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The more we sell, the cheaper we sell. Today's prices add fuel to the flames.

L. G. HOFFMANN & CO., 142 and 144 East Seventh Street, Ryan Block.

Written for the Globe—Copyright, 1892.

Whitway was the most prominent citizen of Lumberton, although that flourishing municipality was the place of residence of an ex-congressman, and also of a man who had killed his wife and found some meshes of the law through which he escaped hanging. Whitway was the president of the local bank, managing director of a big lumber company, superintendent of a Sunday school and mayor of the city for three successive terms. He had the reputation of never putting on airs and of never putting off payment of his bills, so every one spoke well of him. The most remarkable feature of his reputation, though, and that in which he took the greatest pride, was that he and his family never had trouble with servants. How it came about no one could tell—not even the housekeepers who closely consulted Mrs. Whitway, and to whom that lady told everything she knew about the management of the class that made more misery at Lumberton than all the politicians and other rogues combined. The servants said their employers were to blame; the employers retorted that the primal curse was not work, but the necessity of keeping servants of any kind. There were times when nervous and suspicious housekeepers insisted that there was a general conspiracy of the hired help of the town, and that no one less malignant than Satan was the instigator thereof, but on these occasions, as well as all other times, the Whitways retained their servants and their peace of mind; the husband had never to begin the morning by making the kitchen fire and profane remarks, and hurry off to business while his wife dropped bitter tears into the dishpan. His servants, old or young, black or white, native-born or foreign, never gave notice until ready to go into matrimony or the retirement compelled by age, and some of them lost possible husbands for the sake of remaining where they would be sure of food and shelter.

Indeed, so exasperating did it in time become for other Lumberton people, when they had trouble with their servants, to have the Whitways thrown—metaphorically, of course—in their faces, that some heads of families were not sorry when the Whitways left the town and went to a Western state where Whitway's knowledge of lumber promised to have a wider and more profitable field of activity. Several years later they heard news, bit by bit, which implied that their late fellow-townsman was probably not maintaining his old reputation, for if reports were true, Whitway had become too poor to have servants of any kind. There had been some trouble with a partner—Lumberton never could get all parts of the story, but the report was that Whitway had been entirely ruined, that a long fit of sickness had followed, and that he and his family had finally gone to New York, where Whitway hoped to find such employment as his illness had left him fit for.

Whitway had indeed become very poor and helpless. Through an old business acquaintance he obtained a small clerkship, which enabled him to keep a section of a "flat house" roof over the head of his wife and half-grown children, and to buy enough food to keep them from starving, if he were careful to buy only what was cheapest; so it came to pass that once a week he carried a basket to the great city's greatest market, and scrutinized the stalls with as much care as in old times he had given to large tracts of timber and rafts of logs. One consolation he had while spending hours of time to save the unnecessary spending a few cents of money—nobody knew of him. Frapp, his rascaly partner, lived in New York, so he had heard, but there was no likelihood that Frapp, with his ill-gotten gains and expensive tastes, would ever venture into the crowded aisles and alleys of Washington market. Could ever certain papers be recovered from Frapp—papers which the fellow had declared on oath he never saw, although many people believed he lied—then the tables might be turned, and Frapp himself might be obliged to squeeze pennies to keep the wolf from the door. In the meantime, Whitney would act on the time-honored American injunction—"Grin and bear it"—so long as he met no one who could remind him of old times.

But New York is the worst place in the world to hide. There are towns and wildernesses which no one ever visits; but every man and woman in America longs to go to New York, and many of them succeed, whether for better or worse does not concern this story. One Saturday evening, after Whitway had spent half an hour in stimulating his heart by looking at the choice cuts of meat and stalls of poultry and game from which he hoped one day to fill his family larder, he invested a quarter in some decent yet cheap scraps of beef from which to make a stew for the Sunday dinner. He had just placed his purchase in his basket, and was wondering whether he could afford a single bunch of the crisp celery which his wife loved so dearly, when he heard a woman's voice, asking:

"Sure, an' it must be Mr. Whitway?"

"Why, Nora Caffrey!" exclaimed Whitway, turning quickly, "when did you leave Lumberton?"

"Sure, Mr. Whitway, an' don't ye remember that me husband came to New York to go on the police?"

"Oh, yes; to be sure. Quite a well-paid business, too, I believe. I hope he's doing well?"

