THE LOWER RANCH.

BY HATTIE HORNER LOUTHAN.

JASON GRANT sat in his light spring wagon, waiting to go with his wife and her friends to the Lower Ranch. She was really going, although she had vowed that she never would. But they were not ready yet, and he bowed his head on his hands and allowed his mind to wander over the almost twenty years of their married life.

No one would ever accuse Jason Grant of sentimentality; yet in this retrospection his thoughts dwelt with singular persistence upon a certain morning in a haying season long ago, when pretty Mary Moore had come to help his mother cook for the hay hands. He recalled the jealous pang with which he saw the young minister drive Mary to the door—for Jason Grant, hard-working, close-handed, grasping, was never given to sentiment. But twenty years made a difference; and he had been at that time what most of the other farmer boys were—even though every one thought him wrapped up in land-getting and money-making.

How well he remembered that day! He had made numerous trips, necessary and unnecessary, from hay field to house, just for a word with Mary Moore, or for a glimpse of her plump form and blooming face. The picture that rose oftenest before him was that of Mary, framed by the doorway, smiling upon him as he turned away with the hammer for which he had made one of those unnecessary trips. That smile had made his heart beat like a hammer of another sort—foolish fellow!

Ah, me! he could see it all in detail—the yellow farmhouse with green shutters, the "leanto" for tools, the bench, the grindstone, the scythe, the garden rake, the wood-pile with the axe in the old stump, the well-sweep, beyond the stretch of orchard fence, the barn, swallow-circled, and the fast-multiplying stacks of emerald hay.

Jason, the only son, had inherited the Grant homestead; and Mary Moore had been wise, from the worldly point of view, in accepting his hand, grasping though it was, rather than that of the young minister, which had been offered her on that very morning's drive.

It was more the spirit of innate coquetry that prompted her to inform the reticent young farmer of the honor proffered her by the minister; though Jason Grant, during the sober second thought following the arduous insistence of his own proposal, came to the conclusion that the information had been vouched him in order to bring him to the point.

His father had for some time had his business eye upon a rich bottom-land ranch, an entire section, six hundred and forty goodly acres, wooded, watered and gently sloping, and lying in the inevitable path of the much-talked-of branch road from seat to seat of the adjoining counties. When old Ranchman Grant came to his last illness, shortly before his son's wedding, he confided to the prospective bridegroom that the coveted ranch could be had upon a small payment, and by assuming the heavy, though long-time mortgage held by eastern parties; and that the acquirement of it was worth even the postponement of the wedding.

But love is love; his blundering proposal was made, and the marriage celebrated shortly after the old father had been laid to rest. It was not until the wedding day that the young ranchman told his bride of the proposed purchase of the Lower Ranch, that it would require all his ready money for the first payment, and that they would have to defer their intended wedding tour to the State capital. Instead, she might accompany him to the county-seat, where he must go to fix up the transfer of the mortgage.

So Mrs. Jason Grant—how proud she was of the new name—informed her friends and the minister—who had the grace to hide his disappointment and officiate at the wedding—that for the present "my husband and me" would journey to the county-seat and stop at the best hotel till "my husband's" business was settled, that of buying six hundred and forty acres of the richest bottom-land in the country; that later they would build a fine house on their new ranch, and move there; and that they would go on their wedding trip in the fall.

Needless to say, that wedding tour was never taken. So this was the first of a long series of credits to Mary Grant in her account with the Lower Ranch. That fall her health was not the best; by spring, baby Ruben came, and the multiplication of household cares tied her to the home ranch. But Mary was young and strong, and like any other loving woman, centred her heart in her husband, home and baby, sang about her work, and laughed down any mention of a wedding tour. There were so many other things she wanted more; a baby-carriage, some new clothes, and an ingrain carpet for the best room. But her mother-in-law said she had raised one son and six daughters without a baby carriage; that the wedding clothes could be made over, and that rag-carpets ought to be good enough for farmers' wives.

