

awoke with a laugh and cried out, "What a beautiful dream! Ma wasn't sick any more, and we had lots to eat and to wear, and my hand burns yet where an angel touched it!" When she discovered that her nickel had been replaced by a bill, a dollar of which loaded her down with all she could carry, she innocently said, "Well, now, but ma won't hardly believe me that you sent up to heaven and got an angel to come down and clerk in your grocery!"—*San Francisco News Letter.*

Margaret, the Mother of Criminals.

At one of the meetings of the State Charities Aid Association, New York, when the subject of preventing pauperism by giving a proper training to the children of paupers was under consideration, Dr. Elisha Harris related the terrible story of "Margaret, the Mother of Criminals." It has been published in the newspapers, but can profitably be read again to illustrate the great importance of one branch of the Association's work. Margaret was a pauper child left adrift in one of the villages on the upper Hudson, about ninety years ago. There was no almshouse in the place; and she was made a subject of out-door relief, receiving occasionally food and clothing from the town officials, but was never educated nor sheltered in a proper home. She became the mother of a long race of criminals and paupers, which has cursed the country ever since. The court records show two hundred of her descendants who have been criminals. In one generation of her unhappy line there were twenty children, of whom seventeen lived to maturity. Nine served terms aggregating fifty years in the State Prison for high crimes, and all the others were frequent inmates in jails and almshouses. It is said that, of the six hundred and twenty-three descendants of this outcast girl, two hundred committed crimes which brought them upon the court records, and most of the others were idiots, drunkards, lunatics, paupers, or prostitutes. The cost to the country of this race of criminals and paupers is estimated at, at least, one hundred thousand dollars, taking no account of the damage they inflicted upon property and the suffering and degradation they caused in others. Who can say that all this loss and wretchedness might not have been spared the community, if the poor pauper girl Margaret had been provided with a good moral home life while she was growing up to womanhood?—*The Century.*

A Horse's Sense of Humor.

Carlyle told the story of two horses, illustrative of the sense of humor in animals. The distinguished author had a vicious sow, which was the terror and the tyrant of the farm-yard. One day Carlyle was smoking his pipe outside his front door, when he heard shrieks of rage and agony combined from the back of the house. He went round to see what was the matter. A deep drain had been opened across the yard, the bottom of which was stiff clay. Into this, by some unlucky curiosity, the sow had been tempted to descend, and being there, found a difficulty in getting out. The horses were loose. The pony saw the opportunity—the sow was struggling to extricate herself. The pony stood over her, and at each effort nudged her back again with a stroke of his fore-foot. The sow was screaming more from fury than pain. Larry, the horse, stood by watching the performance, and smiling approval, nodding his head every time the beast was knocked back into the clay, with the most obvious and exquisite perception of the nature of the situation.

Watching the Oil Wells.

It has been the custom for several years past to board up the derricks of "wildcat" test wells in important locations and place an armed guard around them to prevent trespassers from gaining access, in order to keep the result of the wells a secret from the public until the owners have had time to buy or sell adjoining lands and prepare for the effect of the well on the market. Such a well in oil region parlance, is termed a "mystery," and the frequent occurrence of "mysteries" has resulted in the employment by leading brokers and large producing firms of men thoroughly versed in all matters pertaining to the petroleum industry, who are aptly termed scouts, as it is their duty to learn the condition of such wells by strategy or force.

The Story of Life.

Say, what is life? 'Tis to be borne;
A helpless babe to greet the light
With a sharp wail, as if the morn
Foretold a cloudy noon and night,
To weep, to sleep, and weep again,
With sunny smiles between, and then?

And then apace the infant grows
To be a laughing, sprightly boy,
Happy despite his little woes.

Were he but conscious of his joy!
To be in short from two to ten,
A merry, moody child, and then?

And then in coat and trousers clad,
To learn to say the Decalogue,
And break it, an unthinking lad,
With mirth and mischief all agog,
A truant oft by field and fen,
And captures butterflies, and then?

And then increased in strength and size,
To be anon, a youth tall grown?
A hero in his mother's eyes,
A young Apollo in his own.
To imitate the ways of men
In fashionable sin, and then?

And then at last, to be a man
To fall in love, to woo and wed!
With seething brain to scheme and plan
To gather gold or toil for bread;
To sue for fame with tongue and pen,
And gain or lose the prize, and then?

And then in grey and wrinkled Eld
To mourn the speed of life's decline,
To praise the scenes of youth beheld,
And dwell in memory of Lang Syne,
To dream awhile with darkened ken,
Then drop into his grave, and then?

—John G. Saxe

Provident Rats.

Rats are very apt to take heed for the morrow. Eggs which they have been known to carry from the garret to the cellar, and other tempting food, instead of being devoured instantly, are stored away for the hour of need. A gentleman who fed his own pointers, noticed through a hole in the door that a number of rats ate from the trough with his dogs, which did not attempt to molest them. He resolved to shoot the intruders; so, when he served out the food, he kept the dogs away. Not a rat came to taste, although he could occasionally see them peering out of their holes, for they were too well versed in human nature to venture forth without the protection of their canine guard. When the dogs were let in, the rats joined them, and fed with them as usual. The forethought of rats is indeed proverbial, and so far from being careless or selfish, these interesting little folk are proved to be dutiful children, careful parents, and friends in need.

Shall Women Preach?

A clergymen of Louisville, Ky., the Rev. C. J. K. Jones, recently preached on the question, "Shall women preach?" The following passage will explain his attitude on the question: "The woman who has something to say and can say it acceptably has as much right to speech and attention on the platform or in the pulpit as though she wrote it in prose and poetry. I cannot understand why Mrs. Livermore or Miss Williard should not speak from pulpits as well as George Eliot may speak through prose or Mrs. Browning or Adelaide Proctor speak in poetry. The woman who has something to say and can say it acceptably is of more concern to the world than the man who has nothing to say and makes a success of it. Women have been preachers for generations as mothers, as writers, as companions. Another objection is often raised: 'To preach is outside of woman's sphere.' How do we know? The test of a singing bird is its capacity to sing; the test of a woman's call to preach is her ability to do it."