

THE STAY-AT-HOME.

There's dress an' hood to buy f'r Jane,
A pair o' pants f'r John,
A whole outfit f'r Buster Bill,
An' winter's comin' on.
But baby Nan, the stay-at-home,
Jis laughs, an' never knows
That all on earth she has to wear
Is ole made-over clothes.

There's books to buy f'r them at school—
It makes a pore man sick
To hear 'em holler "joggafy"
An' "mental 'rithmetic."
But, thank the Lord! the stay-at-home
Is not so hard to please;
Jis gits the fam'ly almanac
An' reads it on her knees.

An' writin' books an' drawin' books—
They never seem to think
How much it costs to buy sich truck,
An' pencils, pens, an' ink.
But little Nan, the stay-at-home,
She knows her daddy's pore;
Jis gits a charcoal pen an' writes
Her lesson on the floor.

There's boots to buy f'r Buster Bill,
An' boots to buy f'r John,
An' shoes f'r Jane an' ma an' I,
Till all my money's gone.
So Nan, the last, the stay-at-home,
Is left to do without;
Jis wears her home-made moccasins,
An' crows, an' crawls about.

'Pears like that all I rake an' scrape
Wou't hardly satisfy
The pressin' needs o' Bill an' John
An' Jane an' ma an' I.
But baby Nan, the stay-at-home,
Is full o' sweet content;
Jis euddles up in daddy's arms
An' never wants a cent.
—Century.

THE MIDDY'S CAPTIVE

BLUBBERING won't do any good; you had better report the matter to Captain Wilson at once," said the navigating lieutenant of her majesty's ship *Triumph*, as he gazed quizzingly down at the chubby-faced midshipman who stood in such comical dismay before his superior officer. "Come with me; I'm going to his stateroom now," the speaker added, not unkindly, as he noted the lad's evident distress.

"I'm not blubbering, and I don't care if he does stop my leave!" indignantly responded the youngster, drawing himself up to his full height.

"What is it, Stuart?" inquired the captain, as the twain entered his cabin. "I merely wish to say that we are ready to get under way whenever you please, sir; but Robson has a report to make," said the lieutenant.

"Not sensible yet, I hope?" ejaculated Captain Wilson, ironically. "Well, I'm listening."

"Please, sir, it's the 'First Lord'; he's bolted! He ran off while we were shipping the soft tack—I mean the bread!" incoherently stammered Robson.

"The 'First Lord' bolted with the soft tack!" exclaimed Wilson in astonishment. "What does he mean, Stuart? Who's the 'First Lord'? Is the boy a raving maniac?"

Lieutenant Stuart had perforce to explain that the cadet, being in charge of a boat sent ashore to ship provisions, had lost one of his men—an able-bodied seaman answering to the name of West, but who was, by reason of his superior bearing, nicknamed by his companions "the First Lord of the Admiralty."

Charley Robson meekly endured the reproaches of his commander, who was a stern martinet, and made no allowance for youthful inexperience. "But at any rate," mused the young fellow, when he was at length dismissed, "he said nothing about stopping my furlough." And then his volatile spirits threw off the recent discomfiture as only youth knows how to, while his thoughts wandered far away to that pleasant country home in Surrey, with all its attendant attractions, from which he had been separated for one long year. And if among the dream faces conjured up there was one which eclipsed all others, the fact should not cause undue surprise.

The usual steps taken to secure the arrest of the deserter were of no avail. His description was circulated by the police throughout the country, and all the majesty of the law invoked to capture the runaway, but the man disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up. He was of a strangely reserved nature, mixed but little with his companions, and had evidently once occupied a far superior station in life.

There was one person, however, who did not forget the runaway. Robson often in imagination ran the scoundrel to earth.

Little did Charley Robson imagine as at the commencement of his long-deferred leave no lounged in a first-class smoker on his way to Guildford how soon, or under what strange circumstances he would meet the villain of his melodrama.

"And you have come home; Alice will be able to resume her interrupted country walks," said the mother of the youthful sailor next morning. "But of course," added she, addressing the girl, "Charley has not heard of your latest admirer. I don't know whether the girl's nerves are out of order," continued Mrs. Robson, "but she declares that a strange man has been following her about during the last few weeks although no one else has ever caught a glimpse of him."