"God grant it," said the woman, with a pious gesture, as he dropped her head, "seein' He tuk him to Himself."

"Dead?" exclaimed Whitway; then he continued gently, "He's safe then; Mike was a good man."

"Ye remember his name, thin?" said the woman, her face brightening. "May the saints preserve ye, Mr. Whitway. An' how is the wife an' childer?" As she spoke she looked at Whitway keenly. The man, who didn't like to be regarded in exactly that way, assumed some of his old manner, and answered quickly:

"Quite well, thank you."

"An' have ye all the help ye nade? I'm workin' agin; Mike's pinsion from the force isn't enough to take care of all the childer. I'd lave the place where I am in a minute to come to yez, if yer not suited with the help ye have."

"I do believe you would, you good soul," said Whitway, "but"—he hesitated a moment and then put on a grim smile as he continued—"the kitchen is being managed just now by the best woman who ever was in it—present company excepted."

"Ah, well, thin," sighed the woman. "But if ever ye should nade me, I'll lave ould Frapp in a minute. His ain't the kind I like, but a woman that's got a family to bring up must take work where she can git it. Ye'll kape my address, though, won't ye? Mebbe Mrs. Whitway might like to see the fine byes and girruls I've got."

She took a bit of brown paper from the stall in front of her, borrowed the butcher's pencil, and scrawled an address, while Whitway set his teeth. Frapp! To hear that rascal's name again roused him anew to a sense of his condition—his helpless condition. How strange that he should get it from such a source—that he should be doubly reminded of his prosperous days! He was so absorbed in his thoughts that he bade the woman good-bye in an absent-minded manner, and slowly walked away and plodded his way homeward—even a car-fare would have been an extravagance; besides, with his head aflame with rage, he could have walked ten times the distance that night without feeling fatigue.

Had he looked backward as he tramped along he might have seen a middle-aged Irish woman hurrying and puffing through the throng not far behind him, and getting many angry remarks as her own market basket collided with various pedestrians. As Whitway turned from one of the long avenues which are the arteries of New York, the woman threw her shawl over her head and quickened her steps. She noted the house which he entered and groaned and murmured, "I might ha' knowed it, from his clothes an' the luk av his face. An' him such a fine man, too!"

Then she made a mental note of the street and number, repeating each to herself several times before hurrying to the home of her little family, not far away, and then made her way to the house where she was employed. She was back again, though, within a couple of hours; she made an excuse to waylay some one of about her own social station who came out of the house, and little by little she learned much about the condition of her old employer's family, and even found out where Whitway was employed.

For weeks after Nora Caffrey carried a great load on her heart. There are difficulties enough in the way of the rich who wish to help the poor, but when the poor long to help their own kind, whom they, nevertheless, think are above them, there is some heroic struggling which never is appreciated except at the judgment seat. The woman had too much natural delicacy to call on her old mistress, much though she longed to look at her and the children whom she, Nora, had loved before she had children of her own. By stealthy excursions, made at times when she was supposed to be delivering her employer's orders with butcher and baker, she finally succeeded in looking at the children; they did not remember her, which hurt yet pleased her, but one day she had the bliss of helping one of them, who was on her way to school, across a street in which two wagons were rapidly approaching each other. The act gave an excuse for asking questions.

"Ye luk too healthy to have always lived in this dreadful city," she said. "Where did ye last come from?"

"Way out West," was the reply.

"An' is that so? An what made ye come away?"

"A horrid old man named Frapp made my father real poor."

"Ye don't mane it! What did ye say was the name av him?"

"Frapp," the child repeated.

Nora went back to her kitchen, with her heart on fire and her head in a muddle. Her employer must be the man of whom the child had spoken; she knew he had come from the West and seemed to be rich. But what could she do? First she determined to leave his employ, first giving him a piece of her mind, but the thought of her own children restrained her; she knew what it meant to haunt intelligence offices a week or two, while her little ones needed food, shoes and clothes, as they always did in spite of her best efforts and the care of the late policeman's sister, who cared for them out of Nora's earnings. She wondered if it would do any good to tell Whitway of the whereabouts of his enemy, but she had been long enough in New York to have absorbed the customary belief that the poor had no chance against the rich. Apparently all she could do was to hate her employer, so to this congenial duty she devoted most of her time. She avenged Whitway to the best of her ability by slyly destroying things about the house and creating much waste in the kitchen, but none of this helped her old employer to regain his own. She watched Frapp closely and savagely, without any reason that she could give herself, yet with a dumb hope that justice might yet be done in some way. So determined was she to keep a close eye upon the mischief-making man that one day, when the "second girl" had given sudden warning and disappeared, Nora astonished her mistress by offering to do double work until a satisfactory substitute could be found. Mrs. Frapp, who was young, pretty and incompetent, felt so relieved that she informed her husband that the cook was going to be an angel—her wings had already sprouted. As for Nora, her new position enabled her one day to overhear Mrs. Frapp say, one morning at the breakfast table:

