settled up, the wife came to this city and met her husband, whom she had not seen for over six years. He remains in the employ of the firm, and they are both living happily together in pleasant quarters on the South Side.

The husband is a little exultant over this reward of his patience and endurance, just as Jacob felt joyous after he had served fourteen years and finally earned the hand of Rachel, and is not disinclined to tell the story of his early love and the long separation. The wife, however, is more sensitive; is unwilling to have the story known among the acquaintances whom she has made since she came here, and it is, therefore, rather out of deference to her wishes that the names of the parties are not given.—*Chicago Tribune.*

"Sartage."

Finland, "the last born daughter of the sea," Dr. J. C. Brown says, is the only country in Europe in which "sartage"—that is the practice of setting fire to the trees in order to clear the ground—is still carried on extensively. The clearing away of the woods is to prepare the earth for agriculture, but as much, or more, by the preparation of the soil for the cultivation of the seed contemplated, and this is the peculiarity of the usage. The trees growing on the spot selected are burned, and the seed is then sown on the soil thus manured with the ashes of the trees. Should the ground thus cleared not be permanently retained under cultivation, it is likely to become covered again with a crop of self-sown trees of higher pecuniary value.