THE LILAC TRAIN

By FRANCES MITCHELL

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MISS 'LIZBETH had a story, but what it was, was a vexed question among the gossips, some of whom declared that she was once to have been married, and the guests were all in the house; she was dressed, and the preacher waiting to perform the ceremony, when a note was brought her, from her affianced, saying he had left, never to return, and asking her to forget him. Others told of a drunken husband, who had deserted her, and then had tracked her to her present home, whither she had fled, bearing her maiden name, to live down her sorrow, and now came back, occasionally, after dark, and gave a peculiar rap on the window, which she understoood as a demand for money. They further told, how, to prevent his proclaiming himself as her husband, she always gave him the sum he required, although she lived on but meager fare for weeks afterward. But the few who knew Miss 'Lizbeth best, declared that she was a gentle little woman of refined tastes, who kept her secret because it was sacred to her, and not because of any disgrace attached to it. Indeed, one of these friends had once gone so far as to intimate that she wished Miss 'Lizbeth would give her some little statement that she might make, and so close the mouths of the gossips, but the little woman had only smiled and said:

"Why, they have partaken of me and my sorrows, with their tea, for so long, that they would be unable to drink it, minus the flavor; no, just let them continue to speculate, and in speculating, be happy."

And so five years had gone by, and still Miss 'Lizbeth's secret was discussed by the gossips, and still the only point they could fully agree upon was that there was certainly a man in the case, when, one day, the news came that at eight, the next evening, the lilac train would pass through en route for Montana.

Every one in the little town knew what the coming of the lilac train meant, for it was no new thing—this sending of a carload of blossoms, sometimes into the mining towns of the North, where the breath from the smelters destroyed every vestige of vegetation; sometimes to the towns nestled high up the mountain sides, and shivered with their summer frosts and the biting winds from the snow fields around them. Only the last year, Leadville had been brightened by the coming of the "lilac train," for so it was called, although there were always other kinds of flowers and usually but one carload; but, though the shelves at one end of the car held potted plants and cut flowers of every variety, it was the lilacs that were loaded, by trucks full, as the train stopped at one station and then at another.

"That's a pretty custom you have here in Utah," Miss 'Lizbeth had said to the neighbor who, in passing, had noticed her standing by a lilac bush, caressing a blossom she had plucked, and had told her about the coming of the lilac train. "They say that up in Butte and Anaconda and those other Montana mining towns, there is not a tree, shrub or plant growing out of doors. I heard of one small azalea that sold easily for fifteen dollars in Butte. What a sight it must be to those people to see a whole carload of blossoms coming into their midst!"

"They say they are as delighted as if a carload of gold nuggets were being distributed. Will you unload your bush, there, for their benefit?"

"Indeed, I shall be only too glad to send some nice bouquets. I love lilacs," and as she stooped to pick up the flower she had dropped, her friend passed on, remarking:

"Well, I must be off," and did not see the tear in Miss 'Lizbeth's eye, nor notice the tremor in her voice.

That night, Miss 'Lizbeth sat alone on her little front porch and watched the moon come slowly up from behind the great mass of the Wahsatch range, and sail off into the blue vault above, and as she watched she thought:

"Yes, I'll do it. It can't do any harm. If it falls into Reuben's hands, he'll understand what it means. If it don't, why, the blossoms will cheer some one's heart, and the—other, will just excite a little curiosity. Five years ago, day after tomorrow, I got off the train here, and Reuben went on up North. The lilac train went just ahead of his, and I picked up one of the blossoms that had fallen when they were loading, and handed it to him. I don't know why I did it; Reuben had never asked for a promise of any kind from me, but I had read something in his eyes, all that year when I was boarding at his mother's. And his treatment of me, too, was another thing. He would come to meet me and walk home with me, and would ask, so gently, if the day had been a hard one. He was such a great, good-hearted fellow! No, I don't know why I did it, but when I handed him the blossom, I said, 'I'll wait for you, Reuben, for years, if it is necessary,' and then I turned and fled to the waiting room, and his train was just starting, so he could not answer, but I knew his heart."

There Miss 'Lizbeth heaved a sad little sigh, and sat tapping her lips with the lilac blossom she had taken from her belt.

"I wonder why he never wrote to me," she mused on presently. "I expect he failed in his mining and was discouraged. I know Reuben loved me," and the little woman blushed as if she had been talking to Reuben himself. "Yes, he did. I know he did, and I'll—do it!" and then she arose and went into the house.

The next day, Miss 'Lizbeth went down town, looking her best in a pretty dark-blue suit, with a neat walking hat to match, and returned in an hour, with a tiny envelope in her hand. Later in the evening, she started out with two large bunches of lilacs, and if the gossips had met her, they would have noticed a certain guilty look she wore, and would have declared that the drunken husband had been around lately.

