

Farm and Garden.

Spare Leaves.

Not a sound the old leaves utter
As they swirl and swoop and flutter
From the branches to the gutter.
From their glory to their shame;
As they die before their fellow
Leaves have donned their red and yellow.

Ere the autumn's fashions mellow
Into flame.

Yet they catch my spirit trying
To interpret their replying
To the sympathetic sighing
Of the breezes from the West—
"We have garished London's lean-
ness."

With a tiny spot of greenness,
We have touched man's sordid mean-
ness.

With God's best.

So these leaves of nightly musing
For a stem my heart are using
Till they fall to meet the bruising
Of the traffic rushing by;
Yet perchance their shadows, waving
Over the heartless city paving
Yield the hope some soul is craving
Ere they die.

—London Daily News.

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CURIOUS HOTEL CUSTOMS.

Where Every Cuss Word Costs a Penny.

A curious custom prevails at an Edinburgh hotel, says Tit-Bits. Whenever a customer is heard to swear he is required to place a penny in a box on the bar counter. It is not a matter for surprise that the landlord hears much less bad language than some of his fellow publicans in the capital of Scotland.

The following is a quaint idea for providing funds for picnics and social evenings. It is carried on with much success at an Ashton-on-Mersey inn: A "knocking club" is connected with the inn, and when a customer calls for refreshments he is expected to knock on the table or counter before drinking. If he fails to do this he is fined one penny. Anyone who wrongfully accuses another of breaking this unique rule is also fined. The money thus obtained provides funds for many enjoyable outings and pleasant evenings during the course of the year.

At another hotel, known as the Old Hundred, customers are allowed only one drink. If one is not sufficient to quench their thirst they are obliged to go out of the hotel and take a walk before they are allowed to have another.

Till recently the proprietor of an old-time hotel in Warwickshire used to invite all his customers to accompany him and his wife to the service at the parish church on Sunday mornings, which was situated on the opposite side of the road, the house being closed while they were away. On returning each customer was invited to partake of refreshments offered by the hospitable landlord free of charge.

Visitors to a certain hotel in Aberdeenshire who wear brown boots must remember to keep them in their room over night. Otherwise the boots will be blacked, regardless of the original color of the same. In one of the rooms of a Dumfriesshire public house is an old armchair which is said to have been frequently used by the poet Burns.

A DRAGON HUNT.

It Took Place in Turkey and Was a Great Success.

"Yes, I wunst hunted dragons, and the hunt was successful, too," said a sailor.

"It was on Eyoub, the native quarter of old Constantinople. I lived there with my wife, a Circassian gal, Fatmah by name, and comin' home from the calf one night."

"Sure! Calf. Don't you know what a calf is? Kind of restaurant where you eat and drink and smoke. But where was it?"

"You were coming home."

"Well, as we come home from the calf Fatmah grabbed my arm, pointed to the moon and gave a loud yell. The full moon behind the domes and minarets was goin' into an eclipse. I laughed, but Fatmah says:

"A dragon, O my beloved," she says, "is tryin' to devour the moon!" she says. "If the faithful say it not, there will be no more moonlight," says she "never!"

"Then, by tar, begun the biggest racket I ever hear. All Eyoub was on a dragon hunt. From every housetop the faithful fired blunderbusses at the moon in the hope of killin' the dragon."

"When we got home I tried to explain to Fatmah what an eclipse was, but she thought I was laughin' at her. So I gave up my explanations, and, with a pistol, each of us joined in the hunt, bangin' away at the dragon from the window turn and about."

"By crissus, we got him! The hunt was a success! The dead dragon dropped off the moon, and she floated, round and silvery wunst more, above the palms and minarets standin' black agin the pale sky."

"Fatmah claimed it was her shot that landed him, but I was always convinced it was my own."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

A SCREAM.

Song writer—Heard my latest lingering tilt, old man? It's making the horrid kind of a hit with the girls. Vaudeville—What's it surmamed?

Song writer—"How'd You Like to Be the Blarney Stone?"—Puck.

THE EFFECTS OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

A lady whose voice was quite mellow attracted to her a nice fellow,
Till one day a cow
She thought raised a row.
For her fellow she yelled with a bel-
low.

A LONG-LENT WALT.

"I had a half-raising experience this morning," said the doctor.
"Wish I could bump up against something like that," said the bald-headed druggist.—Chicago News.

WHAT MA SAID.

Little Girl (to lady visitor)—Please, Miss J. J. let me see your tongue.
Miss J. (surprised)—Why, my dear?
Little Girl—Why, ma said you'd no end of a tongue.—London Sketch.

FRESH REPORTER.

"Yes," said Stormington Barnes, "I love the stage. I am bound to it by many ties, as it were."
"Railroad ties?" queried the fresh reporter.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

WORSE AND MORE OF IT.

