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"MOTHER'S COOKING."

The Martyrdom Endured by a Patient Little Wife.

The Plainfield boys always had the name of being smart, and Ignace Lute Baker was just about the smartest boy the old town ever turned out. Well, he came by it naturally; Judge Baker was known all over western Massachusetts as the sage of Plainfield, and Lute's mother—she was a Kelllogg before the judge married her—she had more faculty than a dozen of your girls nowadays and her cooking was talked about everywhere—never was another woman, as folks said, could cook like Mrs. Baker. The boys—Lute's friends—used to hang around the back porch of nooning just to get some of her doughnuts; she was always considerate and liberal to growing boys. Maybe Lute wouldn't have been so popular if it hadn't been for these doughnuts, and maybe he wouldn't have been so smart if it hadn't been for all the good things his mother fed into him. Always did believe there was plenty and wisdom in New England victuals.

Lute went to Amherst college and did well; then he taught a winter, for Judge Baker said that nobody could amount to much in the world unless he'd taught school a spell. Lute set on being a lawyer, and so presently he went down to Springfield and read and studied in Judge Morris' office, and Judge Morris wrote a letter home to the lads once testifying to Lute's "probity" and "acumen"—things that are never heard of except high up in the legal profession.

How Lute came to get the western fever I can't say, but get it he did, and one winter he up and picked off his Chicago, and there he hung out his shingle and joined a literary social and proceeded to get rich and famous. The next spring, Judge Baker fell off the woodsill while he was shingling it, and it jarred him so he kind of dropped and picked round a spell and then one day up and died. Lute had to come back home and settle up the estate.

When he went west again he took a wife with him—Emma Cowles that was everybody called her. Em, for short, pretty as a picture and as likely a girl as there was in the township. Lute had always had a hankering for Em and Em thought there never was another such a young fellow as Lute; she understood him perfectly, having sung in the choir with him two years. The young couple went west well provided.

Lute and Em went to housekeeping in Chicago. Em wanted to do her own work, but Lute wouldn't hear it; so they hired a German girl that was just over from the vineyards of the Rhine country.

"Lute," says Em, "Hilda doesn't know much about cooking."

"So I see," says Lute, feelingly. "She's green as grass; you'll have to teach her."

Hilda could swing a hoe and wield a spade deftly, but of the cuisine she knew somewhat less than nothing. Em had lots of patience and pluck, but she found teaching Hilda how to cook a precious hard job. Lute was amiable enough at first; used to laugh off with a cordial that by and by Em would make a famous cook of the obtuse but willing immigrant. This moral backing buoyed Em up considerably, until one evening in an unguarded moment Lute expressed a pining for some doughnuts "like those mother makes," and that casual remark made Em unhappy. But next evening when Lute came home there were doughnuts on the table—beautiful, big, plethoric doughnuts that fairly reeked with the homely, delicious sentiment of New England. Lute ate one. Em felt hurt.

"I guess it's because I've eaten so much else," explained Lute, "but somehow or other they don't taste like mother's."

Next day Em fed the rest of the doughnuts to a poor man who came and said he was starving. "Thank you, marm," said he, with his heart full of gratitude and his mouth full of doughnuts; "I hadn't had anything as good as this since I left Connecticut twenty years ago."

That little subtlety conspired Em, but still she found it hard to bear up under her apparent inability to do her duty by Lute's critical palate. Once when Lute brought Col. Hi Thomas home to dinner they had chicken pie. The colonel praised it and passed his plate a third time.

"Oh, but you ought to eat some of mother's chicken pie," said Lute. "Mother never puts an under crust in her chicken pies and that makes 'em juicier."

Same way when they had fried pork and potatoes; Lute couldn't understand why the flesh of the wallowing, carnivorous yestern hog shouldn't be as white and firm and sweet as the meat of the swill-fed Yankee pig. And why were the Hubbard squashes so tasteless and why was maple sirup so very different? Yes, until all his professional duties Lute found time to note and remark upon this and other similar things, and of course Em was—by implication, at least—held responsible for them all.

