The Mill on the Floss

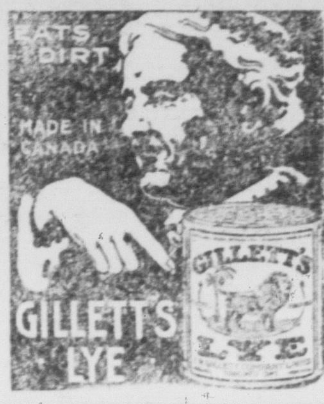
By George Eliot.

BOOK SECOND — SCHOOL TIME.

(22. Instalment.)

Perhaps it was because teaching came naturally to Mr. Stelling that he set about it with that uniformity of method and independence of circumstances which distinguish the actions of animals understood to be under the immediate teaching of nature. Mr. Broderip's amiable beaver, as that charming naturalist tells us, busied himself as earnestly in constructing a dam, in a room up three pair of stairs in London, as if he had been laying his foundation in a stream or lake in Upper Canada. It was "Binny's" function to build: the absence of water or of possible progeny was an accident for which he was not accountable. With the same unerring instinct Mr. Stelling set to work at his natural method of instilling the Eton Grammer and Euclid into the mind of Tom Tulliver. This, he considered, was the only basis of solid instruction: all other means of education were mere charlatanism, and could produce nothing better than smatterers. Fixed on this firm basis, a man might observe the display of various or special knowledge made by irregularly educated people with a pitying smile: all that sort of thing was very well, but it was impossible these people could form sound opinions. In holding this conviction Mr. Stelling was not biased, as some tutors have been, by the excessive accuracy or extent of his own scholarship; and as to his views about Euclid, no opinion could have been freer from personal partiality. Mr. Stelling was very far from being led astray by enthusiasm, either religious or intellectual; on the other hand, he had no secret belief that everything was humbug. He thought religion was a very excellent thing, and Aristotle a great authority, and deaneries and prebends useful institutions, and Great Britain the providential bulwark of Protestantism, and faith in the Unseen a great support to afflicted minds: he believed in all these things, as a Swiss hotel-keeper believes in the beauty of the scenery around him, and in the pleasure it gives to artistic visitors. And in the same way Mr. Stelling believed in his method of education: he had no doubt that he was doing the very best thing for Mr. Tulliver's boy. Of course, when the miller talked of "mapping" and "summing" in a vague and diffident manner, Mr. Stelling had set his mind at rest by an assurance that he understood what was wanted; for how was it possible the good man could form any reasonable judgment about the matter. Mr. Stelling's duty was to teach the lad in the only right way—indeed, he knew no other: he had not wasted his time in the acquirement of anything abnormal.

He very soon set down poor Tom as a thoroughly stupid lad; for though by hard labour he could get particular declensions into his brain, anything so abstract as the relation between cases and terminations could by no means get such a lodgment there as to enable him to recognise a chance genitive or dative. This struck Mr. Stelling as something more than natural stupidity: he suspected obstinacy, or at anyrate, indifference; and lectured Tom severely on his want of thorough application. "You feel no interest in who you're doing, sir," Mr. Stelling would say, and the reproach was painfully true. Tom had never found any difficulty in discerning a pointer from a setter, when once he had been told the distinction, and his perceptive powers were not at all deficient. I fancy they were quite as strong as those of the Rev. Mr. Stelling; for Tom could predict with accuracy what number of horses were cantering behind him, he could throw a stone right into the centre of a given ripple, he could guess to a fraction how many lengths of his stick it would take to reach across the playground, and could draw almost perfect squares on his slate without any measurement. But Mr. Stelling took no note of these things: he



only observed that Tom's faculties failed him before the abstractions hideously symbolised to him in the pages of the Eton Grammer, and that he was in a state bordering on idiocy with regard to the demonstration that two given triangles must be equal—though he could discern with great promptitude and certainty the fact that they were equal. Whence Mr. Stelling concluded that Tom's brain being peculiarly impervious to etymology and demonstrations, was peculiarly in need of being ploughed and harrowed by these patent implements: it was his favourite metaphor, that the classics and geometry constituted that culture of the mind which prepared it for the reception of any subsequent crop. I say nothing against Mr. Stelling's theory: if we are to have one regimen for all minds, his seems to me as good as any other. I only know it turned out as uncomfortable for Tom Tulliver as if he had been plied with cheese in order to remedy a gastric weakness which prevented him from digesting it. It is astonishing what a different result one gets by changing the metaphor! Once call the brain an intellectual stomach, and one's ingenious conception of the classics and geometry as ploughs and harrows seems to settle nothing. But then it is open to someone else to follow great authorities, and call the mind a sheet of white paper or a mirror, in which case one's knowledge of the digestive process becomes quite irrelevant. It was doubtless an ingenious idea to call the camel the ship of the desert, but it would hardly lead one far in training that useful beast. O Aristotle! if you had had the advantage of being "the freshest modern" instead of the greatest ancient, would you not have mingled your praise of metaphorical speech, as a sign of high intelligence, with a lamentation that intelligence so rarely shows itself in speech without metaphor—that we can so seldom declare what a thing is, except by saying it is something else?