Grumbell—Most women have but one idea, and that's dress.
Jenks—Huh! My wife has about a dozen ideas on all that subject.—Houston Post.

DOING IT THOROUGHLY.

Hixon—Hello, old chap! You're looking well this morning.
Dixon—You bet I am! I'm looking for a man who owes me \$10.—Chicago News.

LIFE.

Life's a poker game at best.
The cards are dealt and none can stay 'em;
It's up to you to do the rest,
Buck in and play 'em.—Detroit Free Press.

A Captured Thanksgiving Dinner

Pretty Mercy Standwell drew out the end of the huge iron crane almost as high as herself—and peered into the pot which it had brought from the blaze with a pretty, plump hand. Some one had to stay at home to look after things, and this morning Mercy had insisted on the others going to meeting and leaving her to this task, and she had been utilizing the three hours of the long sermon in adding to the stock of food. There were a goodly number of home folks and guests, and no one knew how many her father and mother would bring from the service.

"So, ho, mistress," came a deep, mocking voice; "ye have been preparing for our coming, it seems. Beshrew me, but the odds are good. What say ye, boys," turning to a line of piratical, sailor-looking men who were following him into the room. "Shall we sit for a while and let this fair wench minister to our appetites? 'Twill be a difference from our blackamoors' cooking, I am thinking."

A hoarse growl of assent came from the line—from all but one, who looked doubtful.

"Will it be safe, captain?" this one asked.

"Safe!" the deep voice echoed grimly. "What have we with a land word like that? Besides, it sounds weak in thy big mouth, Turbell. It is their Thanksgiving time here, and they would long to see us. Let us be thankful, too, and partake of their good cheer. We shall then be fitted, when they return from service, to pick out good men and true for our vessel. And for thy word safe, the soldiers are at their gorging a mile away from here. We can eat and be merry, call our need from the praise singers when they come back, and be dipping across the water before news of the exploit can get over the loaded tables to their ears. Now, Turbell," his keen, scornful eyes flashing about and seeming to see and comprehend everything; "get all the men inside. You fill up the table here and I will take charge of the one in the next room. It will be time enough to bag chickens and pigs and other live stock when we are through; and perhaps there will be a few scraps left from our feast that we can carry back to the vessel. It will be a change from the blackamoors."

All this time Mercy had been standing by the fireplace, and her eyes, which had at first dilated with terror, gradually calmed and grew watchful and speculative. She had thought they might be king's men, on a raid to impress some. Now she believed they were buccaners, or pirates; but it amounted to the same. The one impressed in the king's name, the other in their own. In either case the possibility of release or escape were equally small; only, with the pirates, in the event of capture, explanations might be difficult, and then punishment would be quick and certain.

As she hurried from table to table, trying to meet the demands for hot coffee which were hurled at her from all sides, the lips of the young girl were pressed firm, her brain busy. Something must be done, and she was the one who must do it. In another hour the fathers and brothers and uncles and cousins, and all the men in the neighborhood would be coming from service, and, unwarned, would fall into the hands of these evil-eyed freebooters, who would pick out the strongest among them and bear them away to slavery that would be worse than death.

Mercy knew what it meant. The coast was an exposed one, and press-gangs had visited it before. Men had been carried away and not one of them had ever returned. Occasionally stories had come back of hardships and cruelty and even of death, until the word press-gang had become a word to whiten the cheeks of women and clinch the fists of the men. Only the year before the son of their nearest neighbor, the most promising young man around, and the playmate and dear friend of Mercy, had gone out in a boat for a day's fishing. But he had rowed too far. A schooner had slipped from behind an island, a boat had been dropped from her davits filled with dark-faced men. Mercy had been on the shore with others and had witnessed it all. And from that day to this no tidings had come back of Robert Wade.

Mercy was thinking of her playmate as she tried to keep the cups of the men filled, and of the similar fate that was pending over her dear ones. And doubtless there would be bloodshed, for the dear ones would resist to the last.

For the most part the men ate noisily, with loud guffaws of enjoyment and rude badinage. The viands were before them, and they helped themselves liberally, with long reachings. It was only the cups that needed replenishing; but the men seemed to throw the contents down their throats at a single gulp, and then cried lustily for more.

Four times the big pot was refilled and emptied, fresh coffee being added with each refilling. But the men's impatience would not allow for boiling, and when hot water was poured in for the fifth time Mercy had an uneasy apprehension that the coffee was very weak.

Suddenly a cup flew across the room, crashing against a looking glass and breaking them both.

"To blazes with dish-water," a man yelled. "Here, girl, what ye got that's good to drink—strong?"

"Nothing, sir," answered Mercy, keeping her voice steady with an effort.

"No wine or cider?" threateningly.

"No. The only barrel of cider that we had is too strong to drink."