"Edward, I'm tired of taking care of those shabby old papers that you insist in keeping in my desk. I need all of the desk room myself."

"Just like a young woman," growled the head of the house. "I buy you a hundred-dollar desk just because you set your extravagant heart upon it, and now you begrudge me a single compartment in it. My first wife hadn't any desk at all, but she never grumbled."

"But, Edward, those papers take up so much room; besides, they smell musty. Why can't you keep them at your office?"

"Because they're too important to be rummaged through by any one else. I don't want any of my clerks to even see them."

"That's funny," murmured Mrs. Frapp, with a condescending smile. "You trust your clerks with money, don't you? I'm sure that money is worth a great deal more than a horrid bundle of papers, so I don't see—"

"That's because you're a woman and don't know anything about business—see?" snarled Frapp.

The wife took refuge in a pout, but as that did not reduce her husband to submission, she began to cry.

"That's it!" exclaimed Frapp, in mock encouragement. "Cry—cry about something that doesn't concern you in the least. Come to think it over, though, it does. I've done everything for your sake; you've got a handsomer house, finer dresses, and more money than any woman you know. Do you know how it came about? All through those 'horrid papers,' as you call them. You want to go to Europe pretty soon, and I've promised to take you. Well, if those papers in your desk happened to fall into the hands of any one who might care to do me harm, we might have to start for Europe all of a sudden—and perhaps go in the steerage. Now, will you try to have some sense?"

"Gracious, yes," gasped Mrs. Frapp, "though I shall always be afraid, after this, to be in the same room with those papers."

"Don't be a fool," growled Frapp, abruptly leaving the table and burying his face in the newspaper.

Nora, who had heard this conversation from behind the door that led through the butler's pantry to the kitchen, was so excited that, as she afterward told her husband's sister, she felt her head "split open the width of three fingers." For two days and nights she was in a daze, and did all her work so badly that Mrs. Frapp had to give up several engagements and go from one intelligence office to another in search of an additional servant. During these outings of the mistress the cook had the house all to herself, so again and again she went to her mistress' room and gazed in a fascinated way at the desk which contained the fateful documents. Could it be possible that they had anything to do with the transactions which had made Whitway a poor man? She wished Whitway might see them; several times she was half-inclined to go to his house and tell him all she had heard. One day she saw the desk had been left open, for Mrs. Frapp was a careless creature; Nora peeped in, and quickly discerned the only portion of the contents which could be called "horrid;" it consisted of several long, soiled, bulky envelopes. Suppose she were to take them and hurry to Whitway's house with them? But, no; he would not be at home at that late hour of the day. Perhaps she could find out what they really were; she had been to school in her younger days, and could read writing fairly well. Slowly she put forth her hand to the package, but quickly withdrew it, as if it were a serpent. She whispered a prayer, and made another attempt, removed the rubber bands which held the envelopes together, and exclaimed:

"The ould divil. I might ha' known he wouldn't have left thim uns'aled."

Replacing the bands, she hurried from the chamber to the kitchen, her imagination picturing whole platoons of policemen behind her. Once again in her proper place, though, she recovered her wits and set herself to thinking. If anything were to be done there was no time to lose; her mistress might close and lock the desk on her return; she might even bring the desired new servant with her—she certainly would try, for the next day but one would be Christmas, and she knew that the family had invited guests, so Mrs. Frapp would lose no effort to provide herself with some one to wait at table.

Nora dropped on her knees and buried her face in a chair; she remained in this position several minutes, and then she sprang to her feet, exclaiming:

"Heaven be praised that iver I was married. That thrick that Mike showed me once—the way some thieves takes money out of letters—that'll do it."

