

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

Suggestions for next Christmas.

This is the time for the young woman spending these summer days in the country to prepare her Christmas present. At a great saving of money and the eyesight lavished upon needlework, many dainty gifts are easily procured on rambles through fields and forests.

Let me speak first of the much-prized rose jar. The rose petals may be procured until late in September. Two or three quarts of petals are sufficient for an ordinary sized jar. Spread them out on papers and sprinkle with salt. Shake them up every day or two, occasionally adding a little more salt. In six or seven weeks they will be thoroughly dried and ready to put into the jar with a little allspice, three or four cloves, and as many drops of attar of roses as you can afford. Jars may be procured at prices convenient to every purse.

If you are fortunate to be located near the resinous balsam trees, you can not do better than to make a pillow for some frail friend or for one who is subject to headaches. Cut only the young needles and those of paler green. You will need a bushel of them packed down to fill an eighteen-inch pillow when they are dried out. Lay on papers on a dry room, and after a few days you may fill your pillow. Be sure that there are no insects or stems among the needles. Do not try to embroider an elaborate cover. Save your eyes and cover with plain green material, expensive or inexpensive as you wish.

Another dainty pillow for an invalid is one filled with clover tops, white clover preferably, as that is the sweetest. These may be picked until frost comes, but the first and second crops are best. Dry like the rose leaves, but with less salt, and in the sun, as quickly as possible. Nothing is prettier for the outer covering than white muslin. Out of pink muslin cut in rustic lettering, "A message from the clover and the bees." Turn the edges neatly under and stitch on the machine. It may not be so pretty as the embroidered cover, but it looks more useful.

A characteristic pillow for the baby may be filled with milkweed pods. These are to be gathered late in August and September. Open the pods, cut off the seed, pull the floss apart, and dry it. The pillow is exceedingly light and fluffy if the floss is thoroughly dried. Embroider a few pink or blue polka-dots on the outer slip, or buy a muslin with printed dots.

For the elderly woman who cooks gather caraway seeds and dry. Cut off all stems, and be sure they harbor no insects when picked. Fill a glass jar which has a china cover and label. With a pint or quart of these nowadays rare spices inclose a recipe for the cookies, and if you are a good cook, add a dozen of the cookies carefully wrapped. This forms a unique and pleasing gift and souvenir of the country. Here is a recipe for seed cookies: Two cupsfuls of sugar, one cupful butter and lard, two eggs, one cupful sour milk or thin cream, one teaspoonful soda, two tablespoonfuls seeds, a pinch of salt, flour to roll soft.

In October gather beechnuts and spread them out in a dry place, not too near the fire. Beechnuts may be digested by invalids who can eat no other nut, and are always enjoyed by elderly people.

On some of your walks you will surely come across some sweet flag. Procure plenty of the root, slice it, and dry in sugar. This was a favorite breath perfume of our grandmothers; and a small quantity taken infrequently is good for the stomach. Put it up in Christmas confectionery boxes, or in a labelled glass jar with aluminum cover.

In the forest you will find all sorts of ferns. Often, if you select a small spiral-growing, silky variety, you will get a root that will grow well indoors and prove very hardy. A thrifty fern in a neat dish is appreciated by any housekeeper.

Take a walk through the wood lot to select the young fir trees you are going to send to those who usually buy one for the Christmas festivities.

For the popular and busy college girl all sorts of things that will help her out when it is her turn to give a spread will be gratefully received. A large percentage of the maple sugar first displayed in early spring is last year's sugar carefully kept over. A three-pound cake with a quantity of maple leaves in all the glory of their autumn coloring, ironed with resin, and a dozen place cards made with a pressed leaf outlined in spatterwork background, in which appropriate lines are daintily written, form pleasing materials for an evening with wax on snow. The ingenious girl can arrange a number of original and successful combinations similar to the above.

The old-fashioned butternut is hard to obtain in the city. A pound box of butternut cream candy will be enjoyed at your city friend's Christmas table.

Home-made preserves and pickles, which now bring the highest prices on the city markets, may be offered without hesitation to any housewife.

The Undoing of Towser.

J. A. McKee, in United Presbyterian. The presence of a black and tan dog at the morning service on a recent Sabbath in the First United Presbyterian Church of Butler set some of the older heads of the congregation to telling stories about the early history of the church and the much revered first pastor, Rev. Isaiah Niblock, D.D., who died in 1864, after a pastorate of forty-four years.