When Mary appealed to her husband, he said gravely that he feared she'd have to wait awhile, as the semi-annual payment on the Lower Ranch was about due, and he hardly knew how he was to meet it without sacrificing some hogs on the then low market. Then Mary, in a burst of generosity, said he must do nothing of the sort. He should have her butter and egg income, which was no little. So she continued to carry her heavy baby, made over her meagre wedding outfit, and spent the evenings tearing and sewing carpet-rags.

That fall the old mother died, and the funeral expenses consumed much of the money saved toward the winter payment on the Lower Ranch. New winter clothes were not to be thought of; the butter and egg income continued to flow into the Lower Ranch fund, and by spring Mary was asking a quarter at a time for thread and other necessities. Still she was proud of her husband as a land owner, and kept saying that she would go with him some day to see the Lower Ranch. But it was ten miles distant, a long ride for her and baby in the heavy wagon, and she was always so busy.

That season the crops were almost a failure through drought, and the hogs had to go, market or no market. In the spring another baby added to Mary's cares and she made Ruben's infant clothes do for the tiny girl. How could she ask for new things when barns must be painted, hired hands paid, and that semi-annual payment always staring them in the face?

A hired girl had been the dream of her honeymoon days, and the necessity for house help grew as the passing years increased the work, and slipped babe after babe into her reluctant arms. But she was told, impatiently, I fear, that she could see that three hired men couldn't put in and cultivate and gather all the crops of the homestead and Lower Ranch and the rented land; he must have more help. When once the Lower Ranch was paid for, she could have a hired girl and welcome.

It was the fifth year when the mortgage was due that a diplomatic trip had to be made to the county-seat. The last payment was overdue, with only part of the interest paid. But the agent was wise. He had learned upon inquiry that Jason Grant was honest, hard-working and ambitious; that he always paid, as he demanded to be paid—to the last penny. So there was no trouble about the extension of the mortgage; and the ranchman returned home radiant. His wife was not as sympathetic as he had expected. Every year of the extension of that mortgage meant another year without help in the house.

The second five years proved harder than the first five. Mary's superb health yielded more and more to the strain. The rosy face and arms grew brown and leathery from exposure at the washtub, in the garden and in the barnyard. She took less pride in herself and children now, went less frequently to church, though the minister, still unmarried, called to protest. She grew more and more silent, unfriendly and self-contained, as she "trod her eternal circle" of cooking, dish-washing, sweeping and mending, washing, milking cows and rocking babies. During these years of meeting payments, she seldom expressed a want of a need—shoes or school books for the children, a bottle of medicine, or small donations for the parsonage—but she was confronted by the Lower Ranch and its next payment.

At length the mortgage was lifted, the last payment met; but the sign of pardonable relief was quenched by the announcement that the "fine house" would now be built—for renting purposes. The projected Branch Road from county seat to county seat was enjoying its biennial boom, the Lower Ranch was on its surveyed route, and as all the adjoining ranches were making improvements, it was just pure business to keep up with the neighbors and be ready for what might happen.

The "fine house" was begun and finished, and Ranchman Grant urged his wife to go with him and see it. Mary smiled one of her grim little smiles, and said she was too busy and too tired; the children might go—Ruben, Mandy and Jason. She really never had been to the Lower Ranch, near as it was. The longing of earlier years to visit had changed, first into indifference, and by-and-by into a positive aversion, quite unaccountable to her husband.

The years that followed were full of prosperity for Jason Grant. He "bought more land to raise more corn to feed more hogs"—his eternal circle. His possessions increased — fields, barns, stock, family. He would have hired a girl for his wife, he told her one day about here; but country help was high-priced, and besides, Mandy and Mag were quite old enough to take responsibilities. To this Mary did not respond. She was growing to be almost as silent as he.

More years, more prosperity, more improvements on all the ranches and now of the state of affairs at the old ranch house, just a glimpse.

