

fore he had placed a quantity of oats in a hammock suspended from the beams which supported the floor above.

"You know," said Mr. G——, "that rats and mice won't get into grain when it is kept this way." He took a small measure and dipped his hand into the hammock of oats. "Good gracious," he cried. "Don't you ever believe that story again. The inside of this heap of oats is entirely eaten out. I shall have to go over to my neighbor's and borrow some feed for my horse."

"He started at once to negotiate the loan," and I idly thrust my hand into the heap of grain lying in the hammock, with a vague idea of starting any rats or mice which might lurk there. There was indeed a mouse's nest in the grain, and my hand came into contact with some of its inmates. I withdrew it with great celerity. As I did so, the mother mouse appeared on top of the grain, running for dear life. A little mouse followed her, and catching on to its mother's long tail, clung to it with a grip like death. A second mouse followed his brother, and caught on to his tail just as the first one had caught on to his mother's: a third one followed and did the same; and before the mother in her wild flight had reached the rope by which the hammock was suspended, a fourth little one was clinging to the tail of the third.

"Incredible as it may seem, the mother mouse with four little ones, each hanging to the tail of the one in front of him, ran nimbly up the suspension rope of the hammock, made her way on the face of a beam to the side wall of the barn and disappeared, leaving me overcome with wonder and admiration.

"Now," asked Mr. Lawrence, in conclusion, "was this instinct on the part of the little mice? Would all mice have done in just this way? Or was this an uncommonly smart mother?" — *Harper's Young People*.

A DEAF EDITOR.

The editor of the Santa Clara (Cal.) *Echo* is happily deaf, and thus tells of his adventures with a female book agent.

We thought everybody in the State knew we were deaf, but once in a while we find one that is not aware of the fact. A female book-peddler came to the office the other day: she wished to dispose of a book. She was alone in the world, and had no one to whom she could turn for sympathy or assistance, hence we should buy her book. She was unmarried, and had no manly heart into which she could pour her sufferings, therefore, we ought to buy a book. She had received a liberal education, and we could not, in consequence, pay less than \$2 for a book. We had listened attentively and here broke out with: What did you say? We're deaf."

She started in a loud voice and went through her rigmarole. When she had finished we went and got a roll of paper, and making it into a speaking trumpet, placed one end to our ear, and told her to proceed.— She nearly broke a blood-vessel in her efforts to make herself heard. She commenced:

"I am alone in this world——"

"It doesn't make the slightest difference to us. We are a husband and father. Bigamy is not allowed in this State. We are not eligible to proposals."

"Oh, what a fool the man is!" she said in a low tone; then at the top of her voice, "I don't want to marry you; I want to sell a book!"

The last sentence was howled.

"We don't want a cook," we remarked, blandly; "our wife does the cooking, and she wouldn't allow as good-looking a woman as you to stay in the house five minutes. She is very jealous."

She looked at us in despair. Gathering her robes about her, giving us a glance of contempt she exclaimed:

"I do believe if a three hundred pounder was let off alongside that deaf fool's head he'd think that somebody was knocking at the door."

You should have heard her slam the door when she went. We heard that.

THE PARABLE OF THE HEARTLESS BROTHER.

BY NORMAN FOX.

As Jesus was teaching, there drew near a great number of rapacious tax-gatherers and other sinful men to hear him. The Master received them most cordially, rejoicing that erring ones were led to think of duty and holiness. But the Pharisees and Scribes took offense, and said that this young rabbi made himself altogether too familiar with bad men.

Jesus declared it proper that he should extend them a friendly welcome; for the angels in Heaven rejoice over a sinner reclaimed as does a shepherd over a straying sheep recovered, or a housekeeper over a lost coin found again. And then begins a more extended parable. A wandering son returned in penitence. The father gave him a joyful welcome. But his elder brother felt no pleasure at his return, refused to unite in the thanksgiving festivities, and even "was angry" at the rejoicings.

The purpose of the parable is to illustrate the difference between God's disposition and man's disposition in regard to the erring. It was the father, not the brother, whom the prodigal had wronged; but while the former received him with love, the latter turned from him with heartless disdain. There was a deep reproach in father's words: "Son, all that I have is thine; not merely a kid, but all my wealth, making thee rich beyond want; and yet thou wouldst grudge the slight cost of this feast to celebrate that poor boy's return."

This parable is a missionary sermon, reproving us for our unconcern regarding a world lost in sin. We may not, as did the Pharisees and Scribes, actually murmur when the erring are brought in; but how little do we share God's anxiety for their recovery. Day after day the father sits looking to see if the lost one will not return; but we are "in the field, busy with our gains. The father kissed the wanderer while still in rags. It was on the neck of a filthy tramp that he fell, with loving embrace. But we shrug our shoulders when asked to make the least exertion to bring back the wanderer, and we grudge the price of a calf as the cost of a brother's salvation. That elder son was not a true son; for he did not inherit the father's heart of love. No more can we claim to be true sons of God if we show not the missionary spirit, the impulse to seek and to save the lost.—*N. Y. Independent*.