GRANDMA'S STORY

Of a Brave Soldier Lover and His Strange Courtship.

[*By Louisa M. Alcott.*]

"When I was fifteen, my mother gave me this wheel, and said: 'Now, daughter Betsey, it is time for you to begin your wedding outfit, for I mistrust you'll marry young.' In those days girls spun and wove webs of fine linen and laid 'em up in chests, with lavender and rosemary, for sheets and table linen after they married. So I spun away, making all manner of fine plans in my silly head, for I was a pretty piece, they all said, and young as I was, two or three fine lads used to come evenings and sit staring at me while I worked.

"Among these, was my neighbor Joel Manlius Shirley, and I was fond of him, but he hadn't much money, so I put on airs, and tried his patience very much. One day he came in and said: 'Betsey, I'm going a-soldiering; they need men, and I'm off. Will you think of poor Joe when I'm gone?'

"I don't know how I looked, but I felt as if I couldn't bear it. Only I was too proud to show my trouble; so I laughed and gave my wheel a twist, and said I was glad of it, since anything was better than hanging round at home.

"That hurt him, but he was always gentle to saucy Betsey, and taking out his knife, he cut these letters under mine, saying, with a look I never could forget:

"'That will remind you of me if you are likely to forget. Good-by; I'm going right away, and may never come back.'

"He kissed me and was off before I could say a word, and then I cried till my flax was wet and my thread tangled, and my heart 'most broken. Deary me, how well I remember that heavy day!"

Grandma smiled, but something shone in her old eyes very like a tear, and sentimental Lotty felt deeply interested at this point.

"Where does the fighting come in?" asked Geoff, who was of a military turn, as became the descendant of a soldier.

"I didn't know or care much about the war of 1812, except as far as the safety of one man was concerned. Joe got on without any harm till the battle of New Orleans, when he was nearly killed behind the cotton-bale breastworks General Jackson built."

"Yes, I know all about it! Jackson fought against twelve thousand and lost only seven men. That was the last battle of the war, January 8, 1815. Three cheers for Grandpa!" shouted Geoff, waving a tidy, as no hat was at hand.

The others echoed the hurrah, and grandma beamed with pride as she went on: "We couldn't get news from the army very often in those troublous times, and Joe was gone two years before the war ended. After the great battle we had no news for a long spell, and we feared he was one of the seven men killed. Those were dreadful days for all of us. My honored mother was a pious soul, and so was Mrs. Shirley, and they kept up their hearts with hope and prayer; but I, poor thing, was young and weak, and I cried myself half blind, remembering how naughty I had been. I would spin no more, but set the wheel away, saying I should have no need of wedding gear, as I should never marry; and I wore black ribbon on my caps, and one of Joe's buttons strung about my neck, mourning dismally for my lost dear.

"So the winter ended, and the summer went, and no news came of Joe. All said he was dead, and we had prayers at church, and talked of setting a stone up in the graveyard, and I thought my life was done; for I pined sadly, and felt as if I could never laugh again. But I did, for the Lord was very good to us, and out of danger and captivity delivered that dear boy."

Grandma spoke solemnly, and folded her hands in thanksgiving as she looked up to the picture of the handsome officer hanging on the wall before her. The elder children could just remember grandpa as a very old and feeble man, and it struck them as funny to speak of him as a "dear boy," but they never smiled, and dutifully lifted their eyes to the queue and the high-collared coat, wondering if Joe was as rosy in real life as in the portrait.

"Well, that's the sentimental part; now comes the merry part, and that will suit the boys," said the old lady, briskly, as she spun away, and in a lively tone:

"One December day, as I sat by that very window, dreaming sorrowfully at my sewing work, while old Sally nodded over her knitting by the fire, I saw a man come creeping along by the fence and dodge behind the wood-pile. There were many bad folks 'round in those times; for war always leaves a sight of lazy rascals afloat, as well as poor fellows maimed and homeless.

"Mother had gone over to the sewing society at Mrs. Shirley's, and I was all alone, for Sally was so stiff with rheumatics she could scarce stir, and that was why I staid to take care of her. The old musket always hung over the kitchen chimney-piece loaded, and I knew how to fire it, for Joe taught me. So away I went and got it down, for I saw the man popping up his head now and then to spy the land, and I felt sure he meant mischief. I knew Sally would only scream like a scared hen, so I let her sleep; and getting behind the shutter I pointed my gun, and waited to blaze away as soon as the enemy showed signs of attacking.

"Presently he came creeping up to the back door, and I heard him try the latch. All was fast, so I just slipped into the kitchen and stood behind the settle, for I was surer than ever he was a rascal since I'd seen him nearer. He was a tall man, dreadful shabby in an old coat and boots, a ragged hat over his eyes, and a great beard hiding the lower part of his face. He had a little bundle and a big stick in his hands, and limped as if foot-sore or lame.

"I was much afeard; but those were times that made heroes of men and taught women to be brave for love of home and country. So I kept steady, with my eye on the window, and my finger on the trigger of the old gun that hadn't been fired for years. Presently the man looked in, and I saw what a strange roll his great eyes had, for he was thin-faced, and looked half-starved. If mother had been there, she'd have called him in and fed him well, but I dared not, and when he tried the window I aimed, but did not fire; for finding the button down he went away, and I dropped on the settle shaking like a leaf. All was still, and in a minute I plucked up courage to go to look out a bit; but just as I reached the middle of the kitchen, the buttery door opened, and there stood the robber, with a carving knife in one hand and my best loaf of spice bread in the other. He said something, and made a rush at me; but I pulled the trigger, saw a flash, felt a blow, and fell somewhere, thinking, 'Now I'm dead!'"

Here grandma paused for breath, having spoken rapidly and acted out the scene dramatically, to the intense delight of the children, who sat like images of interest, staring at her with round eyes.

"But you weren't dead? What next?" cried Walt eagerly.

"Bless you, no! I only fell into Joe's arms, and when I came to, there the dear fellow was crying over me like a baby, while old Sally danced round us like a bedlamite, in spite of her rheumatics, shouting: 'Hosanna! Thanks and praise! He's come, he's come!'"

"Was he shot?" asked Geoff, anxious for a little bloodshed.