Ranchman Grant sits inside the fly-screen of the west kitchen door. Mrs. Grant has "done" the supper dishes and strained the milk and set the yeast and picked the chickens and put the baby to sleep and heard Mag's and Willie's Sunday-school lessons, and now she draws her mending basket near the lamp, and approaches her husband on the matter of their share of the minister's salary. The Joneses give ten dollars besides most keeping the minister and his sister in meat. The Turners give ten dollars and never go to town without taking a bushel of turnips to the parsonage. And didn't he mind, they had set down four dollars and one-half last revival time, and only fifty cents of it was paid, besides the half bushel of potatoes and what butter she had spared?

Emboldened by his silence, she goes on to remind him that Ruben needs a new pair of boots, since he and the team have been promised a week in Turner's timber. And Mandy ought to have a new calico dress if she takes the little ones to Sunday-school. And she, herself, would like to get another bottle of that iron tonic just to carry her over haying season; the other bottle had sort o' braced her up. She hated to go to Dr. Dean again, when he wasn't paid yet for tending on Willie and the baby.

Jason Grant is astonished. Doesn't he let her have half the butter and egg money, and oughtn't a woman to keep herself in little things with all that? Don't all the stores where she trades carry calico? And Ruben's boots will last another two months at least; he noticed them only last Sunday. As to the parson, doesn't he, Jason Grant, give each of the children a penny every Sunday for the collection? She doesn't stop to calculate how much that amounts to in a year; women are nothing at figures anyhow. Well, he'll see the parson some of these days and see about that four dollars. Maybe he'll take some more potatoes. He settles back to his paper without a mention of the medicine. But his wife persists, though half frightened at her own temerity. Can she have just enough to get the tonic? She can't sell butter and eggs at the drug store. If she can only be carried over till cool weather. She isn't feeling right smart, and baby pulls her down and—"

Her husband breaks in impatiently. How much does a bottle cost? Thirty-five cents. He counts out the exact change into her extended hand, muttering that he doesn't see how he is ever to improve the Lower Ranch if she keeps on. Nearly a whole half dollar for a bottle of patent medicine that won't do any good either. Women are always sick or think they are. If they'd only take care of themselves! He is never sick. Always money! Does she think his breeches pockets are chuck full all the time? A man can struggle along all his days and work like a slave and never get ahead. And to see his money, good straight silver, cash, mind you, worse than thrown away on such fool things as patent bitters! It is downright outrageous! And two new sickles broken and a new sulky rake to buy, and a stock-well to dig on the Lower Ranch, and won't that ranch be hers when he is dead?

After several such interviews, Mary Grant's aversion to the Lower Ranch grew into a sort of mania. Not only did she refuse to see it, but she began to tell her neighbors in a boastful way that she had never seen the big piece of land, bought when she was a bride, now more than eighteen years ago, and what was more, she never would go near it. It was the one subject upon which she was talkative. The habit grew upon her. She would tell the same story to every one, even to chance acquantances. She went so far as to repeat her vow to the minister in the presence of her husband—a vow which the minister never forgot and which the husband never forgave.

But one day, after a week's absence at the county-seat, Jason Grant returned home too jubilant to remember petty wrongs. The Branch Road was to be built, in fact, was being built. The survey was completed, construction begun, and oh! what a fortune, a station was located right in the southwest corner of his section. A town, rejoicing in the name of Grantville, was to be laid out, and he would be the Town Company, with the price of lots to be fixed at his discretion. Now she must go to see their town on their ranch.

She heard him through with her little mirthless smile, but shook her head. She could not go; she was always too tired.

And she clung to her resolution. The road was completed, the town laid out, lots sold and houses erected by the magic of all Western booms. Grantville flourshed that summer and fall. There were the smell of new lumber and fresh paint and the sound of saw and hammer. A quarry was opened within two miles of the town. The new cemetery, with its two fresh graves, was laid out in the northeast corner of Jason Grant's ranch, and even there was a boom in lots.

But the Town Company's wife never saw the town. She kept her vow with the dogged persistence of her class, though the town was their nearest market. She remained at home altogether on Sundays after the services were transferred from the country schoolhouse to the new church in town. And the neighbors whispered that Mary Grant wasn't the housekeeper she used to be. She hadn't entered butter nor preserves nor patchwork quilts at the county fair for three years. Her marigolds and hollyhocks died from want of attention, and Mandy took the entire care of the last baby. Even the minister's sister had to acknowledge that Mrs. Grant "didn't seem to take any interest."

