

HOME CIRCLE.

LAND POOR.

I've another offer, wife, of twenty acres more
Of high and dry timber land, as level as a floor.
I thought I'd wait and see you first, as lawyer Brady said—
To tell how things will turn out best a woman is ahead.
And when the lot is paid for, and we have got the deed,
I'll say that I am satisfied—it's all the land we need.
And next we'll see about the yard, and fix the house up
some,
And manage in the course of time to have a better home.

There is no use of talking, Charles; you buy that twenty
more,
And we'll go scrimping all our lives, and always be land
poor.

For thirty years we've tugged and saved, denying half our
needs,
While all we have to show for it are tax-receipts and deeds.
I'd sell the land, if it were mine, and have a better home,
With broad light rooms, in front the street, and take life as
it come.

If we could live as others live, and have what others do,
We'd live enough sight pleasanter, and have a plenty too.
While others have amusements, and luxury and books,
Just think how stingy we have lived, and how this old place
looks.

That other farm you bought of Wells, that took so many
years

At clearing up and fencing in, has cost me many tears.
Yes, Charles, I've thought of it a hundred times or more,
And wondered if it really paid to always be land poor;
That had we built a cozy house, took pleasure as it come,
Our children, once so dear to us, had never left our home.
I grieve to think of wasted weeks, and years, and months
and days,

While for it all we never yet have had one word of praise.
They call us rich, but we are poor. Would we not freely
give

The land with all its fixtures, for a better way to live?
Don't think I'm blaming you, Charles; you are not a whit
to blame:

I've pitied you these many years, to see you tired and lame.
It's just the way we started out, our plans too far ahead;
We've worn the cream of life away, to leave too much when
dead.

'Tis putting off enjoyment long after we enjoy;
And after all, too much of wealth seems useless as a toy.
Although we've learned, alas! too late, what all must learn
at last,

Our brightest earthly happiness is buried in the past.
This life is short and full of care; the end is always nigh:
We seldom half begin to live before we're doomed to die.
Were I to start my life again, I'd mark each separate day,
And never let a single one pass unemployed away.

If there were things to envy, I'd have them now and
then,

And have a home that was a home, and not a cage or
pen;

I'd sell some land if it were mine, and fill up well the
rest:

I've always thought, and think so yet—small farms well
worked are best.

"THE 'MORTGAGE' YE SHALL ALWAYS
HAVE WITH YOU."

We worked through Spring and Winter, through Summer
and through Fall,
But the mortgage worked the hardest and the steadiest of
us all;

It worked on nights and Sundays; it worked each holiday;
It settled down among us, and it never went away.

Whatever we kept from it seemed almost as bad as theft;
It watched us every minute, and it ruled us right and left.
The rust and blight were with us sometimes, and some-
times not;

The dark-browed scowling mortgage was forever on the
spot.

The weevil and the cut-worm, they went as well as came;
The mortgage staid on forever, eating hearty all the same.
It nailed up every window, stood guard at every door,
And happiness and sunshine made their home with us no
more,

Till with failing crops and sickness we got stalled upon the
grade,

And there came a dark day on us when the interest wasn't
paid;

And there came a sharp foreclosure, and I kind o' lost my
hold,

And grow weary and discouraged, and the farm was cheaply
sold.

The children left and scattered, when they hardly yet were
grown;

My wife she pined an' perished, an' I found myself alone.
What she died of was "a mystery," an' the doctors never
knew;

But I knew she died of mortgage—just as well as I wanted
to.

If to trace a hidden sorrow were within the doctor's art,
They'd ha' found a mortgage lying on that woman's broken
heart.

"Worm or beetle, drought or tempest, on a farmer's land
may fall,

But for first-class ruination, trust the mortgage 'gains't
them all!"—*Will Carleton.*

WHAT MAKES A HOUSE BEAUTIFUL.

It is an excellent thing to have a well-kept horse, and a
beautifully appointed table; but, after all, the best cheer of
every home must come from the heart and manner of the
home mother. If that is cold, and this ungracious, all the

wealth of India cannot make the home pleasant and invit-
ing. Intelligence, too, must lend its charm, if we would
have home an Eden. The severe style of house-order
neatness seldom leaves much margin for intellectual culture.
Even general reading is considered as out of the question
for a woman so hurried and so worried with her scrub-
bing and polishing, and making up garments. A simpler
style of living and house furnishing would set many a
bonded slave at liberty, and add vastly to the comfort of all
the house.

