

A Friend o' the Family.

"Well, sir," said the shoemaker, shortly after the sunshin' quit bitting, "I got a letter yesterday that done me a lot of good. You remember I told you the last time I was out fishin' together that I used to have a shop of my own up in old Illinois an' made good money too. Well, sir, all the kids in that town knowed me, an' they wasn't a one of 'em that wouldn't have gone to the bad place for me if they'd been old enough to know what that really meant. But they wasn't—bless their little hearts!"

"An there was two of 'em in pertickler, the nicest little kids you ever seen. It's a fact that there little girl'd come from school every day leavin' her little brother by the hand. An' they'd never be a time they'd be passin' the shop on their way to school an' goin' home to dinner that they wouldn't stop an' knock on the shop window."

"An often after school'd be out they'd stop in an see me. Why, I've had as high as 10 or 12 of 'em at one time after school in my shop singin' the shoemaker song an' goin' through the motions, just like their teacher'd learn 'em to."

"Sometimes some of 'em would have to stop an' laugh—they thought it was such a good joke on the shoemaker. But there'd always be two or three of 'em would go on an' finish out, 'cause they knowed they'd never get the dime fer candy if they didn't. An' there's where I used to have the joke on them. They never knowed how much I liked to hear them sing that there song. I'd sooner hear it now than have a dollar."

"Well, that's just the way it was all the time with them kids. They all knowed me, an' they all knowed my dog. An' when they knowed my dog, they knowed a mighty good dog."

"Well, sir, this little girl's daddy used to be station agent there at that town, an' it was know'd all along that part of the Big Four line that there wasn't a depot anywhere that was what you could call as model a depot as his. Course I knowed him an' he knowed me, an' his wife, she used to tell the little girl when they'd want me to come an' take dinner or supper with 'em. It wasn't very often I'd go, but I couldn't refuse when they'd send the little girl after me."

"Now, him keepin' his depot so model is what got him promoted. The Big Four sent him over to a bigger town in Indiana. Course I was glad to see him do in better—he deserved it. But after they'd gone, me an' my dog, we used to shut up shop an' go fishin' an' huntin' a little oftener than before."

"Well, come along Christmas time, an' what'd I do but one day get a letter from this here little girl tellin' me her an' her little brother was goin' to have a Christmas tree, an' couldn't I come over to Indiana an' see 'em Christmas?"

"So I made all arrangements to go, an' you bet I laid out a dollar or two for presents. But, course, like it had to be, one day I gets word her an' her little brother was took down sick—diphtheria, the dispatch said."

"So I makes up my mind I'd go anyway. There's no tellin' you know, what's liable to happen in a case like that. So I put \$100 in my pocket—an' even at that I didn't have to put it there; I always carried at least a hundred in them days—an' I went over. An' I didn't get there none too soon neither. She died the afternoon of the evenin' I got there."

"Well, I didn't know what the devil to do. I wasn't what you could call a friend o' the family, but I wished I could do somethin' for that poor little girl a-layin' there. An' before three days was out I got my chance."

"You see, her dyin' of diphtheria, they wouldn't let 'em ship the body back over the railroad. Her daddy bid agent didn't help 'em none in that case, neither. He tried hard enough to get a permit, but it didn't do no good. He just couldn't get it."

"The mother was just about crazy to think they'd have to lay her away in Indiana instead of the old buryin' ground over in old Illinois alongside of them that had gone before. An' you bet yer life they didn't have to, fer I went an' got a team an' a wagon, an' I says, 'I'll drive her through.'"

"It was 12 below zero when I started, a little before midnight. They took the mornin' train next day an' got there long ahead of me. Ninety-one miles in a spring wagon at 12 below ain't no picnic."

"I didn't get to see 'em after the funeral. I felt just a little bit wore out, an' I thought the best thing I could do was to go lay down awhile. An', leave me tell you, I got all the layin' down I wanted in the next year an' a half, an' it cost me everything I had but my tools an' shoemaker's kit. I've got that stored up there in old Illinois yet."

"I wrote to her folks one time, but I didn't get no reply. I thought maybe they thought I wasn't quite as good as they was, so I never tried writin' no more."

