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CHRISTMAS ON THE FARM.

By MYRTA CHAMKERLIN.

Uncle Josiah Swilkins and Amanda Jane, his wife, had lived together forty years—a peaceful, happy life. They owned a farm near Jonesburg, located on the pike, and had no child to leave it to, excepting Oliver Ike.

Josiah's farm was the richest for many miles around. While Mandy's "dairy product" was the best that came to town; Their horses, cattle, sheep and hogs were of the highest grade; Their fields grew the finest harvests, their trees the deepest shade.

Twas Monday before Christmas that Amanda Jane began To arrange for a Christmas dinner, according to her plan; So she said to her Josiah: "The holidays draw near, And I'd like to go to Jonesburg to buy some things, my dear."

So they loaded in some turkeys, and geese, and chickens, too, And butter, and eggs, and spare ribs, and stocking yarn, white and blue;

Then hitched the big gray horse to the bobsled painted brown. And, with parting words to Oliver Ike, soon hurried off to town.

The Jonesburg clerks were courteous and received them with a smile,

And soon exchanged their products for an enormous pile Of luxuries of every kind that the season might demand,

And they were soon in the sleigh again, with rein and whip in hand.

When Amanda Jane to her nephew called—he was working in the store—

"Come out to Christmas dinner, James, and bring a dozen more; Just ask a lot of boys and girls, your ma and sister Sue,

For Oliver Ike will be 'pecting you, and me, and Josiah, too."

So Christmas morning at the farm found them ready for the day, For Amanda Jane and Josiah had faithfully worked away;

And when the folks began to come, there seemed to be no end Of young and old and middle-aged, who came that day to spend.

There was Kesiah Smithkins Sykes and Deborah Susan Spear, Who had known Josiah and Mandy for more than forty years;

And Pelig Bedot and the Haines girls and Uncle Ephraim Snooks And Eliam Bly and Samanthany Banes and all their little folks

While in the load of young folks came Alexander Payne, Si Belkins and Jim Crippen, and Henry and Isaac Crane,

Besides some stylish clerks, who worked with Jeems in Meister's store.

And Rube and Garry Updyke, young Lehman and some more, And Ruth and Desire Cornstalk and Jane and Abigail Drew,

Euphemia Starks and Debby Stiles and Lize and Joe and Sue,

And several that were strangers, with a violin or two.

To make the time pass pleasantly, and for entertainment, too.

Who can describe that dinner and the subject fairly treat,

For there was nothing lacking that was good to drink or eat;

And for two full hours they sat there as each course before them passed.

And expressed their full approval of each from first to last.

Such roast goose, duck and turkey, and mince and pumpkin pies,

With quince and apply jelly, and plum pudding a full supply,

And Jersey sweet potatoes and olives and celery and fish,

With raws and stews and oyster pie as fine as neart could wish.

And the lively scene that followed in that grand old dining hall,

The music and the dancing so happily joined by all,

Will never be forgotten, but re-created o'er and o'er.

On each returning Christmas day till time shall be no more

You may talk about the Christmas time in gilded palace walls,

Or describe a gorgeous masquerade within some brilliant hall;

These cannot be compared at all; they have no equal charm,

To give the satisfaction of a "Christmas on the Farm."

STRETCH YOURSELF.

Do It the First Thing After You Wake In the Morning.

A splendid thing for the body is stretching. When you first wake up in the morning, take a good, long stretch. Stretch the hands as far out sideways as possible. Then stretch them over the head as far as you can reach, and at the same time stretch the feet downward as far as you can. Raise the feet and stretch upward just as high as you can, and then lower the feet and legs very slowly.

When you get out of bed, raise your arms over your head, and, standing on tiptoe, see how near you can reach the ceiling. Then walk about the room while in this position. Stand on the right foot and stretch the right arm forward and upward as high as you can, while at the same time the left foot is raised from the floor and stretched outward, and the left hand is stretched backward and downward. This is a fine exercise for the whole body and is especially good for the waist and hips, making them firm and strong. Standing on the left foot this exercise can be reversed.

