St. Johnsbury Caledonian.

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The Leak in the Dyke.

A STORY OF HOLLAND.

The good dame looked from her cottage
At the close of the pleasant day,
And cheerily called to her little son
Outside the door at play:
"Come, Peter, come! I want you to go,
While there is light to see,
To the hut of the blind old man who lives
Across the dyke, for me;
And take these cakes I made for him—
They are hot and smoking yet.
You have time enough to go and come
Before the sun is set."

Then the good wife turned to her labor,
Humming a simple song,
And tho't of her husband, working hard
At the sluices all day long;
And set the turf a-blazing,
And brought the coarse bla & bread;
That he might find a fire at night,
And find the table spread.

And Peter left the brother,
With whom all day he had played,
And the slater, who watched their sports,
In the willow's tender shade:
And told them they'd see him back before
They saw a star in sight,
Though he wouldn't be afraid to go
In the very darkest night!
For he was a brave, bright fellow,
With eye and conscience clear:
He could do whatever a boy might do,
And he had not learned to fear.
Why, he wouldn't have robbed a bird's nest,
Nor brought a stick to harm,
Though never a law in Holland
Had stood to stay his arm!

And now with his face all glowing,
And eyes as light as the day
With the thoughts of his pleasant errand,
He trudged along the way;
And soon his joyous prattle
Made glad a lonesome place—
Alas!, if only the blind old man
Could have seen the happy face!
Yet he somehow caught the brightness
Which his voice and presence lent;
And he felt the sunshine come and go
As Peter came and went.

And now, as the day was sinking,
And the wind began to rise,
The mother looked from her door again,
Shading her anxious eyes;
And saw the shadows deepen,
And birds to their homes come back,
But never a sign of Peter
Along the level track.
But she said, "He will come at morning
So I need not fret or grieve—
Though it isn't like my boy at all
To stay without my leave."

But where was the child delaying,
On the homeward way was he,
And across the dyke while the sun was up
An hour above the sea.
He was stopping now to gather flowers,
Now listening to the sound,
As the angry waves dashed themselves
Against their narrow bound.
"Ah! well for us," said Peter,
"That the gates are good and sound,
And my father tends them carefully,
Or they would not hold you long!
You're a wicked sea," said Peter;
"I know why you fret and chafe:
You'd like to spoil our lands and homes,
But our sluices keep you safe!"

But hark! Through the noise of waters
Come a low, clear, trickling sound:
And the child's face pales with terror,
And his blossoms drop to the ground.
He is up the bank in a moment,
And, stealing through the sand,
He sees a stream not yet so large
As his slender childish hand.
'Tis a leak in the dyke! He is but a boy,
Unused to fearful scenes:
But young as he is, he has learned to know
The dreadful thing that it means.
A leak in the dyke! The stout-est heart
Grows faint that cry to hear,
And the bravest man in all the land
Turns white with mortal fear.
For he knows the smallest leak may grow
To a flood in a single night;
And he knows the strength of the sea, when
Roused in its angry might.

And the boy! He has seen the danger,
And shouting a wild alarm,
He forces back the weight of the sea
With the strength of his single arm!
He listens for the joyful sound
Of a footstep passing nigh:
And lays his ear to the ground, to catch
The answer to his cry.
And he hears the rough winds blowing,
And the waters rise and fall,
But never an answer comes to him,
Save the echo of his call.
He sees no hope, no succor,
His feeble voice is lost;
Yet what shall he do but watch and wait,
Though he perish at his post!

So, faintly calling and crying
Till the sun is under the sea;
Crying and moaning till the stars
Come out for company;
He thinks of his brother and sister,
Asleep in their safe warm bed;
He thinks of his father and mother,
Of himself as dying—and dead;
And of how, when the night is over,
They must come and find him at last;
But he never thinks he can leave the place
Where duty holds him fast.

The good dame in the cottage
Is up and astir with the light,
For the thought of her little Peter
Has been with her all night.
And now she watches the pathway,
As yester eve she had done;
But what does she see so strange and black
Against the rising sun?
Her neighbors are bearing between them
Something straight to her door:
Her child is coming home, but not
As he ever came before!

"He is dead!" she cries; "my darling!"
And the startled father hears,
And comes and looks the way she looks,
And fears the thing she fears;
Till a glad shout from the bearers
Thrills the stricken man and wife—
"Give thanks, for your son has saved our land,
And God has saved his life!"
So, there in the morning sunshine,
They knelt about the boy;
And every head was bared and bent
In tearful, reverent joy.