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Jason Grant sat in his light spring wagon waiting to go with his wife and her friends to the Lower Ranch. She was really going, although she had vowed that she never would. But they were not ready yet, and he bowed his head on his hands and allowed his mind to wander over all the years of their married life.

Presently the minister came out of the house, and spoke a word to his sister who had charge of the children. Then he came to the side of the spring wagon and touched the arm, of the dreaming man. If the minister had been a woman, he might have said something bitter, since he had never forgotten Mary's vow. As it was, he climbed to the wagon-seat in silence, took the reins from Jason Grant's hand and gave the sign for the procession to start.—Waverley Magazine.

An Authority on Napoleon.

Frederick Masson, who has just been elected a member of the French Academy, is famed as one of the greatest living authorities on Napoleon. He represents in its most acute phase the French Napoleonic cult. His collection of Napoleonic relics is second to none except that of Prince Roland Bonaparte. He has spent a lifetime in connoting the minutest details of Napoleon's public and particularly private life. But M. Masson is more than a mere antiquarian and commentator upon unpublished documents. He has a magic touch which gives life to the personages whom he discusses, and it is said that his election to the Academy represents a most important literary acquisition to that august body.

Underground Station in Paris.

An extraordinary piece of engineering is begun by the municipality of Paris, which will keep the Place de l'Opera closed for nearly a year, and when it is reopened it will have beneath it an underground metropolitan railway station of three floors, where the several lines will intersect on the different levels. Metalic flooring will separate the three lines, and will support the roadway. The lowest line is twenty-one meters deep, but as water is reached at a depth of ten meters a large part of the work will be done by means of compressed air compartments, measuring eight by twenty-five meters.—Springfield Republican.

WOULD NOT ADVERTISE.

Englishman Found That the Calls of Politeness Made It Impossible.

He was an Englishman, and although he had lived in New York for several years, he clung to insular opinions with a tenacity that puzzled his friends. For one thing he disdained typewriting machines. But even though his aversion for that necessity of the modern age was well known, his acquaintances were hardly prepared for his latest exhibition of extreme punctiliousness in the matter of correspondence. That came out through his reply to a man who had advised him to advertise in the daily papers a certain commodity which he desired to sell.

"Oh, but I don't want to advertise," remonstrated the Englishmen. "It is too much trouble."

His adviser combated the point. "I don't see how you make that out," he said. "All you have to do is to write out your ad. and pay for it, and afterward read the answers. I fail to see where the tremendous amount of trouble comes in."

"But you forget the most important point—the answering of all the letters I shall get," said the Englishman.

The man with advice to throw away looked curious, and the Englishman proceeded to explain.

"An advertisement in New York papers calls out so confoundedly many letters, you know," he said. "I have had occasion to advertise twice since coming to this country, once for a home with congenial people, and again in regard to a fur muff I happened to find, and each time it took me three days to clean up ensuing correspondence."

"But you don't mean to say," exclaimed the amazed adviser, "that you answered all the letters you received?"

"I certainly did," returned the Englishman. "What else could a gentleman do? Those people had been kind enough to write to me, and even though most of the letters were worthless they represented time and labor and expense, and common courtesy demanded that I reply and tell the writer that I could not see my way clear to transacting further business with him."

"Oh, of course," said the adviser, "if you hold that view of commercial amenities, I cannot urge you to advertise very often."

The Englishman shook his head sadly. "You do not seem to appreciate my point of view," he said. "You Americans are so impolite in business affairs."—New York Times.

Spelling Reform Again.

There is a new outbreak, says the Minneapolis Tribune, of spelling reform. Earnest persons are writing to the newspapers about it, and some newspapers are trying to begin at home and reform their own spelling, according to the artificial rules of the learned societies.