The next fifteen minutes were each an hour long to Nora, although the clocks of the house told a different story. First, she filled the fire-box of the kitchen range with wood; then she put on the tea-kettle, with only a little water in it. Then she made haste to see that both front doors were securely locked; she ran for the package, came back, waited for the kettle to steam freely, and then held the flap of the envelope over the steam a moment until it became quite damp. She recalled every motion which the late lamented policeman, Mike, went through during his demonstration; she moved the envelope slowly to and fro until all of the sealed portion seemed equally moist; then with a table knife she carefully raised the flap and extracted the contents, putting them into her capacious pocket. But how could she return the envelopes flat to the desk? the difference in their bulk would be noticed. Ah! She had it—hurrying to a closet where she kept kindling material she snatched a newspaper, folded it to the size of the envelope, found it too bulky, tore it in half, put it into the envelope and peplaced the flap, which she then pressed on the cooler part of the range top, just as Mike had done with his experimental letter over the stove in their tenement. She repeated this operation with the other envelopes and then, remaking the package, returned it to the desk. It seemed that her feet would scarcely hold her up until she had unlocked the door, so that it would yield to her mistress's latch-key; when she got back to the kitchen she felt so faint and criminal that she made haste to seek assistance from prayer and cooking brandy, taking the brandy first. She repeated both doses several times during the day, for it seemed that between her secret and her fear she would lose her reason. Her mistress returned without the new girl, so Nora made several excuses to visit the chamber floor during the day, and during the last visit had the satisfaction of seeing Mrs. Frapp close and lock the desk. Still she felt as if she might faint at any moment, and should her mistress attempt to revive her the mysterious papers might drop from her pocket. Going to her room, she wrapped all the papers in a handkerchief; she took the package to the kitchen and hid it under a pile of rubbish in one of the closets; after dark she would make an excuse to go out, find a boy near the Whitway house, and send the papers to her old master without any intimation as to who the sender was. If Frapp was right in his statement of what might happen were they to fall into the hands of any one who might want to do him harm, Whitway would know what to do with them; if not, at least there would be misery of mind some day for the man who had wronged the best employer she ever had.

But the fates were against her. Dinner was scarcely ended when some people called, and Nora had to ice champagne and then prepare some luncheon, so it was nearly midnight before she was at liberty. She thanked heaven, though, that the next day would be marketing day—the day before Christmas. She had the right to the afternoons of Sundays and holidays, in which to do her marketing for her own little family. She would go down town to the place where, she had learned, Whitway worked; she would watch for him as he came out; of course he would go to Washington market; she would follow him, speak to him again, and slip the package into his overcoat pocket. She had seen his wife do this some other days. Perhaps he would find a basket with him—of course he would; so much the better—she would slip it in that. Then with what unexpected joy and relief she would purchase the turkey with which she was going to surprise the little Caffreys—they hadn't tasted turkey on Christmas since their father died.

The sky was growing dark Christmas eve as Whitway left his desk, went slowly down the stairs, and, still slowly and with bowed head, toward the market. Usually he was in haste to get home, but tonight the thought of what he wanted to do in the way of presents, yet was unable to do, made his feet as heavy as his heart. He had been carrying home work to do at night, so as to earn a little extra money, but one of the children had suddenly been discovered with its feet literally on the ground, as children's feet always manage to be just when their parents' pockets are empty; another child had been slightly ill, and medicines cost money. There could be no presents, nor any turkey; a piece of corned beef and a pound of candy would have to be the measure of the family's festivities. His wife was loving and patient; his children affectionate; things might be worse, but oh, if he might only have an opportunity to make them better. Other men had gone down only to rise again; would his own time never come?

Nora had purchased her turkey before going on guard—she hadn't been able to resist the temptation. With her prize in a stout paper bag, she followed her old master to the market, and through it, wondering that he passed the poultry stalls, where his practiced eye should have told him were as fine turkeys as could be found anywhere. She saw him stop at a meat stall, look at one cut after another, and finally purchase a not very large bit of corned beef. Nora's heart melted. Was her old master's family to eat such common food on Christmas while her children were to have turkey? Had heaven forgotten the good? It would never do for her to speak to him while he was betraying his poverty so painfully. Perhaps he would stop at some other stall where appearances would not be so much against him.

But he did not; he went into the street and started homeward. Once or twice, in the crowd, Nora tried to reach his side unobserved and slip the package into his pocket, but she feared being seen; besides, she noticed, to her dismay, that his pockets had outside flaps. Suddenly a new plan came to her mind. She hurried to his side, and said:

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Whitway."