"No, dear; the old gun burst and hurt my hands, but not a mite of harm was done to Joe. I don't think I could tell all that happened for a spell, being quite dazed with joy and surprise; but by the time mother came home I was as peart as a wren, and Joe was at the table eating and drinking every mortal thing I could find in the house.

"He'd been kept a prisoner till exchanged, and had had a hard time getting home with little money and a bad wound in the leg, besides being feeble with jail fever. But we didn't fret over past troubles, being so glad to get him back. How my blessed mother did laugh, when we told her the reception I gave the poor lad. But I said it served him right, since he came sneaking home like a thief, instead of marching in like a hero. Then he owned that he came there to get something to eat, being ashamed to go in upon his mother with all her company about her. So we fed and comforted him; and when we'd got our wits about us, I whipped away to Mrs. Shirley's and told my news, and every one of those twenty-five women went straight over to our house and burst in upon poor Joe as he lay resting on the settle. That was my revenge for the scare he gave me, and a fine one it was; for the women chattered over him like a flock of magpies, and I sat in the corner and laughed at him. Ah, I was a sad puss in those days!"

The old lady's black eyes twinkled with fun, and the children laughed with her, till Walt caused a lull by asking:

"Where do the wolves come in, Grandma?"

"Right along, dear; I'm not likely to forget 'em, for they most cost me my life, to say nothing of my new slippers. There was great rejoicing over Joe, and every one wanted to do something to honor our hero; for he had done well, we found out, when the General heard his story. We had a great dinner, and Judge Mullikin gave a supper; but Major Belknap was bound to outshine the rest, so he invited all the young folks over to his house, nigh ten miles away, to a ball, and we all went. I made myself fine, you may believe, and wore a pair of blue kid slippers, with mother's best buckles to set 'em off. Joe had a new uniform, and was an elegant figure of a man, I do assure you. He couldn't dance, poor dear, being still very lame; but I was a proud girl when I marched into that ball-room on the arm of my limping beau. The men cheered, and the ladies stood up in chairs to see him, and he was as red as my ribbons, and I could hardly keep from crying as I held him up, the floor being slippery as glass with the extra waxing it had got.

"I declared I wouldn't dance because Joe couldn't; but he made me, saying he could see me better, so I footed it till two o'clock, soon forgetting all my sorrow, and my good resolutions as well. I wanted to show Joe that I was as much a favorite as ever, though I'd lived like a widow for a year. Young folks will be giddy, and I hope these girls will take warning by me and behave better when their time comes. There mayn't be any wolves to sober 'em; but trouble of some sort always follows foolish actions; so be careful, my dears, and behave with propriety when you 'come out,' as you call it nowadays."

Grandma held up a warning forefinger at the girls, and shook her dead impressively, feeling that the moral of her tale must be made clear before she went on; but the lassies blushed a little, and the lads looked all impatience, so the dear old lady introduced the wolves as quickly as she could.

"About half-past two, Joe and I drove off home with four fine hams in the bottom of the sleigh, sent by the Major to our mothers. It was a bitter cold February night, with just light enough to see the road, and splendid sleighing, so we went along at a good pace till we came to the great woods. They are all gone now, and the woolen mills stand there, but then they were a thick forest of pines, and for more than three miles the road led through them. In former days Indians had lurked there; bears and foxes were still shot, and occasionally wolves were seen when cold weather drove them to seek food near the sheep-folds and barn-yards.

"Well, we were skimming along pleasantly enough, I rather sleepy, and Joe very careful of me, when, just as I was beginning to doze a little, with my head on his arm, I felt him start. Old Buck, the horse, gave a jump that woke me up, and in a minute I knew what the trouble was, for from behind us came the howl of a wolf.

"'Just the night to bring 'em out,' muttered Joe, using the whip till Buck went at his quickest trot, with his ears down, and every sign of hurry and worry about him.

"'Are you afraid of them?' I asked, for I'd never had a scare of this sort, though I'd heard other people tell of the fierceness of the brutes when hunger made them bold.

"'Not a bit, only I wish I had my gun along,' said Joe, looking over his shoulder anxiously.

"'Pity I hadn't brought mine; I do so well with it,' I said, and I laughed as I remembered how I aimed at Joe, and hurt myself.

"'Are they chasing us,' I asked, standing up to look back along the white road, for we were just on the edge of the woods now.

"'Shouldn't wonder. If I had a better horse it would be a lively race, but Buck can't keep this pace long, and if he founders we are in a fix, for I can't run, and you can't fight. Betsey, there's more than one. Hold tight, and try to count 'em.'

"Something in Joe's voice told me plainer than words that we were in danger, and I wished we'd waited till the rest of our party came; but I was tired, and so we started alone.

"Straining my eyes, I could see *three* black spots on the snow, and hear three howls as the wolves came galloping after us. I was a brave girl, but I'd never tried this kind of thing before, and in a minute all the wolf stories I'd ever heard came flying through my mind. I *was* mortally afeared, but I wouldn't show it, and turned to Joe, trying to laugh, as I said: 'Only three as yet. Tell me just what to do, and I'll do it.'

"'Brave lass! I must see to Buck, or he'll be down, for he's badly scared. You wait till the rascals are pretty close, and then heave over one of those confounded hams to amuse 'em, while we make the most of their halt. They smell this meat, and that's what they are after,' said Joe, driving his best, for the poor old horse began to pant, and limp on his stiff legs.

"'Lucky for us we've got 'em,' says I, bound to be cool and gay, 'if we hadn't they'd get fresh meat instead of smoked.'

"Joe laughed, but a long howl close by made me dive for a ham, for in the darkness of the woods the beasts had got closer, and now all I could see were several balls of fire not many yards away. Out went the ham, and a snarling sound showed that the wolves were busy eating it.

"'All right!' said Joe. 'Rest a bit, and have another ready. They'll soon finish that and want more. We must go easy, for Buck is nearly blown.'

"I prepared my ammunition, and, in what seemed five minutes, I heard the patter of feet behind us, and the fiery eyes were close by. Over went the second mouthful, and then the third, and the fourth; but they seemed more ravenous than ever, and each time were back sooner in greater numbers.