'Tis many a year since then; but still
When the sea roars like a flood,
Their boys are taught what a boy can do
Who is brave, and true, and good.
For every man in that country
Takes his son by the hand,
Tells him of little Peter,
Whose courage saved the land.
They have many a valiant hero,
Remembered through the years;
But never one whose name so oft
Is named with loving tears.
And his deed shall be sung by the cradle,
And told to the child on the knee
So long as the dykes of Holland
Divide the land from the sea.

—*Phebe Cary.*

Farm, Garden and Kitchen.

Stirring the Soil in a Drouth.

A correspondent of the Journal of Agriculture says: "It was in the middle of a hot day towards the end of a long drouth, that I took my friend to a corn-field that had been thoroughly cultivated during all the drouth. He was a nonbeliever in stirring the soil. 'The soil,' he said, 'that is thrown up will dry out, and so much moisture is lost.'

"I took him to the hill and showed him the soil between the rows that had been kept well stirred during the drouth. It was mellow and heavy; the weight was that of shot, it seemed. I opened it, and near the surface not so much from it was the moist ground. This pleased and surprised him. He went to the ground near the hill, where the cultivator had not reached it, and where the hoe had passed but once or twice. The ground was mellow; it seemed as good as the rest, though there was a difference, and sufficient for the practiced eye to discover at once; it had a more compact yet mealy appearance. The soil at the hill was crusty, dry—by far several inches. The substitute for all the hills that were tried showed the same, while the soil beneath was invariably moist.

"Here was a fact that was satisfactory. Nothing more was wanted than just such soil all through the field, up to the hill, the whole surface uniformly moist. But what brought it here, the moisture, in this great drouth? The corn grew rapidly and largely. The soil was brown, with a hard pan beneath, say eight to ten inches. Clay prevailed largely, with some sand and some humus, having been tilled and kept in tolerable order several years, and the year previous underlaid with general clover. The season helped, the soil helped, but must we rely on to [illegible]

"[illegible] was found the [illegible] sufficient to keep down the weeds. Large cracks [illegible] drouth [illegible] up for crickets, and the dust [illegible] good [illegible] The insect said was hot, and dry [illegible] a hot pan on almost impenetrable subsoil. But the roots [illegible] moisture from the soil, that lay cool on the surface. The way seemed [illegible] and I could easily be convinced.

"[illegible] the soil [illegible] the hot pan. I saw cracks. The soil was rich and [illegible] This afforded food, the rest was as it were used."

Currants and Currant Jelly.

No food is more sure of a market than currants, as the manufacturers of currant jelly in the large cities are always ready purchasers, while the increased consumption of currant jelly will ensure a continuance of the demand.

To make current jelly, place the currants in a stone jar, and suspend this jar in a vessel of boiling water until the currants are in a condition to yield their juice readily; then place them while hot in a bag, and press out the juice; add pure double refined loaf sugar, and then boil until it jellies—this point is ascertained by dropping a portion on a cold plate, and if it will hold fast with the plate upside down, it is done, and should be removed from the fire. Should any scum arise, it may be skimmed off—put the jelly while hot into jars, and cover tightly. Our experiment last year resulted thus: twenty-seven quarts of currants gave twenty-nine pints of juice, and with twenty-nine pounds of double refined sugar, gave eighteen and a half quarts of very superior currant jelly. Those who suppose that currant jelly can be made with common brown sugar, or even with inferior loaf sugar, will find themselves without a market, as an inferior article cannot be sold.

How to Preserve Apples.—The editor of the Northern Farmer says: "Apples may be kept a long time beyond the usual season by packing in shavings. We kept apples this year, that were in good eating condition in February, until July, and they possessed all the delicacy of flavor that is had in the earliest maturity—to the last, and, had we chosen, we could, without doubt, have kept them until apples came again.

A Very Thrilling Adventure.

I was a medical student at Paris at the time the strange and startling adventure happened which I am about to record. Tired with long lectures and hard study, I was out one evening for a walk in the fresh air. It was a pleasant day in midwinter and the cold, bracing air, as it touched my feverish brow, caused a grateful sensation.

Passing through a rather lonely street, near the river, I was surprised at meeting a young and pretty girl, (at least so she appeared in the dim light of a rather distant street lamp,) who carried in her hand some three or four bouquets, which she offered for sale.

"Will Monsieur have a bouquet?" she asked in a sweet musical tone, holding out to me a well arranged collection of flowers.