And Em did try so hard, so very hard, to correct the evils and to avert the hypercritical demands of Lute's foolishly petted and spoiled appetite. She wrocca valourously with it, butchers groceries and hucksters; she sent down east to Mother Baker for all the famous family recipes; she wrestled in speech and in practice with that awful Hilda; she experimented long and patiently; she blistered her pretty face and burned her little hands over that kitchen range—yes, a slow, constant martyrdom that conscientious wife willingly endured for years in her enthusiastic determination to do her duty by Lute. Doughnuts, chicken pies, boiled dinners, layer cakes, soda biscuits, flapjacks, fish balls, baked beans, squash pies, corned beef hash, dried-apple sauce, currant wine, succotash, brown bread—how valourously Em toiled over them, only to be rewarded with some cruel reminder of

how "mother" used to do these things! It was terrible, a tedious martyrdom. Lute—mind you—Lute was not willfully cruel; no, he was simply and irremediably a heedless idiot of a man, just as every married man is, for a spell, at least. But it broke Em's heart, all the same.

Lute's mother came to visit them when their first child was born, and she lifted a great deal of trouble off the patient wife. "Old Mis' Baker always liked 'em," had told the minister three years ago that she knew Em would make Lute a good Christian wife. They named the boy Moses, after the old judge who was dead, and old Mis' Baker said he should have his gran'pa's watch when he got to be twenty-one. Old Mis' Baker always stuck by Em; maybe she remembered how the old judge had talked once on a time about his mother's cooking. For all married men are, as I have said, idiotically cruel about that sort of thing. Yes, old Mis' Baker braided Em up wonderful; brought a lot of dried catnip out west with her for the baby; taught Em how to make salt-rising bread; told her all about stewing things and broiling things and roasting things; showed her how to tell the real Yankee codfish from the counterfeit—oh, she just did Em lots of good, did old Mis' Baker!

The rewards of virtue may be slow in coming, but they are sure to come. Em's three boys—the three bouncing boys that came to Em and Lute—those three boys waxed fat and grew up boisterous, blatant appreciators of their mother's cooking. The way those boys did eat mother's doughnuts! And mother's pies—wow! Other boys—the neighbors' boys—came round regularly in troops, battalions, armies, and like a consuming fire licked up the wholesome viands which Em's skill and liberality provided for her own boys' enthusiastic playmates. And all those boys—there must have been millions of 'em—were living, breathing, vociferous testimonials to the unapproachable excellence of Em's cooking.

Lute got into politics and they elected him to the legislature. After the campaign, needing rest, he took it easy and he ran down east to see his mother; he had not been back home for eight years. He took little Moses with him. They were gone about three weeks. Gran'ma Baker had made great preparations for them; had cooked up enough pies to last all winter, and four plump, beheaded, well-plucked, yellow-legged pullets hung side by side in the chill pantry off the kitchen, awaiting the last succulent scene of all.

Lute and the little boy got there late of an evening. The dear old lady was so glad to see them; the love that beamed from her kindly eyes well-nigh melted the glass in her silver-bowed specs. The table was spread in the dining room; the sheet-iron stove was glowing and seemed like to crack with the heat of that hardwood fire.

"Why, Lute, you ain't eatin' enough to keep a fly alive," remonstrated old Mis' Baker, when her son declined a second doughnut; "and what ails the child?" she continued; "ha'n't he got no appetite? Why, when you wuz his age, Lute, seemed as if I couldn't cook doughnuts fast enough for you!"

Lute explained that both he and his little boy had eaten pretty heartily on the train that day. But all the time of their visit there poor old Gran'ma Baker wondered and worried because they didn't eat enough—seemed to her as if western folks hadn't the right kind of appetite. Even the plump pullets, served only in a style that had made Mis' Baker famed throughout those discriminating parts—even those pullets failed to awaken the expected and proper enthusiasm in the visitors.

Home again in Chicago, Lute drew his chair up to the table with an eloquent sigh of relief. As for little Moses, he clamored his delight.

"Chicken pie!" he cried, gleefully, and then he added a soulful "swallow," as his eager eyes fell upon a plateful of hot, exuberant, voluptuous doughnuts.

"Yes, we are both glad to get back," said Lute.

"But I am afraid," suggested Em, timidly, "that gran'ma's cooking has spoiled you."