It is the old story. We are to begin with simplifying the spelling of twelve large and hard words. When we have induced all the users of English to adopt our reformed spelling of these, we are to take twelve more, and so on, until we have lightly adventured all through the dictionary from A to izzard.

Will the earnest reformers never learn that the spelling, writing and pronunciation of the English language are among the things beyond control by statute law or mass meeting resolution?

We do not spell the English language. The English language spells itself, and we have to go along with it. It is a living organism, fluid, growing, changing, like a jelly fish floating in the water. We talk wisely about the laws of language; but the wisest men tell us that they know little about them.

If the English language, or any living language, have a formative, shaping force, it is the general, unconscious consent of its users, as vague as it is irresistible, as fluid and shifting as language itself.

When a language begins to yield to the shaping hand of the learned academies it begins to die. When it is dead you may spell and pronounce it any way you like, as we spell and pronounce Latin and Greek; but not before.

Cunning Rats.

The achievements of the rat would be incredible if they were not established on authority beyond dispute. A rat has been seen, for example, to mount a table and upset a box of figs on to the floor for the benefit of twenty waiting rats; and the stopper in a flask of oil has been removed by rats which then dipped their long tails into the bottle until it was dry. Sugar has been found in deep drawers thirty feet from the place where the rats had found it, and they have been known to carry eggs from the bottom of a house to the top without breaking them, the egg resting upon the hind legs of one rat and the forelegs of another as they climber the stairs. A man-of-war was once so overrun with rats that they destroyed a hundredweight of biscuits every day, and it was necessary at last to smoke the ship between decks.

Mount Ararat.

A French paper states that two Frenchmen recently succeeded in reaching the summit of Mount Ararat, in Palestine, at a height of 17,178 feet. The inhabitants of the regions surrounding Mount Ararat still believe that the mountain is absolutely inaccessible, though it is known that as far back as 1829 the summit was ascended by Parrot. In 1834 the Russian, Altonswoff, succeeded in reaching the summit. Of all the persons, however, who ever ascended to the top of the famous mountain none is better known than General Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, who in 1858 ascended the highest point of Mount Ararat.

Save Your Eyes.

Looking into the fire is very injurious to the eye, particularly a coal fire. The stimulus of light and heat united soon destroys the eyes. Looking at molten iron will soon destroy the sight. Reading in the twilight is injurious to the eyes, as they are obliged to make great exertion. Reading or sewing with a side light injures the eyes, as both eyes should be exposed to an equal force of light. Those who wish to preserve their sight should preserve their general health by correct habits of living, and give their eyes just work enough, with a due degree of light.

ELECTROCHEMICAL DISCOVERIES.

REVELATIONS THAT MORE THAN RIVAL THE VISIONARY ACTS OF MYTHICAL WIZARDS OF OLD.

THE group of industrial establishments that have grown up around Niagara in the past few years to delve deeper into the mysteries of electrochemistry, are rapidly transforming many lines of business and trade manufacturing. The supply of electric power in large units has primarily been responsible for this marvelous growth, but purely experimental companies are now carrying on exhaustive tests and experiments to develop new industries for the benefit of mankind, and their work is receiving critical attention from all parts of the world.

Industrial electrochemistry and electrometallurgy have already accomplished wonders in the field of manufacture. Carborundum has become a staple product of the electric furnace, displacing in many trades nearly all other abrasive materials. In the past year it has become an important factor in the steel trade, and some seventy-five tons per month are demanded for this industry alone. More recently tungsten and ferrotungsten have been satisfactorily produced in the electric furnace, and the use of these in the steel trade for manufacturing self hardening and high speed tools has steadily increased.

The manufacture of aluminium, zinc and manganese in the electric furnace has also achieved considerable importance, and promises for the near future far reaching developments. There are several factories now engaged in manufacturing aluminium at Niagara Falls and Massena, and their total output is considerable. Commercial phosphorus is satisfactorily made by mixing the finely powdered phosphate material with carbon and sand in the electric furnace, and then, when heated, distilling the phosphorus from the mass and collecting it under water.