If you have been sitting in the same position for a long time reading, studying, writing or sewing and the muscles have become tired and cramped, the best thing to do is to get up and stretch. Stretch the arms upward and outward and forward and backward. Lift the shoulders as high as you can and drop them. Expand the chest and breathe deeply, or, sitting in the chair, stretch the hands upward, lift the feet from the floor and stretch them forward as far as possible, any way so you give the muscles a good, vigorous stretch.

When one is very tired, there is nothing more restful than stretching the muscles and then relaxing.

Illuminating Gas.

In the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London for 1739 is printed a letter, written in 1691, in which the Rev. John Clayton details a series of experiments he made in distilling coal in a retort, showing not only that he had observed the inflammable gases evolved, but that he had collected and stored them for some time in bladders. In 1787 Lord Dundonald made gas from coal, with which he lighted the hall of Culross abbey. In 1792 Robert Murdoch began the experiments which resulted in the establishment of coal gas as an illuminating agent. In 1797 he publicly showed the system he had matured, and in 1798, being employed in the factory of Boulton & Watt, Birmingham, he fitted up an apparatus for the manufacture of gas in that establishment, with which it was lighted. This was the first use of illuminating gas except by way of experiment.



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Don't Speak to Your Horse.

Caress must promptly reward performance and the voice be never used—the horse does not understand your words, and if you are angry your tones will only further disconcert him—while if you are eternally talking to him you simply render him careless and inattentive. Caress the spot you have just addressed nor think that he understands a pat on the neck as reward for something he has just done with his hind quarters. Go direct to the spot, and where two parts have been addressed caress them both, as in backing, the hind quarters and the sides where the legs came, etc.—and do the same thing in biting. Do not pat the neck if you asked him to yield his jaw. "Don't reward your daughter for your son's successful geography lesson"—that is the idea in a nutshell.—From "Directing the Saddle Horse," by F. M. Ware, in *Outing Magazine*.

WONDERFUL MOVING VINE.

One of the Most Interesting of All Phenomena on Record.

Near the bank of the Guadalupe river I saw something green upon the ground and, hurrying forward, found a lovely vine with leaves smaller than those of the smilax, of a pale, tender green. The vine had its root about five feet from the trunk of a towering cottonwood tree and spread out on the ground four or five inches wide, becoming a little narrower as it approached the tree. I could see no stems or tendrils, so thick was the growth, and as I drew close to the tree I saw that the vine branched just above the ground and went climbing up the great trunk and the branches. It grew more and more slender until far up I could distinguish only a threadlike line of green.

As I stood intently watching the delicate, graceful vine, I became aware that it was pervaded by a curious, tremulous motion. Then I saw that the individual leaves were not stationary. Picking up a twig from the ground, I touched one of the leaves and found to my amazement that there was a brown ant under it about as long as my little finger nail. Each leaf was held in the mandibles of an ant in such way as to conceal the body of the insect, and the ants were coming down the tree. The discovery came upon me with a shock. I had stumbled on a nest of umbrella ants. Books had told me that such ants were found in the tropics, where they carried bits of leaves over their heads as if to protect themselves from the sun. But here, on the banks of a Texas river, I had found a colony of them, shading themselves where there was no sun and completely hidden by their covering of green.

Charmed at the sight, I turned back to call my companions, who were fishing in the river. Within a few yards I met my husband coming to look for me. He was even more excited over the phenomenon than I was and shouted for the others to come quickly. On investigation we found that the spot where the vine seemed to have its root was really the opening of the ant nest. The tiny creatures had by some instinct learned that the topmost branches of the cottonwood had put out their first small leaves. They had climbed the immense distance and had cut off and brought down their leaves—to feed their young ones, we supposed. The ants which issued empty jawed from the nest made a long circuit to the farther side of the tree and climbed up where they would not interfere with the leaf bearing thousands coming down.—St. Nicholas.

A Lively Chill.

