Iron County Register

BY ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON. - - MISSOURI.

THE NEW YEAR.

The world is full of mystery,
 Which no one understands;
What is before our eyes we see,
 The work of unseen hands;
But whence, and when and why they
 wrought,
Escapes the grasp of human thought.

There was a time when we were not,
 And there will be again,
When we must cease and be forgot,
 With all our joy and pain,
Gone like the wind, or like the snow
That fell a thousand years ago.

We live as if we should not die,
 Blindly, but wisely, too,
For if we knew Death always nigh,
 What would we say or do,
But fold our hands and close our eyes,
And care no more who lives or dies?

If death to each man in his turn
 Is coming soon or late,
Be ours the soldier's unconcern
 And his courageous fate;
Better to perish in the strife
Than to preserve the coward's life.

Before my heart's fire pondering long,
 As 'twere a bivouac,
I heard last night the solemn song,
 Which I have summoned back.
It seems my somber mood to cheer,
And is my greeting to the Year.

New Year, if you were bringing Youth,
 As you are bringing Age,
I would not have it back; in sooth,
 I have no strength to wage
Lost battles over. Let them be.
Bury your head, O Memory!

You can bring nothing will surprise,
 And nothing but dismay.
No tears again in these old eyes,
 No darkness in my day.
You might bring light and smiles instead
If you could give me back my dead.

I have beheld your kiss, New Year,
 Full fifty times, and none
That was so happy and so dear,
 I wept when it was done.
Why should we weep when years depart
And leave their ashes in the heart?

Good-bye, since you are gone, Old Year,
 And my past life, good-bye,
I shed no tear upon your bier,
 For it is well to die.
New Year, your worst will be my best;
What can an old man want but rest?
 —R. H. Stoddard.

MISS DOROTHY'S DAY.

An Entertaining Story For the New Year.

"I reckon baby'll have to be mighty well bundled up, to go that far on muleback, and come home in the dead o' night, Susanna," said one mother to another, as they sat with each a child on her lap before a blazing fire, that crackled and sputtered and threw its light into the farthest corner of the room. The speaker continued without giving her neighbor an opportunity to reply: "You remember the shawl Miss Dorothy gave my Amandy last year because she had learned to read so nicely? Well, I'm going to wrap my baby in it to keep it from takin' cold. I only wish you had something as warm."

The tone was intended to be kindly and the offer a friendly one, but there was an underlying something in the voice, or words, or both, that caused the other to glance quickly up from the child's face, and reply with a certain dignity:

"You are very kind, Samanthy Jones, but I have plenty of clothes to wrap my baby in—thanks to Miss Dorothy's teaching."

"Well, you needn't be huffy about it. I'm sure I meant no harm, and going back to what we were talking about—I must say, I don't see how we ever managed to live before she came among us. I'm allers afeared she'll go as she came, all of a sudden, and no one knows where. There's something mighty mysterious about her, anyway, with her dainty ways, her quiet voice and her snow-white cap. I'd give a good deal to know what that cap covers—"

"Hush, Samanthy! I'm afraid to speak in that free way about her. I've told Simon over and over, the day would come when we should have no Miss Dorothy, riding around with her little mules and cart, teaching us how to bring up our children, and helping us nurse our sick folks. I believe it would break my heart to go back to the old ways of living again, though that's really impossible after all these years' teaching."

"I feel just the same as you do, Susanna, only I never had quite your chance at book larnin', and can't tell my thoughts quite as pert as you do; yet, much as I set store by her, it allers puzzles me to know where she gets all her money. It stands to reason she must use a sight o' it. What with medicine, and books, and presents—and all her fences and building, it must cost her nigh about as much as all the county. If you stop to think o' it, she never learns one o' our ways, but we've learned a sight o' hearn. Good evenin', Simon."

"Good evening, neighbor. We never hear 'howdy' any more, do we? Of course you're ready for to-morrow. Give me the child, Susanna," and taking the half sleeping child from the woman's arms, he retired to a corner where the shadow fell, and was soon intent on getting the baby asleep. In the meantime, two or three others came in, mostly near neighbors, and seated themselves by the fire-place to talk over the coming event, whatever it was.

"There's been great doings at her house this week," spoke up Mrs. Fundy, in a shrill voice, conscious that she was uttering something of more than usual importance, "I sent John over a minute this morning to ask for a pattern I wanted, and he said they were all fixed to fits, and a hammering like mad, and outside the door were big boxes that hadn't been opened. We're going to have a big treat to-morrow, or I miss my guess. I'm glad it's full moon, so coming home we'll have plenty o' light. Where'll she put us all? But pshaw! what do I say that for, when I've seen her stow us away every year? She's a wonderful woman, she is."

"We were just saying the same thing when you came," said the one who had been called Samanthe Jones, "and I was wondering where all the money came from for her to spend. You may depend on't there's something back of her coming here that she wouldn't have us know for worlds, and though I think as much of Miss Dorothy as any one. I know that where there's a mystery, there's sure to be something wrong."