"I shan't be afraid of any loafers while Charley is with me," responded the maiden. "In proof of which, he shall convey me for a walk now." And Alice Westerner buoyantly danced off to array herself for the proposed jaunt. The eyes of mother and son followed

the girl with a wistful look as she quitted the room.

"I suppose nothing has been heard of him?" queried the latter.

"No! Your father thinks there never will be. Doubtless Sir Richard died abroad, believing to the end that he was a murderer."

"And Allie is still ignorant of her father's sad history?" queried the lad.

"Yes. We have decided not to say anything to her until she is of age, unless some contingency should arise, such as your obtaining a sublieutenancy, and being of the same mind as you are now."

Robson colored at the hint delicately conveyed by his mother, and so well understood by himself. To see their only son mated to their ward was the dearest wish of Admiral and Mrs. Robson, yet they had the good sense to restrain the impetuosity of the youthful couple until both arrived at years of maturity.

II.
With the course of true love running thus smoothly, and the crisp, frozen ground under their feet, the twain started upon their ramble.

With buoyant steps they breasted the "Hog's Back," from which favorite vantage ground a splendid view of the surrounding country could be obtained.

"Yes, there's the dear old Towers," said Alice, "where I should be living now if the pater had not died."

"You've found another home," whispered Charley, "and other parents."

"I know that, dear," responded the girl. "But you cannot imagine what it feels like to have one's birthplace given over to ruin and decay, and to know one hasn't a single living relative. Only to think I cannot even visit my father's grave, because he died in some far-away outlandish place!" Then, with returning vivacity, she added: "Don't you remember that day in your school holidays when we walked over there and rambled through the disused rooms? How we thought there was a ghost in the hall, and ran all the three miles back home without once stopping!"

"I should just think I did," said the young officer. "You caught a chill through being overheated, and the governor said he would make a tailor of me for being such an idiot."

"You wouldn't be afraid now?" queried the girl.

"No fear!" laughed her companion. "Life on a man-of-war soon knocks all the fear of spooks out of a man."

"Let us pay another visit, then!" A sharp walk soon brought the twain to the rusty lodge-gates of Westerner Towers.

"How dreary it looks!" said the girl. "I wonder if that scullery window is still unfastened?"

Charley tried, and to his surprise the sash slipped up without difficulty. "It's a case of gentlemen first this time," said he, stepping through the aperture. "Come along, tomboy. If you're not careful you'll tear your dress. The window's no bigger than the lubber-hole of a brig."

The casement being negotiated in safety, together they wandered through the cobweb-festooned rooms of the once palatial residence. Ascending to a second story, Robson carelessly threw open a door of a room which faced the landing. Here an unexpected sight met their gaze. Sitting before a wood fire was an elderly man, contemplating the flames with a ruminant air. At the sound they made he turned his face toward them and started in alarm.

The next moment the youth was across the room and grappling with the stranger. "You villain!" he panted, "I've got you at last! Run, Allie, bring some one quickly! I can't hold him long; say he's a deserter from the navy."

The trembling limbs of the girl failed to carry out his behests as she stood fascinated, watching the unequal struggle, which was speedily ended. Youth and agility were no match for the sailor's sinewy arms, and in a short time Robson was ignominiously plumed against the wall.

With lowering brows and eyes, which boded no good to his captive, West stood staring at the lad as if undecided what to do with him. Then, catching sight of the pale face of Alice, who was petrified with horror upon recognizing in her companion's antagonist the man who had so persistently dogged her footsteps of late, his own features assumed a softer expression, and he muttered: "It is kismet!"

After a pause of breathless silence the ex-sailor, addressing his captive, said: "You are not so muscular as was your father in his youth, young fellow. The Charley Robson that I knew would never have allowed an old man to get the better of him; but let that pass and come to the crux of the matter. You want to arrest me for deserting from the navy. Very well, you shall, if you still wish to after hearing what I have to say."

Releasing the grip upon his would-be captor, the elder man, in a strange, cultured voice, addressed his auditors.

"Years ago," said he, "I was known and respected in this neighborhood, a man of substance, and a member of the diplomatic corps. Unfortunately, in my official capacity, I became embroiled in a quarrel with a political opponent, and, as was more common even fifteen years ago, the result was I had no alternative between fighting a duel or being dishonored."

