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HOUSE PLANTS.

My little window trophies, set with palm, With bright geranium and cactus rare, And frail exotics from a warmer air, That mock our Northern winter with your balm, And smile at storms that spare your indoor calm! You breathe of summer, though the trees are bare, Though shines the sun on snow and icy glare, And winds are hoarse from their loud-swalling psalm. In little here you bring the sunny South, Where all the year the grass waves in the field. And on the bough the orange-blossom clings, The sublimans are the words upon your mouth. By which the law of beauty is revealed, That summer still is at the heart of things. —Curtis May, in Youth's Companion.

BILL PAID HIS BOARD

The wagon factory had been shut down for over a month and old man McFarland and Mrs. McFarland were getting uneasy. They made their living by taking in boarders, and most of the boarders made their living by working in the factory, the consequence of which was that the weekly board bills were in some cases only partly met and in some cases not met at all. Mrs. McFarland worried, and when she worried she talked to her husband for the greater part of the night and he lost sleep. So did the men who occupied the rooms on either side of them, for they knew what that steady murmur was about.

"You've got to get some money out of some of them," said Mrs. McFarland.

"We can't go on this way any longer. There's Bill Seney owes us nearly \$20. Why don't you make him pay something? Do you hear me, Robert?"

"Yes, I hear you," grunted McFarland. "But what are you going to do? They'll all pay when they get the money, and if we get to hounding them they'll get mad and quit, and we will lose the connection."

"We might just as well, as far as I can see. The connection isn't going to pay our bills unless there's some money in it, and we might as well quit before we get any more into debt. Why don't you go for Seney? I'm pretty sure he could pay something if you insisted on it."

"Why don't you ask him? I should think you could do it just as well as I can."

"I should think that I had enough to do with the cooking and the housework without running around attending to your business. If you can't see that man and get some money from him I'm going to quit, and that's all there is about it."

McFarland kept awake a long time after the partner of his joys and sorrows had stopped talking and gone to sleep. He was a little man, meek and timid, with whom the battle of life had gone so hard that he had been content for years to hover around the outskirts as a sort of camp follower. The idea of asking any man for money was painful to him. He knew what it was himself, and imagined that everybody else must have the same sickening sensation of impending doom that he experienced in the presence of a dun. And Seney was a burly, loud-voiced man, with a terrible eye and fierce whiskers. McFarland's heart sunk within him at the thought of insisting on having money from this truculent giant. "Insist" was the word his wife had used, and anger filled the old man's breast at the absurdity of it and the unreason of woman generally.

He knew that the factory would soon open again and everything would be paid up and he could keep on with his duties of marketing, milking and tending the old cow, which was pastured on the vacant lots of marshy grass, carrying water from the well and doing such other chores as might become a man. His life was not one of rapturous enjoyment, but it was comfortable enough, and his wife's threat of "quitting" frightened him. He fell asleep contriving delicate means of broaching the disagreeable subject with the dreaded Bill Seney.

With his wife's eye upon him he rose from the breakfast table as Bill Seney rose and followed him out to the door. As the delinquent turned to walk up the street McFarland hailed him in a tremulous voice.

"Oh, Bill," he said, "I want to speak to you a minute—privately."

"Well, there ain't no one around as I see," said Bill, gruffly. "What is it?"

McFarland cleared his throat nervously and then, with his eyes on a button of the man's coat, smiled and said: "How are you fixed financially, Bill?"

"I ain't fixed at all," replied Seney, with a frown; "I'd ha' thought you'd ha' known that with the factory

stopped. What's the matter with you?"

"It's this way, Bill," said McFarland, humbly. "I hate to dun you, but we are needing money the worst way, and I thought you might be able to let us have some if it was convenient."

"You thought right. If it was convenient I could let you have some just as well as not, but it ain't. What do you want money for? Won't they trust you at the grocery?"

"Yes; but then there's rent—and they only sell for cash at the meat market. We've got to have meat."

"I guess that's right," said Seney. "You can't stand them off for the rent, but it would be mighty slim diet without meat. I couldn't stand for that. Let's see if I can't think of some way of helping you out."

McFarland looked hopeful as the other sat down on the doorstep and began to smoke meditatively. "I wouldn't trouble you if I didn't need the money, Bill," he said again.

Seney waved his hand in a magnanimous gesture. "That's all right," he said; "that's all right. I know you wouldn't, Mac."

"See here," he continued, "I've got it now, and it's the only way I can see out of it for you. Take and butcher the old cow."

McFarland looked after him as he strode off, and for a moment had a wild impulse to pick up a stone and hurl it at the bulky boarder; but that passed, and he crept dejectedly into the house and met his wife at the dining-room door. "Well?" she asked.