"Then it's a pity there is not more wrong going on in the world, if it makes such women as she is, I say;" the voice came from the corner in the shadow and was a man's, 'and if what she says about God is true, I don't see why He don't make more folks like her, and not such a no-account lot of women as there are. Just think how we lived here before she came. Hog and hominy, year in and year out, and mighty glad if we got the hog then. Now we have chickens, and eggs, and white bread and potatoes, and sorghum, and our places are all fixed up, our windows have glass in them, and not a one of us that hasn't a horse or mule to go about on. She knows everything worth knowing, and can doctor our cows and pigs as well as our children, and I don't see whose business it is where she gets her money as long as she is nothing but a blessing. All I've got to say is, why on earth ain't there more like her? Perhaps where she came from they're all like her."

"And p'rays there's men there to match 'em. I reckon one's made to suit the t'other," replied Mrs. Jones, in a voice far from amiable.

"Tut, tut! No need of getting into a temper over what I said, though I never like to hear folks hint at something wrong about the woman that's done more for us than all the ministers that ever lived. What did we use to do Christmas, Fourth O' July, Thanksgiving and New Year's before she came here? You know as well as I do. We just sat around barefooted and ragged, with pipes in our mouths. How did our cabins look then? Not a pane of glass or window curtain, let alone having gardens, and vines, and fancy notions. What did we ride then? Blessed, if we didn't walk everywhere. Yet, I've heard more than one that has been helped by her say there was something out of the way with her, cause why? She just lives to do good to everybody, and to-morrow there'll be people going to her house, and eating her good things, who will throw out the same mean hints. Such folks ain't fit to live, let alone being treated well."

"I'm powerful glad, it ain't me you're hitting, Simeon Gravitt, for I do despise a slandering tongue. I guess I'll be goin' now, so as to be ready for an early start in the morning. Come along right early and we'll all go together."

"Ha! ha! ha! I thought she'd start. It takes me to clear out hornets an' rattlesnakes and old women with strings in tongues."

"And you oughter to be ashamed of yourself, for doesn't she tell us we must treat people well in our own houses. Howsomever, I was kinder glad to hear you speak out. We must get things good and ready for morning, as Mrs Fundy said. I feel as if we should never have another day at Miss Dorothy's."

"That's some more of your nonsense, Susanna. You're always feeling what is going to happen. If I thought it would come true this time, I'd never smile to-morrow once."

"I'm sure I hope not, just as much as you do; but what is going to happen, 'll happen, whether or no, I reckon." After a few more words, the visitors rose to leave, and in twenty minutes fires were covered, and all was quiet in the log house of Simon Gravitt. Perhaps they dreamed of the coming day, perhaps they did not dream at all, but while they sleep we will tell something of the woman and the day, that caused all this excitement.

Dorothea Langley had been delicately nurtured, had been accustomed to every comfort and even elegance of life, yet at the age of thirty-five we find her living among the mountains in one of our border States, apparently as much at home among the simple-hearted country folk, as she had formerly been with the cultured and refined. She wore a small cap of white muslin, that merely hinted at her golden-brown hair, and tied under her chin with snowy strings, like her grandmother's in the old-fashioned portrait at home. This cap would have been a most unbecoming adornment to ninety-nine women out of every hundred, but Miss Dorothy was the one out of the hundred to whom it was an ornament. It gave an added sweetness to the curve of the chin, and softened the brightness of her hazel eyes by its soft edges. Yes, her cap was becoming to her, and though she found this out after having worn it a year or so, it had no effect whatever upon her. She wore it for reasons of her own, entirely apart from the question of beauty or looks.

To have lived thirty-five years, possessed of more than usual attractions, was sufficient in and out of itself to set idle tongues wagging; but to leave society and the great world of fashion, put a Quaker-like cap upon her head, and settle among the wilds of distant mountains, leaving no clue to her whereabouts, keeping up no connection with the old life; surely this was more than a nine day's wonder, and even among the class to whom she had come as an angel from heaven, it was a mystery constantly forcing itself upon their notice.

It was the last day of the year 1881, and the morrow, or, "Miss Dorothy's Day," was in the thought of old and young for many miles. She had been among them seven years. She had come when azaleas and rhododendrons were in full bloom, and the mountain-sides showed neither bowlder or barrenness because of the verdure and bloom that concealed them. She had bought twenty-five acres of wild woodland, had put men with strong muscles at work to clear it, with an eye to final beauty; and here she had seen her log house built. If she was to be anything to these people she must meet them where they were, not on her own level, so the house was of logs like their own, with all the added beauty that taste and refinement could give. She knew enough of human nature to be assured of a welcome not altogether hearty, and her first step must be to win their confidence. It was slow progress she made, but sure. The log house did much for her, for it spoke constantly to the passers, saying, "Here dwells a woman without nonsense and airs," but with the logs all similarity ended.

Everything within and around it was as æsthetic as if belonging to a poet's home, and all its beauty was planned with a single intent, viz: that they should see, admire and imitate. That this had not been in vain, we can glean from Simon Gravitt's words; that Miss Dorothea herself was not satisfied was just as true. The worker never sees the full effect of his work, and Miss Dorothy at times gave way to a feeling of discouragement that would have astonished the people who saw farther than she, and felt more deeply than she dreamed.

Perhaps the greatest good she had done them had been just where she would have placed it least of all. This was in teaching them to set apart certain days of the year for holidays, whereon they must dress in their best and meet together for social enjoyment.

She began with Christmas, by inviting them to meet in the school-house, where she had prepared a Christmas tree and some trifling gift for each. Next year she added the Fourth of July; then Thanksgiving, and followed it the same year by a cordial invitation to her own home for New Year's Day, where she entertained them from morning till night, gave them a bountiful repast, and sent them home as happy as mortals could be. From that time the beginning of every year found them gathered together at her house, and, far and near, the day had come to be known as "Miss Dorothy's Day."