"This here letter I got the other day was from a friend o' the family that knowed them an' knowed me. It said they hadn't never heard a line from me, an' they often wondered what had become of me. It said that little girl's mother often wished she knowed where I was at, so she could write, because, this letter went on to say, she said I was the best friend o' the family they ever had."

"An' that's the kind of letter that makes a feller feel good."—St. Louis Republic.

Do You Read Poetry?

You have heard persons say, "I never read poetry." If this remark is made affectedly, as if to say, "Poetry is silly, and I am above such frivolity as reading it," there is no need to comment upon the foolish ignorance of any one who knows no more than to talk so absurdly. But if it be said modestly, and because the speaker believes that poetry is a strange and foreign thing requiring a peculiar talent for its appreciation, then the state of mind from which the remark comes is one to be pitied. Poetry is the earliest form of writing. All the oldest books are either in verse or are in poetical style. Babies begin with "nursery rhymes" and understand them before they can understand prose. Prose requires training for its appreciation, and a young reader who can see the literary beauties of prose needs little teaching in literature.—St. Nicholas.

Absentminded.

"I want to get a room," said the traveling man.

"Yes, sir," absentmindedly replied the new night clerk who formerly had been employed in a department store. "Will you pay for it now or shall we send it home O. O. D.?"—Philadelphia Record.

FARM AND GARDEN

CONCERNING PLUMS.

A Comparison of Varieties at the Ohio Station.

About 175 varieties of plums have been planted in the Ohio station orchard, and nearly half of these have borne fruit. Among observations upon the different varieties are the following:

Native plums, as a whole, are injured less by the curculio, are not so liable to rot and are harder than European varieties.

Native plums are infertile when planted alone, and care should be taken to select varieties which bloom at about the same time.

The American group is the hardest of the natives, as well as of all other classes. The trees are vigorous, with dark green leaves; the fruit is firm, with thick skin, dull in color, but usually high in quality, although having more or less astringency next to skin and stone. Some of the varieties of this class are desirable for home use, but owing to rather unattractive appearance but few of those now known are likely to prove profitable for market.

The following are some of the most desirable that have been grown here: American Eagle, Champion, Hawkeye, Illinois Ironclad, Louisa, Rollingstone and Weaver.

The Miner group is intermediate between the Americana and Wild Goose groups and includes some choice varieties for culinary purposes. The following are desirable: Forest Rose, Miner and Prairie Flower.

The Wild Goose Group.—The varieties of this class are mostly vigorous and very fruitful. The foliage resembles that of the peach, the fruit is thin skinned, juicy and often watery and usually not of high quality. Although not as hardy as the Americana species, all varieties that have been grown here have endured our winters. The following are worthy varieties: Choptank, Milton, Poole's Pride, Wild Goose and Whitaker.

The Wayland Group.—Similar in habit of growth to Wild Goose, but the foliage is more shiny, the trees being quite ornamental. The fruit is very firm, not watery, and of fair quality and in most cases very bright and beautiful in color. The following are desirable varieties: Golden Beauty, Reed, Sucker State, Wayland and Moreman.

The Chickasaw Group.—Rather dwarfier and more spreading than the Wild Goose group. The least desirable of any of the native groups for domestic uses. The following are among the best varieties: Newman, Pottawattamie and Yellow Transparent.

The Triflora Group, or Japanese Plums.—Trees robust in habit and mostly very fruitful. Fruit usually handsomely colored and of good quality, but most varieties quite inclined to rot. The following are some of the best that have been fruited here: Abundance, Chabot, Burbank, Ogon, Red June.

The Domestica Group.—This is the well known European plum. At present it is the most important class, although subject to numerous diseases and very liable to the attacks of the curculio. The following varieties have been found to be valuable, both here



CHABOT.

A FINE JAPANESE VARIETY.

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COES GOLDEN DROP

A VALUABLE DOMESTIC.

and in other portions of the state: Archduke, Bradshaw, Coe's Golden Drop, Grand Duke, German Prune, Gueli, Imperial Gage, Lincoln, Prince of Wales, Reine Claude de Bavay, Yellow Egg.

Hybrid Plums.—But two varieties of this class have fruited here—viz, Gold and Juicy. Both are very prolific, beautiful in color, but somewhat deficient in quality.