"What's the matter with that?" he asked, peering into the pot.

"Father made it for us to drink," mockingly. "And vinegar is just right. Bring in a pitcherful, quick!"

"It is out in the barn."

"Quick! Didn't I tell ye!" yelled the man. "We don't want any palaver."

Mercy caught up a large pitcher and hurried out, an eager light coming into her eyes. If she was to do anything, she must do it now. But what?

As was often the case in rural communities, the Standwell young people had some little interest in the farm. Mercy owned a calf and a few of the chickens and a field which she sometimes gave to crops and sometimes left it in grass for hay. The last season it had been in grass, and her seven or eight tons of hay now rose in a large stack on the slope below the barn, where it awaited a purchaser. With the proceeds she expected to buy from her father, some English dress goods from the store, and some presents for the various members of the family.

When she left her house her mind was on the stack, and her face cleared of some of its anxiety when she noticed that the wind blew away from the barn.

"Ye was a long time drawin'," grumbled the man who wanted his vinegar, surlily, as she came to him with the pitcher.

Vinegar runs slow when the bung is small," she answered, "and, besides, the pitcher is heavy."

"Lay steps lag," he retorted. "Ye'd ought to be a boy, and on ship-board."

Ten minutes later the captain leaned back, wiping his mouth on the back of his hand.

"Now, what do ye give us for the finish?" he called to Mercy. "Have ye cake and other sweet stuff?"

"Yes, sir, many kinds; and pies and things fit for a Thanksgiving."

"Well, bring them all on. But what's that smoke?" suddenly, and springing to his feet, he rushed outside, drawing his sword. When he came back a few minutes later, his eyes were red and angry.

"Didn't I tell you men to be careful until we had eaten?" he cried. "Some of ye have dropped fire in lighting a pipe, and the dry grass is burning below the barn. If it spreads, the barn itself may catch, and then some of the torpid soldiers may be wakeful enough to see. Hurry, now, and get through. The press-gangs will be here soon, and we must be ready to invite them on board. Your carelessness will lose us part of the feast. Come, now, girl; bring on the sweet things, quick! quick!"

Mercy ran to the storeroom, returning a few minutes later with her arms straining under a pyramid of pies. These she hurried along the table, dropping one before each man. Then she ran back after more. Oh, if she could only keep the men feasting until the soldiers arrived—and even more than that, if only the men in the meeting house would be slow in discovering the smoke, so the soldiers could arrive as soon as they. All of them would believe it was a raid, with buildings being set on fire, and would come hurrying to the spot. Fortunately the freebooting captain himself did not suspect. He had gone just far enough to see it was not the barn, and then the feasting had tempted him back. He supposed the fire to be grass burning in some field beyond.

He did not seat himself again in his chair, but stood by the table, taking huge mouthfuls of cake and pie, and swallowing glass after glass of the fresh buttermilk that Mercy brought in. Presently he swung around.

"Turbell," he called to the next room, "take all your men and gather up what food ye can find in the house. Go into the storeroom where the wench keeps her cakes and pies. Take everything, and all we are leaving on the tables. We will have a few days' rest from the blackamoors. Hurry, now, and get them to the boats. In case anything might happen; then come back. We will stay here and watch. The praise-makers will be here soon."

Ten minutes and the house had been stripped of its food; five more, and there was the sound of voices.

"Stand by the doors," ordered the captain. "When they get close, spring out on them. Better club every one into insensibility; they will be easier carried."

"The soldiery," he warned in a hoarse whisper. "They're almost here. What—"

But the captain was by him with a look. The men tumbled after. One took was sufficient. The soldiers were approaching at a run.

"To the boats!" yelled the captain. "They're too many for us, and ye know our fate if captured. Where is Wade? Not here? Then Turbell must have taken him. Run, now! run!"

When the soldiers came up panting, the last of the buccaners were tumbling into their boats on the beach. The soldiers fired a volley to accelerate their movements. As the echoes died away a faint, disheveled figure crept from under the Standwell porch. Its eyes were big and hollow, and there were scars of ill-usage and cruelty upon the face, and one arm was in a sling. The people coming from the meeting house stared incredulously, then united in a ringing, welcoming, joyous shout of "Robert Wade! Robert Wade!"—Frank H. Sweet, in The Advance.

Won \$160,000 at One Sitting.
Mention of Lord Rosslyn and his "infallible" system reminds one that Viscount Villiers, who has just married Lady Cynthia Needham, has shown a fondness for Monte Carlo gambling tables. And although he possesses no particular system he has proved one of the biggest winners of recent years. Some two years ago he made a most sensational coup, and won \$32,000 at one sitting.—Tit Bits.

But It Was All Right.
The poor but proud duke decided to

play a safe game, so instead of bearding the dear girl's father in his lair he wrote as follows: "I want your daughter—the flower of your family."