The mountains where all this life went on, were a range running from northeast to southwest, through one of our Southern States, that through the war formed a border land between North and South. They were bold, and high at their sides, and hid beneath their surface mines of iron and coal, sufficient for countless generations of wasteful humans. On their tops, broad table-lands stretched for miles, as level as the rolling prairies of the West, and rich with lumber for the needs of the future. Capitalists passing over these mountains made a note of all these possibilities, where some day they might invest surplus capital; but to the dwellers of the region, no thought of marketable values ever came. To them it was a place where nature joined hands with human nature to help it to thrive without effort, and this was the reason that no homes, worthy the name, could be found there, when Dorothy Langley first came among them. Occasionally a straggling visitor, desirous of discovering some new region, would stop at the foot of the mountain, hire a ricketty wagon and a driver to take him to the wonderful table-lands of which he had heard rumors. He was glad to return in a short time, and would describe it as "semi-barbarous, inhabited by shiftless ne'er-do-weels."

After Miss Dorothy's house was built, gradually the neighborhood about her changed its aspects. Over the log houses, vines were trained—roses and honeysuckles and trumpet-creepers and passion-flowers in glorious profusion. At the windows curtains were seen, and within rag-carpets, and shelves ornamented with mosses, met the eye.

There was old grandmother who still smoked her pipe in the chimney-corner, but even she never ventured on the front porch with it, save in the shadows of the twilight; yet the time had been, and not long since, that young women as well as old, had smoked regularly and constantly. They had not given up the habit because of anything Miss Dorothy had said, but under her influence the evil had been relegated to the dark corner, and thrift had taken the place of untidiness.

She was seven years younger then than now, just twenty-eight years old—with a form made up of pretty curves and plumpness, and cheeks that still had the pink of apple-blossoms on them. Since that time she had grown a shade paler, but her face had changed but little otherwise. The work of building and beautifying had gone steadily on, until at the end of seven years there seemed but little else to be done. Trees, natives on the mountain, had been set out in clumps through her ground, with an eye to the effect to be produced by spring flowers and autumn colorings. A school-house nestled among the deep-green cedars, and had for a background the scarlet sourwoods. Poultry houses and yards were equally æsthetic, and vine-yards and orchards lay beyond. All this sounds tame, but the reality was charming, and Arcadia would have been a most appropriate name for Miss Dorothy's home. She called it, however, by the less attractive one of Nemesis. Why—none knew. They did not even know the meaning of the name.

When the arrangement's for the morrow's festivities were at length finished on this last day of the year 1881, and the blazing fire of logs attracted her to rest and meditate, Miss Dorothy, partly from fatigue, partly from the reaction of intense nervous strain, seated herself in front of the fire, and, burying her face in her hands, gave way to a spell of the blues. She would have been more than human could she have lived unmoved through the season that carried her back, more than any other, to friends and loved ones, and Miss Dorothy was thoroughly human.

Pose, her faithful dog, lying at her feet, grew uneasy at her attitude, and licked her hand beseechingly.

"Yes, Pose, I know all you would say to me, old fellow, and your counsel is good," she said at length, patting his black head. "You would tell me how much truer my dumb friends are than those of whom I think; and you are right. My mules, my calves and you, are all the society I wish, and I am really content. If you can't talk the world's language, you at least do not chatter meaningless nonsense, and say what you do not mean; and your eyes tell me of your love a thousand times a day, and, best of all, you prove it by your actions. I would not give you for all the friends of fashion I ever knew. Now for some music."

Pose jumped to his feet at the words, for she had talked to him so much that he understood every word, and began jumping about with evident delight that he had broken her mood. When she again seated herself, guitar in hand, he stationed himself at her side, with all his dog's senses alert to the strain she would first produce. He had learned to know her moods by the tunes she chose. Pose was as much a character as his mistress. He had followed her home from Board-Hollow one day when a mere puppy, and had forever after refused to leave her. She had paid for him since, and named him Purpose, because the old man who owned him said he always acted with a purpose, and Purpose had gradually been changed into Pose. He could do everything but talk and read. He could count correctly, and bring home cattle or sheep without missing one. In his own way he could sing and dance, and understood the English language perfectly. He was the only dog on the mountains of his kind, and the people said, "Like mistress, like dog—he is just suited to her." He never left his mistress, except when her interests demanded it, but only in the evening could they fully enjoy each other's society.

His mistress began to sing "Robin Adair." Had it been "I Can Not Sing the Old Songs," Pose would have been wretched, but "Robin Adair" meant content and cheer, and he was a happy dog.

"You are a polite fellow, Pose. Few humans could listen to the same old songs year after year with such apparent delight. What should I do without you, dear?"—here she pulled his long silky ears out over her hand—"but the time must come that we must part, and then who'll take the missing place? The fact is, we're growing old, my dog. You do not see my gray hairs, but I counted five to-day, and soon my head will need no cap to change my appearance, while you are growing staid and quiet, and life will soon be over for us both. Only yesterday the cow rang her bell twice before you heard her, and your naps are growing longer and more frequent; but we'll stand by each other till the last, and then—what then? Shall I find you over there, and have you always? Who knows?"

