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Thursday, Nov. 4, at 1 o'clock

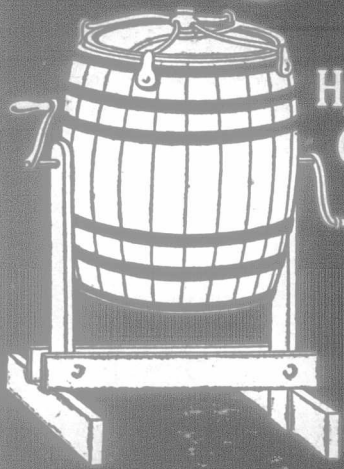
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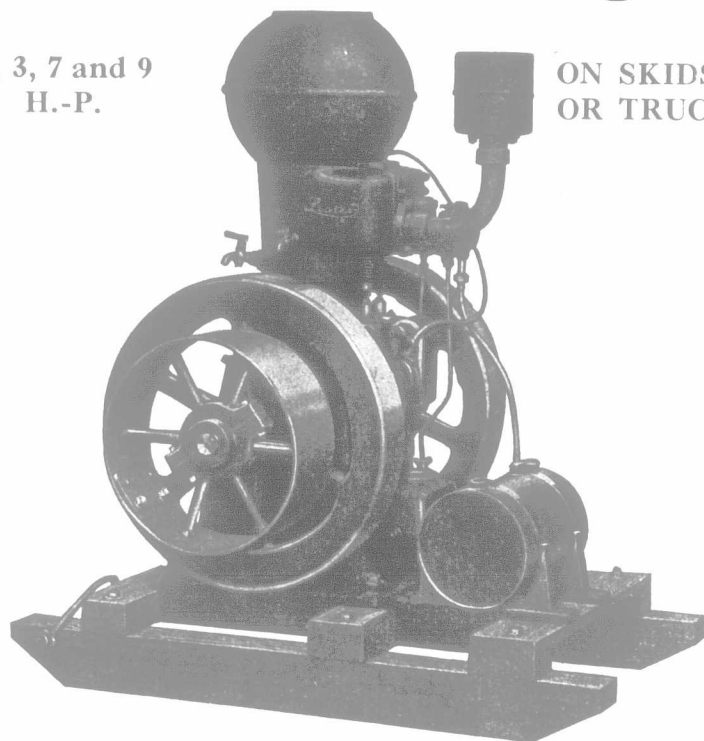
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in such wonderful little jewel-caskets of houses!" exclaimed Phyllis, to be echoed by murmurs of admiration from the others. But I said nothing. And it really was like wandering into a fairy picture-book. It was impossible to imagine any other house resembling this, unless that of Silverhair's Three Bears.

The polished green walls were almost hidden with brightly colored Dutch plaques, and shelves covered with little useless ornaments. The chairs were yellow, with roses painted over them, and varnished till they twinkled. The family beds in the wall had white curtains as crisp as new banknotes, and white knitted coverlets with wool-lace ruffles; but as the green doors of the beds were kept shut for the day, you would not have suspected the elegance within, had not the Siren opened them for inspection. Under the door of each bed was placed a little red bench, festooned with painted flowers; and as there were nine in the family and only four beds, counting the little one underneath for the babies, the disposition of forces at night did not bear thinking of.

All the tables had crocheted white covers, and were decked with vases and fresh flowers, glittering brass and pewter things, and gay old china. But it was the next room—a small one adjoining the big living-room—which roused the highest admiration. There was not much furniture, but up to the low ceiling the walls were concealed by shelves laden with gorgeously painted wooden boxes, little and big. They were of all colors and all brightly varnished. Some were plain blue, or green, or crimson; others had Dutch or Japanese scenery painted on their sides, and the largest could not have been more than a foot and a half long, by eight inches in height.

"This must be where they keep their cake and bread, and kitchen stores," said Miss Rivers; but with a smile the Siren began to open the boxes.

Instead of sugar and spices they contained the family wardrobe; folded neck-handkerchiefs in great variety; little embroidered jackets for the children; lace-covered caps; bodices, and even—in the largest boxes—petticoats.

The ladies, and Starr also, were charmed with everything, especially the dark, secretive loft, as full of suspended fishing nets as Bluebeard's closet was of wives. They had never seen such a distracting place as Marken, or such kind and pretty people. It was nearly an hour before it occurred to them that they had better say good-by, and by that time they knew the whole history of the interesting family.

They shook hands with each one of the nine, including the baby, patted the cat and then lingered outside, taking photographs. Some of the neighbors—young women and girls, with dimples in the roses of their cheeks—drew nearer, as if lured by admiration of the ladies. Nell and Phyllis, seeing them, beckoned, and the fair creatures obeyed the summons with an appearance of shyness. They, too, were photographed; and after many politenesses had been exchanged, Starr came to ask if I thought the dear things' feelings would be hurt by a small offering of money.

"They may, and probably will be—if the offering is small," said I dryly.

"What are you insinuating?" exclaimed Nell.

Meanwhile the Siren, her sisters and brothers, and a number of handsome friends of her own age, pinned wary eyes upon us. The dimples were in abeyance, for the guileless anglers used the subject of conversation, and were preparing for eventualities.

"I don't think they'll refuse money," I said. "In fact, they expect it."

"How much ought we to give?" asked Starr.

"Whatever you have handy, and whatever you think it's worth," said I, exploring my pockets for silver.

"I suppose the family would be delighted with the golden," suggested Phyllis. "We might hand one child another, to divide among her little friends, and buy them sweets."

"You can try that, and see if they thank you," I replied.

"Why, of course they will," said the Chaperon. "It's easy to see that they have lovely dispositions, except the lit-

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