Nitrate of Soda on Strawberries.

In dry seasons nitrate of soda on strawberries often gives surprising results, says Rural New Yorker. It probably pays better to use the nitrate alone rather than a complete fertilizer. You can use 150 pounds per acre in late July or August. This will force a heavy growth before fall. It would be a mistake to use only nitrate this summer. You will then have fine, thrifty plants, but few fruit buds. We would prefer a complete fertilizer for late summer and fall.

His Consecutive Letters

"Now, Arthur," said Mrs. Barrington as her husband put three handbags in the seat beside her in the sleeper and handed over six baggage checks, "I want you to be sure and write to me every day and tell me everything you think, just how much you miss me and all about the way the servants get along—don't omit any of the details, thinking that I shall not be interested, for every word that you write, dear, will be precious to me. Put plenty of local color in your letters."

"Oh, I'll keep you posted," he replied. "You go ahead and have a good time and don't worry about me. I'll get along some way. Of course, it'll be lonely and all that, but I'll manage to pass the time. It'll be rather dismal for me to sit on the front porch alone when it begins to get dark, thinking of you in the gay crowd having a good time and never giving a thought to—"

"Arthur Barrington," his pretty wife interrupted, "if you continue to talk that way I just shan't go. You know I shall think of you every minute I'm away, and if the doctor hadn't said the sea air would be good for me I wouldn't have thought of accepting Aunt Laura's invitation. Please don't fret me, love, will you? Remember that, wherever I may be and no matter how gay my surroundings, I shall be thinking of you, and, lowering her voice to a whisper, "my soul will still be communing with your soul."

They threw kisses at each other as the train moved away. Then Barrington went to his office and began writing letters. They were to his wife. He wrote 14 of them—enough to last for two weeks. In general outline the letters were about the same. He started each by filling a sheet with endearing words and declarations that he was very lonely without his darling. Then followed the local color she wanted in the form of comments on occurrences of the day in and around their home. The letters were not dated, but he sealed and addressed them and arranged them in a bunch, so that the stenographer could take off the top one day after day and drop it into the mail box.

He had been gone nearly a week when there came a telegram for him. Of course, telegrams had to be opened, and when Miss Wildreth, the stenographer, read the message she turned pale.

"Why don't you answer my questions about the housemaid's ankle and your liver? Am awfully worried."

That was what Elizabeth Barrington had telegraphed. After studying the matter for awhile Miss Wildreth decided that it was necessary for her to act. She was clever enough to hold a position that not more than one man out of 50 could have filled, and she had the habit of keeping her eyes and ears open. Still she said to herself:

"The housemaid's ankle? I can see how he might know something about his own liver, but—and why should his wife, of all people, want him to see about it? Well, if I ever get married!"

But instead of finishing what she had started to say she wrote the following dispatch:

"Leg and liver O. K. Don't worry." It was about 10 o'clock the next day when another telegram for Arthur Barrington was received. It read:

"Yesterday's letter contradicts telegram. Why are you deceiving me? Are you better today? Shall I come home?" The stenographer's reply was as follows:

"Am true as steel. Don't think of coming home."

Miss Wildreth had just begun to feel that she had succeeded in settling the disagreeable business when a messenger boy arrived with another telegram, in which her employer's wife said:

"Don't understand. What do you mean by being true as steel? Something tells me you are worse. Wire immediately."

The stenographer replied:

"Never mind reference to steel. Am all right."

Mrs. Barrington watched eagerly for the postman on the following day, and when he had handed her Arthur's letter she opened it with trembling fingers. Eagerly she scanned the first page and was about half through the local color when she jumped up and ran to her aunt, crying:

"Merciful goodness, what can this mean? Three days ago Arthur wrote that the housemaid was still laid up with her lame ankle, which I have tried in vain to get him to tell me about, and that he was not feeling well and the doctor had told him his liver was out of order. Yet here in today's letter he tells me that the housemaid has just fallen out of a cherry tree, spraining her ankle, and that he made himself a Welsh rabbit eight before last and ate so much of it that his liver is all upset. Why on earth did the housemaid climb a cherry tree when she had a lame ankle, and who ever possessed Arthur to eat a Welsh rabbit when the doctor had just warned him about his liver?"