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An impatient crowd of people had been standing in the rain, since the early morning, expecting momentarily to hear the whistle of the engine that would bring the lilac car into the Butte depot. The noon whistles had sounded; still no evidence of the coming of the lilac car; still a pouring rain and still a waiting mass of people. Twelve-fifteen — thirty — forty-five—a whistle and the crowd began to surge forward. Into the depot the engine panted, and with a shout the anxious, weary waiters welcomed the men who stood on the platforms, with arms full of blossoms.

"Throw them this way, pardner." "Give us a few, over here." "Don't forget us. We can't get any closer." Such were the cries that came up from various quarters, as men, women and children, reached and scrambled for the flowers that came pouring upon them.

Coming with quick step, down one of the streets, was a man roughly dressed in a miner's garb, and close behind him, another, clad in a neat brown business suit.

"Now, I do wonder if I am too late for the lilac train," soliloquized the man in the lead. "'Twill be the first one I have missed since I came into Montana. Five years ago, she gave me a blossom that had fallen when they were loading the lilac train, and then she said, 'I'll wait for you, Reuben!' She read in my face what I did not have the manhood to tell her. She must have been sorry for me then, and so spoke, before she thought, but afterward, she grew sorry for herself, I suppose, when she realized what she had done, for she didn't answer that letter I wrote, as soon as I got here, telling her how gladly I could work now, knowing that she was waiting for me. Well, she'd had to wait a long time, for luck was against me, right along, but I didn't care since she wasn't waiting for me, after all. She was in earnest when she said she'd wait. I am sure of that. And now, if only I could send her a message, saying, 'I am coming.—Reuben,' it would be worth all these years of work and discouragement. I've seen people from there, many times since, but they didn't know that I knew her, and I never asked about her—I was afraid, somehow, of what they might tell me, till about a month ago, when the Sweet Lilac began to show rich streaks. Then—" and here he clenched his hands till the nails cut into the calloused flesh, "then I asked Jim Davis, if he knew her; he said he didn't, but he had heard her name in connection with some rumor about a drunken husband, and I turned and left him, and spent a night that was—well, a man don't have to die, to taste of the tortures of hell. Ah, I am not too late," for he had come in sight of the car, and in another moment, he and the man in brown, who had kept even pace with him, for a block or more, were grasping frantically at a large bouquet that came over the heads of the crowd, within easy reach for them.

"There, stranger," exclaimed the miner, "I beat you on that catch, but there are enough here for two, so I'll cut the string and 'divy' up, as we say in camp."

"You are generous, sir," answered his late rival, "and I will gladly pay you any sum you may name, for my share of them. My little sick daughter—"

"Little sick daughter? Well, now, do you think I'd sell you a few flowers for her? And besides, money is nothing to me. Have you heard of the Sweet Lilac, that sold yesterday for fifty thousand— What's this?" and lifting a tiny tintype that had been fastened in among the stems, he gazed into the face that spoke back to him, with a look of love, he only, could read. "I'm waiting for you, Reuben," were the words he saw faintly scratched beneath the face, and turning to his wondering companion, he said, as he held the entire bonquet to him:

"Just give me one small spray of the flowers, stranger, and you can have all the rest for the little girl. I'm going in here to send a telegram that says, 'I am coming.—Reuben.'"

Odor of Flowers Not Always Most Pleasing

Nearly everyone likes the smells of freshly cut flowers, of violets, roses and others that belong to the sweet-smelling varieties. But psychologists who have studied the matter scientifically find that flower odors are not really the ones most intensely and universally pleasing to the human nose.

This distinction belongs to the spicy odors such as cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and the others of similar character. Among hundreds of persons tested, always with odors that they could not identify by seeing the flower or in any way except by the sense of smell, not one person failed to describe a faint smell of cinnamon as being pleasant, while a number of persons were found to vote against each one of the flower odors.

