

In Pastures Green

"In a wicker-covered carboy in the cellar entrance."

Once more the lids banged and Mr. Summersox splashed the contents of the carboy lavishly over the paper, kindling wood, and coal. Then he struck a match and applied it to the soaked paper. It spluttered once and went out. He lit another match. Same fate. As the last vestiges of his self-control were slipping away he lit a third match. He waited until it was burning brightly and then plunged it into the midst of the paper and kindling. It went out quicker than the others. Then Mr. Summersox lifted up his voice and tore a passion into tatters.

"Confound the greedy, griping, soulless Standard Oil Company anyway. If I didn't want it to light that confounded oil would explode at the sight of the cook's red hair, and here I can't light it with a forced draught. The whole cursed corporation ought to be rooted out and drowned in its own incom-bustible product. What is the flash point of this condemned coal oil anyway?" Not being a swearing man, Mr. Summersox was greatly handicapped in dealing with so universal a sinner as the Standard Oil. Just as he was going to start on a second outburst his wife called softly:

"Eben, dear. Are you sure you didn't take the carboy of vinegar? It stands beside the coal oil."

"Vinegar, woman? Did you say vinegar?" He sniffed at the fluid, and then his whiskers began to bristle with rage.

"What in blazes do you think I am trying to do? To make a salad? If I didn't have more sense than to put the vinegar beside the coal oil I'd go and run a junk shop, instead of pretending to be a housekeeper."

Mrs. Summersox was altogether too happy to resent the attack. The cosy bed shook with her silent laughter. Meanwhile her husband put fresh paper under the kindling and poured on so much oil to neutralise the vinegar that when he touched a match to it it started with a blaze that singed off his eyebrows. Banging the door shut he started for the parlour