Here Pose began wagging his tail vigorously with heavy thumps upon the floor, to show his hearty response to her sentiment, while she continued:

"Now we'll have the last dance of old '81 together, just to show we are not so very old. Who knows what '82 will bring us?"

She took him by the hand, his two paws in her two hands, and, humming a little air, they moved round and round the room together, throwing shadows on the wall opposite the fire-place.

Out in the cold, frosty air, just as the moon was rising, a black figure moved cautiously to the window of her sitting-room, hid itself behind a bush, and, after a moment, raised itself on tip-toe and looked in. It was just when mistress and dog were at the height of their frolic. The figure did not move, and a voice muttered something about "abomination of a cap," and "forgetting"—then moved slowly off toward the cedars. An hour later, when Miss Dorothy's fire had burned low, and she was sleeping the sleep of the just, the same figure reappeared in the moonlight, and could have been seen prowling around the place so silently that Pose did not awaken. Was it strange that in her dreams that night old familiar faces became blended with burglars, and when she awoke and remembered her whereabouts, she should smile and sigh and go to sleep again?

. . . .

Old men and women, little children and babies, young men and maidens, all met together at Miss Dorothy's that memorable morning of the New Year, 1882. Horses, mules, and even donkeys and oxen, had been employed to carry the people to their destination. Mrs. Fundy and two or three neighbors had formed themselves, as first comers, into a committee of reception, and as each new arrival rode up, they went out to the "upper-block," as the horse-block was called, and in cordial accents greeted the guest with the old-time phrases: "Howdy! Light an' hitch." Before noon the house was full to overflowing, the yard was alive with many men and children, and the odors of savory dishes were wafted far out upon the air, as a hint of the feast preparing.

Such a dinner as it was! However Dinah and her mistress managed to cook so much was the mystery; and, though it was necessary to set the tables in both large rooms, it took three different sets before all were helped. At the first were the married people; then came the younger ones, and, last of all, the children. Miss Dorothy would have liked to have reversed matters, but she saw the eager faces of the hungry men and women, and had not the heart to disappoint them; so she sent out apples and cookies to the children, and told Dinah to hurry the dinner. There had never been so many before to celebrate her day, and she was glad to see among her guests some who had never before accepted her invitation. They were a people of bitter and lasting prejudices, and at first a few families had taken offense at what they called "her airs," and had been for a long time unapproachable. During the past year the ice had been broken by serious illnesses where she had nursed patiently and lovingly, furnishing, in many instances, food and medicine.

While the parents ate their dinner, the children played blind-man's buff in the barn. At four o'clock the wild turkeys and chicken pies, the vegetables, sauces and puddings had been demolished, and visiting began in earnest. In and out among this uneducated throng moved their hostess, Miss Langley, quiet but cheery; loving, saying but little. She had a word for all, some bit of inquiry after an ailment or piece of work, or suggestion that would help in some new endeavor. They never tired of watching her, this quiet, peaceful but powerful woman, of whom they knew so little, and on this day, more than ever before, there seemed a fascination about her that charmed them. The evening revealed the cause of all the pounding and hammering, for Miss Dorothy treated them to a trip to New York with the aid of a magic lantern. She showed them the miseries of lower life there, its want and poverty and crime. She described the difference between life in a tenement house and on the heights of the mountains; in one place all the earth one could hope to own was their last resting-place, while on the other vast acres could be held by the poorest. Then she told them of high life in the city—its hollowness and hard-heartedness, and contrasted this with their own life. All this made them feel proud and glad to be living simple, honest lives apart from these rushing, seething centers of civilization, and when they broke up and started on their different roads homeward, the full moon never shone down on a happier group of mortals; yet not one, except their hostess, had ever seen a railroad, or traveled farther than a mule could carry them.

"It is all over, Pose, and I am glad," sighed out Miss Dorothea, as she closed the door after the last guest. "I'll rest a while, Dinah, while you straighten up."

She drew her own easy-chair before the dark fire place, and proceeded to rake the embers together and coax them into a blaze. A knock startled her. At this hour it must mean sudden and severe sickness. She arose and opened the door to find a stranger standing there. He was unlike those who lived near her, and his dress bespoke city-life.

"Miss Langley, I believe?"

His tones were musical, and startled Miss Dorothy by a suggestion of a voice she had once known. She replied, however, quietly—

"That is the name I am known by"—

"But not your real name!"

She was offended at this, and would have closed door, had he not stepped inside the threshold, glancing at the fire that was now blazing.

"You seem warm and comfortable; could I rest a few moments? I'll not detain you long, for it is getting late."

"It is already late, and I am very weary, but you can sit a moment. Dinah, bring forward a chair."

Dinah did as she was bid, but lingered near her mistress. She knew from her voice that she was annoyed at this unusual call.

The stranger was tall, and what could be seen of his face was handsome, but a heavy growth of hair covered all but his bronzed cheek-bones and brilliant eyes. His forehead was covered by heavy curls. He seated himself with the air of one quite at home, and looked around the room.

"It is very like you," he said.

She started. Who was this that dared trouble her in her retreat? She only said:

"What do you know of me, sir?"

"More than any one in the world, Dolly!"

The tones were tender now, or she had fainted.

"Can it be you bring me tidings of the lost? Your voice is strangely like his."