Tom Tulliver, being abundant in no form of speech, did not use any metaphor to declare his views as to the nature of Latin: he never called it an instrument of torture; and it was not until he had got on some way in the next half-year, and in the Delectus, that he was advanced enough to call it a "bore" and "beastly stuff." At present, in relation to this demand that he should learn Latin declensions and conjugations, Tom was in a state of as blank unimaginativeness concerning the cause and tendency of his sufferings, as if he had been an innocent shrew-mouse imprisoned in the split trunk of an ash-tree in order to cure lameness in cattle. It is doubtless almost incredible to instructed minds of the present day that a boy of twelve, not belonging strictly to "the masses," who are now understood to have the monopoly of mental darkness, should have had no distinct idea how there came to be such a thing as Latin on this earth: yet so it was with Tom. It would have taken a long while to make conceivable to him that there ever existed a people who bought and sold sheep and oxen, and transacted the everyday affairs of life, through the medium of this language, and still longer to make him understand why he should be called upon to learn it, when its connection with those affairs had become entirely latent. So far as Tom had gained any acquaintance with the Romans at Mr. Jacob's academy, his knowledge was strictly correct, but it went no further than the fact that they were "in the New Testament"

and Mr. Stelling was not the man to enfeeble and emasculate his pupil's mind by simplifying and explaining, or to reduce the tonic effect of etymology by mixing it with smattering, extraneous information, such as is given to girls.

Yet, strange to say, under this vigorous treatment Tom became more like a girl than he had ever been in his life before. He had a large share of pride, which had hitherto found itself very comfortable in the world, despising Old Goggles, and reposing in the sense of unquestioned rights; but now this same pride met with nothing but bruises and crushings. Tom was too clear-sighted not to be aware that Mr. Stelling's standard of things was quite different, was certainly something higher in the eyes of the world than that of the people he had been living amongst, and that, brought in contact with it, he, Tom Tulliver, appeared uncouth and stupid: he was by no means indifferent to this, and his pride got into an uneasy condition which quite nullified his boyish self-satisfaction, and gave him something of the girl's susceptibility. He was of a very firm, not to say obstinate disposition, but there was no brute-like rebellion and recklessness in his nature: the human sensibilities predominated, and if it had occurred to him that he could enable himself to show some quickness at his lessons, and so acquire Mr. Stelling's approbation, by standing on one leg for an inconvenient length of time, or rapping his head moderately against the wall, or any voluntary action of that sort, he would certainly have tried it. But no — Tom had never heard that these measures would brighten the understanding, or strengthen the verbal memory; and he was not given to hypothesis and experiment. It did occur to him that he could perhaps get some help by praying for it; but as the prayers he said every evening were forms learned by heart, he rather shrank from the novelty and irregularity of introducing an extempore passage on a topic of petition for which he was not aware of any precedent. But one day, when he had broken down, for the fifth time, in the supines of the third conjugation, and Mr. Stelling, convinced that this must be carelessness, since it transcended the bounds of possible stupidity, had lectured him very seriously, pointing out that if he failed to seize the present golden opportunity of learning supines, he would have to regret it when he became a man—Tom, more miserable than usual, determined to try his sole resource; and that evening, after his usual form of prayer for his parents and "little sister" (he had begun to pray for Maggie when she was a baby), and that he might be able always to keep God's commandments, he added, in the same low whisper, "And please to make me always remember my Latin." He paused a little to consider how he should pray about Euclid—whether he should ask to see what it meant, or whether there was any other mental state which would be more applicable to the case. But at last he added, "And make Mr. Stelling say I shan't do Euclid any more. Amen."

(To be continued.)