"Not to make a long story, my adversary and our seconds journeyed to Guildford with me late one night, intending to settle our differences at day-break, on the following morning. With the courtesy that such affairs demanded, I offered the whole party hospitality for the night."

"From the moment my head touched the pillow until I was awakened the next morning my mind was an entire blank, but judge of my horror when,

essaying to rise, I found the bedclothes dabbled with blood, and at the foot of my couch a gory hunting knife belonging to myself. Simultaneous with my horrible discovery the servant found the man I was to have fought lying foully murdered.

"Although conscious of my innocence, I dared not face the inquiry which was sure to follow, as who would believe my own theory of the matter, which was simply that I committed the terrible act in my sleep, as from childhood I had been subject to attacks of somnambulism. Hastily caressing my infant daughter, the only pledge left me by my departed wife, I left the house like a felon and fled the country, and it was hunger for a glimpse of my dear child's face that has worked my undoing. My faithful secretary convolved at my escape, and subsequently sent me the news of the charge of the willful murder against Sir Richard Westerner. Yes. You will be able to deliver up to justice a more important person than the deserter West. My devoted retainer Burton, who assisted me at such great risks to himself, is not here to help me now. He is dead."

"He was a villain, Sir Richard!" cried Robson, in wild excitement. "It was he himself who killed Lord Marcus, and artfully foisted the blame upon you in order that you should not discover his defalcations. My father possesses his dying confession to that effect."

The sudden revulsion of feeling was almost too much for the baronet. Tottering to the nearest chair, he buried his face in his toll-worn hands. Silence reigned in the room for a few intense moments. Then Sir Richard, feeling a gentle hand upon his shoulder, looked up into a sweet but still scarred face and two half-frightened gray eyes.

"Daddy, dear," Charley heard a tremulous voice murmur softly as he stole from the room. . . .

Powerful friends at the admiralty soon glossed over the delinquencies of the seaman West, and Sir Richard Westerner once more assumed his proper rank and station. As time wore on, and the vividness of his past misery faded, he could even afford to joke about the matter; and sometimes, upon the rare occasions that he saw a certain young officer, would, much to the amusement of his daughter, simulate extreme terror and cry in affected dismay: "He has come for me at last!"

When some few years later a very excited youth, with a golden circlet upon the arm of his new uniform coat, burst unceremoniously into the room, he was greeted by the same old joke, and in response blushing replied: "I'll let you off this time if you will give me Alice as a hostage." And as the girl seemed to be a willing sacrifice, Sir Richard gave them his blessing.

THE YOUNGEST DEPOSITOR.

Flaxen-Haired Girl to Whom Someone Is Always Kind.

Once every month, in the long line of men and women that forms in front of the teller's window on "open day" at the Union Dime Savings-Bank, a flaxen head appears—at the height of their elbows. Looking down, one sees that close against the breast of a shabby frock is tightly clasped a bank-book—and then, says the New York World, the secret is out. The flaxen-haired little girl is the bank's and New York's youngest depositor.

Alice Metz is her name, and her home is close by Hell's Kitchen. She is barely eight years old. How she gets the money nobody knows, but each month there is a deposit of fifty cents to swell her account, which has now reached the sum of three dollars. There she stands patiently in line till some one less hurried and preoccupied than the rest bends to question her.

"Will you help me?" asks the little maid, breathlessly. "I have fifty cents—two quarters. Johnny got it changed for me; there were five before. And I want to put it in there," pointing to the window, "and they write it down here in the book," finding the row of figures. "But I don't know how by myself. Will you do it? O yes, I can put down my own name, 'cause I couldn't bring my money till I learned to do that."

She is so engaging in her pretty youthfulness that men or women, as the case may be, forthwith fill out the deposit blank. Alice laboriously inserts her name, and is in a state of ecstasy when she is lifted up to give in those precious quarters.

Her December helper was a woman. When the ceremony was over it was already dark.

"Where do you go now, little one?" she said, fearing for the child's safety. "Oh, Johnny's waiting across the road," replied the little depositor.

So they traveled in company, and sure enough there was Johnny, sturdy and fat, one year older than his small charge.

"It's in!" Alice cried, gleefully. "The lady did it! She's ever so good!"

"Somebody's always good to you, I guess," was Johnny's comprehensive reply. "But did you count?" and together the two heads bent over the column. Over and over they counted.

"Three dollars, that's it," concluded Johnny, at last, with a sigh of relief. "It's in for keeps, Allie."