"We were nearly out of the woods when the last was gone, and if Buck had only had strength we should have been safe. But it was plain to see that he couldn't keep up much longer, for he was very old, though he'd been a fine horse in his prime.

"'This looks bad, little Betsey. Cover up in the robes, and hold fast to me. The beasts will begin to snatch presently, and I'll have to fight 'em off. Thank the powers, I've my arms left.'

"As he spoke, Joe pulled me close, and wrapped me up, then took the whip, ready to rap the first wolf that dared come near enough to be hit. We didn't wait long; up they raced, and began to leap and snarl in a way that made my heart stand still at first. Then my temper rose, and catching up the hot brick I had for my feet, I fired it with such good aim, that one sharp, black nose disappeared with a yelp of pain.

"'Hit 'em again, Betsey! Take the demijohn and bang 'em well. We are nearing Beaman's, and the brutes will soon drop off.'

"It was a lively scrimmage for a few minutes, as we both warmed to our work, Joe thrashing away with his whip on one side, and I on the other flourishing the demijohn in which we had carried some cider for the supper.

"But it was soon over, for in the fury of the fight Joe forgot the horse; poor Buck made a sudden bolt, upset the sleigh down a bank, and, breaking loose, tore back along the road with the wolves after him.

"'Run, Betsey! run for your life, and send Beaman's folks back! I'm done for—my leg's broken. Never mind, I'll crawl under the sleigh, and be all right till you come. The wolves will take a good while to pick poor Buck's bones.'

"Just waiting to see Joe safe, I ran as I never ran before, and I was always light of foot. How I did it I don't know, for I'd forgot to put on my moccasins (we didn't have snow-boots, you know, in my young days), and there I was tearing along that snowy road in my blue kid slippers like a crazy thing. It was nigh a mile, and my heart was 'most broke down before I got there; but I kept my eye on the light in Hetty's winder and tugged along, blessing her for the guide and comfort that candle was. The last bit was down hill, or I couldn't have done it; for when I fell on the door-step my voice was clean gone, and I could only lie and rap, rap, rap! till they came flying. I just got breath enough to grasp out and point:

"'Joe—wolves—the big woods—go!' when my senses failed me, and I was carried in."

Here Madam Shirley leaned back in her chair quite used up, for she had been acting the scene to a breathless audience, and laying about her with her handkerchief so vigorously, that her eyes snapped, her cheeks were red, and her dear old cap all awry.

"But Joe—did they eat him?" cried the boys in great excitement, while the girls held to one another, and the poor little wheel lay flat, upset by the blows of the imaginary demijohn dealt to an equally imaginary wolf.

"Hardly,—since he lived to be your grandfather," laughed the old lady, in high feather at the success of her story.

"No, no,—we mean the horse;" shouted Geoff, while the others roared at the mistake.

"Yes, they did. Poor old Buck saved us at the cost of his own life. His troubles were over, but mine were not; for when I came to I saw Mr. Beaman, and my first thought and word was 'Joe?'

"'Too late—they'd got him, so we turned back to tell you,' said that stupid man.

"I gave one cry and was going off again, when his wife shook me, and says, laughing:

"'You little goose! He means the folks from the Major's. A lot came along and found Joe, and took him home, and soon's ever you're fit we'll send you along, too.'

"'I'm ready now,' says I, jumping up in a hurry. But I had to sit down again, for my feet were all cut and bleeding, and my slippers just rags. They fixed me up and off I went, to find mother in a sad taking. But Joe was all right; he hadn't broken his leg, but only sprained it badly, and being the wounded one he was laid up longer than I. We both got well, however, and the first time Joe went out he hobbled over to our house. I was spinning again then, and thought I might need my wedding outfit after all——. On the whole, I guess we'll end the story here; young folks wouldn't care for that part."

As grandma paused, the girls cried out with one voice: "Yes, we do! we like it best. You said you would. Tell about the wedding and all."

"Well, well, it isn't much. Joe came and sat by me, and, as we talked over our adventure, he cut that true lover's knot between the letters. I didn't seem to mind, and spun away till he pointed to it, saying with the look that always made me meek as a lamb: 'May it stand so, my little Betsey?'

"I said 'Yes, Joe,' and then—well, never mind that bit;—we were married in June, and I spun and wove my wedding things afterward. Dreadful slack, my mother thought, but I didn't care. My wedding gown was white lutestring, full trimmed with old lace. Hair over a cushion with white roses, and the pearl necklace, just as you see up there. Joe wore his uniform, and I tied up his hair with a white satin ribbon. He looked beautiful, and so did I."

At this artless bit of vanity, the girls smiled, but all agreed that grandma was right, as they looked at the portraits with fresh interest.

"I call that a pretty good story," said Walt, with an air of an accomplished critic.

"'Specially the wolf part. I wanted that longer," added Geoff.

"It was quite long enough for me, my dear, and I didn't hear the last of it for years. Why, one of my wedding presents was four hams done up elegantly in white paper, with posies on 'em, from the Major. He loved a joke, and never forgot how well we fought with the pigs' legs that night. Joe gave me a new sleigh, the next Christmas, with two wolf-skin robes for it. Shot the beasts himself, and I kept those rugs till the moths ate the last bit. He kept the leavings of my slippers, and I have them still. Fetch 'em, Minnie—you know where they are."

Grandma pointed to the tall secretary that stood in a corner, and Minnie quickly took a box from one of the many drawers. All the heads clustered around grandma, and the faded, ragged shoes went from hand to hand, while questions rained upon the story-teller till she bade them go to bed.

Nothing but the promise of more tales would appease them; then, with thanks and kisses, the young folks trooped away, leaving the old lady to put the little wheel to rights and sit thinking over her girlhood, in the fire-light.—*St. Nicholas.*

Barbara Frietchie.

[*By J. G. Whittier.*]

Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,

The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland.

Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple and peach tree fruited deep.

Fair as a garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,

On that pleasant morn of the early fall,
When Lee marched over the mountain wall;

Over the mountains, winding down,
Horse and foot into Frederick town.

Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,

Flapped in the morning wind; the sun
Of noon looked down and saw not one.

Up rose old Barbara Frietchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten.

Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag that men hauled down;

In her attic window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet.

Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.

Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced—the old flag met his sight.

"Halt!" The dust-brown ranks stood fast;
"Fire!" Out blazed the rifle blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash,
It rent the banner with seam and gash.

Quick as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf;

She leaned far out on the window sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.

"Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag!" she said.

A shade of sadness, a blush of shame
Over the face of the leader came;

The noblest nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word.

"Who touches a hair of yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.

All day long thro' Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet;

All day long that free flag tossed
Over the head of the rebel host;

Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well,

And through the hill gaps' sunset light
Shone over it with a warm good-night.

Barbara Frietchie's work is o'er,
And the rebel rides on his raids no more.

Honor to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier!

Over Barbara Frietchie's grave
Flag of Freedom and Union wave!

Peace, and order, and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law,

And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

Ready.

[*By Phœbe Cary.*]

Loaded with gallant soldiers,
A boat shot into the land,
And lay at the right of Rodman's Point,
With her keel upon the sand.

Lightly, gayly, they came to shore,
And never a man afraid;
When sudden the enemy opened fire
From his deadly ambuscade.

Each man fell flat on the bottom
Of the boat; and the captain said:
"If we lie here, we all are captured,
And the first who moves is dead!"

Then out spoke a negro sailor,
No slavish soul had he;
"Somebody's got to die, boys,
And it might as well be me!"

Firmly he rose, and fearlessly
Stepped out into the tide;
He pushed the vessel safely off,
Then fell across her side:

Fell, pierced by a dozen bullets,
As the boat swung clear and free;
But there wasn't a man of them that day
Who was fitter to die than he!

Consumption Cured.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 149 *Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y.*

THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

And How it is Tripped at the Balls of Zurich.

Special Correspondence National Tribune.

ZURICH, Dec. 21, 1883.

Quite as characteristic of Zurich as its universities, are the balls, which come in quick succession through the winter, and receive much more active discussion and wide-spread attention throughout the community than the humdrum course of university life claims for itself.

First, comes the academical ball, then follow the ball of the German society, the See-club ball, and a ball for every Saturday of the whole long winter. And a Zurich ball is quite as strikingly different from an American one, as the Zurich University from the American institution of the same name.

For an American, the surprises of a Zurich ball begin with the invitation, for this suggests terrible difficulties in the way of an acceptance, which, however, is *de rigeur*. The invitation's complicated structure is as follows:

"Highly honored Miss (or Sir): The ball committee of the —— society permits itself, you and your worthy family to participation in a Saturday, the —— evening, at 8 o'clock, in the —— hotel, taking place ball, to beseech.
"With highest esteem,
"The committee."

Happily, the committee is polyglot, and the simple American formula is sufficient for acceptance, written in straightforward English.

One point in the invitation is extremely important—namely, the hour; for the Swiss are a punctual people, and if the invitation says 8 o'clock, it means 8 o'clock, and the dancing begins at 8 o'clock; and the little books of partners are filled by 8 o'clock, and woe betide the luckless maiden who comes after 8 o'clock. By a quarter past eight, such a tardy comer finds the cloak-room deserted, the attendants beginning to grow drowsy, the duennas established in the draughtless corners of the room and well started in their evening's chat, and the first dance quite half finished.

A PRETTY SCENE.

To come into a Zurich ball-room during a dance, is to behold an extremely pretty scene. The light is soft and free from glare, the musicians' corner is prettily decorated, the pretty Swiss use of muslin curtains is skillfully applied, and the row of duennas presents such kindly, friendly, interested faces as add greatly to the cheery effect of the place and the company. But these are only subsidiary conditions; the chief beauty, naturally, is among the dancers. There is nothing brilliant in the coloring, nothing glaring; every young girl wears delicate pink, or blue, or cream color, or white, and the ornaments are of the simplest and daintiest. The dresses are all short, showing slippers or dancing shoes—some black, some white, some bronze; and every dress is made with low neck and short sleeves, showing, usually, round necks and arms such as would be hard to find in such numbers in America. Every dancer wears a slender necklace and artificial flowers (which are exquisitely made and very cheap here) in dress and hair. The room is kept at so pleasant a temperature that there is slight fear of cold, and that little is removed by the deliberate promenade which follows every round dance. Round and round the room goes the procession of flushed and heated dancers in characteristically vigorous conversation, but at a measured pace. On these occasions the masculine portion of the company does not present to the foreign eye so attractive an appearance as friendly prejudice might desire; for long, bushy hair, an extraordinary disproportion of eye-glasses (some of them worn over spectacles), and a prevailing tendency to stooping shoulders do not contribute to an attractive appearance in the ball-room. The Swiss and German education is not successful in producing fine physiques. Swiss boys do not ride and swim, and row and play cricket, and coast and skate, as well-brought-up English and American lads do. Their life is sedentary, and their out-door recreations are few and defective. True, they have gymnastic training in connection with school life, but that is by no means sufficient to counterbalance the long school hours and defective play. Hence, in the ball-room a tall, graceful Englishman or American not only attracts a fair share of admiration for himself, but throws the German and Swiss youths about him into melancholy contrast in point both of stature and carriage. The German or Swiss youth has usually two physical accomplishments: he fences, for purposes of student duelling, and he dances.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING.

The third surprise which a Zurich ball presents to the untraveled American is the violent and prolonged nature of the dance. This presents such continuous, relentless revolution as there is rarely opportunity to behold in America. The little book or partners offers fifteen dances—all very long—and all performed in a methodical circulation around the ball-room, the whole company avoiding the middle of the room. Then, too, there are five dances thrown in from time to time. And such dances, such whirling, and hopping, and spinning, and bumping, so prolonged, so serenely conducted, so calmly emerged from! The surprise of *that* phenomenon does not wear off for days afterward. Every young woman expects to dance every dance, and all of it. She begins early, she continues conscientiously, and she shows no signs of wear at the end. If her partner hurls her against the whirling elbow of an oncoming dancer, he says, "Pardon!" with a tone of deep contrition, and receives a like blow in the next instant himself—a blow so violent as to enrage a dancer of a less patient race. But those are episodes to which the Zurich maiden is accustomed from the dancing-school of her early childhood, and they have no power to disturb her. For, never having known the advantage of the quiet American waltz and the security of skillful reversing, she accepts frequent bumpings and otherwise unbroken spinning as inevitable accompaniments of an evening's pleasure.