The development of the carborundum industry led to the manufacture of artificial graphite, which is now produced by passing the amorphous carbon through the electric furnace and obtaining a pure graphite with merely a fraction of one per cent. of ash. Even the direct graphitization of anthracite coals has been successfully accomplished, a granular graphite being obtained which can be extensively used for lubricating purposes. This graphite is easily manipulated with machine tools, and is of great service in many trades. In 1901 over two million pounds of this graphite were made in this country, and much more in the year just closed.

The electrolytic production of caustic alkalies and chlorine has proved of the greatest importance to the world of trade. The chlorine produced is used for making bleaching powders, which in turn has revolutionized the bleaching trade here and abroad. The production of sodium by electrolyzing fused caustic soda has developed rapidly at Niagara and other places where large electric units are supplied at low rates. The production of sodium is now conducted on a large scale.

The application of the electric furnace to steel manufacturing has also received a good deal of attention in France and by the Niagara people. Experiments have been conducted to manufacture steel from pig iron in the electric furnace, and also to smelt the ores directly and manufacture and refine the material in two connected furnaces. At St. Etienne, France, iron ore has been treated most successfully in specially prepared electric furnaces, and new factories are being projected for carrying the work forward on a commercial scale.

The manufacture of carbon bisulphide by directly treating in the electric furnace charcoal and sulphur is now in operation at Penn Yan, N. Y., where a daily output of 10,000 pounds is an average. The electric furnaces employed for this work at the Penn Yan factory represent the largest yet made in any of the electrochemical industries in this country. They are sixteen feet in diameter and about forty feet high, having a capacity sufficient to make a larger daily output than any similar factory in the world.

The production of nitric acid by electrochemical methods is a new process that promises extensive changes in our agriculture. The manufacture of nitric acid from the nitrogen and oxygen of the air in sufficient quantities for commercial uses has been the dream and hope of scientists for years. At Niagara experiments have been conducted successfully in producing commercial nitric acid by using a high tension current in an air chamber, by which a yield of one pound of nitric acid is obtained for every seven horse power hours. Steps are now being taken to establish the production of nitric acid on a large commercial scale, and while further experiments in this field will be conducted they will be simultaneous with the practical work of making the product.

So remarkable have these and similar industries become that purely experimental companies have been formed within the past year to investigate further in electrochemistry at Niagara for the sole purpose of discovering new processes to patent. They do not intend to establish any commercial factories, but to dispose of the rights to their patents and discoveries to industrial companies which can easily be organized later. They represent the modern wizards of practical chemistry, seeking new discoveries in a field that has already proved exceedingly rich. The experts who compose these experimental companies are searching for definite results along lines already indicated by past successes. Starch, for instance, is receiving considerable attention from the electrochemists, and it is believed that this will soon be produced by some electric process. Likewise artificial rubber is a substance that is attracting the ambitious, and results already obtained justify the chemists in continuing their experiments with this object in view. The recent scare in prices of good rubber, and the lessening supply of crude rubber, stimulate the workmen to greater effort in the field of electrochemical experiment.

There are many other lists or groups of products of great commercial value which the experimenters are trying hard to produce artificially by chemical reactions with the high temperature electric furnace and current. Ammonia, cyanides and silicides are among the most promising of these, although not by any means the only ones. The manufacture of artificial camphor is now assured, and calcium carbide is now produced on an enormous scale. One company converts barium sulphate into other needed barium salts. Barium hydrate is now produced so successfully that its price enables the different trades to use it in many minor ways. Both the sugar and paint trade—two widely distinct industries otherwise—employ barium hydrate on a large scale.

One important feature of all these new industries is the stimulating effect they have upon widely separated trades and manufacturing industries. By producing materials on a large commercial scale, they enable other trades to utilize them in ways never before considered possible. With the cheapening of the products their use becomes universal. They have thus directly tended toward lessening the cost of production of articles in common use. Synthetic electrochemistry is thus proving in its quiet way one of the greatest trade revolutionizing factors the world has ever known. The unlocking of secrets by man's ingenuity is always fascinating and stimulating, but when they in addition help mankind by placing within the means of everybody articles which were formerly considered luxuries, the result is something that holds the admiration of all. From Niagara, Massena, Penn Yan and other places where large electrical units are easily obtained, the world of science and trade hope for revelations that more than rival the visionary acts of mythical wizards of old.—Scientific American.