Dr. Niblock was a great lover of dogs, and in his latter days was the owner of two, a house dog of the terrier type and a majestic black and tan watchdog of the mastiff breed. Both dogs were much noted for their intelligence.

Towser, the mastiff, constituted himself the special guardian of the minister. When the venerable pastor went on his daily walks through the town and into the country, Towser went along. On Sabbath mornings he escorted his master to church, remained inside until the services were over, and then escorted him home again. He would walk at a respectful distance ahead of his master on the way to and from the church, and not even a chicken or a cat could distract his attention from the duties of the day, and Towser disliked cats, too. Towser appreciated the dignity of his position, and only once did he engage in unseemly conduct inside of the church.

The old brick church on the corner of East Jefferson and McKean Streets—the most pretentious edifice of its day in the town—was not more than half as large as the auditorium of the present church. The pulpit and pews occupied the same relative positions as they do now. The pews were the old-fashioned box affairs with high backs and a door in the end next the aisle. The gallery was furnished in the same manner, and a broad aisle crossed the main floor from east to west in front of the pulpit. Double doors at the ends of the aisle opened onto McKean Street at the west side, and at the east side into a vacant lot, now occupied by the parsonage. This lot was known as the calf pasture. During the hot days in the summer these doors were left open to ventilation.

Once inside of the church the demeanor of Towser was as respectful as any Christian. After his master had entered the pulpit, Towser would quietly walk up to the corner of the pulpit platform and there curl himself up for a snooze while the sermon lasted. The sight of the dog sleeping on the corner of the platform was so common that the youngsters of the congregation ceased to giggle at it, and if Towser had missed a Sabbath even the elders would have been visibly disturbed.

Nothing disturbed the serenity of

Towser on these occasions. If an unusual noise occurred in the congregation during the services, Towser would raise his head, gravely look over the congregation for the cause of the disturbance, and then relapse into slumber. There was never any outward manifestation of his inward thoughts—if he had any.

Even on a hot summer day, when the east and west doors were open, and Farmer Hoon's colt walked through the building to the calf pasture and back again, exploring the front pews with his nose as he went, while the pastor was preaching, Towser merely opened one eye and then shut it immediately. When the pastor did not stop preaching because of a fool colt browsing around and snuffing at the furniture, what was the use of Towser getting fussed up?

The downfall of Towser came unexpectedly. One Sabbath he was enjoying his accustomed sleep on the corner of the platform, and Dr. Niblock was preaching on a subject in which he was deeply interested. The minister grew eloquent, and under the enthusiasm of the moment brought his fist down with a terrific bang on the pulpit Bible. The noise woke up the sleepy heads of the congregation, and even Towser was startled out of his dreams. Here was something doing, and he was going to look on the side of his master as all hazards. Jumping to his feet he gave voice to his sentiments in two or three loud "bow-wow" that rang through the church above the voice of the minister. Then a sheepish expression stole over his face as he recognized the mistake he had made by "butting in," and with drooping head and tail Towser retired to the darkest corner of the platform and resumed his sleep.

The youngsters of the congregation giggled outright, while the elders made heroic efforts to suppress their smiles and at the same time administer the proper rebuke to their offspring. Some of the gray-haired members of the congregation to-day recall the incident with feelings of mingled pleasure and pain, for the parents of that day disciplined their olive branches at home in a way that the erring ones never failed to remember.

This affair caused the temporary banishment of Towser. The next Sabbath he was left at home, chained to his kennel. The pastor was well on in the second head of his sermon when a rattle and clanking of iron was heard, and through the open door trotted Towser, dragging ten feet of a chain after him. He looked not to the right or left, nor did he until he reached his accustomed place on the pulpit platform. Here he paused and gave an appealing look at his master. He seemed to get an assuring glance from the eye of the venerable minister, for he curled up and went to sleep.

Towser was never chained at home after that, and he continued going to church as long as his master preached. When Dr. Niblock retired from his pastoral duties on account of ill-health and old age, Towser ceased attending church, but he continued to be the special guardian of the daily walks of his master until the venerable minister died, which was not long after his retirement.

Like the story of Doctor MacClure's faithful horse, Towser did not long survive his master. Whether he died from grief or old age—for he was very old—no one will say. For weeks after the funeral he traversed the paths frequented by his master apparently searching for some one he could not find. He grew thin, and refused to eat. One morning a member of the old pastor's family went to the kennel to feed Towser. He called the dog by name and got no answer. Towser had been gathered unto his fathers.

A special effort on special occasions is a poor substitute for faithfulness in your ordinary work.