



Aunt Polly's Opinions.

What with the awful mushy weather, with coal that dear it seems a sin to burn it, and chilblains, and chapped hands, and one thing and another, I've been worried nigh to death's door this week.

Monday was wash-day as usual, and I was getting on so brisk, and thinking I'd get through in time to cook a snack of dinner, and tidy myself a bit; for, having a boarder, I likes to have everything straight for meal time, when who should come in to my back door but Mrs. Sam Banks! If she'd only come to the front door I'd a taken care whether I'd a let her in or not. And she was dressed up within an inch of her life, and that fixed up with bows and fil-fals; not that her dress was much above a shilling winey; but it had bows of turnable blue and red ribbon all down the front, and another about the size of a cabbage leaf stuck in front on the top of her head, and beau-catchers all around the sides of her face. I don't hold with no such rigging out, and she two years older than me, the vain creature! I know her well, I went to school with her, and she's that proud of being married to Sam Banks! and she knows well enough I could have had him, years ago, over and over, without as much as raising a finger. She was speaking about it herself one day, and she said, "Weren't you just a fool not to marry Sam when you had a chance? Don't tell me you ain't sorry, you can't deceive the inquisitional eyes of friendship, and I knows. Though of course I am unfrandedly glad you let him slip." She does get her words so mixed up, it's past believe. Why the other day she said, talking about herself, as she mostly does, "I am such a sanguinary disposition, no trouble don't enervate me, quick." Well, as I was saying, she came in the back door without knocking and sat down on a chair close to the wash-tub, and I tell you I ached to splash the soap-suds over her.

"How can you do your own washing, Polly?" said she, to begin with. "I think I should transpire if I washed."

"Don't doubt you would, freely," said I, vexed like, for it's only the last few weeks I've done my washing, just since I took my boarder—it's quite an undertaking having a boarder, especially if he works at printing, if your means are small. "Taint long since you washed for a family of six." I went on, thinking as I'd begun I might as well give her a good one.

"Oh! but that was priory to my marrying Sam Banks. But what I came over for was to ask you to give a dinner to some deserving parties."

"Well, Mrs. Banks," said I, "I never yet turned away a hungry tramp. I don't give money, but broken victuals I never refuse."

"But you know they ain't what you'd call tramps," she said, kind of gentle. "It's what Sam calls a kind of special conference; we've had some trouble in our church, and some delicacies are coming to try to renovate matters, and we're to have ten ministers to stop with us for three days, and I want you to give them a dinner the first evening."

"Well," says I, "if a meal's an object, you can fetch them along to tea."

"Call it dinner and I'm with you," says she, insinuating like.

"Call it what you please, it don't make a particle of difference in the provender. If you think by calling it dinner you gets hot meat and vegetables you reckons a long way ahead of your hostess."

"Dinner do sound so much more exquisite," she sighed.

"It won't taste a mite better, but let that be. Ten men and you and Banks and Billy and me, that's fourteen, yes the table'll hold them at a pinch, and I don't mind obliging you for once in a way. You can come."

"Thank you, Polly, and you'll ask some ladies to meet them, now do?"

"No, that I won't," says I, quite rasped, "I never did and I never will hold with encouraging ministers in their flirtations. They'll get no temptations here, to be untrue to their poor wives! If they can't come and eat a solid meal without a lot of caudling women around, I don't want 'em."

"Well, but one of them is yet unwed. Now do ask some one to cheer him up."

"I'll ask Weesie Juniper, if you like, and that's all I'll do, and now Mrs. Sam, if you'll call again to-morrow I'll talk to you as long as you like, but now I want to get my washing done." And for a wonder she took the hint and her departure simultaneously, promising to come at five on Thursday. I just fairly worked after she went, and got things fixed, and a clean apron on, and dinner ready, and by the time my nephew, Billy Webster, came home everything was tidy as a new pin.

"Well, Aunt!," he says, trouncing himself down in his place, and knocking his hat off backwards. "Washing-day again! By Jove, why don't they come every day, and then a fellow'd be prepared for 'em; but now they always come upon me in the lush of a sweet surprise. You might drop an intimation, my august relative, when it's coming round. Its hurtful to be taken by surprise; joy sometimes kills."

"I'll tell you next time," I says, not a bit vexed, I'm used to his ways.

"Don't forget, for I like to look forward to it, I love a wash day and a cold dinner almost too much."

Now anything like that he calls sarcastic, but I calls it a rank lie, pure and simple; pure, because it ain't mixed with a bit of truth, and simple because nobody would believe it on oath. I didn't take no notice, didn't even seem to hear, but just told him about the meal I'd promised to give the preachers, and he was tickled most to death.

"A ministerial dinner-party! Hokus-pokus, won't it be sport! May I share their bread and salt, Aunt?"

"Of course. But Billy, did you hear what the trouble in their church was?"

"Well I heard a rumour round town that the man, what d'ye call him? the man that raises the tunes?"

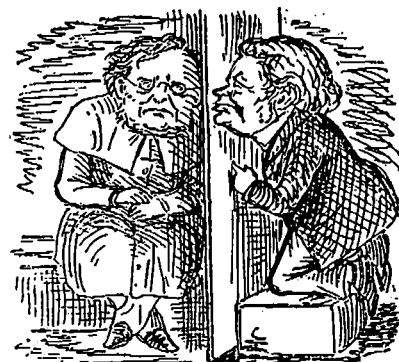
"Modulator or Preceptor or something," says I.

"That's near enough. Well I had it on good authority that he used a four-pronged tuning-fork, instead of a two, to raise the Psalms with; and the Elders hoisted him up by it and yammed him square through the window; whereby his collar-bone, or his bone collar-button—I forget which—became a total wreck."

"Don't talk to me," says I, "I know that ain't true, for it's a Methodist church."

Then he laughed, and rushed down cellar for some apples, and went off to his work, leaving me to prepare for the party I was fool enough to promise to give.

There are 880,000 more men than women in the United States. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts has done all she could to remedy this terrible state of things.—*Pack*.



Edward the Confessor.

Mr. Blake has at present the satisfaction of listening to a very childlike, though somewhat indirect, confession from the lips of the Finance Minister. The humble functionary, with downcast countenance, admits that his oft-repeated assertion to the effect that the producer and not the consumer pays the duty is not so veracious as the statements of truly good men ought to be. This confession is not made precisely in the manner pictured above, but by means of a Bill of which notice has been given, to provide for recouping to manufacturers the duty on raw materials entering into the manufacture of goods that go into the construction of the Canada Pacific Railway. If Canadian makers of fish-plates, bolts, etc., could afford to sell their wares as cheaply as foreigners, the Syndicate people would buy them. Mr. Tilley enables them to do so by taking off the duties, which is a very plain, if not very frank, contradiction of the assertion that the duty does not necessarily add to the cost of any manufactured article. The fact that this Bill is simply another mouthful for the already gored Syndicate is also worthy of comment, perhaps.

Thos. White, M. P.

Grip admires Mr. Thos. White's touching modesty. Speaking on the Hansard debate the other day he said, in substance, "newspapers will always report the speeches of prominent members." Seeing that more columns of the *Montreal Gazette* are given up to Mr. White's speeches than to those of any two other members of the House, what a very prominent personage Mr. Thomas must deem himself. Even Sir John and Sir Charles play second fiddles as compared with him, and poor Mr. Blake is, of course, nowhere.



Parliamentary Nursery Rhyme.

Little Jack Horner
Sat in a corner,
Eating political pie,
He put in his thumb
And pulled out a Plumb,
Saying, "What a dear, prosy old guy!"