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CENTRAL POINT, OREGON.

The Key to a Fortune

(Original.)

John Nettleton was an inventor. He invented a number of small devices for various purposes, but none of them turned out to be of value, or, if they did, some one who found the means to put them on the market reaped the benefit. Nettleton's wife and a girl she had adopted stood by him through all his disappointments. His son Peter, as soon as he became old enough to shift for himself, became a machinist and drifted away from home.

Peter knew enough of such matters to feel sure that if his father had invented means of overcoming the defect he had made a model of the contrivance. He and Maggie hunted all over the house for such a model. Every closet was ransacked, spaces under the eaves of the roof, cellar and workshop, to no purpose. The model was not to be found.

The pet scheme of John Nettleton's life was a machine for saving labor, the object of which he alone understood. While thus engaged he dreamed at night of great fortunes secured, or that some one was destroying his model just as he had perfected it. Often his wife would awaken him when he was struggling in nightmare. But before he accomplished his object she died, leaving no one but Maggie Thorpe, her adopted daughter, to care for him. She remained with him and was a perpetual bow of promise.

It was several years after his wife's death before Nettleton struck the fundamental idea of his machine. But on applying it he found that a device was necessary to overcome a defect which, though trifling in itself, rendered the machine useless. He worked three years over this and overcame it. Then he made a model of his machine, and a separate model of his contrivance to overcome the defect. He had been so swindled by persons appropriating his inventions that he chose to keep a key to this one, which would alone unlock the secret. The model of the machine he kept in his workroom. The model of the contrivance he kept no one knew where.

But with all his precaution John Nettleton never reaped the benefit of his invention. Death took him away so suddenly that he had no time to reveal to any one where he kept the model he called his key model. Peter was called home to bury his father and found nothing to represent an inheritance except a will bequeathing the little house and the invention to Maggie Thorpe. Peter saw the model of the machine, and, being a machinist, was delighted with it; but, setting it in motion, he soon saw the defect. It seemed a simple matter to remedy that, and he set to work to do so. Mag-

gie told him that his father had done so, but she knew not by what contrivance.

Peter obtained employment near by and nights and holidays went to his father's workshop to find a remedy for the defect. As his father had been encouraged by Maggie, so was the son. She would go into the workshop, which was in the rear of the house, when he was there, and when she found him despondent would remind him that his father had overcome it, and what had been done once could be done again. Often late at night the shop door would open to reveal Maggie's sympathetic face while she held in her hand a plate on which she had placed a simple supper.

But Peter had not the genius of his father and at last made up his mind that if he did not give up hunting for the secret he would go mad. Then, and not till then, Maggie advised him to give it up and reminded him that there were fortunes to be made in other ways.

Peter decided to go back to the work he had done before his father's death, but when he came to part with Maggie he found that he had won a greater treasure than fortune—the heart of a pure young girl whose disposition would render her the most valuable of wives. With this discovery he made another—that he could not go and leave Maggie. He must take her with him.

Peter bought a plain gold ring which he took to Maggie. Not finding her in the house he went to the shop. She was there soldering a kettle that had become leaky. Peter produced the ring and as he was about to slip it on her finger dropped it. It rolled into one of the great seams between the boards in the floor.

There was nothing to do but take up a board. Peter took up two and found the ring on a box placed between the joists. He took out both the ring and the box, and seeing that the latter was locked Maggie went for John Nettleton's keys, which she had kept since his death. She unlocked the box and displayed a model.

Something told them both at once that here was the missing key to a fortune. Taking out the model Peter turned with it to the model of the machine, but Maggie espied a paper in the bottom of the box.

God, if necessary, will direct my little girl to this.

Peter saw at once how the connection was to be applied to the machine and catching up a screwdriver made the attachment. Then setting the whole in motion they both watched it working smoothly.

"Peter," said Maggie at last, handing him the paper, "see what your father said about our finding the key to a fortune."