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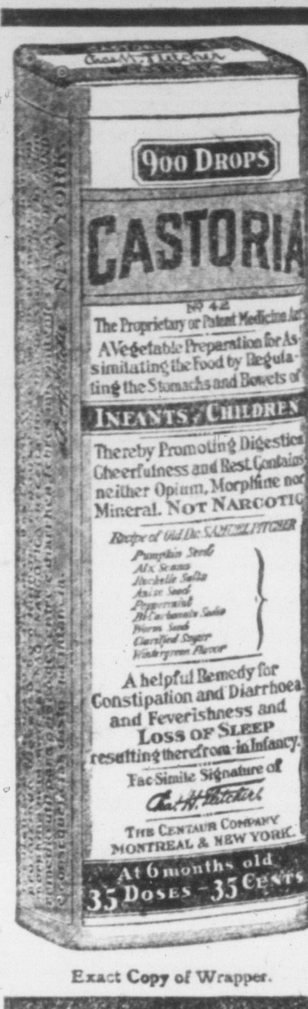

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WOMAN'S WORLD

"ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED"

"I am engaged to Paul Smith," my friend announced some time ago. I don't need to tell you that Paul Smith isn't his real name, but as he doesn't enter very much into this little recital, it will do as well as any other.

The girl of Paul Smith's choice is about twenty-five, and if I had to describe her in one word I would say she had charm. "We shan't be married for some time yet," she continued, "because I am not unselfish enough to make a small start." I was rather surprised, having judged her a girl to whom a simple start would not have mattered. She continued a trifle shamefacedly, "I told Paul I couldn't cook, or sew, and that I didn't like housekeeping—I confessed it all to him." Naturally, I didn't ask her what Paul said to her confession, because it was quite unnecessary. We all know just what he would say. "That is all right, my dear; it's YOU I want; you can learn all these things, there is lots of time," or words to that effect, with a caress thrown in.

The unfortunate part is that she took him entirely at his word, and she is postponing the learning process until they are married, and she has "plenty of time" on her hands. While the learning is going on you can imagine that it will be somewhat of a discipline to a man of rather irritable temper — for such Paul is. He has been accustomed to comfort and good meals all his life, and he didn't know what he was so glibly foregoing. It will be a strain, too, on the learner, so anxious to please, and so ignorant of the method. How much better to learn as she goes along, and before the full responsibility of a home rests upon her. Isn't it quite as much her part to prepare herself as far as possible to keep Paul's home comfortably for him, as it is his part to provide and maintain that home for her?

Paul's fiancee does not represent the majority, but she is certainly not unique. She literally knows nothing at all about cooking, is hardly sure how long you should boil an egg, cannot sew at all, and has no knowledge of housewifely arts. To those of this generation who have been accustomed to think in terms of domestic science, it is rather startling that such helplessness should exist, and all being well it will not exist among our heirs and descendants. It is an old joke to ask Mr. Newlywed how his digestion is, but there is often more than a little truth in the condition implied. It will be a good era for brides-to-be and bridegrooms-to-be when no girl who has passed a certain number of years in school can escape without some training in the important art of cooking. It will be a better day still when domestic science at its broadest and sanest comes into its own, when we learn not only how to prepare food, but how to choose and properly balance the meals we prepare to order; when we range science and greater intelligence and added knowledge on our side, and weave these things into the wonderful fabric of our own home.

Recipes

Vegetable Stew Without Meat.

8 small onions, 8 small carrots or 4 large carrots cut into halves lengthwise, 4 white turnips cut into halves lengthwise, 1 cupful of celery cut into small pieces, 3 potatoes cut into quarters, 1 cupful of canned tomatoes, 1-4 cupful of drippings, 1 quart of water(more if needed), 1 teaspoonful of salt, 1 teaspoonful of paprika, 1 teaspoonful of table sauce, 1 teaspoonful of chopped parsley, 1-8 teaspoonful of pepper.

Wash and prepare the vegetables. Leave the onions whole and cut the other vegetables as described for other stews. Fry them all, except the potatoes, in the fat for half an hour, being careful not to burn them. Add the tomatoes, water and seasonings, except the parsley, and simmer slowly until the vegetables are soft. Add the potatoes, and cook for half an hour. Dumplings may be served, cooked separately.

Rice Cooked the Chinese Way.

Wash one cupful of rice thoroughly and place it in a kettle which can be closely covered. Add one teaspoonful of salt and two cupfuls of cold water, cover, and cook for ten minutes after the water begins to boil. Set the dish where it will have heat enough to cook, but not sufficient to keep the liquid boiling. In twenty minutes the rice will be soft and dry, and each kernel will be quite distinct.