Her aunt was trying to figure it out, when Elizabeth Barrington happened to think of the telegrams she had received the day before.

"This letter must have been written about the time they were sent," she said. "I'm going home. Something's wrong Arthur's liver trouble has gone to his head. My poor darling has lost his reason. He writes a thing and then denies it by telegraph. By starting tonight I can be with him tomorrow forenoon. Oh, how shall I pass the weary hours?"

Miss Wildreth broke down and made a full confession when Mrs. Barrington rushed, wild eyed and pale, into her husband's office. Then the two young women sat together in the private room and wept.

"If I hadn't accidentally knocked over the pile of letters he left to be mailed," the stenographer sobbed, "they would not have been mixed up; there would have been no reference to the spraining of the housemaid's ankle before it happened and his liver would not have troubled him until after he ate the rabbit. How shall I ever be able to explain it to him?"

"You needn't try," Mrs. Barrington answered. "I'll explain to him when he comes out of the woods. Dear old fellow! I'm so glad he doesn't know anything about this. He mightn't be having a good time at all if he did."—Chicago Times-Herald.

Large ocean going vessels can go up the St. Lawrence river as far as Montreal, over 1,000 miles from the Atlantic ocean.



BY WEATHERBY CHESNEY AND ALICK MUNRO.

COMMENTARY BY THE AUTHORS.

distance, and was followed presently by the appearance of Mrs. Jelly herself. Meanwhile Dr. Tring had taken advantage of the sailor's brief absence to hold a hurried colloquy with his friend. "What on earth are you thinking of, Colepepper?" he protested. "We don't want a stewardess."

"A stewardess!" repeated the captain, with a roar of laughter. "Mrs. Jelly a stewardess? Wait till you see her!"

The doctor looked puzzled. "She is a sailor, sir," the captain went on; "rates as an A. B.; stands her watch as well as any man and better than most. Mrs. Jelly a stewardess! Don't you dare to mention such an idea to her if you don't want to be annihilated. Mrs. Jelly is a— Here she is, though, to speak for herself." he broke off.

Mrs. Jelly appeared in the doorway and bestowed upon the captain a stiff, awkward bow, which seemed to hint that she was not much accustomed to such feminine courtesies. She was a squat, broad-hipped woman, with a snub nose and a bristling chin and upper lip. Her visible dress consisted of a drab colored deer stalker cap, a stout double-breasted pea jacket, a short blue serge skirt and a heavy pair of man's laced-up boots. She had large brown hands and swung them at her side, sailor-fashion, with the fingers hooked inward, and her grizzled gray hair was cropped as short as a schoolboy's. Yet, in spite of her uncouth exterior, no one would have been in danger of mistaking Mrs. Jelly for a man rigged out in female attire, for there was an indescribable something about her which wrote her "woman." Perhaps it was her eyes, for they were large and brown and had that look of soft appealing in them which is to be seen in a dog always, in a woman often, but in a man never.

"Well, Henrietta," said the captain, "I suppose you know that this is not an ordinary cruise?"

"Yes, captain," said the woman. "Jelly and me heard all about it at the Admiral Blake, from them as had been told by you yourself, and we settled to sign on, if you'd have us."

"Then you don't want to hear the details over again at first hand?" asked the doctor in some surprise.

"No, sir, thanks," replied the woman. "I'd like to hear what the terms are to be, though. Some said we were to have wages and others a share in the run."

"It's shares, Henrietta," interposed Jelly. "Don't bother the gentleman. Let's get signed on and be trudging."

Mrs. Jelly agreed by a nod, and, taking the paper which Captain Colepepper handed to her, added her name to the others. She wrote the signature in a firm, clear hand, and afterward added underneath it her husband's name also, and, having done so, she handed the paper across to Jelly for him to authenticate the document with his mark.

"Now, Jelly, we'll tramp," said the woman shortly, and shouldered her husband's hand organ.

"Stay a minute," put in Dr. Tring, turning to the seaman. "That reminds me that you have not yet explained your possession of this horrible engine of torture."