"Well, he's broke to-day," said McFarland, "but he'll maybe have some money in a week or two and then he'll square up everything."

"Did he say that?"

"Well, he didn't say exactly it—just sort of intimated it—and the chances are that the factory will open up again inside of a week or two. You just leave Bill Seney to me; I'll manage him all right." He tried to speak with jaunty confidence, but he could not meet his wife's suspicious and indignant eye, and his nervous cough came on again.

"Bill Seney's all right," he continued, feebly. "There's lots worse than Bill—whole townships of 'em. When he's got the money he's as good as the wheat, is Bill."

"Suppose you go down to the meat market and get a pot roast of beef and tell them that you'll pay for it when Bill Seney pays you," suggested Mrs. McFarland. "Tell them what a good feller Bill is and they'll let you have it."

"That reminds me," said the old man. "What kind of an idea do you think it would be to let them have Maggie? She ain't giving much milk now, and we might get a good deal to take it out in trade."

His wife looked at him intently and he covered. "It wasn't exactly my own idee," he explained. "Bill—"

"It was Bill's idee, was it?" She said no more, but went away after bestowing a contemptuous look on her quailing husband.

At noon when Seney came in he was met at the door by Mrs. McFarland, whose bare arms were akimbo and who had an unmistakable glitter in her eye as she looked up at him. Usually Seney had passed her by without much notice, but this time he felt constrained to take off his hat and wish her a good morning. Mrs. McFarland, however, did not seem appeased by this polite attention.

"Was you going to dinner?" she asked.

"Yes'm."

"Well, it isn't ready yet, but I think it will be by the time that you get back with the money you owe me for board. You had better get out and hustle, too, because you're going to get hungry if you wait for me to feed you until you've paid me. You may put McFarland off, but you can't put me off, my man; and you needn't look at me like that; because when you do you make me curious how fast them whiskers are in your face. I should be ashamed, sir, if I was you, to try and take advantage of hard working people in the way you have. You needn't tell me that you haven't got it, because I know that they ain't giving trust down at the saloon, and you've spent the price of a day's board there this morning, and you needn't think that you can fool me. If you hain't got the money it don't make no difference, because I can't afford to carry you—you're too big and too ugly, and you wouldn't have talked strike the way you have at my table here if you had thought that you was going to suffer any."

"I'll go up to my room for a minute," said the man, but Mrs. McFarland planted herself directly in his way.

"So that you can get your tools and go over to Duffy's and pay cash," she said. "No, you don't. I'll take care of those tools for you, and I'll take care of you if you try to go over to Duffy's before you pay me."

"Maybe I can borrow some," said Seney, with a crestfallen air.

"Then go borrow it," said the woman.

In less than half an hour Seney got back with the money and paid it over to his landlady. He had thought of freeing his mind when he had done this, but he thought better of the resolution when he once more looked Mrs. McFarland in the eye. He did not wait for dinner, however, and, meeting Mr. McFarland in the hall as he went out, swore ferociously at him.

"He's paid," announced Mrs. McFarland, exhibiting the bills; "paid up in full."

"I knew he would," said the old man. "I laid down hard on him, and he knew he'd got to, or else have trouble; but I b'lieve I made him mad, and I wouldn't be surprised if he went over to Duffy's."—Brooklyn Standard Union.

CHILDREN'S IMAGININGS.

Strange Notions That Sometimes Get Into the Juvenile Head.

There is a time in a child's life when his imagination becomes cosmic, and deals, according to his temperament, luridly and terribly or genially and grotesquely with vast subjects. There was once a boy, says the Boston Transcript, who, at the age of about eight or ten years, lay awake nearly all one night trying to think what it would be like if there were no world—if there was nothing at all. He thrashed in bed from side to side, getting rid of himself, resolving the world to globes, to vapor, to a point—and at last he succeeded in making the point vanish; and then he uttered an awful and bloodcurdling scream, and his mother came running, and the world was restored. It took the boy a long time to get over this experiment; perhaps he has never entirely got over it.

This boy is now a man, and has a boy of his own who is seven years old. The other day the father was a little surprised by having his boy ask him: "Papa, what would it be like if there wasn't any world?" And as the boy is of a genial and happy temperament, and never has been allowed to let his mind roll on such awful subjects as the childish pabulum of the father—damnation and the dead and such things—the father did not worry about any midnight visions. But something did happen—only it wasn't that. An evening or two later the boy and his smaller sister, lying in separate beds in one room, were heard to be conversing cheerfully a rather long time after they had gone to bed, and the father went up and asked them what they were talking about. The boy answered:

"We were talking about how nice it would be if there were two worlds that had a chain running between them, and the monkeys on one world came over on the chain and played with the monkeys on the other world!"