From 8 o'clock until 11 the ball-room is either a vortex in which each separate atom revolves upon an axis of its own, constantly and violently shifting the same, to its own great danger and the danger of every other whirling atom, or the floor is cleared, except so far as it is needed for the slow movement of a compact procession of the dancers of the preceding dance.

A SUBSTANTIAL SUPPER.

At 11 there is a sudden and complete change. Supper is formally announced, and the entire company of dancers vanishes swiftly away. The row of duennas remains unbroken until the last dancer vanishes; then the flock rises, and, without wasting a moment in hovering, it follows swiftly after. Meanwhile the dancers have seated themselves, and all the tables are occupied save one. Around this one the black-clad flock settles down with beaming, expectant faces and much friendly chat. The tables are ornamented as if for a dinner, and such the supper of a Zurich ball in truth is. Bouillon, pastry, roast beef and vegetables, two kinds of light wine, a made dish of a mysterious nature, and a closing course of ices,—all served and eaten with great deliberation, amid prolonged conversation,—such is the supper as consumed at midnight. When the ices are disposed of, bon bons are handed, and a great snapping and cracking follows all over the room, as though a children's party had suddenly developed. Somewhat after 12 the duennas rise and make in good order the little journey back to their posts of duty; the dancers follow in straggling order, the music strikes up a fine waltz, and the room having been ventilated and chilled during the supper hour (and a half), every one begins forthwith to whirl and spin and hop and jump just as before. To the American observer it is a great puzzle that such violent exercise can be endured at any time; and such violent exercise immediately upon so substantial and ample a meal would be to Americans utterly destructive. Hence the American participants wisely limit themselves to bouillon and ices, and are apt to be a trifle the worse even for this mild form of refreshment.

At no time is there anything stiff at a Zurich ball; but after supper the atmosphere is even more social than before. All previous dancing engagements are cancelled, and the polonaise, which consists of two or three german figures, is carried on until 2 o'clock on Sunday morning. Then, by one consent, the duennas rise, the dancers make for the last time the prim little bows which begin and end every dance, the room is emptied in a twinkling, the drowsy attendants pull themselves together in the ante-room, dancing shoes are exchanged for good, stout, black-leather boots, a sudden outburst of white wraps and hoods is speedily concealed under outer layers of heavy cloaks and shawls; carriages come in swift order to the door, and in ten minutes the company is safely at home—so compact a town is Zurich!

It is all very pretty and very interesting, and for an American it has a quality which he can describe by no other adjective than "different." The frank wearing of bare neck and arms, the patient twirling about always in one direction and always around and around the outer edge of the ball-room, the social chatter and total absence of stiffness, the prim bows at the beginning and end of dances, the formal promenade, the heavy midnight dinner and violent dancing immediately thereafter, and, most of all, the shabby treatment of the duennas, whose durance vile, beginning at eight and lasting until two, is a good deal of an ordeal—all this is decidedly "different."

THE DUENNA'S UNHAPPY LOT.

The duenna's lot is not a happy one. After a time conversation among her fellow-victims wanes and expires. Comparison of the toilettes of her proteges with those of the other dancers loses its novelty in an hour or two, and her own sole chance of moving about consists in the remote possibility that a short dress may be torn and it may be necessary to go to the ante-room for repairs. Nobody talks to a duenna, no one pays her any attention. If an American mother goes to a Zurich ball, and the English and American youths who are present sit now and then chatting with her through a dance, so phenomenal an occurrence is attributed by other duennas either to an especial personal charm or to the pervasive eccentricity of the English-speaking peoples.

A yet greater difference between the Zurich ball and the American ball, consists in the cost thereof. The other day a Zurich dressmaker was recommended as the best in the city, "but conspicuously expensive," because her price for making a ball dress ranges from 20 to 25 fr., or from four to five dollars. A costume which cost forty dollars would subject the wearer to severe criticism and would make her, in several ways, uncomfortably conspicuous. But although a Zurich ball is wholly "different," it has several agreeable points. The early beginning, if followed by a correspondingly early ending, would be a decided advantage; the simple dressing is a decided advantage, and so is the fact that the balls come at intervals which give plenty of rest between, and keep a "society winter from interfering with faithful study and a generally quiet home-life.

F. K.

THE WORK GOES ON.

Relief Corps Notes From Various Points Along the Line.

The delegates to Zanesville from Canton Corps, Canton, Ohio, besides the president, Mrs. Harter, are: Lottie M. Myers, secretary; M. E. Ebersole, treasurer; Sarah C. Moses and Mina D. Barclay; alternates, Mariana Johnson, M. A. Lester, Kate Bockius and Kate Adler.

Comrade W. P. Clarke, Commander of A. D. Hamilton Post, No. 60, Milton, Wis., writes us that Relief Corps No. 4, auxiliary to the above-named Post, was organized on the 9th inst. with twenty-three charter members, and that the following ladies were chosen for its officers: President, Mrs. Emma M. Wilbur; senior vice-president, Mrs. Frank M. Lanphere; junior vice-president, Mrs. E. J. Warren; secretary, L. E. Randolph; treasurer, Mrs. L. A. Clarke; chaplain, Mrs. A. J. Marskie; conductor, Mrs. M. J. Obourn; guard, Mrs. R. A. Crane.

A comrade at Minerva, Ohio, writes us that a Woman's Relief Corps, auxiliary to Post No. 106, of that place, was organized on the 7th inst. by Mrs. Lottie M. Myers, of Canton, the installing officer of the Department, and that the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. Helen Westfall; senior vice-president, S. Lentz; junior vice-president, Mrs. Adam Fishell; treasurer, Mrs. Lizzie Boorg; secretary, Mrs. Hannah Sala; chaplain, Mrs. Tillie Greenwood; conductor, Mrs. Annie Clemans; guard, Mrs. Mary Laantzenheizer.