She clutched the book once more to her bosom, and hand in hand the two trotted off into the darkness.

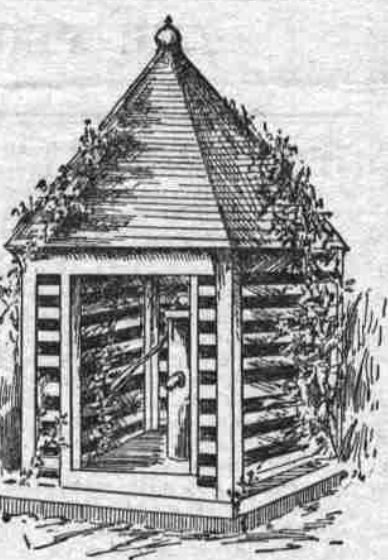
New English Dictionary.
Dr. Murray expects to have more than half of the new English dictionary published by the end of the century—up to the middle of the letter L.

Half the people in the world are unhappy because they can't afford the things that make the other half miserable.



Attractive Well House.

Few realize the amount of heat that goes down into a well of water through the platform that surrounds the pump. It can be partially realized by going up into a close attic under the roof some hot day. As a matter of fact, closed air spaces beneath boarding that is exposed to the bright sun become fearfully heated, and in the case of wells this heat is soon transmitted to the water. A double platform with an air space between will help greatly, but best of all is a summer house, or regular closed well house, built over the platform, and this in turn covered with vines. Not only will such a little house serve an excellent purpose in keeping the well cool, but it will be an ornament to the place as well, and, as a "summer house," may be a most agreeable place to spend an hour on a hot day. Woodbine is one of the best vines to use in covering such a house, as it provides abundant shade very quickly and is hardy even in the coldest climates. A few little things like this done about the farm each year will soon greatly improve the looks of the farm surroundings, and will decidedly increase the comforts of farm life. A suggestion for such a house is given herewith.



HOUSE OVER THE WELL.

Country places are much improved by entrance posts of cobble stones, but to be attractive these must be laid up with great exactness. Excavate to the frost line, and set up in the square excavation a box-like structure of boards, one side coming only to the surface. Fill in to the top of the ground with loose rock and soft cement—soft enough to run into all the crevices between the stones. From the ground up the stones should be laid up carefully in cement, the sides of the box permitting the stones to be pushed out to make an exactly even surface. When the top is reached the three boards can be sawed off at the surface of the ground, leaving the bottom of the pier encased, which will keep the frost from getting any lifting power on the stones. It will lift the boards rather than the stones. When the boards are removed from the portion above ground, carefully dig out the loose cement from between the faces of the stones.—New England Homestead.

Cutting Potatoes Made Easy.

The preparation of no farm seed causes more trouble than that of the potato crop. It is a slow, tedious task and must be done by hand. This is usually done by placing the potato upon a board and cutting it in the size desired. Now this task may be greatly alleviated by the use of a device that is not new. It is simplicity itself, consisting only of a plank, a ten or twelve inches in width and two feet in length, and a knife, b, driven in one end equally distant from either side. This is placed upon a box, or stool, and the operator sits astride it. At his right is placed a basket, c, containing the whole potatoes, and in front, just under the knife, is another basket, d, to receive them when cut. The potatoes are cut by being pressed against the knife, one at a time. At the first person cutting them need exercise a little care to prevent his fingers being cut,



FOR CUTTING POTATOES.

but with a little practice there will be no danger, and he can cut an amount of potatoes in an hour that would be impossible for him to cut in twice that time in the old way.—A. R. B., in American Agriculturist.

How to Set a Hen.

Very few people know how to set a hen properly. In the first place, remember that you can't make her set if she doesn't want to. Cut a barrel in two in the middle; then cut out one or two staves, so that when it is stood on its end there will be plenty of room for the hen to pass in and out. Place the barrel on the ground, with the headed end up, and then scoop out the earth to a concave shape and put in a very little fine hay, and the nest is ready for the eggs. If it is not convenient to put the barrel on the ground, a grass sod placed underneath the nest will answer. It is best to place the hen on a few glass or worthless eggs at first, as she may not take kindly to the nest you have prepared for her. Place her on the nest after dark and she will get accustomed to it through the night. If she seems inclined to set after this, she may be given the eggs which are intended to be hatched. If the hen is allowed to leave her nest every day a small coop may be placed in front of the barrel, and then she will be sure to return to nest. She should always have plenty of food. If the above directions are followed and the eggs are well fertilized, a good brood of chickens may be expected.—EX.