The father in his mind made note of the fact that this was a fancy of a sort that had never occurred to him in the whole course of his mind's cosmic wanderings.

A MUSICAL PRODIGY.

How Elbridge T. Gerry Helped Instead of Harming Him.

Elbridge T. Gerry's fixed conviction that the use of children as public entertainers is ruinous to their moral and physical being has resulted in much benefit for talented youngsters and in a deluge of abuse for their protectors. Several years ago he called in the aid of the law to prevent the performances of a child pianist. The child was admitted by all qualified to judge to be marvelously talented, and as the young prodigy seemed to be well cared for the outcry against the society was long and loud. But Mr. Gerry never flinched, and the law upheld him. Shortly afterward the child was taken to Europe, and the episode faded from the public mind. Ten years later the same pianist reappeared, now in the vigor of youth. His musical gifts had been developed under the guidance of the most accomplished foreign instructors. The public wondered and admired; but few knew that the musician owed the training in his art to the generosity of the man who had restrained him from concert playing ten years before. —Ainslee's Magazine.

You Will Hear of It.

If you have a habit of speaking lightly of your acquaintances, you may rest assured that they will hear of it.—Athenian Globe.

AMONG STRANGE COMPANIONS.

Civilized Men Who Have Identified Themselves with Barbarians.

That highly civilized men should desert their kind, join savage races and actually fight against their own countrymen seems almost incredible. Yet there are many instances of the kind, and in nine cases out of ten these deserters from civilization adopt all the worst traits of the people they join and often surpass them in cruelty and cunning.

In Cochinchina, where the French have for nearly 20 years been carrying on a relentless warfare against the bloodthirsty pirates who infest the coasts, and especially the great rivers, the naval and military forces every now and again discover that the pirate chiefs whom they succeed in capturing are Europeans. One of these men had deserted from the French army, and, says Answers, had become one of the principal lieutenants of the black flag pirate force of the dreaded chief and mandarin Doc Tich.

In the Soudan the khalifa had a large number of Europeans under his orders, including the former Prussian Sergeant of Artillery Klotz and a former Austrian officer who now bears the name of Inger, while his principal lieutenant, the celebrated Osman Digna, was the son of a French shopkeeper, was born in Rouen and, baptized in the magnificent cathedral of that ancient capital of Normandy.

Quite a number of other Frenchmen endeavored to join the dervishes in the Soudan to fight against the English, and the marquis de Mores, married to the daughter of Louis Hoffmann, banker, of New York, lost his life while on his way to Khartoum for the purpose of placing his services at the disposal of the khalifa.

Another case is that of Oliver Pain, one of the most prominent leaders of the French commune in 1871. He was condemned to death for his participation in the insurrection, but his sentence was subsequently commuted to penal servitude for life in New Caledonia. He succeeded in effecting his escape, made his way to Europe and then to Khartoum and offered his services to the mahdi. For many years he was in high favor with the prophet, but finally incurred his displeasure and was buried alive.

Both in Egypt and Turkey there are quite a number of pashas who are nothing more nor less than deserters from more civilized countries. Thus Omar Pasha was an Austrian by birth, and served in the Austrian army under the name of Mikail von Lottas.

Old Cherif Pasha, who was on numerous occasions prime minister of Egypt, was a son of that French General Seives, who reorganized the army of Mehemet Ali on a European footing and embraced Mohammedanism with the object of increasing his influence over the troops. One of the most interesting renegades of this kind was old Sefer Pasha, whose real name was Count Koscielcky, and who, while holding the rank of lieutenant colonel in the Prussian army, had the misfortune to kill in a duel his commanding officer, Count Kleist.

This led him to expatriate himself and, joining the Turkish army, he distinguished himself during the Crimean war as a member of the staff of the Turkish commander in chief, Omar Pasha. Subsequently the count, who had meanwhile become a convert to Mohammedanism, under the name of Sefer Pasha, transferred his services to Khedive Ismail of Egypt.

Then there is Mehemet Ali Pasha, who, after taking a leading part in the last Turko-Russian war, was sent by the sultan as one of the Ottoman plenipotentiaries to the Berlin congress of 1878. He narrowly escaped being arrested on that occasion by the Prussian military authorities as a deserter, having at one time held a commission as a lieutenant in the Third regiment of foot guards.

During the last war between England and the great Matabele tribe under King Lobengula, the latter owed much to the advice and assistance of an American of the name of Whitaker, a former sergeant of the United States artillery.

Statistics of Newspapers.

The total number of copies of newspapers printed throughout the world in one year is 12,000,000,000. To print these requires 781,240 tons of paper, or 1,749,977,000 pounds, while it would take the fastest presses 338 years to print a single year's edition, which would produce a stack of papers nearly 50 miles high.