"That's easy answered, sir," replied Tom Jelly, with a grin. "You see, I was out of a berth for a bit, 'cause I wouldn't ship with no captain as refused to take Henrietta along, too, 'cause, as Cap'n Colepepper 'imself will tell you, we two allus does ship in company. So after we've been idle for a month or so, she says, 'Jelly,' says she, 'ow far have you ever been from the seacoast?' 'Matter of a few miles once or twice,' says I, 'but not often.' I was born in Bristolquay side, sir, and spend all my life in traipsing from port to port, or lying quiet in sailors' lodgings, close alongside it. 'Then,' says she, 'supposing we takes a trip inshore by way of a change.' 'That 'ud suit Tom Jelly down to the ground, old lass,' says I; 'only I don't see 'ow it's to be worked. The shotlocker is about empty as it is, and if we started for a cruise in unknown waters like them, we'd soon be finding ourselves 'ove beam ends on to a lee shore.' 'So we would, ye lubber,' says she. 'Them's the very words, sir; you know 'Enrietta's way, cap'n.' 'So we would, ye lubber, if you'd got the managing of it. You've no more 'ead on you than a pint of bilge water 'as. Can't we buy one of them grinding organs,' says she, 'and work our passages with that?' Now I take it, gentlemen all, there ain't many women clever enough to plan out a tower like that; blow me, if there is!"

At the chorus of amused assent which the three auditors gave to this piece of brazen flattery Mrs. Jelly looked uncomfortable and muttered something which the others did not catch.

"So you steered inland, Tom," said the captain, with a laugh. "Did the organ keep you going?"

"We lived and traveled like a dook and a dookess, cap'n, and see a sight of things and places. But I must say we did begin to tire of it terrible after a bit and to long for a sniff of sea air and a bite of salt junk. You know how it is, Cap'n Colepepper."

"Yes, Tom," said the captain, with a bit of a sigh, "I understand. I feel that way myself sometimes. Well, we're going to smell the salt again in company, it seems, and I for one am heartily glad of it."

"So be I, cap'n; so be I," said the man, "and so be 'Enrietta. Treasure or no treasure, we both of us feels proud to sail again under Cap'n Colepepper, and I says it for the two of us. And now, if the gentlemen'll excuse us, we'll be going. A word to the Admiral Blake will allus bring us within an hour or so, cap'n. Come on, missus!"

He had shouldered his organ while he spoke and was edging nervously toward the door. Mrs. Jelly followed him, and the strange couple bowed themselves out with all the awkwardness of bashful and uncouth courtesy.

"Well, Colepepper," said the doctor, throwing himself into the captain's big armchair, "I don't think that even after a debauch of lobster salad and toasted cheese I could have dreamed of such a quaint couple of recruits as Nos. 2 and 3. The man was odd enough. But the woman! You seem to know her, though?"

"Yes," said the captain. "Henrietta and I are old acquaintances. She sailed with me two years in the Hope and four in the Brothers Jones."

"As a woman?" queried the undergraduate.

"Lor' bless you, no! As a deckhand, and a rare good one she was, too—always ready for duty at sea, and nimble with her fingers, and always to be relied on ashore. She liked her jaunt now and then, did Henrietta, and would take a glass with the rest of them, but she never got drunk, to my knowing."

And the strange couple bowed themselves out.

and never outstaid her leave. Jelly wasn't so reliable. He's a weak-minded chap and a bit soft in his upper story. I often think, and sometimes he'd get led away and go on the mad rampage till his money was done. It was in one of those flings that he lost his arm, got run over in the street at Montevideo and had the fin so badly crushed that they were obliged to amputate, and it was after that that Henrietta took him in charge. He, like the rest of us, thought her a man then. She was sailing under the name of Henry Vere and was as smart a seaman as ever wore breeches. But after the pair had been close chums for about a year she let out her secret and they got married. I had them both with me for other voyages afterward, but her sex was always known to all hands."

"Then she discarded the breeches?"

"No; served in her old rating, doctor, and rigged herself out man fashion as before."

"By the way, Colepepper," said the doctor, "now that you've accepted one woman Miss Dolly will have a new argument against you, and a pretty strong one too. She'll expect you to reconsider your veto, you'll find."

"Yes, and why not?" put in the undergraduate quickly, and then, as he caught the doctor's eye fixed quizzically upon him, he blushed furiously.