Little Moses (bless him!) howled an indignant, a wrathful remonstrance; "Gran'ma can't cook worth a cent!" said he.

Em expected Lute to be dreadfully shocked, but he wasn't.

"I wouldn't let her know it for all the world," remarked Lute, confidentially, "but mother has lost her grip on cooking. At any rate her cooking isn't what it used to be; it has changed."

"Then Em came bravely to the rescue. "No, Lute," says she, and she meant it, "your mother's cooking hasn't changed, but you have. The man has grown away from the boy, and the tastes, the ways and the delights of boyhood have no longer any fascination for the man."

"Maybe you're right," said Lute. "At any rate, I'm free to say that your cooking beats the world."

"Good for Lute! Virtue triumphs and my true story ends. But first an explanation to condemn my narrative. I should never have known this true story if Lute himself hadn't told it to me at the last dinner of the Sons of New England—told it to me right before Em, that dear, patient, little martyred wife of his. And I knew by the twinkle in Em's eyes that she was glad that she had endured that martyrdom for Lute's sake—Eugene Field, in Chicago News.

—Husband (newly married)—"Don't you think love, if I were to smoke, it would spoil the curtains?" Wife—"Ah, you are really the most unselfish and thoughtful husband to be found anywhere; certainly it would." Husband—"Well, then, take the curtains down."

—George—"What made you bald, papa?" Papa—"My mother used to pat me on the head so much for being a good boy." George—"Do you think I'll be bald?" Papa—"No, my son; there's no danger."

SEA SHELLS.

Pretty and Odd Things Found Under the Water.

The sea cucumber is found in shallow waters, on coral reefs, or in those lovely, calm lagoons, that shine like looking-glasses just inside the breakers—sometimes exposed on the bare rocks, sometimes half buried in the coral sand, its tentacles floating on the surface of the water. The natives often capture the larger kinds by spearing them on the rocks; but the usual mode of taking them is by diving, where the water is four or five fathoms deep, and gathering them by hand, as the pearl diver is taken. A good diver will bring up a dozen at a time.

To prepare them for market they are split down one side, boiled and pressed flat with stones; then, stretched on bamboo slips, they are dried in the sun and afterward smoked; and so they are shipped abroad in great quantities to China to tinkle the whimsical palates of dainty prefects and epicurean mandarins. And you may imagine how fond of trepanning soup those luxurious fellows are when you are told that although the finest sea cucumbers sell in Puchow and Nanchang for about a dollar and a half a pound, floats of from sixty to a hundred proas, carrying from fifteen hundred to two thousand men, leave Macassar in company to gather them.

All the curious and beautiful forms of animal life that float or sail or row on the surface of the Indian ocean, command the sea for miles in all directions, the most curious and beautiful are the violet janthine, the Portuguese man-of-war, the sallee-man and the glass-shells.

The janthine is a snail with a shell which, in form and size, resembles the little-shell that the common garden snail carries on its back; but its color is pearly-white above and violet beneath; it is provided with a curious oblong sucker, about an inch in length, composed of a delicate white membrane, inflated and puckered on the surface into small bladders or bubbles, and supported by this the janthine floats on the convex side of its shell. Three or four drops of a blue liquid are always found in its body; and some naturalists have imagined that the use of this is to conceal the pretty little creature, when danger threatens, by imparting to the water around it a color like its own. But this can hardly be so, since the whole quantity found in even the largest janthine is barely enough to stain half a pint of water. In the spawning season the eggs of this snail are hung by pearly threads under the float; yet these tiny bladders are found in great numbers, separate from the mother, but with the eggs attached. The janthine must have the power of casting off its float, and forming a new one, leaving its eggs, and probably its young also, to be warmed and cradled on the billows, in the heat and light of the sun.

Then there are those exquisitely lovely and fragile "glass-shells," little ivory rowboats, the bustling shallops of invisible sea fairies, like the mussel shell, whose inch in length, composed of a delicate white membrane, inflated and puckered on the surface into small bladders or bubbles, and supported by this the janthine floats on the convex side of its shell. Three or four drops of a blue liquid are always found in its body; and some naturalists have imagined that the use of this is to conceal the pretty little creature, when danger threatens, by imparting to the water around it a color like its own. But this can hardly be so, since the whole quantity found in even the largest janthine is barely enough to stain half a pint of water. In the spawning season the eggs of this snail are hung by pearly threads under the float; yet these tiny bladders are found in great numbers, separate from the mother, but with the eggs attached. The janthine must have the power of casting off its float, and forming a new one, leaving its eggs, and probably its young also, to be warmed and cradled on the billows, in the heat and light of the sun.