Hospitality rarely prevails in these spotless, line and
letter houses. Company disarrange the books, and disorder
the house, which had work enough in it before. The
mother cannot throw off her household cares, and sit down
for a real heart-to-heart converse with the old friend of her
childhood. Still less can she enter into the joys and pleas-
ures right and delightful to her own children, because of the
extra work of clearing away it will be likely to make.

With all your toils to make a house beautiful, do not
neglect the first element of all, to beautify yourself, body
and soul. A sweet, loving word, and a warm clasp of
the hand, are far more to a guest than the most elaborately
embroidered lambrequins at your window, or the most
exquisite damask on your table. There are bare cabin
homes that have been remembered ever with pleasure,
because of the beautiful loving presence there; and stately
palaces, which leave the impressions of an iceberg on the
mind.

OVER THE WAY.

No fresh young beauty, laughing-eyed,
Who reckons lovers by the score,
But just a sweet old maid who died
While I was yet in pinafore.

She lived upon the shady side
Of that old-fashioned country street,
A spreading chestnut greenly tried
To screen the door of her retreat.

A tiny garden, trim and square,
A snowy flight of steps above,
And sweet suggestions in the air
Of all the flowers the poets love.

Within the trellised porch there hung
A parrot in a burnished cage—
A foolish bird, whose mocking tongue
Barlesqued the piping tones of age.

A branching apple-tree o'erspread
A rickety old garden seat;
No apples sure were e'er so red!
Or since have tasted half as sweet!

In memory's enchanted land,
I see the gentle spinster yet.
With watering-pot in mitted hand
Gaze proudly at her mignonette.

And when the Spring had grown to June,
She'd sit beneath the apple-tree,
And dream away the afternoon,
With some quaint volume on her knee—

A gray-robed vision of repose,
A pleasant thought in Quaker guise;
For truly she was one of those
Who carry Heaven in their eyes.

—*Chambers' Journal.*

THE PROMINENCE OF ATHLETICISM IN
ENGLAND.

"I care for nothing but hunting, shooting, and fishing,"
writes an ex-landlord, quite lately, while inquiring through
the columns of "The Field" for a cheap residence abroad.
You must be an Englishman to understand the exact spirit
in which this is written, and the spirit in which it will be
taken by the masses. Such a confession in the columns of
the public press in any other country would be taken as the
apology of some harmless idiot. Not so here, however.
Impossible as it may seem, an Englishman will recognise
it instantly as having a great deal more of the boastful than
the apologetic, and two-thirds of the rising generation, on
reading it, will mentally chronicle that unknown curiosity
as "a fine fellow."

The singularity, however, lies not so much in the fact of
a vast number of individuals, whom accident has made in-
dependent of occupation as regards their living, devoting
themselves with business-like energy to self-indulgence, as
in the more than toleration, the semi-admiration, with
which the workaday world, in its intervals of labour, from
the prime minister to the agricultural labourer, looks on and
cheers the barren feasts or the school-boy gambols of grown-
up children. Physical superiority, in short, is the fashion
in England, and the public will shout louder and longer at
excellence in amusements, than they will at excellence in
those qualities which help to advance their country, and the
cause of civilization, and the good of men.

When we read, in the local paper, that at a public dinner
in the town hall Sir John Spretasch, K.C.B., occupied the
left of the chairman, and Mr. Reginald Redcoat, M.F.H.,
sat upon his right, no sense of the ridiculous is supposed to
strike us in the unconscious but still seemingly apparent
equality in importance at which these two affixes are rated.
The one marks, perhaps, the successful leader of some
campaign in which the honour of the nation and something
more has been at stake; the other, the ownership of a pack
of honours, which are as often as not intrusted to the sole
charge and management of a hired servant, who in turn,
from the mere fact of his being connected with field sports,
will be treated as an incomparably more important person
than his brother, the thrifty tradesman, and will combine in

the highest perfection all those offensive characteristics
which so often distinguish the dependents of great establish-
ments.

I think I am not wrong in saying that the title of M.F.H.
would be more deeply respected, by one-half of the rising
generation of England, than all the other letters indicative
of military or intellectual distinction that her Majesty or her
institutions could affix to a subject's name. Of course this
is very droll,—no contemptuous epithet could be found
strong enough to apply to it; but it is nevertheless a part of
our social system; it has eaten into our lives and become a
part of our traditions—so great is the human material we
have to draw upon, so great our wealth, so great the vigour
of the middle classes and the working portion of the upper
classes. This monomania is powerless to arrest for a
moment the stream of our national life and industry. It
pervades only that quiet backwater which plays around
with bats and balls and fishing-rods and guns, and which,
by an odd paradox, calls itself "the world," and by the
still stranger force of habit exacts the tribute of admiration
and respect, and whenever possible of imitation, from the
busy stream that turns the wheel that makes Great Britain
what she is.—*Atlantic Monthly.*

NORWEGIAN TABLE MANNERS.