Again he said "Dolly," but this time it was uttered in tones so unspeakably loving, that she could only cover her face with her hands and murmur:

"How dared you to open a tomb so long time closed, Arthur Preston? I have buried you and all the past in a deep grave, and am happy in my new life."

"Because I love you, Dolly. Because I have searched the world over for you. Because I can not live without you. Why did you ever flee into this wilderness and give me no token?"

"Why did you break your vow to me and marry a woman at the Pacific?"

"Why! Because I never did. There has been some great mistake, Dolly. There was a man in the mines whose name was Preston; it was he that married. I had a long, terrible fever; when I came to myself, I received no letters from you. I said to myself: 'She is true as steel,' and went farther into the mountains. At the end of six months I went again to the coast. In all that time I had heard nothing from you. I could not leave then, for I wanted money to make you happy. I struck luck, and became a rich man. Then I came back, to find you had fled into some unknown region—none knew whither. The only trace I could find was through your banker, and I followed the clew that led me here. Last night I watched you frolic with your dog. 'She does not care, she has forgotten me,' I said, and I cursed the cap that covered your pretty brown hair. To-day I saw you the center of all the country people in the county, but I saw, too, that your face was sad. I knew then that you, too, were wretched, and I could not wait till morning to tell you I was near."

She had been more than woman to have listened to his pleadings unmoved; and when at length they separated, it was to give her a night of unrest, with wide-open eyes, pondering the question of duty or happiness. He settled it for her next morning.

"You are mine, Dolly—mine alone. After all these years of waiting, to whom else do you belong; but this mountain life that you have learned to love, I shall live also; and every year I promise you we shall come back to Nemesis to celebrate the beginning of the years as 'Miss Dorothy's Day.'"

When she had gone, and a wail of lamentation went up from the mountain over their loss, Simon Gravitt said to his wife:

"Never tell me what's going to happen again, Susanna, for you don't know."

"Howsomever, I was right after all, for the times will never be the same again, and we shall never have another genuine 'Miss Dorothy's Day. More's the pity.—*Mrs. Margaret B. Peake, in Chicago Interior.*

WEATHER PROGNOSTICS.

Some of the Signs Upon Which Careful Observers May Rely.

Few intelligent persons can have any sympathy with the so-called prophets who oracularly announce phenomena, giving dates, occasionally making lucky hits, but as often firing their random shots altogether wide of the mark. That there is, however, something in weather philosophy, intelligent persons will be quite ready to concede, and they will be in accord with the views of the writer when he recommends the observation of natural phenomena, which has been long practiced. He says:

If one could read the signs, each day foretells the next; to-day is the progenitor of to-morrow. When the atmosphere is telescopic and distant objects stand out unusually clear and distinct, a storm is near. We are on the crest of the wave, and the depression follows quick. It sometimes happens that clouds are not so indicative of a storm as their total absence. In this state of the atmosphere the stars are unusually numerous and bright at night, which is also a bad omen. It appears that the transparency of the air is prodigiously increased when a certain quantity of water is uniformly diffused through it. Mountaineers predict a change of weather when, the air being calm, the Alps covered with perpetual snow, seem on a sudden to be nearer the observer, and their outlines are marked with great distinctness on the azure sky. This same condition of the atmosphere renders distant sounds more audible.

There is one redness of the east in the morning that means storm; another that indicates wind. The first is broad, deep and angry; the clouds look like an immense bed of burning coals; the second is soft and more vapory. At the point where the sun is going to rise, and a few minutes in advance of his coming there rises straight upward a rosy column, like a shaft of dyed vapor, blending with and and yet partly separated from the clouds, and the base of which presently comes to glow like the sun himself. The day that follows is pretty sure to be windy.

It is uncertain to what extent birds and animals can foretell the weather. When swallows are seen hawking very high, it is a good indication, because the insects upon which they feed venture up there only in the most auspicious weather.

People live in the country all their lives without making one accurate observation about nature. The good observer of nature holds his eye long and firmly to the point, and finally gets the facts, not only because he has the patience, but because his eye is sharp and his inference swift. The are many assertions, the result of hasty and incomplete observation, such as, for instance, that the way the milky way points at night indicates the direction of the wind the next day; also that every new moon indicates either a dry or a wet month. There are many other stories about the moon too numerous to mention. Again, when a farmer kills his hogs in the fall, if the pork be very hard and solid he predicts a severe winter; if soft, the opposite, overlooking the fact that the kind of food and the temperature of the fall make the pork hard or soft. Numerous other instances could be cited to prove that the would-be shrewd farmer does not interpret nature in the right way, and that his conclusions, being hasty and incomplete, are wrong; and until he studies nature understandingly, using a little common sense, so long will he be more or less under the ban or superstition and ignorance.—*Southern Planter.*

—Recent soundings over the bed of the Atlantic Ocean prove the existence of a sunken ridge often less than 1,000 fathoms from the surface, while on either side the water has a depth of 3,500 fathoms. The elevation of the ocean's bed to a height sufficient to make it dry land would therefore bring up a range of mountains, varying from 9,000 to 15,000 feet in height. The higher points of the sunken ridge now form the Azore Islands.

ANGORA CATS.

Several of the Rare Animals to Be Found in San Francisco.