Comrade F. Vogl, Junction City, Kan., informs us that Relief Corps No. 6, auxiliary to Post No. 132, of that place, which has sixty-four charter members, recently elected the following officers: President, Mrs. Ella Linton; senior vice-president, Miss Agnes Hensler; junior vice-president, Mrs. F. E. Tenney; treasurer, Mrs. A. Allen, M. D.; secretary, Mrs. A. L. Nicholson; chaplain, Mrs. A. E. Mabie; conductor, Miss M. S. Hastings; guard, Miss Carrie Holbrook. Delegates to organize Department Encampment, Mrs. A. L. Nicholson, Mrs. A. Allen, M. D., and Mrs. S. Maben; alternates, Mrs. S. Holbrook, Mrs. E. Haughawout and Mrs. G. S. Hastings.

Mrs. Hattie A. Prescott, Westfield, Mass., writes us that Lyon Relief Corps, No. 22, was inspected recently by Mrs. Parker, of the State Department, and found to be in a thoroughly satisfactory condition. This Corps started one year ago with twenty-two members, and has now a membership of fifty-five, with $287 in the relief fund and $86 in the treasury. The following is a list of its newly-installed officers: President, Mrs. S. C. Walkley; senior vice-president, Mrs. Hattie A. Prescott; junior vice-president, Mrs. Louisa Meadon; conductor, Mrs. Nellie Maxwell; chaplain, Mrs. Marion Burge; guard, Mrs. —— Furrows; treasurer, Mrs. J. C. Edgar; secretary, Mrs. Hattie Clark.

Lottie M. Myers, Canton, Ohio, assistant instituting and installing officer for Ohio, writes that she has a number of encouraging letters from friends of the work in the State and elsewhere, who write enthusiastically words like these: "'God bless the noble ladies' goes up as fervently now as it did twenty years ago." Mrs. Myers well says: "Words fail to express our high appreciation of this encouragement, every word of which is welcomed as a gleam of blessed sunshine, and with such hearty support surely we may enter upon the work of the coming year with prospects greatly brightened, and with renewed zeal and spirit."

Members of Relief Corps, unavoidably absent from the meetings, can do much good by writing an encouraging word to the president explaining their absence. A faithful worker wrote from a bed of illness to her Corps president, at the holiday season, as follows, and her words have been a happy New Year to the entire Corps: "My kind regards and holiday greetings to the Relief Corps—loyal women, good and true. Though I am not with them in the body, I am in spirit, beholding and rejoicing in their steadfastness of faith and order in the needful and noble work to which they have set their hands. May the Great Captain of Salvation lead them all safely through the warfare of this life, and when the march is ended crown them with victory in the life which is to come."

Comrade R. B. Brown, writing from Zanesville, Ohio, of the phenomenal success of the holiday fair and festival, despite the inclement weather and snow blockades, says: "For the hundredth time I say, 'God bless the Woman's Relief Corps!' In all that was done we had the untiring assistance of Hazlett Relief Corps. The president, Mrs. F. J. Terry; the secretary, Mrs. C. C. Russell, all the officers and all the members worked with an enthusiastic, intelligent will to a common purpose—success. Other ladies not yet connected with the Corps in an organized capacity rendered efficient aid. Press on the work of organization. As long as God gives me strength I shall endeavor, by voice and pen, to defend, uphold and encourage the Woman's Relief Corps." Comrade M. V. B. Kennedy, Commander Hazlett Post, No. 81, Zanesville, Ohio, writes that the net proceeds of the fair will be about $4,000, the expenses being nearly $1,500.

Gen. O. A. Janes, Department Commander of Michigan, has evinced his interest in the National Relief Corps by making it the subject of Clause No. 11, in General Order, No. 14, issued January 2, which reads: "Kate B. Sherwood, national senior vice-president of the National Woman's Relief Corps, auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, has received instructions to organize a State Department in Michigan at the time of the Department Encampment. All Posts desiring to form Relief Corps are requested to send delegates to this convention. Such delegates must have proper credentials from their Post signed by the Post Commander." This action of Commander Janes is very greatly appreciated by the Relief Corps, as it brings the matter more fully before the Grand Army in that State, and so prepares the way for a successful organization. Michigan comrades who desire the formation of auxiliaries to their Posts will bear this opportunity in mind.

Health is Wealth.

It is worth more than riches, for without it, riches cannot be enjoyed. How many people are without health who might regain it by using Kidney Wort. It acts upon the Liver, Bowels, and Kidneys, cleansing and stimulating them to healthy action. It cures all disorders of these important organs, purifies the blood, and promotes the general health. Sold by all druggists. See advertisement.

OUR RURAL TOPICS.

Some Practical Suggestions for Our Agricultural Readers.

SHEEP AS RENOVATORS OF WEEDY PASTURES.

From an instructive letter on this subject in the *Mirror and Farmer* we make the following extracts: "Sheep are very beneficial to pastures, and afford one of the readiest means of renovating such as are worn out. They eat more kinds of herbage than other stock, and by eating down weeds and bushes will exterminate them. Pastures overrun with bushes may be cleared by first cutting the plants and then put in sheep to eat down the young sprouts as they grow. A farmer in Maine had a mowing field of forty acres covered with white and yellow weed and the grass nearly killed out. He turned ten acres of it to pasture, on which he put fifty sheep, and allowed them to run on it for two years. The third year it was again mowed and turned out a heavy crop of hay; grasses and clover again took the lead, and made heavy crops for years afterwards. A Connecticut farmer had a five-acre field which became entirely overrun with the white daisy, sometimes called white weed. He put a flock of sheep into it and they swept off every daisy, and not one has been seen on the field since. Ragweed and other weeds may be equally as effectually destroyed by sheep. A Massachusetts farmer had a pasture so rough that it could not be plowed, which was covered with briers and bushes so thickly that there was but little grass upon it. He cut the bushes and put in sheep enough to eat everything that grew in it, and kept them there five seasons. The sheep killed the briers and most of the bushes, and one acre was worth more than three acres were before." Another farmer says: "I have two pastures, twenty acres in each. I have kept sheep on one of them about seven years in ten, and the other, three in ten. The one I kept sheep in the most is worth 25 per cent. more than the one I pastured with cattle. When apples are about the size of walnuts, I turn sheep into the orchard, and they pick up the green fruit which falls, thereby destroying many worms."