TALE OF AN ARTIST.

Which Tells of the Manner in Which He Got a Summer Suit.

In a remote part of Washington can be found a grimy little old studio where the water seldom runs and the window glass is always dusty. The young artist who occupies the abode had just completed his masterpiece, a pastel, whose color scheme he devised in a moment of real inspiration, born, as it were, at the sight of a forlorn old Italian woman who wore upon her head a wondrously faded and shabby scarf.

"For that head-dress," exclaimed this artist, upon beholding her, "come into my studio and take anything, everything I have; all is yours—only give me that scarf."

And the woman, who seldom disposed of her apples and pies in this quarter, fled, believing that at last the wolf had completed his task and rendered the artist insane.

Then the artist hastened to his studio, and with the memory of the weather-beaten scarf in his soul, dashed off the inspired pastel—his masterpiece, he was sure.

He placed it in some soft-colored hanging which plainly told of more prosperous days, but even now, midst all the want, their old-rose tints seemed to send back an answering glow, and to the artist the whole world seemed better and brighter for the presence of the little pastel.

"I am on the road to fame," said this artist. And it was only the rude knock on the door which opened into all this glory, that aroused him and brought him back to the realities long enough to shout, "Come in."

"Dead broke," said the soulful man, whose face now indicated that he had been remided of stern realities. But Abraham, the second-hand clothing man, who knows the ways and means of surprisingly large numbers of artists, urged in a way known only to a man of his business that the time was summer, and that he would perish under the weight of his heavy winter suit. And the artist only looked at his pastel and bravely answered, "No."

"It hurts your business to appear like that," rejoined Abraham, clothier and art critic as well, his keen eye catching sight of the pastel. "The serge is fine quality, and the dark blue will become you well. Have I not always been fair with you? Give me the pastel."

And now the artist wears a summer suit.—Washington Post.

The Changing Dinner Hour.

It is a curious fact, says the Chicago News, that with almost every generation the dinner hour has undergone a change, the principal meal of the day being eaten at different periods from 10 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night. The author of "The Pleasures of the Table" points out that in England 400 or 500 years ago people took their four meals—breakfast at 7, dinner at 10, supper at 4 and livery at 8. In France in the thirteenth century 9 in the morning was the dinner hour; Henry VII. dined at 11. In Cromwell's time 1 o'clock had come to be the fashionable hour, and in Addison's day 2 o'clock, which gradually was transformed into 4. Pope found fault with Lady Suffolk for dining so late as 4. Four and 5 continued to be the popular dining hour among the aristocracy until the second decade of the nineteenth century, when dinner was further postponed, from which period it has steadily continued to encroach upon the evening.

Very Pleasant Electioneering.

In South Australia female suffrage has been in operation for some time. A member of the Commonwealth Parliament, anxious to ascertain the best mode of approaching the woman voters in his constituency, sought the advice of an experienced South Australian legislator. "How do you please them? Do you kiss the baby?" "No, sir," was the candid reply, "we kiss the elector."—London Chronicle.

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN.

Here's to the man who has nothing to do,
He chatters and chuckles the busy day through.
He bothers your work and he hinders your nap,
And if you get angry he cares not a rap.

He likes to come 'round in a casual way,
With nothing to do and with nothing to say,
He tells you the story you don't want to hear,
He tells you the news that falls flat on your ear—

For time that is precious has ruthlessly fled,
And the family is waiting at home to be fed.
You wish him all joy that a lifetime can view,
But you wish that he wouldn't make merry with you.

And he goes on his way with a look of regret,
When your work has been spoiled and your plans are upset,
And because you're unmoved by his humorous prank
—Washington Star.