Repelling Borers.
One gallow of coal tar, two pounds beeswax and two pounds tallow melted and mixed with flour of sulphur and air slacked lime to make it the consistency of paste. This mixture is to be spread on strips of burlap and wrapped around trunk of tree about two or three inches under surface of ground and about same distance above ground.

from end of lath; make the bottom from a 1-inch board sawed circular, 16 inches in diameter, and fasten to the end of the laths with nails. Bore several holes in this bottom. Make a ball from a strong piece of wire and fasten to top hoop. Suspend by a rope passing through pulley overhead. When filled with potatoes it can be easily raised and lowered into a 50-gallon kerosene barrel containing the solution. Raise from the barrel and allow to drain for a short time, when they can be emptied into the potato boxes. By this method none of the solution is wasted, and it is a short cut compared with the old way of treading a sack over the barrel and drying the solution from the potatoes.

Woodchopping in Spring.
It is too hard work to do much chopping after warm weather comes, while in zero weather the exercise of swinging the ax and bringing down the tree is rather a delight than otherwise. But after the sap starts in the trees it is easier to chop or split them than in midwinter. A very knotty and tough tree may therefore be left standing until nature has filled it full of sap, though the wood will dry out slowly. If beech wood is cut while full of sap it must be kept under shelter, for if exposed to rains water will soak in as fast as the sap dries out. Spring is the worst time of year to cut wood and have it kept wet, and the abundance of sap it contains is probably the reason. Most timber will keep best if cut in July or August while the tree is in leaf. The leaves continue to evaporate moisture after the tree is down, and this soon makes the wood dry.

Outdoor Nests.
Of course in winter nests are made in the henhouse. Hens are not apt to be broody in cold weather, and the short time the hen is laying her daily egg does not cause vermin to breed in it. But so soon as warm days tempt the fowls out of doors they should be encouraged to nest outside. About this time too fowls will become broody, and if allowed to nest in the henhouse they will inevitably fill it with vermin. If the outdoor nest is made on the ground the moisture arising from the soil will keep the shell in good condition for the chick when hatched to pick its way through. Most hens if allowed any range will steal their nests, and generally bring off a larger hatch of chicks than those for which the poultry keeper has carefully set the eggs.

Building Stone Piers.
Country places are much improved by entrance posts of cobble stones, but to be attractive these must be laid up with great exactness. Excavate to the frost line, and set up in the square excavation a box-like structure of boards, one side coming only to the surface. Fill in to the top of the ground with loose rock and soft cement—soft enough to run into all the crevices between the stones. From the ground up the stones should be laid up carefully in cement, the sides of the box permitting the stones to be pushed out to make an exactly even surface. When the top is reached the three boards can be sawed off at the surface of the ground, leaving the bottom of the pier encased, which will keep the frost from getting any lifting power on the stones. It will lift the boards rather than the stones. When the boards are removed from the portion above ground, carefully dig out the loose cement from between the faces of the stones.—New England Homestead.

Grafting Young Orchards.
It sometimes happens that the farmer finds even before his orchard gets to bearing that a large part of the trees are of varieties that will not give him much profit. Grafting to better sorts is a very laborious and expensive process if the trees have grown to nearly bearing size, because so many grafts must be set to make an even head. A few sprouts may be left below the grafts to draw the sap, but they must be cut away as soon as the grafts get to growing. A better way is to take a few years to do the grafting, putting in two or three grafts each spring, until the entire head is changed. So much cutting away of the top wood will cause many sprouts to start. These must be destroyed as fast as they appear, rubbing them off while the green shoot can be removed with the thumb and finger.

Outmeal for Young Chickens.
Laying hens cannot profitably be fed with whole oats because they have too large a proportion of hull and are too chaffy to digest well. But oat meal that has had its hull sifted out of it and has been mixed with pressed curd milk makes an excellent feed for young chickens. Another good way to feed oat meal is to mix with water and bake it, breaking the hard pieces small enough so that the chicks can swallow them. These feeds supply all that is needed to make chickens grow thriftily, and there will be few sickly chickens if oatmeal prepared in either way is made a part of their diet. If variety is needed feed some whole wheat or rye. Whole grain or meal which has been baked until it is hard is better than any soft food for fowls at any age.