POULTRY

COMFORTABLE HOUSE ENCOURAGES FOWLS

The poultry house is both the home of the hen and the factory where winter eggs are produced, and unless it provides suitable living and working conditions the hen cannot be expected to lay well. To be comfortable the house must be dry, well ventilated, well lighted and have sufficient floor space to provide exercise by scratching. Dryness is insured by having a good roof, keeping the floor of the house higher than the surrounding ground, and by providing good ventilation. Ventilation must supply plenty of fresh air without drafts. This is secured by having the south side relatively open and the other three sides absolutely tight. The importance of light in the poultry house has not been properly emphasized in the past. Recent experiments with artificial lights show that by furnishing more light so that the working period for the birds is lengthened the egg production can be materially increased. In many farm poultry houses no windows are provided and the house is in constant twilight on cloudy days even when the door is left open. Needless to say, this condition does not favor activity on the part of the hen. To insure good natural light in a poultry house the openings in the walls should equal about one-fourth of the floor space of the house. At least half of these openings should be for open-front ventilation, and the windows should be so arranged that the maximum amount of sunlight will be available to the birds. Wherever possible windows should be placed in the east and west ends of the building so that the early morning and late afternoon light will be secured. To insure room for scratching not only must sufficient floor space be provided but the droppings must be kept off the floor and a deep litter of straw or similar material be supplied so that the birds can be made to scratch for their feed. To keep the droppings off the floor every poultry house should be provided with a droppings platform arranged underneath the roosts to catch the manure.

Dried Buttermilk Found Profitable for Poultry

At the Indiana experiment station several tests have also been made with dried buttermilk for laying hens. In one of its bulletins on this subject, A. C. Phillips, who conducted the tests in which dried buttermilk was compared with liquid buttermilk, says: "The income from the liquid buttermilk-fed pen was $7.13; from the dried buttermilk-fed pen, $8.21; and from the no-milk-fed pen, $2.39." Stating the same facts in different words, Mr. Phillips continues: "The profit over feed cost from the liquid buttermilk-fed pen was $4.92; from the dried buttermilk-fed pen, $5.69; and from the no-milk-fed pen, 78 cents."

Thus we see that the pen fed dried buttermilk as a protein carrier, made the largest profit per bird per year. The pen that received no milk of any kind netted less than $1 per hen per year. In addition to getting more eggs from the dried buttermilk than from the liquid buttermilk, that institution also obtained greater hatchability in the eggs from the dried buttermilk pen than from the one fed liquid buttermilk.

Emden Geese Popular

The Emden breed of geese is one of the best known and most popular of all the varieties known. Individuals of this breed are large, and beautifully formed. The back is fairly straight while the under part of the body is canoe shaped, or, almost crescent. They have blue eyes, orange bill shanks and toes and pure white plumage. Size and vigor are the principal features to be considered when mating these birds. It is quite common for the females to develop a "dewlap" or loose pouch of skin under the body.

Poultry Facts

Keep strong, healthy, vigorous stock and care for it properly.

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Know the preferences of your market and strive to meet them.

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Never wash eggs unless they are to be used immediately by local trade.

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Don't wash dirty eggs. Washed eggs spoil quickly and are of lower market value.

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The first essential in marketing quality eggs as required by the new egg law is quality production. When proper methods are employed it is easy to produce and market quality eggs.

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The average composition of cow's milk is as follows: Water 87.17 per cent, butterfat 3.69 per cent, casein 3.02 per cent, albumen .53 per cent milk sugar 4.88 per cent, ash .71 per cent; total 100 per cent.

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Grain is usually best fed just after the calves have had their milk. Two good calf rations are as follows: 1 Corn, three pounds; bran, three pounds; oats, three pounds; ollmean one pound. 2. Corn, five pounds, oats or bran, three pounds; ollmeal one pound.

DAIRY FACTS

WATER FOR COWS IN WINTER IMPORTANT

Many cows fall off in production in the winter time either because they do not receive enough water, or because that which they do receive is too cold. A big, high-producing cow needs eight to fifteen gallons of water daily, depending on her feed; and if she does not get it her milk will drop. In the winter time, if the cow has to suck water out of a hole in the ice or drink out of a trough which is ice-cold, she will not take enough to supply her needs. Particularly this is true if she has to go far to get it in cold, stormy weather. Further, this ice-cold water cools down her body so that she has to use a lot of her feed to produce heat to restore her temperature. Thus, too cold water wastes feeds, and this is true for all dairy animals as well as the cow in milk. If the animal shivers after drinking, the water is too cold.

Automatic drinking buckets in the stable assure the animal of plenty of water which will not be too cold and are ideal equipment for the dairy barn. However, it is entirely possible to provide water satisfactorily with less expensive equipment. A trough of water in the barn to which the cows have access twice a day will assure ample water which will not be too cold.

On many farms where the well or brook is close to the barn, the water can be pumped inside with an ordinary pitcher pump. Cows should be let out a little while every day for exercise, but if possible they should be watered in the barn. They will drink more and eat more.

Get Rid of Separators That Rob Dairy Farmer

There are a number of separators that are robbing the farmers of cream. This was brought to light recently when A. J. Cramer, director of Wisconsin cow testing associations, Wisconsin College of Agriculture, received a letter from one of the testers out in the field.