Jingles and Jests

"He's comparatively rich, isn't he?" "I should say rather that he is relatively so. He has a rich uncle upon whom he bases his hopes." -- Philadelphia Press.

Full many a maid of haughty mien
Is wooed by lover brave.
When courting her she is his queen,
And after that his slave.
—Philadelphia Record.

Dollie—"Oh, Granny, do the heathen savages wear trousers?" Granny—"No, dear. Why?" Dollie—"Well, then, why did pa put a trousers button in the collecting bag at church to-day?" —Pick-Me-Up.

"Well," she said, "the Browns have accepted our invitation and are coming to spend a week with us." "Hang it all, Maria," he complained, "you must have made that invitation too cordial." —Chicago Post.

"She told me," said the young man who had consulted a fortune teller, "that I was born to command." "Well, well," exclaimed Henpeck; "she means then, that you will never be married." —Philadelphia Press.

First Workman—"Wot's it say, Bill, on that old sundial?" Second Workman (reading deliberately)—"It says, Do—to—day's—work—to—day." First Workman—"Do two days' work to-day! Wot O! Not me!"—Punch.

For a landlord he had high ideals. "I hope some day," he exclaimed, glowingly, "to build flats so luxurious and expensive that people will give up absolutely all their liberties in order to live in them."—Detroit Free Press.

Man wants but little here below,
So on ambition place a check.
Man wants but little here below,
And often gets it—in the neck.
—Philadelphia Record.

"How old would you say she was?" "Well, let's see: When we were in high school together she used to snub me because I was a kid. Now I'm thirty-seven, and-um-m-m-well, I should say she was about twenty-eight by this time."—Brooklyn Life.

"Just throw me half a dozen of your biggest trout," said the man with the costly angler's outfit. "Throw them!" exclaimed the astonished fish dealer. "That's what I said," replied the party of the first part. "Then I'll go home and tell my wife I caught them. I may be a poor fisherman, but I'm no liar."—Chicago News.

A motor car on the London and Brighton road passed over a dog, but did not apparently hurt it. The driver, however, stopped the car, jumped out, and gave the man with the dog a sovereign. "I hope you will accept that as a peace offering," he said. The man pocketed the coin, and, as the car exploded off on its course, he muttured, "I wonder whose dog it is!"—Glasgow Times.

Remarkable Stowaways.

Some remarkable stowaways are found on ships of the merchant marine. Mr. Bartlett, of the London Zoological Gardens, had a call one day from a sailor who wanted to know if he was open to buy a "sarpint." Mr. Bartlett said "Yes." "There's a beauty for you," said the man, opening a little rice sack he carried in his hand. An Indian cobra, with hood expanded, and deadly fangs ready to strike, lay in the bottom of the frail bag. In this case the creature had probably been brought aboard in timber or in a package of fruit. Vipers, deadly spiders, and other undesirable immigrants are constantly found in the holds of ships that have arrived from tropical ports. A Liverpool fruiterer recently had a narrow escape from being bitten by a viper which arrived in a case of Spanish melons.

Oom Paul's Reply.

Poultney Bigelow attempted on one occasion to interview "Oom Paul" Kruger, and met with about the same fate that many interviewers have had with the former President of the Boers. He found the old man in a very bad humor, and could get only monosyllables in reply to his questions. He employed every art of the interviewer, but to no avail. Finally, despairing of getting any information of use to him by straight questioning he determined to be diplomatic and approach Mr. Kruger from his family side. So he said, very nonchalantly:

"Is your wife entertaining this season?"

Short and sharp came the gruff answer:

"Not very."

And the interview closed there.—New York Times.

Judge Fined Himself.

An English Judge, Gwilyn Williams, was a great stickler for form in his court, and especially that robes should be worn by solicitors. He was so insistent upon this that one day recently, when he ascended the bench without being duly robed, all in the court room knew that he must have been unusually engaged to cause him to neglect the matter. When the Judge noticed the lack of his robes he stopped court proceedings, made a speech to the solicitor on the absence of his gown and wig, and fined himself ten shillings, which sum he immediately paid into the poor box.—Glasgow Times.