In the hair store under the Baldwin hotel there can be seen at almost any time two large snow-white cats, especially noticeable on account of their long silken hair. During the day they are usually found drowsing in two fancy work-baskets placed on the counter, and apparently undisturbed by the constant chatter about them. After dark they become very active and frisky. The general expression of their faces is much kindlier than that of the ordinary feline, and they are the object of much attention and petting from customers. Inquiry as to their breed elicited the information that they were imported from Angora, a city of Turkey in Asia, well known on account of the long silken hair of the famous Angora goat, which is one of its chief products. The cats are prized chiefly for ornamental purposes, although they evidently have a commercial value, as catskins are found enumerated among the exports. They are very scarce and expensive, and comparatively few have found their way to this country. The first two seen by the reporter weigh about fifteen pounds each, but their bushy growth of hair gives them the appearance of being much larger in size than ordinary cats. In the daytime their eyes are of a pure amber color covering the entire ball of the eye, the pupil being contracted to the minutest black speck in the center. At night the pupil dilates until there is only an occasional rim of yellow to be seen. The ears, nose and toes have a pinkish hue. The most conspicuous and attractive feature is the silken hair, which is about an inch or two long. It is especially thick and prominent about the tail and neck, the former exceptionally long and bushy, while the latter might be readily imagined to be encircled with a series of Elizabethan ruffles of finest lace overlapping each other. They were brought from abroad by a wealthy lady living on O'Farrell street, who appears to have a remarkable fancy and affection for these animals.

A visit to the residence was rewarded by the view of quite a family of them. There are four full grown and three kittens in the house, while at her country seat at Menlo Park she has five or six more. The animals show the same general characteristics, but vary in the color of the hair and eyes. Most of them are white, but others are spotted, and one is entirely black. One of them has the clearest of Saxon blue eyes, while another has one amber and one blue eye. This one is deaf, and it has been discovered that where this peculiar yellowish blue eye occurs, the Angora cats suffer from this affliction. The lady has had many kittens imported, but they are exceedingly difficult to raise, and require as much care and attention as is usually devoted to human babies. They demand not only certain kinds of food, but are very regular in their habits, and only eat at proper meal times. Their food consists mostly of mush and milk, very little meat and that entirely devoid of fat. They eat grass and are particularly fond of catnip and most kinds of vegetables, showing a strong preference for them instead of meat. They are exceedingly gentle in their dispositions, and exhibit a devotion and faithfulness only equaled by that of a dog. Nothing but aggravating and continued annoyance discloses any vicious temperament. The only violent temper that has come under observation was the case of a tom-cat, that had accompanied the lady on a long voyage to China and on her return home showed symptoms of jealousy because of the lady's attention to other old household pets.

In the drug store under the Grand Hotel another of these cats was found. The proprietor has repeatedly refused $150 for it. It is a great favorite and a good mouser. Although it has entire freedom, it never goes beyond the store and never prowls out-doors at night, after the manner of ordinary dissipated felines. A dealer in dogs and cats on Kearney street imported four kittens a few years ago, but they all died before disposed of, probably from the lack of proper attention. They were valued at fifty dollars each.

In order to get the opinion of some one who might be considered expert in judging the value of such animals a visit was made to Woodward's Gardens. F. A. Roop and F. Gruber, in charge of the menagerie and natural history departments, upon being asked if they knew of any Angora cats in this country, stated that none had ever been brought to this coast. They were much surprised when informed by the reporter where they could be found. Beyond some general information, which they kindly furnished, they knew nothing from personal observation. The cats are also found in South Siberia, and bear the same characteristics as those from the Levant. They are of a very delicate constitution, and are not prolific.—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

MONKEYS.

The Demand For Individuals of the Genus Simia For Pets—Their Value.

"Monkeys are in greater demand as pets than most people would suppose possible," said Mr. Alfred Wilkins of 1235 Broadway. "Ladies favor them greatly, chiefly on account of their amusing antics and gestures. Those two in the window keep a crowd in front of the store all day. Look at them now." A monkey, who was eating nothing, put out his hand in a friendly manner to his cage companion, who was holding a nut in his palm. The animal so approached responded to the overture in the readiest manner, but first, as a precautionary measure, transferred the nut to his mouth. This was not what the monkey who made the advance wanted, and he sulkily withdrew his extended hand, while his selfish companion looked knowingly at the crowd outside and resumed his meal.

"There are about four kinds of monkeys that are salable as pets," continued the dealer, "and all are small. The ring-tail is so called, not because of the rings around its tail, but because it swings to the branches of trees, and helps itself to climb with that appendage. All other monkeys climb with their hands only. The pig-tail monkey is about the same size as the ring-tail, and it is easy to see how he gets his name. His tail is stubby and short, like that of a pig. He is not considered a handsome monkey, but he is very popular. The Java monkey is somewhat like the ring-tail. He has a long tail, too, but it seems to be more for ornament than use. The ring-tail comes from Africa, the pig-tail from the Isthmus of Panama, and the Java, of course, from the island whose name he bears. All of these monkeys are worth from $20 to $30 each, according to condition and size, the smallest ranking first. There is a larger demand for them than any other kind. The little Marmazette, a native of Brazil, is the most diminutive of known monkeys. In fact, he is too small to be very healthy, and in our harsh climate he easily falls into consumption and dies. A fair-sized one is smaller than a newly-born kitten, only a few inches in length, excluding the little tail, which is the longest part of him. They have little wizened faces, and hardly look like monkeys at all. Ladies invariably fancy them at first, but a closer examination shows how delicate they are, as they lie huddled up together and shiver at every draught. They are by no means as high-priced as the other popular kinds of monkeys, and can be readily purchased for $10 each. Placed in company with a larger money they seem to thrive better. The bigger one takes great care of the smaller one, shielding him, as far as practicable, from the cold, and ceaselessly exerting himself to keep him clean. Sometimes, indeed, he kills him with kindness.