Deaf and Dumb Beggar (at unexpectedly receiving sixpence)—Oh, thankee, sir! Benevolent Passer—Eh? What does this mean, sir? You can talk Deaf and Dumb Beggar (in confusion)—Y-e-s, sir. Ye see, sir, I'm only mind in' this corner for th' poor deaf and dumb man vrot belongs here. Benevolent Passer (quickly)—Where is he? Deaf and Dumb Beggar (in worse confusion)—He's gone to th' park 't heat the music.—Tit-Bits.

Bell—What do you suppose the fat girl in the avenue candy store weighs? Nell—Candy—Exchange.



On July 1, 1898, when the battle at El Caney was hottest, a curious commotion among the Spanish soldiers was visible in one of the trenches which defended the town. Toward the middle of the day the watching American soldiers on the nearest line saw a half-grown pig come running out of a low thatched building inside the Spanish trenches, and, rounding a corner of the ditch, take to flight outside the trenches in the direction of the American position.

Evidently he had been lodged under the thatched-roofed house just behind the trench, in the free-and-easy domestic manner in which Cuban pigs are generally taken care of. A bullet or a shell had invaded his retreat, shattered his inclosure, set him free and scared him almost to death at the same time.

The Spanish soldiers ceased their firing as the pig escaped, and there was commotion among them. Presently this commotion resolved itself into a rush of several soldiers out of the trench and in the direction of the pig.



CAPTURING THE RUNAWAY.

Soon there were fifteen of them out in the open, in the full sweep of the American fire.

Some of them ran to head off the pig and others pushed up behind to catch him. The pig wheeled and dodged, and the soldiers wheeled and dodged after him. Their voices rose in chorus of Spanish shouts. Up and down went the pig; when a soldier's hands were on him he would make a twist and wriggle himself away.

Once he made a long straight run toward the American lines; it did not help him, for the soldiers were after him, entirely unregarding the battle. Some of them headed him off again, and in another moment an athletic young soldier had seized first his tail and then his legs. Still another moment and the pig, firmly held, was on his way back to the trenches, riding on the shoulder of this young man, his forelegs gripped by one hand and his hind legs by the other.

The soldiers resumed their places in the trench; the one who had the pig put him back into the thatched roof building, and presently returned to his own place and took up his gun.

It is safe to say that during the chase of the pig no American soldier who saw the affair discharged his gun at the goup. The Americans who saw it were too full of admiration and astonishment to add to the dangers which the audacious Spaniards were under; but thousands of Americans who could not see the incident were blazing away in that direction, and the Spaniards who were chasing the pig must have heard a great many bullets whistling about their heads during their performance.

Highly Appreciated.
An old Latin saying, Laudant quod non intelligunt (They praise what they do not understand), was once illustrated by an English tourist who happened into the Lutheran church at Elsinore one Sunday morning. The tourist did not know a word of the Danish language, but he wrote, "The clergyman had a quiet earnestness of manner and a persuasive eloquence that pleased and attracted. I admired the discourse, although I did not understand a word of it!" The book from which we have copied this illustration of a common practice tells the following amusing story of a Dutch audience listening to one of Shakespeare's plays:

I will tell you, such is de powers of de Shakespeare, that I vunce saw a play de great man acted in English, in Holland, where der vas not vun person in all de house but myself could understand it; yet dere vas not a person in all dat house but vat vas in tears, dat is, all crying, blowing de nose, and veep very mouch; couldn't understand vun vurd of de play, yet all weeping. Such vas de powers of de Shakespeare!

Deaf and Dumb Beggar (at unexpectedly receiving sixpence)—Oh, thankee, sir! Benevolent Passer—Eh? What does this mean, sir? You can talk Deaf and Dumb Beggar (in confusion)—Y-e-s, sir. Ye see, sir, I'm only mind in' this corner for th' poor deaf and dumb man vrot belongs here. Benevolent Passer (quickly)—Where is he? Deaf and Dumb Beggar (in worse confusion)—He's gone to th' park 't heat the music.—Tit-Bits.

Bell—What do you suppose the fat girl in the avenue candy store weighs? Nell—Candy—Exchange.