"Young man," said Dr. Tring enigmatically, "your two years at Oxford have not quite spoiled you."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE BELGIAN HARE.

Claimed to Be a Lively Little Money Maker of Many Merits.

Among the general merits of the Belgian hare it is exceedingly domestic and will thrive in close confinement. It is therefore in preference to all others the animal to be raised in cities where space is a consideration. A box 3 by 4 is ample room for a doe and her little ones. Another important factor in the breeding and care of animals in cities is cleanliness. In this respect we have no domestic animal or fowl that will compare with the Belgian hare. The demands for feed that the Belgian hare makes are small. It may be kept on the trimmings of garden vegetables or hay. A little grain should be given the doe while the youngsters are kept with her, but the amount then is so small that it is hardly worth the mention. Grain must be fed when fattening for the table.

As a meat producer the Belgian hare stands high, not only in its superb quality of meat, but in quantity as well. It will excel in the latter regard any animal that can be kept in equal space or at no greater expense. Upon this solid economic basis must rest the business of propagating them. The Belgian hare is the most prolific animal that has thus far been domesticated. In this respect it is a marvel. It will produce its young every 60 days and on an average of from 8 to 12 at a time.

RAILROAD TIME TABLES.

Illinois Central.

Going East.

No. 2, Chicago & St. Paul Limited—6:48 p. m.
No. 4, Chicago Express—1:30 p. m.
No. 26, Omaha & St. Paul Express—6:30 a. m.
No. 38, Port Dodge Passenger—6:53 p. m.
No. 52, Chicago Manifest & Stock—11:15 p. m.
No. 62, East Stock—6:30 a. m.
No. 94, Local Freight—11:45 p. m.

Going West.

No. 1, Omaha Limited—5:57 a. m.
No. 3, Omaha Express—1:50 p. m.
No. 25, St. Paul & Omaha Express—7:57 p. m.
No. 31, Council Bluffs Passenger—8:00 a. m.
No. 51, Manifest Freight—6:04 p. m.
No. 61, Omaha Stock—11:15 p. m.
No. 93, Local Freight—9:30 a. m.

—means daily, —daily except Sunday, c—daily except Saturday.

No. 2 arrives Chicago 10:20 a. m.
No. 4 arrives Chicago 7:00 a. m.
No. 2 arrives St. Paul 8:00 a. m., at Minneapolis 7:30 a. m.
No. 33 arrives St. Paul 7:30 p. m., at Minneapolis 7:00 p. m.

Freight trains No. 93 and No. 94 carry passengers. Tickets sold and baggage checked at all points. H. E. CASNER, Agent.

Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul at Arion

GOING WEST.

No. 1 Passenger—6:31 a. m.
No. 91 Way Freight—8:05 a. m.
No. 3 Passenger—1:41 p. m.

GOING EAST.

No. 2 Passenger—8:51 a. m.
No. 4 Passenger—1:31 p. m.
No. 94 Stock Freight—9:05 p. m.
Nos. 2, 3, 91 and 94 daily except Sunday.

Chicago & Northwestern.

Going East.

No. 2, Overland Limited—10:00 p. m.
No. 4, Colorado Special—10:10 p. m.
No. 6, Atlantic Express—7:14 p. m.
No. 8, Chicago Express—all stops—1:17 p. m.
No. 15, Local to Chicago—all stops—12:50 p. m.
No. 24, Way Freight—11:05 a. m.

Going West.

No. 1, Overland Limited—all stops—5:54 a. m.
No. 9, Fast Mail—all stops—6:47 a. m.
No. 3, Pacific Express—all stops—1:17 p. m.
No. 5, Colorado Special—all stops—9:18 p. m.
No. 15, Fast Mail—all stops—12:50 p. m.
No. 11, Local to Council Bluffs—all stops—5:23 a. m.
No. 23, Freight—12:50 p. m.

Western Iowa Division—Boyer Valley Line.

Leave Denison—7:15 a. m. 6:55 p. m.
Arrive Wall Lake—9:10 a. m. 8:15 p. m.
Leave Wall Lake—10:30 a. m. 8:40 p. m.
Arrive Denison—1:10 p. m. 10:15 p. m.