CROPS EAST AND WEST.

It was formerly the boast of the Western farmer that he paid no attention to manuring lands. The trouble with him was how to get rid of the manure which would accumulate around his stables, and he would pretend that it was cheaper for him to remove his stables than to attempt to remove the manure. The result of this mismanagement is clearly shown by recent statistics, which show that while New Hampshire produces 36 bushels of corn per acre, Illinois produces only 25 bushels per acre; Massachusetts produces 35 bushels, while Indiana averages 27 bushels. Maine produces 35 bushels, Vermont 31 bushels, and Rhode Island 32 bushels, while Kansas produces 36 bushels, Missouri 25, and New Mexico 20 bushels per acre.

There is no merit in gathering fine crops from rich virgin soils; but the practice that produces a yearly diminishing crop is not farming, as properly understood. Skillful farming not only maintains but gradually increases the productive capacities of the soil. The time will come when the run-down Western lands will again reach and far exceed even their best results, but it will be when they are managed by skillful and accomplished farmers. Already this is being exemplified, but the non-manuring, stockless and careless cultivators seem yet to be in the majority. The valuable teachings of agricultural colleges and farm experiment stations, which are rapidly increasing, will in a few years, we apprehend, change the character of present statistical showings, and farming will enlist the attention of those who have qualified themselves for the profession by acquiring a knowledge of fundamental principles and their application.

PACKING EGGS.

A French poultry keeper and breeder says that latterly the favorite method of packing eggs has been in the upright position, the advantage claimed being that the eggs keep better because less liable to be shaken. Let the air-bladder be at the end or at the side, it is exactly the same; consequently the shaking cannot be weakened. As to its being kept fresh for a longer period when in an upright position, we protest in toto against that point. When birds are at liberty, and lay every other day, their eggs keep perfectly well for twenty or twenty-five days, and the whole brood come out simultaneously, the first being as strong as the last. The shape of the egg sufficiently indicates that the natural place is on its side, and to maintain it in a different position is wrong. Eggs put into an incubator in an upright position would never hatch.

Sawdust is the best for packing in, provided soft-wood sawdust is used; but it must not be too dry or too damp. Sawdust has an elasticity which deadens jolting, and maintains the eggs in an equal temperature, being an excellent insulator against cold or heat, and it cannot be replaced either by cardboard boxes, paper, or even cut straw.

BEST BREEDS OF POULTRY.

There is much difference of opinion in regard to the best breeds of fowls. An Ohio poultry keeper says that, in his opinion, the best breeds for both eggs and poultry for table use are the Light Brahmas and Plymouth Rocks. The former, especially, is a good combination fowl. The Plymouth Rocks, from their proclivity to sit, are not always to be relied on for the production of eggs. For eggs alone, the Leghorns—white or brown, the latter, perhaps, preferable—are to be recommended. Young Leghorns also make broilers of excellent quality, though not quite as large as some varieties at the same age. At the North the hen house should be built warm and comfortable, with proper means for ventilation. I prefer a hard earth floor, scattered with fine dry loam or road dust, which should be often removed and replaced with that which is clean.

MANURING FOR CORN.

To the Editor NATIONAL TRIBUNE:

I have found that the best time for putting out manure for corn is in the fall, from the middle to the end of November; or, if not done then, any time during the winter, when the ground is bare; but the nearer the spring the less good will come from it. It is a custom with most farmers, when they clean out the stables in the winter, to throw the manure in the barnyard to rot; but this is a waste in three ways: First, the cattle will eat much of the strawy part of it, which wastes the manure and is not good for the cattle; second, it is not as good when rotted as it was when taken from the stables; and third, the ground has been without it all winter, and is not as rich as if it had been protected by the manure.

Ground will become richer by being covered, even if it is with brush; and this is one of the advantages of putting the manure on in the fall, or during the winter. The manure from the stables should, therefore, be taken immediately to the field intended for corn and spread on the land, and left there until plowed under in the spring. I have been told that I lose all the ammonia, which is very volatile, by spreading out the manure; but as I have also been told but little ammonia is formed unless under rapid rotting, I presume there is not much loss in this way. Be this as it may, we farmers who manure our corn ground this way rarely fail in making good crops. Cornfields served thus last winter turned out this past fall about fifteen bushels of corn more to the acre than fields near by them that were not manured till spring, and we will have better oats next year.—J. K., Del.

CULTIVATION OF BERRIES.

To the Editor NATIONAL TRIBUNE:

I wish to get some instructions from you or your readers with regard to my patch of berries. I have started to grow blackberries and raspberries. I set out the plants this fall where I had sowed rye, calculating to put it in potatoes in spring. Would it do as well for the berries to let the rye grow next summer, and cultivate the summer after that? Please let me know your opinion through THE TRIBUNE, and tell me how to cultivate, how many stalks to a hill, &c. I set them out 3x6. I have the Snyder, the Cuthbert, and the Gregg. Are these the best? I only want the best. I am going to raise carp and berries. I am much obliged to you for information about wild rice, and would like to know if this wild rice is suitable to sow in carp ponds. I am told that it is.—A. Y. Neff, Mills' Mills, Ind.

Remarks. We understand that almost any kind of vegetable growth is good for carp. Your selection of berries is about as good as can be made. The plants will not do well in a rye field; the rye will starve out the berry plants. It would be well to cultivate a strip each side of the rows; better still, plow down the rye before it heads, which will help to enrich the land. From two to three canes to a plant will be as much as will be desirable with your close planting, and hoe down all suckers except those to be retained. Berries cannot be grown to perfection on poor land, no matter what the treatment otherwise may be.

NOTELETS.

—It sometimes happens that house plants in cold rooms are liable to get bitten by frost. A very slight protection, such as can be afforded by a piece of newspaper, will often be all that is needed. Shape the paper by bending like a conical cap, and place it over the plant. If the plant is small, so that the cap may fit the outside of the rim of the pot, the protection will be more complete.

—The leaves of the oak tree contain a much larger quantity of mineral matters, and furnish ashes when burned which—amounting to eight per cent.—is considerably richer in potash than the ashes produced by burning the wood.