"There are a great many people who have a chronic prejudice against monkeys. It is hard to say why, for monkeys are amusing, affectionate and very intelligent.—*N. Y. Sun.*

A GOOD DINNER FOR ALL.

The Universal Spirit of Good-Will That Prevails on Christmas Day.

It would have been a wild prediction of the optimist three centuries ago that the time would ever come when on one day in the year everybody would have a good dinner. And yet it is almost realized. The gospel of humanity has almost reached that point. It is perhaps a wasteful and excessive mode of showing our humanity, but there is this good about it, that the feasibility of accomplishing it on one day will suggest the possibility of making at least decent dinners more common to people generally, and that when a man has once tasted the pleasure of a prodigal meal, he may be induced to some personal exertion of industry and thrift to procure himself the pleasure again. We know by statistics that there is food enough to satisfy everbody if properly distributed, and the lesson that it can be distributed one day is a most important one. The danger, of course, is that it is in human nature to depend upon charity when once charity is accepted, and so to lose the one priceless thing to any man, which is independence. But the beauty of Christmas is in its recognition of common humanity and common dependence on something beyond humanity, and the charity of it is not a condescension that can puff anybody up or hurt any man's pride, but a diffused good feeling, and a drawing together in a common fete of all sorts and conditions of men. Here in the United States it is literally of all sorts and colors, a commingling of people under one privilege absolutely unparalleled. And to enjoy the Christmas of humanity we are not required to eat the same sort of dinner, any more than we are required to have the same sort of creed. The plantation negro with 'possum fat and 'coon (brown cracklin', wid graby—go 'way dar, chile!) is just as much alive to the odor of the anniversary as the English denizen with his traditionary roast beef and plum-pudding. We have learned by the hard discipline of a new country that we can make a very thankful meal for the day out of wild turkey and canvas-back ducks, flanked by a green goose, with appropriate accompaniments. People can get used to anything if they only have the right spirit. Indeed, it has been said that it is not so much what we eat on Christmas Day as what we give away that raises our spirits; but this is to be understood within limits, for it cannot be denied that there is such a thing as universal hunger on Christmas Day that will not be allayed any more in the case of a rich man than of a poor man by the remembrance of a good deed warmed over. But the best sauce to a good dinner is the thought that nobody else within reach is hungry. And better even than the dinner of the day is the universal spirit of good-will that broadens year by year, and deepens, we are sure.—*Charles Dudley Warner, in Harper's Magazine.*

NATURE'S ZOO.

The Wonderland of the World, and the Grandest Out-Door Museum of Natural Curiosities.

The country of the Upper Nile was *par excellence*, the wonderland of the Roman world, as it is still the grandest out-door museum of natural curiosities. Zoologically there is no more densely populated country. All the wild beasts and birds, made homeless by the devastation of Northern Africa, seem to have taken refuge in the Nubian highlands. In the terrace-land of the Nubian and Abyssinian Alps there roam herds of elephants, buffaloes, wild sheep, and fourteen different species of antelopes. Further below the hippopotamus and white rhinoceros haunt the river swamps. Professor Blanford enumerates 290 species of water birds.

With these harmless settlers less desirable guests have crowded in, the spotted hyena, the jackal, the black and yellow lion, four species of smaller cats, wild dogs, and above all, the cynocephalus, the wily and mischievous baboon. Three varieties of these Darwinian pets inhabit the rocks of Southern Nubia; the little babuin, the cynocephalus proper, and the celada or mantle baboon, a fierce and powerful fellow, whose shaggy mane protects his body like a cloak, and enables him to brave the climate of the upper highlands. Professors Kuppel, Hotten and Major W. C. Harris agree on the fact that a troop of these brutes, in ravaging a cornfield, will not only hold their ground against all comers, but on the slightest provocation take the offensive in a way not likely to be forgotten by the unarmed natives.

Dogs have no chance whatever against a full-grown baboon. The old males do not wait to be tackled, but charge them at once with an energy and skill of co-operation that would do credit to a troop of well-drilled soldiers. The hyrax, a queer pachyderm, allied to the European badger, cohabits the rocks with a hibernating marmot, and the coast jungles swarm with wild hogs that multiply undisturbed, for the Abyssinian natives share the pork prejudice of their Mohammedan neighbors.—*Prof. Oswald.*

—In some parts of Georgia bears, wild-cats and coons are abundant.—*N. Y. Sun.*

—No one should attempt to renovate lands that never ought to have been cleared.

PITH AND POINT.