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A PILOT'S LIFE.

It is One of Continual Danger and Responsibility.

Passing down New York bay on a torrid midsummer afternoon, the super-heated traveler may notice a trim schooner bearing upon her sail a large figure, and every the open-air life of a pilot; but in winter it is quite different. The life of freedom may be an enviable one for six months in the year, but in winter the perils of a pilot more than offset any advantages that may be thought to be his. The life of a pilot is one of continual danger and responsibility. He has no choice in the matter, but must ride out storm and gale, and be on the alert night and day. His apprenticeship is long and hard, and he must prove himself capable and efficient before he receives his license; and for a single mistake may undo the work of years.

These stanch little pilot-boats go out beyond Sandy Hook for a hundred miles or more to intercept the incoming steamers. When a steamer is sighted, the pilot understands that he is wanted, and makes his presence known. In daytime signals are easily exchanged, and the steamer may have picked up a pilot further out, in which case the schooner goes on her way again, cruising around in the track of the great steamship lines. At night the pilot burns a torch—a wick ball which has been dipped in turpentine and is held on the surface of the Indian ocean, pending the safety of the vessel and her passengers or freight. As he draws near the land he must know the lights that shine forth here and there, and be familiar with the buoys that mark the different channels at the entrance to the Narrows. He must know just where to stop off Quarantine and await the coming of the doctor—and everything, in fact, depends upon him. Oftentimes the steamer has to lay to in rough weather in order to wait a moment of calm, when the pilot may board the ship with safety; and it has happened on several occasions that the pilot of an outgoing steamer has been carried across the ocean, because the steamer could not afford to wait until the elements would permit of his regaining his boat in wait-

Some times a pilot-boat has to put out to sea in the height of a gale; and sometimes, as happened during the great blizzard a few years ago, the boat and all on board are never again spoken. Be the weather mild or rough, the veteran of many storms must be on hand, and the dangers of his calling are never ending. A pilot must be insured to hardship, and all his crew able seamen, and the schooners that pass to and fro through the Narrows bear a complement of brave men and sailors.

—Harper's Weekly.

PITH AND POINT.

—The brilliant mischief of one's own children is outright crime in the children of the neighbors.—Galvesto News.

—Of Course She Was One!—Popular Novelist—"I only know two women who are absolutely perfect." Her friend—"Who is the other one?"—Cunso—"Old Soak seems to be trying to fill a drunkard's grave as fast as he can." Bumso—"Well, you best if he has the job the grave will be full."—N. Y. Herald.

—Eb Johnson—"Lucindy, darlin', I would die for you!" Lucinda—"Bettab lib for me, Mr. Johnson, of yo' 'spect to hab er chance to pay mah grocery bills!"—Truth.

—The Great Humanizer.—Marriage seems to take a good deal of foolish pride out of a man, the same as it takes the independent own-the-earth look out of a girl.—Atholton Globe.

—It is very wrong, of course, to be inquisitive, but if there were not some inquisitive people in the world what a lot of interesting gossip other people would have to miss.—Somerville Journal.

—Young Nicely—"Oh, I think that Charley Awmsong is a perfect brute; but his hands are as big as a laboring man's." Young Sap—"Oh, I detest him; he ith the unladylike."—Boston Courier.

—Rapid Growth.—"This town seems to be making great progress," said a visitor to a resident of Boomville, Okla. "You are just right, stranger. Why, we've had to enlarge the jail twice."—Epoch.

—Dubious.—"I said considered an honor to be sent out as a missionary?" "Yes, Why?" "I was only wondering," said Mrs. Vealy; "my husband's congregation are unanimously desirous that he shall go."—Comic.

—First He—"Stella de Bilton did not appear to-night." Second He—"That was because of the dressing-room this afternoon and ate up the two costumes she wears in the first act."—Pick-Me-Up.