

to-day because our pa went on their pa's note, an' hed it to pay, an' give up all he hed to do it, an' then they come a-patronizin' us! It's too much!"

"It'll be fine to hev it though when it's cold," ventured Miss Susan, timidly.

"It would be fine to hev an ice-cream freezer now that it's hot," retorted Miss Mindy, "or a new bunnit fer meetin', or a gown that ain't walked the streets on someun else's back a hull year afore we git it, or to hev what vittles we want to eat 'ithout folks thinkin' we's 'stravagant, or to go some'ers to do somethin' lively an' enjoy ourselves onct in a way, an' not to be told we's sinful an' bound for perdition two-forty on the plank road! We ain't neither of us hed no real pleasure in our hull lives, an' you know it, Susan Brown. We've been starved to death all our born days. When we's girls, ef we came to meetin' fixed up pretty like young girls orter be, the preacher couldn't hardly wait fer service to begin so's he could rant an' r'ar 'bout the sinfulness an' vanity of folks that dressed up! Jes' as if any right-minded woman couldn't come a heap nearer bein' an angel if she knowed ner gown fit an' her hat 'as in style! Ef we went to a play-party, we was giddy an' no-count, and Ma cried, and Pa caved, and the town nearly hed fits! I ain't never told you, Susan, but Jim Bowen asked me onct to go to a dance over to his aunt's, an' I come mighty near goin'."

"Mindy Brown!" gasped her sister, who all through this tirade had sat with her mouth open, in helpless astonishment.

"Yes, I did," snapped Mindy; "an', what's more, I'm sorry I didn't, an' I've been sorry ever since, for that's what we quarreled about, an' I ain't never heard tell of him after that night, for he went to Californy next day. I don't believe in no such straight-laced nonsense, and I ain't agoin' to stand it no longer. I can't find no place in the Bible where it says everything folks

want to do is wicked, an' I jes' believe the preachers make it up out o' hull cloth, so's to hev something to r'ar about! What good's it done, I'd like to know?" she demanded, fiercely, a red spot beginning to burn in each cheek. "What good's it done, We's old, an' poor, an' alone, an' we're snubbed for everything we do do. As long as I live I'll never forgive Pa for not takin' us to the circus that come when we's children; you's eleven, an' I's twelve. I never did want to see anything as bad as that, an' he made us learn two hull pages of the Bible by heart jes' fer wantin' to go, an' the preacher he hed conuption fits fer a month or more jes' because ef his members didn't go, he suspicioned they wanted to, anyhow, an' I bet they did, too, an' him worst of all, so now! Don't you look pious at me, Susan Brown, or I'll come over there and slap you. You wanted to go as bad as I did, an' you know it, an' ef we'd hed the sperrit of chickens we'd jes' took our money an' went an' seen it, and let 'em cave afterwards! They couldn't hev made no more fuss than they did, an' we'd a-hed that to remember all our born days; an' ef ever there comes another circus to this here place I'm a-goin' an' so are you, ef we have to sell that there stove to git there, an' ef folks go to cuttin' up, I'll tell 'em I'll settle that with the Lord myself, an' they needn't worry, an' I've an idee, He'll be a heap more reasonable about it than the preacher will, too. I don't believe he took all the trouble to make a world and folks to live in it, an' it full of pretty things, jes' to go an' send 'em to perdition for admirin' 'em an' a-wantin' to be cheerful an' enjoy life. I'm plumb wore out a-trottin' to meetin' to tell the Lord I'm a sinner. Ef He can't remember it by this time, I ain't a-goin' to tell him no more. I'm a-goin' to backside an' git a little fun out o' life. Stop your cryin', Susan Brown; you're a-goin' to backside yourself, so you might as well hush."

"What—what you goin' to do, Min-

dy?" queried the terrified and tearful Miss Susan, wiping her eyes on the tail of her gown in lieu of her mis-placed handkerchief.

"I'm goin' to be a lost sheep," declared Miss Mindy, hrmlly, "an' so are you! Folks are always tickled half to death when a real out an' out sinner gits saved, an' the Bible says there is more rejoicing in heaven over a lost sheep than over a heap o' well-behaved ones, so I'm goin' to be one an' see how it works, an' so are you!"

"What—what will we do?" faltered Miss Susan, helplessly, well-knowing that where Miss Mindy led she must follow.

"Do," snorted Miss Mindy, "do! We're a-goin' to do every blessed thing we's never allowed to do. We's goin' to set up till twelve o'clock to-night, an' lay abed till nine in the mornin', an' then we'll take our dinner an' the coffee pot, an' go over to the creek, an' spend the day, an'—yes—we'll fish!"