—A machine has been invented which will dark stockings by just turning a crank. "Who will care for mother now?"—*Burlington Free Press.*

—Woman is a luxury. Unless a man's circumstances permit of luxuries, he had better be content with sewing on his own collar studs.—*Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.*

—As a nation we do not have ourselves under sufficient control. When a Senator goes down on a slippery corner he is laughed at the same as the man with a market basket.—*Boston Post.*

—Rattlesnake poison is awful. A Florida cow was bitten, and died immediately. Six buzzards that fed on the carcass died soon after, and a newspaper reporter was found lying in the vicinity.—*Lowell Courier.*

"How do you braid your hair so nicely?" queried a gentleman who was visiting a lady friend. "Oh," broke in her *enfante terrible* sister, "she takes it off and ties the knot to the gas chandelier, and fusses over two hours every morning.—*Chicago Herald.*

—Mistress (to servant who has spilled the contents of her ink bottle on the carpet)—"Mercy, Mary! what have you done? You've done a pretty piece of work, haven't you?" Mary—"Ye may well say that, Missus Brown, for didn't Oi pay twinty-foive cints for that same ink this very afternoon?"—*N. Y. Sun.*

—Husband and wife present themselves before the Divorce Court. "What do you want, madame?" "Divorce from that wretch." "And you, sir?" "Divorce from that vixen." "The decree is refused—there is no incompatibility of temper. You both seem to be perfectly agreed. Call the next case!" —*Paris Figaro.*

—A hymn as written:

"Welcome, sweet day of rest,
 That saw the Lord arise;
Welcome to this reviving breast,
 And these rejoicing eyes."

And as sung by our choir.

"Waw-kaw, waw, daw aw waw,
Thaw saw, thaw law aw waw,
Waw-kaw, taw, thaw, raw-vaw-vaw braw,
Aw thaw raw jaw saw aw."
 —Argonaut.

—A man having built a large house was at a loss what to do with the rubbish. His Irish steward advised him to have a pit dug large enough to contain it. "And what," said he, smiling, "shall I do with the earth that I dig up from it?" To which the steward, with great gravity, replied: "Have the pit made large enough to hould all."—*Chicago Tribune.*

—"Simpson," said the managing editor, "please don't write any more pathetic articles. I ask you this as a personal favor, for I am inclined to look on the bright side of life, and when I thoughtlessly take up an article like the one you wrote last night, why, it topples me over the precipice of despondency and gloom, where I flounder for hours before I can climb up the rugged steep and again bask in the beams of the sun." "To which article do you refer?" asked Simpson. "The one headed 'A Drummer's Experience with a Bottle of Cocktail.'" "Why, sir, that was a humorous article." "That's so! Well, give us some pathos, then. Say, Simpson, label 'em, please."—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

A NEW CRIME.

How An Arkansaw Justice of the Peace Resented Interference With His Judicial Prerogatives.

When old Anderson Brumley announced himself as a candidate for Justice of the Peace, the people of Buck Short Township felt that the time when they were to have an able and upright administration of judicial affairs had arrived. Old Brumley had never opened a law book; therefore he was regarded as honest. He had never hesitated to take off his coat and fight the best man in the neighborhood; therefore he was considered able. He had never been backward in denouncing his enemies, consequently he was regarded as a citizen of wisdom. With these accomplishments, his election, in the expressive parlance of politics, was a "walk over." Shortly after Brumley took his seat on the red oak woolsack, a man named Billy Malone was arrested for stealing a grind-stone.

"This here is a mighty important case," said the magistrate, when the culprit had been arraigned before the court. "In lookin' over these here law books I don't find no mention o' grindstones. It was a big oversight in our Legislature not to put down grindstones in the books, fur it mout have been know'd that some blamed rascal in this part o' the State was a goin' to steal one. Folks in this here part o' the country, let me tell you, will steal anything. Wa'al, in the absence o' any statuary barin' on the subjeck, reckon I'll make this here charge manslaughter in the first degree."

"Your honor," said a lawyer, "that would be impossible."

"Wood it? Wa'al, I'll jes show you I'm running this here court."

"Your honor—"

"Call me Jedge, if you please."

"Well, Jedge, there is no such thing as manslaughter in the first degree."

"Ain't thar? Wall, I'll jes show you I'm runnin' this here court. Prisoner at the bar, I have longed fur a opportunity o' teachin' a lesson to the risin' generation. You have given me that chance. I don't delight in seein' a man fall from grace, but when he does fall, thar ain' nothin' that pleases me so much as to tangle my hand in the ruffles o' his calico shirt. Manslaughter is a mighty serious charge, young feller."

"I ain't slaughtered no man yit, Jedge."

"Shet your mouth, impudent violater o' the sacred law o' the land. No matter what you done, I say it was manslaughter in the fust degree, an' when a man disputes my word, w'y, he'd better wush that his bones was made outen Injun rubber an' his back kivered with the skin o' a yalligator. Young outrager o' the principles of civilization, fur this great crime of manslaughter in the fust degree, I sentences you to be hung next Friday."

"Judge," exclaimed the lawyer, springing to his feet, "this proceeding is impossible."

"Is it? Wa'al, I'll jis show you I'm runnin' this court. When you git to be a Jedge, I won't come round tellin' you what you can do an' what you can't."

"Great Cæsar, Judge, such a course as you are taking is a violation of the State Constitution."

"Is it? Wa'al, I'll jest repeal the State Constitution right here. This feller oughter be hung, an' if I had catch him ten days ago, whuther or not he had committed manslaughter in the fust degree or stold a grindstone in the second, which is the same, I would have sentenced him to be hung. Mr. Constable, take charge o' this man an' see that he is hung up in respectable manner. Any lawyer what don't wanter be sarved in the same way had better keep his mouth shet. I'm runnin' this court."—*Opie P. Read, in Texas Siftings.*