The old time darky had a great admiration for high sounding words and phrases. He also had a deep respect for a man who has the boldness to devise innovations of speech. "I jes' tell you Massa Rawson has a pow'ful control ob language," said one old plantation negro thoughtfully on his return from a neighborly call. "I expect to learn something every time I hear him talk. He was telling Major Williams 'bout his wife being taken sick after dat dog bite she had, an' stead ob saying in respects to her shaking fit she had dat she 'shook like she had de agen,' same as most folks would say, what figur' is you s'posin' he used?"

"I dunno," said the old man's wife sulkily from the ironing board. "He said she 'shook like an ash pan.' Dat's his figur', an' I ain't gwine forget it."—Youth's Companion.

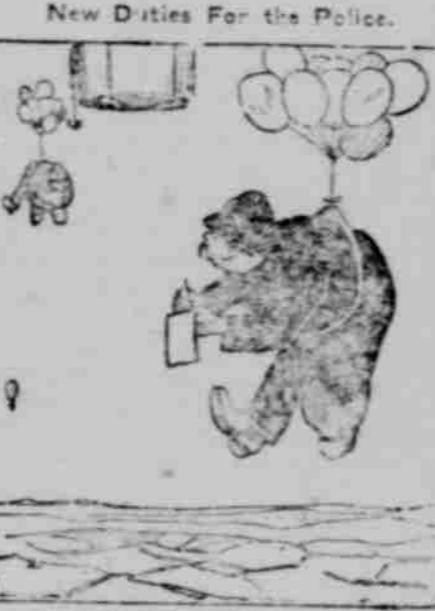
Not Born There.

A Washington man, whose business had brought him to New York, took a run not long ago into Connecticut, where he had lived in his childhood.

In the place where he was born he accosted a venerable old chap of some eighty years, who proved to be the very person the Washingtonian sought to answer certain inquiries concerning the place. As the conversation proceeded the Washington man said:

"I suppose you have always lived around here."

"Oh, no," said the native; "I was born two good miles from here."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.



There is one thing I never realized until I began to cast my bread upon the water."

"And that is?"

"How many people are out for the dough?"—Philadelphia Press.

Two of a Kind.

Oh, Aren't Men Brutes!



No Harm Done.

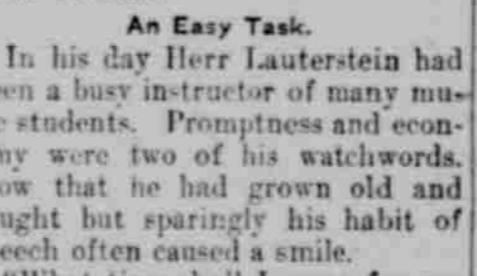
Green—Rounder looks happy since his marriage.

Brown—Yes. His wife married me to reform him.

First Summer Girl—No, I mean the other one.

Second Summer Girl—Oh, he hasn't any money either!—Punch.

Generally.



"What time shall I come for my lesson tomorrow?" asked one of his few pupils.

"You come ven you get ready," said the music master, "but be prompt, so as not to waste my time nor your own. Understand?"

No Easy Task.

In his day Herr Lauterstein had been a busy instructor of many music students. Promptness and economy were two of his watchwords.

Now that he had grown old and taught but sparingly his habit of speech often caused a smile.

"What time shall I come for my lesson tomorrow?" asked one of his few pupils.

"You come ven you get ready," said the music master, "but be prompt, so as not to waste my time nor your own. Understand?"

No Lost.

A bus conductor was shouting "This way for Olloway! Olloway!" when a would be witty jester on the platform called out: "Stop, conductor! You've dropped one of your 'h's.' There was a titter inside and outside the bus, but the conductor quickly retorted, with a broad grin: "Never mind, sir. I'll pick it up again when we get to the Hangel."—London Answers.



Mr. Hammatt—I say, McBooth, here's an article about a fellow who walked around the world.

Mr. McBooth—An actor, by Jove! Washington Star.

Doleful Donald—Some of my bright est thoughts come to me when I am asleep.

Thirsty Gus—Troubled with insomnia, ain't you?—New York Mail.