

A HARBINGER OF SPRING.

HAIL, harbinger of balmy spring,
Telling of dreary winter past,
The vernal season heralding,
And days of sunshine come at last.

With joy thy tender form I see,
Pledge of the Maytime flowrets bloom,
Thy advent much delighteth me,
Oppressed no more by wintry gloom.

Pent 'mid the city's crowded streets,
Nor bird nor bud can meet my view
To tell the season's coming sweets,
Therefore I'm glad to welcome you.

So hail, once more, thou tiny form,
Of birds and flowers let others sing,
The weather must be getting warm—
Thou'rt the first bed bug of the spring!

THE AGRICULTURAL COMBINE.

THE farmer has hitherto figured in trade only as an individual unit. The single combination allowed him has been with nature. The rules of this association, which is the oldest trust on record, have been handed down as proverbs. "Do your part" is their burden, "and nature will do hers."

But after many centuries of trial the farmer has declared this arrangement unsatisfactory. His partner has never proved herself an adept in commercial matters. When prices were good, and trade brisk, she failed to water the stock sufficiently to make large profits a possibility. When times were dull and merchandise a drug, she would invest all available capital in unsaleable goods which had to be closed out at a sacrifice. The head of the firm is therefore quite justified in deposing such a bungler from the position of chief manager, and assigning her a subordinate post under the clerk of the weather. She will also continue to act as drummer, in which capacity she may be relied upon to present the claims of the house to everyone three times a day as heretofore. But though still retaining an interest in the firm, her name will not henceforth appear in its signature. Instead of "Farmer and Nature," it will be "Farmer and Brothers."

New business combines are generally regarded by the public with disfavor. But I hope the present case will prove an honorable exception to the rule. The farmer has been so long forced to content himself with the crumbs that fall from the table his labor provides that it may be pardoned him if in struggling to his feet in order to take his rightful seat, he should jostle the overflowing platters of Dives. If the new departure will but deliver him in a measure from the tyranny of the industrial proverbs, if he may thus occasionally enjoy larks which are in no way associated with the idea of early rising, if he need no longer plough thorough and deep, while sluggards sleep, but can afford to give that leisure class the moral benefit of seeing him go to work, if it be permitted him in these latter days to pass his time in accord with more modern compilations than Poor Richard's Almanac, all should rejoice that Atlas has at last found a way of resting his shoulders. Let this overwrought Jack Horner have his share of the plums his industry earns even if he has to go into a "corner" to find them.

WILLIAM MCGILL.

PRACTICE.

"ARE you a good judge of chickens, Deacon?"
"Lor, sir, I'd know a good one in de dark."



"MR. MOWAT HAS TAKEN THE FEE SYSTEM
INTO HIS CONSIDERATION."

—London Advertiser.

"H. O!"

THERE'S a proverb of old,
By which we are told,
That blood is much thicker than water;
And it may have been so,
A long time ago;
If it was, such things certainly alter.

For I've heard people growl,
Because fish, flesh and fowl
Through their water-taps gushed all day long;
If blood's thicker than this,
Surely something's amiss,
Or another good proverb's gone wrong!

MAX.

KLEPTOMANIACS.

A REMARKABLE fact in regard to this year's conscripts for the German army in Silesia is the extraordinary large number who are maimed in hand or foot. This is said to be due to the growing belief among the peasantry that a war is imminent. The most common form of maiming is the loss of the small toe on the left foot.—*N. Y. People.*

This is a curious form of mania—a sort of clip-toe-mania, as it were. They are evidently disinclined to toe the mark. What mark? Oh, pshaw! that won't do. Emperor William has spoiled that one by firing him.

AT THE BALL.

JACK—"What a lovely girl Miss Blondwigg is! A heavenly flower-like face!"
TOM—"Yes, very flour-like. Look at my coat sleeve. I danced the last waltz with her!"