"Ah! Nora," exclaimed Whitway, with his hearty old-time manners, "the same to you, good woman. Been getting your Christmas turkey, eh? Well, I hope your children have healthy appetites?"

"That's one the blessin's that's never lackin' wid the poor, sir."

"Right you are, my girl, as I happen to know—that is, I've heard so."

"Sure, they're welcome to their appetites, the childer is, so we have the rest of 'em."

Good girl! That's the right way to feel," said Whitway, feeling better himself for the sentiment. There was a moment of silence; then Nora said abruptly:

"I want a Christmas present from ye, Mr. Whitway, for old times, ye know. 'Twon't cost ye a cint. It's only to let me carry the basket for ye."

"Bless you, girl," said the man, with a quick look as he straightened his figure, "do I look tired?"

"Not a bit of it, sir—but ye don't understand me. It's for mesilf I'm askin' it—it's a favor. I want to feel like old times, just for a bit. It's little else I've got but the childer an' the old times that's in me mind. Sure, an' ye're too fine a gintleman to say me no."

Looking down, under the glare of an electric light, Whitway saw tears in the woman's eyes; then he found that they were contagious. Her hand was tugging at the basket, which he slowly released, as Nora continued.

"Walk as slow or as fast as ye will, sir—I'll be right behind ye."

During the next fifteen minutes the spirit of Christmas took full possession of Whitway, driving out all gloom, fear and apprehension. Some one, outside of his family circle, still respected him and felt kindly toward him. Probably there were many such; certainly in his prosperous days he never had forgotten any needy acquaintance at the holiday season. He wished Nora could know how much good she had done him—probably she would, though, through the spirit which had prompted her offer. Still, 'twas outrageous that the woman, not much younger than he, should be carrying his load and her own, too. He turned quickly, saying,

"There, you good soul, your arms by this time have paid dearly for your sentiment! You shan't tug that basket another step. Besides, I must stop in the middle of the next block for a little business. I'll tell Mrs. Whitway about meeting you, and about your old-time spirit; it will do her a great deal of good. Good-night, and a merry Christmas."

"The blessin' of Heaven go with yer basket, sir," Nora replied turning into a side street.

"What on earth did the women mean by that, I wonder?" Whitway asked himself, as he continued on his way. "Is it an Irish expression, or does she see in some way, how poor I am? Well, she's welcome to after tonight; I wish I hadn't been too proud to ask her to come and see us; I suppose she's dying to."

Then he stopped in front of a candy store, and looked in the window a long time before he could determine which of the cheap mixtures would look best on the table next day. Arriving at home he was as cordially greeted as if he were still rich; his children helped him to remove his overcoat, and his wife relieved him of the market basket, returning in a moment from the kitchen to exclaim:

"A turkey! Why, for a whole day we can forget that we are poor."

"Turkey!" exclaimed Whitway, with a wonderstruck countenance.

"You dear old fellow," exclaimed Mrs. Whitway, throwing her arms around her husband and nestling her head in his breast, "nothing can keep you from being your dear old mischievous self. Any one who doesn't know you would imagine from your innocent look that you can't imagine how the turkey got into the basket."

"I do know, though," said Whitway, breaking down suddenly, as even strong men sometimes will. His wife hid his face with her own, but asked no questions; meanwhile, the children, who did not know what was going on, went to the kitchen to inspect the bird, and the older son soon returned with a package and the remark that he didn't think a market basket was a very safe place for letters.

"Letters?" echoed Whitway, taking the package; "well, I shouldn't wonder at anything tonight. What can it be?"

"What can it be?
Open and see,"

said a small daughter, quoting a nursery rhyme.

"Perhaps it's a bundle of money from those hateful folks down town who have been paying you so little for all your hard work."

"I hope so," said Whitway, looking curiously at the address, "though I wasn't aware that any of them wrote so badly. Let's see what's inside; it's rather too broad and long for greenbacks, but about the right size for government bonds folded in the usual manner. A package of bonds as thick as this would be quite a fortune to a poor family, but—great heavens!"

"What is it—quick!" exclaimed Mrs. Whitway.

"It's the whole fortune I lost out West," was the reply, as Whitway rapidly looked over the documents; "at least, it's the papers which will get that fortune back for me very quickly."

"Merciful heavens!" Mrs. Whitway gasped.