Table manners are at a low ebb in Norway. Consistency
does not seem to be regarded as a jewel. The same people
who bow so very ceremoniously to each other, and express
sympathy and interest in the veriest trifles of life, and who
dance and grimace fully five minutes at an open door before
they can determine which shall enter first, are exceedingly
ill-bred during meal time. Their knives wander so far
down their throats that one must at least admire their
courage, though failing to appreciate its object. In these
seats they rival the professional knife swallows of Bombay.
They hold their forks like pens. Even a four-tined fork is
not considered too unwieldy to use as a toothpick. All
knives are put promiscuously into the butter dish, which
indeed is never provided with a separate implement. Also,
when spoons are furnished for a public dish, a Norwegian
generally prefers using his own. Eggs are sucked from the
shell. The people eat most voraciously, displaying the
appetites of tigers, and making disagreeable noises with
their mouths. They rise and reach across the table for
something you could readily pass them, and sometimes a
person gets up and walks to the end of the table for some
particular dish he fancies. When the plates are changed
at the end of a course, the knives and forks are apt to be
simply wiped by the waiter upon a towel in full sight, and
then complacently returned to you. And yet it was the
Scandinavians who won from Voltaire the praise of being
the "Frenchmen of the North," on account of their punc-
tilious politeness. Kind-hearted and well-meaning, but
surely somewhat deluded old man.

FARMING IN SWITZERLAND.

I have wondered if there are such awkward ways of doing
things outside of Egypt as are practised here. The farm-
ing implements would be laughable if they were not mon-
strous. Tubal-Cain certainly made better-formed scythes
than are used here. The axes are simply long sharp
wedges with a hole near the top, and a short, straight stick
in the hole for a handle. Hay-forks are big and awkward,
and twice as heavy as our stable forks. Grain is often
threshed with the old-fashioned flail than otherwise. The
ploughs are the climax of agricultural monstrosities. They
are great cumbersome things, made almost wholly of wood,
with the beam mounted on two wooden wheels big enough
for coal-carts. My friend used just such a plough yester-
day on our farm. I half deny ownership now, when I think
of it. It was pulled by six cows. Two men were driving
the cows, and two men were holding the plough up. I fol-
lowed and looked on. They were half a day ploughing
half an acre. I am glad the whole concern, ploughmen,
cow-drivers, and all, were hired, and not a part proper
of the farm. I sat on a stone wall for half an hour and re-
flected whether it were possible Americans could not make
small special farming profitable, with their soil and com-
plete implements for farming, in the face of the fact that
these people not only make a living, but save money, on a
poor soil, and with the old-fashioned tools of Egypt to work
it. I am certain the whole secret lies in economy—in the
saving of a hundred little things that shall outbalance even
the waste of these awkward implements and these slow
methods. There will not a blade of grass be seen among the
vines here, or a weed on the farm; there will not be a twig of
wood left to rot, or a potato undug. A gentleman's private
garden could not be cleaner or better kept than is the whole
farm in Switzerland, and cultivation, such as is bestowed
only on hot-houses in America, is common here to every
farm. Not one foot of ground is left uncared for.—*Harper's
Magazine.*

LITERATURE FOR BOYS.

The old-fashioned stories which the unhappy boys of the
last generation read have been succeeded by the manly and
fascinating criminal novel. In the old story-books it was
assumed that truthfulness, honesty and obedience to parents
were virtues, and that the Christian religion was not wholly
devoid of merit. If these views were not directly taught in the
juvenile literature of our fathers, at all events they were never
directly or indirectly attacked. Boys could learn nothing
from their story-books except preposterous platitudes—noth-
ing that was of any practical use, or that tended to develop
in them manly and brilliant traits. No such complaint can
be made of the dime and half-dime novels of the criminal
school, which are now read by all our boys, either openly or
secretly. In these delightful stories new forms of profanity
and slang are taught in the most effective way. The pleas-
ures of burglary and highway robbery, the manliness of gam-
bling and fighting, and the heroism of successful lying, are
set forth in what is regarded by youthful readers as glowing