"They are very pretty," said I, taking them in my hand; and then, somehow, I could not help adding, as I fixed my eyes upon her's, "and so, I think, is their fair owner."

"Monsieur will buy, and prove it?" she said.

"Do you really need assistance?"

"Why else should I be here this hour of the night, Monsieur?"

"And why here at all?" quickly retorted I. "This street is very little frequented, and it is about the last place in the world I should have selected for the passing of a luxury most suited to wealth and fashion."

She sighed and rocked out her hand for the bouquet which I still retained.

"What is your price?"

"Five francs."

"A large sum."

"Monsieur will remember that it is winter, and flowers are not plenty."

"For that I will purchase," returning I laughingly to her the opposite silver coin, "though I know that I would hardly indulge in the luxury to-morrow at such an extravagant price."

She thanked me, and seemed about to depart, but hesitatingly looked up to me and said,

"Could Monsieur direct me to the house of a good physician, who will come out to-night to see a patient, at a small recompense?"

"Ally friend of yours ill?"

"My mother," with a deep sigh and downcast look.

"Where does she reside?"

"Only a short distance from here."

"What is the matter with her?"

"She has a high fever for one three."

"When was she taken?"

"She came down last night, and has not left her bed since."

"Why did you not send for a doctor at once?"

"We hoped she would get better soon, and it is so expensive for poor people to employ a physician."

"I am myself a medical student with considerable experience among the sick of the hospitals, and if you are disposed to trust the case to me, I am at your service without charge." I my look so really feeling deeply interested in the fair girl.

"Oh, how shall I thank you, Monsieur?" she exclaimed with clasped hands and an upward, grateful look. "Pray follow me, Monsieur le Docteur."

She turned at once, and led me by a rapid pace from the street, toward the River Seine, in the direction I was walking when I met her.

[illegible] buildings, and spacious warehouses, some of which seemed to stretch for a mile along [illegible]

"My mother lives [illegible]" inquired I, [illegible]

"Only a step, Monsieur, it is just here."

Almost immediately she turned into a covered passage, which I think must be an alley, [illegible] Dark and [illegible] I [illegible] to [illegible] "[illegible] Monsieur le Docteur," she said, at the same time I heard it unlocking, and leading me forward.

I was tempted to draw back and refuse to go any further, though I so unhesitatingly followed her.

"We now went through a long passage in total darkness, and after two or three short turns, began to descend a flight of circular rotten stairs.

"Is it possible that you live in a place like this?" said I, secretly wishing my self out of it.

"In Paris beggars cannot be choosers," replied the girl.

"But even in Paris it is not necessary for the poor to take up their abodes in sepulchres!" I rejoined, with some asperity, being vexed at myself for suffering my good nature to lead me into a den from which I might never come out alive.

To this my fair guide deigned no reply. On reaching the foot of the stairs she pushed open a door into a small dimly lighted room, and I followed her into it with some vague misgivings. There was a bed in one corner, and on it appeared to be a human form lying very still.

"I have brought a doctor, mother," said the girl, as she closed the door behind me. As there was no reply to this she turned to me saying:

"Will Monsieur le Docteur please be seated a minute? I think my mother is asleep."

"I beg that mademoiselle will bear in mind that I can only spare a few minutes in this case to-night, as I have another call I wish to make immediately," feeling anxious to depart from that subterranean quarter as quick as possible.

"Monsieur shall not be detained long by me," rejoined the girl, passing out of the room by another door.

I did not sit down, but walked over to the bed, where the patient was lying very still—so still, indeed, that I could not detect any breathing. A woman's cap was on the head, and as the end of the sheet concealed the face, I ventured to turn this down carefully, and beheld the eyeless sockets and grinning teeth of a human skull!

I started back in horror, and at the same moment the door by which the girl had left was thrown open, and in marched, one after the other, four stalwart forms in black gowns and masks. I at once, then, knew I was to be robbed, and probably murdered. I wore a heavy diamond pin and ring, carried a very valuable gold watch, and had in money about my person, some five hundred francs, but not a single weapon of any kind—resistance, being therefore, out of the question, I felt that my only chance—if indeed there was a chance—was to conciliate the ruffians and buy myself off. With a presence of mind, for which I still take to myself considerable credit, I said at once:

"I understand it all, gentlemen, and you will find me a liberal person to deal with. There is one thing I ask very humbly, because it is the only one I have, and I cannot replace it—that is my life. Everything else of mine is at your service, even beyond what I have with me."

They were evidently surprised by this address, but they marched forward and very soon relieved me of every cent I possessed. They returned a receipt