"I have tested skim milk frequently and found many separators that were sadly worn out of adjustment to the extent that they were wasting many dollars each month for the farmer who sells cream," reports one tester.

"During August we had a new member join our association, and when I made my first visit to his farm he told me that he was trying the tester on the suggestion of one of his neighbors. I took samples of milk from all the cows, and also of the skim milk. To my surprise, there was more fat in the skim milk than could be tested in the skim milk test bottles. So I ran the samples in whole milk test bottles and discovered that they tested 2 per cent of butterfat.

"The following month I again tested the skim milk, and this time it tested 1½ per cent butterfat. That resulted in the buying of a new separator before I left the farm the following day.

"It might be interesting to know that the new separator represented the saving of 92 cents per day, or $276 a year for that farmer."

Liberal Feeding Is Big Secret With Dairy Cows

Liberal feeding is the secret of success in handling animals. Given dairy cows of the right type, success is sure to attend the man who feeds with a free hand. It is impossible to get something for nothing, at least in the dairy business. How long will it be before all the farmers in this country learn that a poorly fed calf means a small, undeveloped cow, and that a runty cow poorly fed means no profit?

What we need are cows that have been well fed and well developed, and that are able to make good use of large quantities of feed. We do not need to look for the cow that can subsist on a small ration. We need a machine that is capable of turning a large amount of food into milk every day. Find the cow, or the type of cow, that turns feed into milk, then give her lots of feed to work on.

Dairy Facts

Discover the star boarders in your herd and remove all doubt as to their ultimate fate by selling them to the butcher.

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The sire of all the calves in a dairy herd has too much influence on the owner's pocketbook to take any chances on its health.

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Remember that clean milk, properly cared for, is one of the best foods obtainable. It is nourishing, digestible, and usually economical.

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A bull in a clean pen where it can see the other cattle is less apt to worry and fret than the bull in the dark and dirty stall.

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"Dairy Barns for Nebraska" is the title of a new extension circular, No. 721, put out by the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The making of good dairy products depends primarily on cleanliness and proper pasture. It is just as important to secure these in a small plant as a large one and the plans given in this bulletin are especially prepared for the small breeder.

Persistency Won Throne.

Jane Seymour, who, as the third wife of Henry VII, was queen of England, had been lady in waiting for the two preceding wives of Henry—Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn. She married Henry the day after Anne Boleyn was executed. She died in October, 1537.

Cooking in Aluminum.

Aluminum conducts heat rapidly and stores it up in great quantities, so that after a pan is thoroughly heated any additional heat applied causes overheating. It is best, therefore, to turn down the gas flame one-half after the pan is thoroughly heated.

Test of Stage Skill.

In 1707 a celebrated trial of skill was held between England's two greatest actresses, Anne Oldfield and Anne Bracegirdle, both playing the same part on alternate nights. Mrs. Bracegirdle lost, and in disgust left the stage.

Quaint Theory.

Thomas Burnet, an Englishman, in 1681 wrote a book „"Sacred Theory of the Earth," to prove that the earth was originally like an egg, and that at the deluge the shell burst and the waters escaped.

Uncle Eben.

"Nearly all de folks dat knows enough to give good advice," said Uncle Eben, "is lawyers or doctors or somebody dat charges real money for it."—Washington Star.

Fickleness.

Fickleness has its rise in our experience of the fallaciousness of present pleasure and in our ignorance of the vanity of that which is absent.—Pascal.

Gentleness Wins.

Gentleness is far more successful in all its enterprises than violence; indeed, violence generally frustrates its own purpose, while gentleness scarcely ever fails.—Locke.

The Verb "To Woo?"

"The business girl finds a husband by the simple expedient of prosecuting her search where men conjugate."—From a Canadian Paper.

Compensation.

No man's feet can ever be made to look so neat as a fashionably shod girl's, but they are always happier.—Houston Post-Dispatch.

First Circus Press Agent.

Circus press agents were first known in this country in 1797 in connection with exploitation of the first elephant shown here.

Especially Gifted.

He only is happy as well as great who needs neither to obey nor command in order to be something.—Goethe.

Storms on Indian Ocean.

The Indian ocean is noted for the violent hurricanes which sweep over it with surprising suddenness and great force. They do immense damage to shipping and to seaports all along the southern coast of Asia.

Proportionate Values.

If gold were as plentiful as tin and tin were as rare as gold we'd be buying sardines in gold boxes and paying for them with tin, says the New York Telegraph.

World's Largest Lake.

The Caspian sea, between Asia and Europe, is the largest lake in the world. Its area is 160,000 square miles or more than four times the size of Lake Superior. Its water is salt.