"Quite right, my dear; that seems to be exactly the state of the case," said her husband, trying to pull himself together by examining the papers in detail.

"But how did the papers get into your market-basket?"

"As mysteriously as the turkey did," was the reply. "When I left the market there was nothing in my basket but a piece of corned beef."

"Haven't you exchanged baskets by mistake with some one?"

"No," Whitway replied; "but a friend of the family carried mine for me a mile or more. I knew she did it for loyalty's sake, but I didn't imagine how much it meant."

"She?' did you say?"

"Yes; Nora Caffrey, one of our servants in other times—don't you remember her? She's now servant for Frapp."

"I see; and you told her of the papers you needed, and she got them for you?"

"I told her nothing; I don't see how she came to know that Frapp and I ever had any dealings together."

"How could she have thought it out, then? She never was over smart."

"I don't know, my dear; unless there's something in one of her old sayings—'The Lord is good to the Irish.' The Lord shan't do it all hereafter, though, so far as that individual Irish person is concerned."

What happened to the wicked Frapp would be too long a story to tell here, for does not every one know how long a well-to-do rascal can remain in the courts before reaching the state prison? One thing may be said, however, he never imagined how the papers got back into his partner's hands. As for Nora Caffrey, she retired from service forever, and drew a handsome monthly pension forced upon her by Whitway. When the rehabilitated man was decorating his new home he astonished the family by bringing in a bust of Nora Caffrey, somewhat idealized, it is true, yet unmistakably Nora, and giving it the place of honor in the sitting room.

THE CHRISTMAS OF MY BOYHOOD.

I.

Some poet has written of scenes dear to childhood,
Which fond recollection presented to view.
"The orchard, the meadow, the deep-tangled wildwood"
Were all loving spots which his infancy knew.
I sing of a mem'ry, whose lasting impression
Nor season, nor epoch can dim or efface;
Each Christmas recurring, recalls the expression:
"Jack, hang up your sock, by the old chimney place."

II.

I fear that Proud Prudery's nerves I am shocking,
My crude Anglo-Saxon may merit disdain;
But "sock" is a word that is shorter than "stocking,"
It answers my purpose, so let it remain.
For the animadversions of critics I care not,
They burden my soul with no sense of disgrace;
And waver at trifles at this time I dare not,
So here's to the sock at the old chimney place!

III.

How wistful I longed for the night before Christmas,
And wished that so me power would accelerate time;
How eager the folks in the morn not to miss mass—
The whole scene comes back and gives zest to my rhyme.
I see throngs of worshipers quietly wending
Their way thro' the snow, and their steps churchward trace;
I hear the hosannas to heaven ascending,
The while my sock hangs by the old chimney place.

IV.

I remember the stories they told about Santa—
His ride o'er the housetops, his deer, bells and sled;
(Being artless and childlike) like visions from Dante,
The tales fairly twisted my poor little head.
Believe them? Of course. What is youth but believing?
The shadow of doubt never darkens his face;
So, guided by impulse—no thought of deceiving—
I hung up my sock by the old chimney place.

V.

They told me "Old Graybeard" was partial to goodness,
And lavished his gifts with a generous hand;
They solemnly stated all boys prone to rudeness
No possible chance for a present would stand.
So a week before Christmas my ways I amended,
And mischief was banished for juvenile grace;
To a state of perfection my life surely tended,
Ere I hung up my sock by the old chimney place.

VI.

I remember how early I wooed the "restorer,"
That blessed condition they call "balmy sleep"
And mother, dear soul, how I'd badger and bore her,
While she bade me be still till the daylight should peep.
Then all through the night, pleasant images scorning,
To strange, weird spectres, my fancy gave chase,
Yet with light heart I gleefully welcomed the morning,
For a glimpse of that sock by the old chimney place.

VII.

But pleasures, like everything human, are fleeting,
And youth's happy moments soon come to a close;
This lesson e'en Nature, to man, keeps repeating,
In the bloom of the bud and the blight of the rose.

* * * * * * * *

Well, Christmas day comes, but its joys have departed,
For manhood's estate sadly alters the case;
How oft I have prayed I might be as childhearted,
As when hanging my sock by the old chimney place.

—M. J. DONNELLY.

A Good Thing to Know.

Albany Press.

A cooking club in Washington was broken up by matrimony in less than a year. Each member in turn ordered, cooked and served a dinner. Each one had the privilege of inviting a man to judge the cooking. Every man invited fell in love with a cook.