"The key to a fortune," he said after reading it, "is often the goodness of a woman. At any rate it is so in this case." FLORA MILLIGAN.

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FRUIT & FLOWERS

POPULAR NUTS.

Pecans, Some Good Hickory Nuts and a Supposed Hybrid.

Pecan culture is getting a substantial boom. Choice varieties are being extensively propagated and planted. The chances of ultimate profit in growing this popular nut would appear quite promising where plantings are made on the right soil in a suitable climate, says Rural New Yorker in notes on the pecan and, more particularly, the hickory nut. The pecan is, however, a southern species and is not successfully grown in the east north of the Ohio valley. The trees are fairly hardy even in the latitude of Long Island, but a longer season is needed to ripen the nuts.

Pecans are most at home in rich alluvial soils in the gulf states. Great



WIKER SHAGBARK HICKORY NUT.

progress has been made in the commercial propagation of pecans. While we of the north cannot hope to fruit pecans, we have in our shagbark hickory a nut far superior in flavor to the best pecan and a tree entirely suitable to our climate.

Many excellent shagbarks have been described, but up to this time only one, Hale's paper shell, is known to be propagated and disseminated. Hale's is a medium sized nut, with a shell thinner than some pecans, but with a very plump kernel of high, sweet quality.

The cut represents the Wiker hickory as exhibited by Dr. J. G. Rush at the last meeting of the Pennsylvania Horticultural society. It is reliable and productive in the original tree and is now being propagated in a Florida nursery. It is not a paper shell sort, though the shell is thin enough easily to crack away from the plump and meaty kernel. The quality is excellent, not surpassed by any hickory we have tested.

Planters will have a long wait for their crop, but a desirable nut tree that may last a century is surely worth waiting for. A few experts only have been able to increase hickories by grafting. Better success is reported from budding by the annular or flute bud method. They may also be propagated when on their own roots by sprouts or suckers that occasionally spring from bare- or upturned roots.

The pecan (*Hicoria pecan*) and the shagbark (*H. ovata*) meet in the Mississippi valley as the latter extends its range from Canada quite to Texas and Florida. It would appear possible that hybrids between these valuable species may be produced in time, and it is easy to imagine the good qualities they should possess.

A supposed hybrid between the western shellbark (*H. laevis*) and the pecan was figured and described by the late A. S. Fuller in 1884 under the name of Nussbaumer's hybrid. The nuts were described as large, thin shelled, sweet and good.

Rooting Poinsettias.

Many growers have trouble in rooting their poinsettia cuttings. It is a good plan about a week before taking the cutting from the parent plant to make a nick or uppercut in the stalk at the place it is intended to take the cutting. This may be done in much the same way that a cut is made in a rubber plant before wrapping it with moss, though the knife should not go too deep, as a very slight cut will bleed a poinsettia. In about a week a callus will have formed, and the cutting should then be removed and placed in the sand. It will root better than one which has not been so treated.—Gardening.

Gumming of Peach Trees.

Excessive gumming of peach and plum trees may be relieved by slitting the bark and the first layer from the ground to the branching, making the slits about three inches apart. The trouble may be termed hide bound, the sap cannot flow as it should and bursts its bounds. The cuts give the tree a chance to clear itself and resume healthy action.—E. S. Starr.

Has Only One Insect Enemy.

The only insect enemy of the gooseberry is the currant worm. It makes its appearance about the 1st of May. It begins at one end of a row and goes from bush to bush across the field to the end. If rows are some distance apart the insects cross to another row and go back again. Spray with paris green or dust with white hellebore when the dew is on.—Western Fruit Grower.

Gas Poisoning.

After four years' experience with street trees I conclude that the sudden death of a vigorous street tree is prima facie evidence of a gas leak. As for example, I have noted several trees which were vigorous last summer that failed to put out leaves the past spring. A gas leak was found in each case, says a writer on this subject.

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