

WEIGHING THE BABY.

"How many pounds does the baby weigh?—Baby was came out a month ago! How many pounds from the crowning curl? To the rosy point of the restles toe!"

SIX HUNDRED DOLLARS A YEAR.

Such is the title of a small book published by Ticknor & Fields. The writer accepted a sum of six hundred dollars exempted from taxation as an assumption by Congress that sum would be sufficient for the maintenance of a family, and that all beyond was practically a surplus which the receiver could well afford to have taxed.

The author has written the book, and has patiently borne the burden of the most obnoxious tax ever imposed upon them, but he does not know whether any of the legislators who passed the law have ever tried the experiment of living on so small a sum; but, judging from the high salaries they receive, he is not inclined to believe that they would have been able to do so.

The new appointee was exactly calculated to render the collection of a disagreeable impost even more unpleasant. Under any circumstances, he would have been able to do so, but when we discovered that there was a small surplus over our wants, it was remarkable how easily we were enabled to increase it. In our lowest condition, we never despaired of seeing better times.

Provisions and clothing were thus so high, that we were obliged to reduce our expenses to a few hundred dollars to our former income. We had but the old sum of six hundred a year to live upon. The landlord had doubled our rent, and from the scarcity of dwellings we had to choose between a small one, or a large one, and a housekeeping altogether. A host of applicants stood waiting to secure our pleasant little home, if we should decide to give it up.

The writer gives numerous details of household expenses and economies, tells of a little garden, and what came of it, and enters into minute details which cannot be quoted here, but which presents the problem of a narrow income in simple and intelligible terms.

The lady philosophically comforts herself by saying "that so long as we report a single dollar, there is a guarantee that behind it will be found the really all-sufficient six hundred a year."

The little volume is very interesting, and will throw the case of a large class of readers. It is pleasantly written, and neatly printed and bound.

It is astonishing, even to ourselves, to find how soon we were again in a home, as well in our pocket as in our hearts. A few weeks sufficed to bring back the old routine of every-day life, together with our former plans for household expenditure. There were many changes to be made in my allowances and habits, for wages had risen as well as other things. But we were better able to pay our difference. We could not complain of these when our income was so much larger. It was longer only eight hundred, but had grown fifteen hundred, with a respectable sum in government funds. Upon the whole, now that we were all over, I sometimes began to think that it was a good thing for me that my husband had been drafted; for we were so much better off now than we were when he was in the army. I thought very differently had any calamity happened to either of us in consequence.

As wages went up, prices went up also, and the writer had to change her base lightly. She says:— "I began my history with the intention of showing how we managed to live, in a tolerably comfortable and genteel way, on six hundred a year, and I think I have proved by actual figures that it was done. Prices of everything have since risen very high, and now, in the year of 1867, they are still higher, and when they are to stop no one appears able or willing to tell. If we had not received that acceptable and most timely increase of our income, we would not have made up our minds to one of two things—either to cut down our expenses, by doing without many of the articles named on my list as among the most ordinary comforts of life, or we should be compelled to go in debt. Of the two evils we should certainly choose the latter, and so preferred to live on less, or potatoes rather than go beyond our means. With our present thirteen hundred dollars, clear of house rent, we were, indeed, very comfortable, and upwards, and our budget was not very different from six hundred in gold a few years ago. When we bought sugar at nine cents the pound instead of twenty, and coffee for sixteen instead of fifty—when the servant's wages were a dollar and a quarter instead of two dollars and upwards, and our butter could be had all the year at an average of thirty, instead of sixty cents, I surely need not argue the question.

Two or three chapters treat of cookery, making preserves, etc., and will be of special interest to the ladies. The recipes are too-often, and show that "six hundred a year" is not without its luxuries. Another chapter treats of the education of children; and the last chapter discourses of laying up of money, the tax on incomes, etc. We quote:— "It is singular how easy the business of accumulating money becomes, when one has actually begun to save. A very rich man declared that he had never seen a man who had not got possession of the first thousand dollars; but that it was the easiest thing to acquire a fortune. I do not know how this may be, never having been the self-complacent possessor of the precious article. If a sailor were to get a surplus over our wants, it was remarkable how easily we were enabled to increase it. In our lowest condition, we never despaired of seeing better times. If a sailor were to get a surplus over our wants, it was remarkable how easily we were enabled to increase it. In our lowest condition, we never despaired of seeing better times. If a sailor were to get a surplus over our wants, it was remarkable how easily we were enabled to increase it. In our lowest condition, we never despaired of seeing better times.

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Well, Arthur filled up the schedule, and I sent it to the collector. Of course we were no longer exempt from taxation; but we were not poorer than the six hundred dollars of former years, and our present more adequate fifteen hundred, must now be reported for taxation. Our tax was now forty-seven dollars, instead of two, as in previous years, yet we were abundantly better able to pay it. Though this obliged to tell exactly what we were worth, still we congratulated ourselves that we no longer knew any of the matters that the assessor judges them, or our own worth, a few weeks afterwards, we saw the list of incomes of the whole town published in the newspaper. We had seen similar lists in the great city papers, but our publisher at home had not had sufficient enterprise to serve up the same kind of local information until now. It seemed that just as we were getting a trifle to report, we were to be exposed in this public manner. No doubt every other person so reported felt exactly as we did. Indeed, there was a general denunciation of the editor for committing so great an outrage. Every one of us thought that everybody else was scrutinizing his individual condition, for we all felt that it was a matter of much more importance than we really are.

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