—Grooming never should be done so vigorously as not to be pleasant to the animal. Whenever an animal cringes under the curry-comb, no good is being done. It is too much of a good thing, like too much bathing.

—An exchange says that a poultry house should be large enough to be airy, but if it is kept strictly clean and sweet it will do no harm to be somewhat crowded. A house twenty-six feet long, ten feet wide, five feet high behind and eight feet in front, and having four roosting poles, all on a level, and only a foot from the floor, will hold sixty fowls. This manner of arranging the roosts prevents a good deal of quarreling to get on the top perch.

—An old florist recommends mixing horn shavings in soil for potting plants—about one pound of the shavings mixed with a barrow-load of soil. Its effects are visible in the clean, healthy growth of the plants. The shavings help to keep the soil in good mechanical condition, and in their gradual decay furnish a lasting stimulant to plant growth.

—F. D. Curtis, of Kirkly Homestead, states that an economical manager of a paper-mill told him that they obtained fifteen per cent. of the cost of the rye straw they used in the grain that was left in it. They always thrash the straw before using it for paper making, and thus reduce its cost. The lesson to be learned from this is obvious. There should be less hurry about the thrashing machine and its feeding should be slower, in order to insure a more perfect shelling of the grain.

—Mr. Green, of New Albany, Ind., scalds his peach trees with water poured from the spout of a teakettle. In five weeks he went over eighteen acres of peach orchard, and was not troubled with peach borers. He treats his apple trees in the same manner and with like success.

—The American Pomological Society is recorded as passing the opinion that a certain grape was not fit to eat, but good to sell. This looks as if the society was run by market gardeners and fruit growers, and not for the improvement of fruits, as has generally been supposed.

—There is no economy of land in planting trees too close together. More trees can be crowded on the land by close planting, but the yield of fruit will not be greater than from the wider planted trees which have plenty of space for the roots to spread and extend into fresh soil.

—Plants that are kept in cold-frames during winter should always receive ventilation during mild weather. No greater evil can befall them than to be confined in a heated atmosphere. Plants thus protected are usually those that will not be injured by a few degrees of frost, but the object should be to merely prevent them from severe frosts; slight frosts will do no injury.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Our Agricultural Editor's Weekly Chat With His Readers.

Can you describe the common edible mushroom, so that one might tell the difference between it and those kinds which are poisonous?—Jonathan, Dover, Del.

Ans. Botanical descriptions of fungi are not readily understood. The true mushroom may be known by the intense purple-brown color of its spores and its gills; other species which resemble it have these spores of a pale umber-brown color. The true mushroom always grows in pastures, and never on or about stumps, or in woods; it always has dark purple-brown spores; always has a perfect encircling clothy collar, and always gills which do not touch the stem, and a top with an overlapping edge.

I have made some preparations for setting hedges—one of osage orange around a field, and one of privet or willow around my house and yard. I have been told that it is best to set out in double rows, alternating the plants so as to prevent animals from creeping through. I would like to hear from THE TRIBUNE on this point; also, about the privet, or willow, as to which is the best to plant.—E. T. B., Fulton county, Ark.

Ans. Good hedges may be made from either single or double rows, but we prefer the single row, as taking up less space and making an equally good fence. The privet is far superior to the willow as a plant for an ornamental hedge, and becomes really a good fence against stock when it is well cared for and becomes compact and dense. Stock rarely seek to go through a hedge unless they see something attractive beyond; hence the value of a close hedge. The Japan privet is the best of the privets for a hedge, and as it grows as readily from cuttings as a willow, is easily started.

Report of the Committee on a Home for the National Grange.

Your Committee, to whom the following preamble and resolution were referred—to wit:

"Whereas, in the history of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, the time has arrived when the National Grange should have a permanent home, where the records and archives of the Order may be preserved; and

"Whereas there are thousands of Patrons throughout the land who would cheerfully contribute to the erection of such a home, in this, the beautiful Capital of our country, where Patrons from all States and Territories may be welcomed; therefore

"*Resolved*, That a special committee be appointed to take this subject into consideration, and report a system by which the funds necessary to execute this scheme may be raised"—

Beg leave to report that they are strongly convinced in regard to the vital importance of the subject-matter of the resolution and the influence it would exert in extending knowledge with reference to the objects and purposes of the Order, and that it would in various respects assist in rendering more efficient all efforts that may be made towards its welfare, and greatly strengthen its basis for perpetuity, and recommend:

First—That the Masters of State Granges here assembled urge upon their respective State Granges, at their next meeting, the advisability of such an effort.

Second—That the members of the Several State Granges press upon their Subordinate Granges the propriety of contributing, either as individuals or as Granges, for the accomplishment of this purpose.

Third—That Grange Lecturers and Editors of the Grange Press are fraternally solicited to present the claims of this enterprise to their audiences and in the columns of their papers.

Fourth—That all sums contributed by individuals or by Subordinate Granges be deposited in our Fiscal Agency to the credit of the Treasurer of the National Grange, who shall open an account there, to be known as "The Building Fund" account.

Fifth—That these contributions shall be forwarded through the same channel through which State Grange dues pass in reaching the Fiscal Agency.

Sixth—That the Treasurer of the National Grange be instructed to procure a book, in which the names of all contributors and the sums contributed be properly entered, and that he furnish receipts for the same.

Seventh—That this Building Fund shall be expended by order of the National Grange, and only for the erection of a Patron's or Grange Temple.

Eighth—That, in due time, a building fund certificate be prepared, containing an engraving of the proposed Temple, and such other devices as may be agreed upon, the same to be transmitted to every individual who donates the sum of fifty cents or more. All of which is respectfully submitted.

L. Rhone, Put. Darden, J. H. Brigham, W. A. Armstrong, D. Wyatt Aiken, William Saunders, F. M. McDowell.

Marvelous Restorations.

The cures which are being made by Drs. Starkey and Palen, 1109 Girard St., Philadelphia, in Consumption, Catarrh, Neuralgia, Bronchitis, Rheumatism, and all chronic diseases, by their new Vitalizing Treatment, are indeed marvelous. If you are a sufferer from any disease which your physician has failed to cure, write for information about their new Treatment, and it will be promptly sent.