One girl was a "raging belle." She knew the way to cook a good beefsteak. Instead of broiling it over the fire, she cooked it under. The slide the broiler was put in was not unlike a drawer with the coals on top.

This is the proper way to cook a beefsteak. The juice, instead of being drawn, as it is when a steak is broiled over the coals, is drawn up and the meat is unctuous and palatable.

To win a sweetheart with a beefsteak is not poetic, but the aftermath is.

How India Ladies Wear Bangles

Glass bangles in India are regarded as sacred objects. If a glass bangle be accidently broken, its pieces must be gathered together and kissed three times Every Hindoo woman wears these ornaments until her husband dies, when she breaks them with a brick or stone and substitutes for them gold or silver ones, a sign in North India that the wearer is either a widow or a less estimable woman. The demand for glass bangles is never failing. They are manufactured in abundance in the northwestern provinces, as well as in the Punjab.

No Call for a Fortune in Gifts.

Altoona Tribune

The people who stem the tide of fashionable folly and purchase simple Christmas presents this year will be doing a great public service.

ABOUT SHOPLIFTERS.

This Is the Season When They Abound in the Land.

The Great Display of Holiday Goods Brings Them Out.

The Genuine Shoplifter Brings Art in Aid of Her Trade.

Interesting Description of Her Methods of Procedure.

SLOWLY the woman went through the store for an hour or more. She priced this and that; she sat down and chatted with friends; she purchased trifling articles. There was a great holiday throng in the big place; there was noise and confusion; the sharp, metallic cries of the cash girls resounded above the din.

By and by the woman asked the price of feathers.

The busy and obliging clerk told all about the styles that obtained in feathers for women's hats. The woman who had inquired sat there listening intently. She was stylishly clad. Now and again people passing in the store looked at her with admiration.

Finally the woman sitting there so quietly, toying with the splendid diamonds on her jeweled hands, concluded she would buy.

She took out her pocketbook and placed it on the counter.

"Show me that!"

As she said this she pointed to some beautiful tips in a case behind the shop girl.

That worthy turned to comply.

Look at that!

Quick as a flash the grand lady nipped number of feathers out of the heap in front of her, and with a trained, deft motion, shuffled them out of sight, somewhere, in the direction of the floor.

It was all done so suddenly that the eye could not follow the flight of her fingers.

The shop girl turned around again and continued to talk of feathers.

With a show of displeasure the woman finally picked up her purse and went away.

She moved quickly toward the door.

She passed to the street.

At the corner she was confronted by a man.

"Madam, come with me!"

As the man said this in a low tone he beckoned toward the store.

The woman turned with an air of injured innocence, pouted, stamped her pretty foot and made a feint to move off.

A crowd collected.

She was led away.

Well, what of it? Oh, nothing. She was merely taken to the examination rooms, where $500 worth of silks, laces and feathers were taken from her by the store detective and his woman aides.

That man who had followed and had accosted her was a famous store detective of Gotham, says the Herald.

He is one of a large and influential class. His duties are peculiarly delicate.

Think of a man who is paid to see that the darling ladies do not steal!

Yes, paid; and paid well.

He must have an eye that never sleeps, for women are the shrewdest of the shrewd, and at this season there are thousands of dollars' worth of property lying within reach of their slender fingers.

Tricks of the Trade.

There are some mighty queer-looking fellows following the ladies about in these days in the dry goods houses. There is no need of begging the question or of getting behind the door in speaking of this matter, for it's a solemn truth about the woman shoplifter—and the sensible girl will be ready to acknowledge, no doubt, before this season's shopping is over, that even she, upright and honest to the last degree, noticed a horrid-looking man glaring at her the day her fingers dallied too long over those tidbits of jewelry in the splendid bazaar.

It was the store detective, and you should look out for him.

The genuine shoplifter is a woman who brings art in aid of her trade. She has the inside of her skirt armed with a huge pocket.

She does her work by sleight of hand. She will sit down like the lady who was after the feathers, and, when she has a lot of stuff spread out in front of her, she will deliberately brush some of it into the big pocket of her skirt.

Sitting very close to the counter, there is but little fear of detection, especially since she usually manages to distract the attention of the salesman.

Then she goes to another part of the store and plies her trade over again.

The store detective divides his time equally between watching the lady's hands and her walk. She wobbles when she walks. This is the way the shoplifter is usually detected.