Americanized Chop Suey

1 pound of fresh pork; 2 Onions (thinly sliced); 1 cupful of celery (cut diagonally into slices); ½ cupful of mushrooms (fresh or dried); 3 tablespoonfuls of soybean sauce; 2 cupfuls of water or stock; 1 cupful of rice.

Trim off all fat and cut the lean meat into very thin pieces. Place the fat in an iron frying pan, and when the liquid fat has dried out add the onions, being careful not to brown them. Add the celery, and cook for five minutes; then add the meat and cook another five minutes. To this add the soy-bean sauce and water, cover closely, and cook for twenty-five minutes. It may be necessary to add a little more water, but when ready to serve the meat and vegetables should be moist. Serve with a border of rice.

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For Our Little Ones

UNCLE WIGGILY

IN THE ATTIC

"Well, and how do you feel today, Uncle Wiggily?" asked Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper of the bunny rabbit gentleman one morning.

"Why, to tell you the truth, I don't feel so very strong," he answered, with a twinkle of his pink nose, as he thought of how she had caught him the other day and made him clean the cellar. "I feel so weak," went on the bunny, "that if I had to lift a soap bubble I'd have to wait until it broke in half, and pick up one piece first. I'm very weak today."

"That's good," said Nurse Jane, with a laugh. "I want you to take a rest, and sit around, and I was afraid you'd get out the snow shovel and make believe it was winter and begin to shovel leaves off the sidewalk. Don't worry. I'm not going to ask you to clean a cellar today. All I want you to do is to sit up in the attic and watch some strings of dried apples."

"Watch some strings of dried apples? Why in the world do you want me to do that?" asked the bunny, in surprise.

"So they won't blow away," was Nurse Jane's answer. "You see, we must be saving of things to eat on account of the war, and I have dried some apples so we may have sauce and pies this winter. I cut the apples into slices, strung beads, and then I hung the strings in the attic.

"I opened the windows, so there would be plenty of air to dry the apples, but I thought some of them might blow away. As long as you fell weak it will do you good to sit up in the attic and watch the apples."

"I'll do it!" said the bunny.

On top of his hollow stump bungalow was a cute little attic, and soon Uncle Wiggily was sitting in this, watching the hung-up strings of apples drying. They seemed to be all right, so he began to glance around to see what else he might look at.

Up in the attic were old trunks, old boxes, bits of broken clocks, chairs without arms or legs, until it is a wonder how the poor things got along so crippled. And over in one corner was a spinning wheel that Nurse Jane used to whirl around and spin yarn so she could knit socks for Uncle Wiggily. But that was years ago. Now she bought the yarn already spun.

"Hum, I guess the apples are all right," said Uncle Wiggily, as he watched the strings dangling to and fro, like the pendulum of a clock. "I'll just make believe I'm young again and I'll whirl the spinning wheel around, as Sammie and Susie Littletail, the rabbit children, do when they come up here to play on rainy days."

So, making sure no one saw him, Uncle Wiggily began to make the spinning wheel go around and around as fast as anything. It was just like a merry-go-round, and he was wishing some of the animal children were there to have a ride, when, all of a sudden, in one of the open attic windows came crawling the bad old skillery-scalery alligator with the humps on his tail.

"Oh, so you're up here; are you?" asked the 'gator of Mr. Longears. "I thought you were down cellar."

"Oh, no," answered the bunny. "I was cleaning the cellar yesterday. Now I am watching that the dried apples don't blow away. But what do you want?" he asked, hoping the 'gator would say "Nothing."

"I want you!" cried the bad creature, "and I'm going to get you, too!"

Over toward Uncle Wiggily he flopped, and he almost had caught the bunny uncle by his ears, when, all of a sudden, the alligator's tail caught in the fast whirring spinning wheel.

"Bang! Smash! Crack! Checker boards and tiddle-winks!" went the 'gator's tail, as he was caught in the spinning wheel the bunny had spun so fast. Then, as the wheel kept on going, and as the tail became twisted tighter and tighter, all of a sudden out of the window flew Mr. Alligator, humps on his tail and all, and he fell to the ground in a peppersault and sommersault, and didn't get Mr. Longears at all. Aren't you glad?

So this shows us that you should never throw away an old spinning wheel. Put it in the attic. And if the baked beans don't try to jump out of the can to go and play hopscotch with the grated cocoanut, I'll tell you other stories about Uncle Wiggily and his adventures.

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