"Oh, Mindy," wailed Miss Susan, "to-morrow's Sunday!"

"I reckon I know it. All my life I've jes' ached to go fishin' on Sunday, jes' because it's wicked, an' to-morrow we're goin'!"

"I'll be ashamed to walk into meetin' at night," sobbed Miss Susan. "Oh, Mindy, what'll ever become of us?"

"You ain't goin' to meetin' to-morrow night, nor to prayer-meetin' on Wednesday neither, so quit fussin' about that. Where we're goin' to, the good Lord knows, an' nobody else, so hush up. To be a lost sheep, you've got to cut didoes, an' we're a-goin' to cut 'em," she concluded tersely, beginning to turn over some things in an old trunk.

Presently she laid before the horrified Miss Susan a box of cigarettes, long kept to smoke her plants, and a small square packet.

Going over to the clock shelf, she took down a pint bottle of whiskey, left by a neighbor during Miss Susan's last sickness, and which the temperance principles of the two sisters had forbidden them to use, and from the family purse she took half a dozen pennies, all of which she deposited on the table, together with matches, sugar, glasses, and a cup of hot water.

"We're a-goin' to smoke, an' drink, an' gamble, an' swear," she announced, pulling down the curtains and locking the door.

"But I don't know how," gasped Miss Susan.

"No more do I," said her sister, grimly; "but I reckon we're a-goin' to learn, and she unwrapped the small packet and displayed to Miss Susan's horrified eyes a pack of playing cards. "I took 'em away from Jim onct, an' I've hed 'em ever since," said Miss Mindy, sternly. "Mebby ef I hedn't been so straight-laced about such things, I'd been a happy wife, 'stid o' bein' a lonely ole maid," she said, as she mixed two glasses of toddy and put a match and a cigarette before her helpless sister.

It was fully nine o'clock on Sunday morning—the unaccustomed hour set by Miss Mindy for rising—before either of the sisters felt ready for breakfast.

"A good strong cup o' coffee'll make us feel all right," said the younger, clearing the table of the evidences of the previous night's orgy.

An hour later, fortified by the strong coffee, and carrying a small basket of lunch which each was secretly sure she could never eat, the two sisters made their guilty way as fast as their weak and trembling limbs could take them, to the creek, where for several hours, feeling uncommonly like outlaws and desperadoes, they fished.

"It's awful," moaned Miss Susan, gripping her rod with desperation, "two church members a-desecratin' the Sabbath so."

"You jes' wait till the fish gits to bitin', an' I'll bet two cents you'll conclude that's what the Lord made fish fer—to be caught whenever folks hez the time to catch 'em," observed Miss Mindy, with suppressed excitement, as her cork began to bob up and down.

Presently with a shriek, Miss Susan landed a fat perch, and then the fun began, and Miss Mindy, who was not afraid of angle-worms, was kept busy baiting hooks.

Miss Susan's pale face was pink, her faded eyes bright and eager, and she ate her lunch, rod in hand, unable to tear herself away from the fascinating sport, for never had fish in Fair Creek bitten as they did that Sunday afternoon, and the two sinners, regardless of time, fished until sunset.

"It'll be plumb dark before we git home," said Miss Mindy, as she counted the fish.

"I don't care," said Miss Susan, valiantly, "I ain't never hed so much fun since I's a girl. Oh, land, Mindy! suddenly collapsing. "Folks'll be goin' to church an' see us."

But fortune favored them, and they managed to reach home unseen, though not without several scares, and crept to bed, leaving the tea-things unwashed, a sin second only to robbery in Fairview.

Monday the backsliders had little time for orgies, both of them being busily engaged on a dress for Sister Snow, and, in fact, their only dissipation that week consisted in not going to prayer-meeting, and receiving a call from the preacher to inquire into their absence.

"Did you tell him you was a-settin' on the creek bank a-haulin' in fish hand over fist Sunday?" asked Miss Mindy, who was out when the reverend gentleman called.

"N—no," faltered Miss Susan, guiltily; "I said we wa'n't feeling well; an' that we went to the country."

"You're a-comin' on, Sukey," said Miss Mindy, encouragingly. "Two more toots like that one an' you'll be the wooliest kind of a lost sheep. Did you tell him your health necessitated your spendin' next Sunday in the country, too?"

"I said as mebbly we might go," admitted Miss Susan, timidly, while Miss Mindy shrieked with laughter.

But Sunday it rained, and the two ladies were, from sheer lonesomeness, forced to trot meekly to church, but somehow Miss Susan found her attention wandering, and Miss Mindy nearly disgraced herself by whispering that folks said fish bit well in the rain.