After she has loaded down her bag with silks and small articles, the stuff is likely nine times out of ten to "cant" over to one side, causing her dress to hang lop-sided, and reacting upon her walk in such a fashion as to make her gait unsteady and wobbly.

She steers left-footed or right-footed.

That is the signal for the detective, and he loses no time in following the woman and in demanding when he stops her that she submit to examination. Of course she always protests that this is an outrage.

It is a serious matter, too, to halt a woman these days and tell her that she must submit to being searched. Mistakes do happen, no doubt, but then the store detective is a man who understands his business. After all, he takes very few chances. He usually sees the woman in the act of stealing, or maybe the clerk will mis something and tell him just in time—if he is lucky enough to be passing.

Another way of catching the shoplifter is by the tell-tale silk or cloth wrapper left empty on the counter where the theft has taken place.

All ladies who patronize the dry goods stores know that cloth and silks are usually put up with an outer covering for protection. This paper wrapper is unfolded as the clerk shows the goods. When a piece of silk or cloth is sold the wrapper is retained by the clerk, as there are certain private marks on it. These are used in checking up the sales. Now, then, when a shoplifter nips a piece of silk or cloth she invariably leaves the wrapper on the counter. She cannot make away with it, as it would expose her. It would take too long to publicly wrap it about the silk. Lying half in the silk and half out of it, the easiest way for the shoplifter to do is to tug away at the cloth, and, securing the prize, leave the paper shell behind on the counter.

As soon as the clerk sees the empty papers before him, perhaps partly concealed in a mass of odds and ends, he says:—

"Helloo, what's this? Is it a sale or a theft?"

It does not take him long to discover the true state of affairs. The alarm is given; the woman is shadowed, perhaps spotted, detained and searched.

The goods are recovered and the woman is arrested.

The Pocketbook Trick.

There is a little game that the store detectives will be looking out for these days, known professionally among thieves as nipping pocketbooks—and a very clever thing it is, too. In some respects it is better than shoplifting. It is easier to work, the profits are usually large, and, all in all, it is a good game to try.

A woman goes into a big bazaar and begins pricing articles. She lays her purse down on the counter. Thousands and thousands of women do this. It is very careless, but there is no remedy for it; it is one of the peculiarities of the shopper, this laying down of pocketbooks.

The women next to the owner of the purse is a thief.

As soon as the real owner's head is turned "nip," and the pocketbook is gone! The other woman—the thief, the one on the "make"—simply picks up the pocketbook and walks off. There is not one chance in a dozen that she will be caught. The crowds in the big stores are very large. A step or two and she is lost to view. Then the other woman turns around.

"Where is my purse?" she says.

Not knowing exactly where she placed it—her mind is abstracted by the show of pretty things on the counters and on the shelves—she is undecided for a moment or two. She fumbles through her pockets, in her wrap, in her skirt. She, good, honest soul, never dreams that she has been robbed. Then she looks under the heaps of articles jumbled together on the counters near where she was standing. Or, perhaps, she has taken a step or two, and really doesn't recall where she placed the book, when it finally dawns on her that she did not put it on the counter.

The search lasts several minutes.

In the meantime the thief has escaped.

A Little Doubt.

Detroit Tribune.

She trembled with happiness as she helped him into his overcoat and handed him his hat. She was very happy. The man of her choice had ignored the fact that she was wealthy, and had asked her to be his wife. She jumped at the chance, and a pearly tear of joy clung to her eyelashes.

When he was all ready to go he stooped and imprinted a kiss upon her brow.

The thought of his bravery thrilled her.

"How noble"—

She found herself close to his ear and whispered softly:

—"you are."

Tenderly he was unwinding her arms from his neck.

Money in an Old Shoe.

It seems that some people have a mania for concealing valuables in odd and ridiculously unsafe places. A particularly odd case was brought to light recently. While looking over the effects of the late Alonza Betts, in his room in Reading, Mich., a sister found in a cheap memorandum book these words: "You will find money in an old shoe." Off in one side of the room she found an old pair of arctic overshoes, and in them was $1,200 in money, checks and notes.

Imitation the Sincerest Flattery.

Harrisburg Patriot.

The office hunters ought to try the Harvard flying wedge. It is said to be very effective in getting there.

DEFECTIVE PAGE

INTENTIONAL DUPLICATE EXPOSURE