It was the next day that the advance agent came to the staid little town, and threw it into an agony of excitement by posting amazing bills of smiling ladies in abbreviated skirts, posed on the backs of fiery steeds jumping hurdles, wonderful acrobats, trained dogs, performing elephants and ponies, marvelous wild beasts, and writhing serpents; in fact, all the attractions and distractions of an up-to-date circus, the like of which proper little Fairview had never before seen.

Miss Mindy came home with a grim expression and a handbill that night. The expression she got in an interview with Sister Snow, who owed her three dollars for sewing, and who could not pay her, as she needed the money for new trimmings for a bonnet; the other she picked up on the street, and the grim expression deepened as she read of the delights in store for those who had the requisite shekels to deposit with the doorkeeper.

Presently she sat down with a pencil and paper and began to figure, talking softly to herself as she did so:

"Two 25 cents to get in—that's 50; we don't need no reserved seat. Three side shows at 10 make 60; 50 and 60's \$1.10. Then peanuts, lemonade an' chewin' gum—I'm a goin' to have the hull shootin' match ef I die fer it—that's 30 more—\$1.40, an' say 10 for extrys—\$1.50. Then twenty yards o' 5-cent lawn makes \$1.00—\$2.50—an' them two shapes is 25 cents each—\$3.00. That leaves \$1.00 fer trimmin's. I'll do it."

"Do what, Mindy?" asked Miss Susan, in some trepidation.

"Sell the stove like I said I would, an' go to the circus," announced that lady, getting up briskly and tying on the old Shaker that had done duty for so many years.

"What will the Circle say," gasped Miss Susan; "an' the preacher, an'—an' folks?"

"Jes' what they politely please," snapped Miss Mindy; "an' much good may it do 'em. Go to that circus, I will, an' hev a new gown an' bunnit, too, an' Dave Smith'll give me four dollars for the stove, an' let me buy it back at that ef I can. You look out our patterns

MAKE YOUR HOME ATTRACTIVE

CANARIES

German and Scotch Fancy.
Choice Singers.

PARROTS

Cuban and Mexican.
Good Talkers.

Write for Prices.

FLOWERS

CUT FLOWERS
Roses, Carnations, Violets, Lily of the Valley, etc., etc. We ship anywhere in Western Canada.

PLANTS
Palms, Ferns Decorative and Flowering Plants. No charge for packing on orders \$2.00 or more.

CHOICE WEDDING and FUNERAL DESIGNS

Supplied on Short Notice

SHIPPED ANYWHERE

Write for Price List.

We also handle the celebrated
CORNELL INCUBATORS
and
PEEP-O-DAY BROODERS

The Standard of the World.
Write for large illustrated catalog Free

Discount of 10% on all orders when this paper is mentioned.

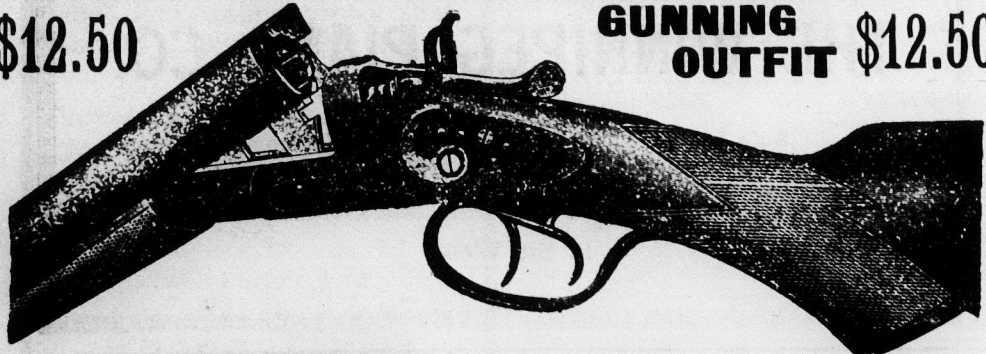
ANGORA CATS
White and Cinnamon
PEDIGREE STOCK

Thoroughly Domesticated. A Beautiful Animal.
Write for prices.

THE ROSERY, Florist

325 Portage Ave. Phone 194. Nights 709.

\$12.50



GUNNING
OUTFIT

\$12.50

This outfit includes the following: **1 Double Barrel Breech Loading Shot Gun, 12 gauge 1 Gun Cover; 1 Box Ammunition; 1 Cleaning Rod.** The gun has a fancy Carved Stock, Imitation Twist Barrels, Bar Lock and Case Hardened Frame made in 12 gauge only. Send for this Outfit while they last. We issue a complete Hardware and Harness Catalogue which is mailed free upon application.

McTAGGART-WRIGHT CO. LIMITED

207 Fort Street.

WINNIPEG, MAN.