

## THE MARVELLOUS RUG.

John and I moved into our new home a few days before Christmas, and Christmas eve found us very happy in our little house. It was so different a matter to purchase the small garden adjoining the old Stuyvesant mansion that we considered its attainment in the light of a triumph. The bit of ground was very small, but upon it John built our house—the tinnest box that was ever inhabited by two people.

"We must not be impertinent to our betters," said my brother, "and flaunt out in modern gew-gaws to shame our aristocratic neighbors."

And so he selected a style of architecture in keeping with the old colonial mansion. This made our adjoining house look precisely like an office attached to the massive structure.

"Who knows, Nelly," said John, "we may own the grand house some day? Stranger things have happened; and this will be my office then, sure enough."

I am very proud of my brother. He graduated in the first ten in the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and entered Bellevue second in the list of competitors. He gets a splendid practice already. He is ready with this little home as soon as I finished at Miss Porter's—at least he had bought the lot and commenced building. I was glad to live near the old gray mansion, although I did not know my neighbors. One need not fear, I thought, to lift that knocker. No contemptuous dunkey could possibly stand behind those broad doors, no cold hearts beat under those low ceilings. I expected to be very happy in my home, for my brother has been the best of guardians to me. He is handsome too.

"I have been unfair to you, Nelly," he said one day, "I have taken all the size and strength of the family and left none for my little sister."

"And all the beauty and talent too," I thought.

But John never makes one feel insignificant, like some great fellows. With him one always grows stronger and cleverer and more ambitious.

We were so happy on this Christmas eve, and in such high good humor with all our belongings that we would not acknowledge our house to be too small.

"It is rather like a ladder I am afraid," said John; "but it is a Jacob's ladder, on which angels will ascend and descend. Mark you, I sleep on the first floor. This remark applies only to you and your friends, Nelly. I am afraid you will have to select them with reference to their slimmness. No room here for good things about our house," he added—"there will never be any ghosts in it. No living over dark deeds in our domain. When the title was searched it appeared there was never a building of any kind on the ground before. Nothing ever grew there but old Mr. Stuyvesant's Dutch tulips."

"How about wigwags?" I suggested.

"Nor wigwags. When the foundations were dug not a bit of a tomahawk or arrow-head was turned up; nothing but old roots. A great tree grew here in the Indians' time, and dear little papooses swung on its branches. We will have to make our own history for ourselves."

I was too tired that Christmas eve to speculate about history or anything else. But how sweet and fresh and dainty it all was! My pretty maids in their white caps, my glistening floors and artistic rugs; the rose-colored sash-curtains with a fleur-de-lis pattern, the delicate bits of china—surely there was never a daintier spot to be happy in.

As John left me after luncheon he exclaimed, "O Nelly, you will have to buy your own Christmas present! I have not had a moment—nonsense, this is not a present! Who ever heard of furniture etcetera, given as a Christmas gift? Do run across to Union square and get a little jewel or something you fancy. Bring it home, give it to me, and hang your stocking outside your door."

I was very busy that afternoon and it was late, nearly half-past five o'clock, before I set forth on my errand. I had barely time to reach Tiffany's before dark. The streets and shops were thronged. We all remember how warm it was on Christmas eve, and almost suffocated in the crowded store, and saw at once it would be useless to think of reaching a vacant place at the counters where the smaller wares are displayed. When John asks me to do anything I like to be a strict constructionist, so I resolved I would buy some trifle in one of the smaller shops nearer home. But when I turned to retrace my steps I found a thick, warm fog filling the atmosphere, and the streets unpleasantly moist and slippery. I could not see the houses half a block off. I had a short distance to go, but it had grown so dark I felt a little nervous at being alone. I was hurrying along when a voice very near me said, "It is for you, lady! I sell cheap! I make bargain. It is for you." Close to my face I saw the gleaming eyes and thin cadaverous countenance of a foreigner. From his black fez and long tight coat I supposed him to be a Turkish peddler—the same in fact that I had seen at Narragansett last summer. The face was rather pathetic, not sinister, but I did not like to be followed in the street, and with a decided "No" I hurried on. "But lady it is for you," he protested. Glancing at him again I perceived he held under his arm a tightly rolled rug, and it was this he wished me to purchase. I was glad to lose him the crowd; and presently I discerned through the mist, looming up like an old gray Santa Claus with a Christmas box under his arm, the old Stuyvesant mansion with my own little home tucked snugly at its side. I fairly hugged myself with joy to think it was mine! When I reached the door John approached it from the opposite direction.

"Ah, good little sister!" he exclaimed, "so you have brought my present! I see you may dispense with the stocking."

"Why no, John," I began, when I perceived he was looking beyond me. Sure enough I had been followed by the Turk, who now pressed forward and with tremulous earnestness entreated John to buy his rug. "It is royal Daghestan! It is for the lady. Twenty dollar! Fifteen!"

"Fifteen dollars! poor fellow," said John, "he must be in distress. Come in, we will look at it," and opening the door with his night key, he followed him into the hall. The merchant, looking very worn and ill, began to fumble at the strings which tied the parcel, when John said kindly, "Never mind. Do you know Nelly, we will buy it without looking at it? It will be more ex-

pecting. It will be like a lottery." Hastily counting twenty dollars into the hands of the bowing Turk he gently put him from the door, and calling Nolah bade her take his purchase to Miss Nelly's room. "You are not to run upstairs to look at it," he said to me. "That would not be proper and Christmasy. You look as pale as a little dark sister can. And I am famished. Come right in and give your good brother a plate of soup."

That was our first dinner in our own house. And how lovely it was to sit opposite my dear brother at our own round table. John had produced a stout black bottle from the side pocket of his overcoat.

"This, Nelly," said he—"this is the genuine Westmoreland punch from the club in Richmond. Lee Nelson sent it to me by a thimbleful in her glass, Nolah. It is too ardent for little girls—now! To old Virginia. May she never tire of such punch."

John had proposed to make me an additional present of his company that evening, and take me to the theatre, but I was too tired to go. So we read aloud to each other, Dickens' "Christmas Carols" and Milton's "Hymn on the Nativity." A big bunch of mistletoe and some Christmas roses, ordered by him, arrived late. He hung the former in the doorway, kissed me under it and sent me to bed.

When I entered my room I found Nolah had put a lump of candle coal in my grate, which was sending a thin flame upward. I was glad of this, for I never like to sleep in utter darkness. The new rug was spread before the fire. Such a beauty! The ground work was light blue, clear and soft as the sky. On this the most delicate Turkish characters were traced. Turning up my gas, I perceived it to be a rare old rug with a sheen of velvet, and the curious light only found in the best antique carpets. There was a dark spot however in the centre. This I remembered it was just here that the Moham-metan worshipper must for generations have been considered by connoisseurs to enhance its value. I called my brother and we admired it together. "I must find that poor fellow," said he, "this is a super rug—worth more than a hundred dollars. It will never do to cheat him this way because he was in extremity. What a marvellous blue! It becomes you spirituelle and aristocratic style, Nelly, but it makes everything else in the room look disgustingly new and shoddy."

I could not fall asleep at once that night. I thought of many things—of long ago Christmas times when our parents were living, of my great treasure in my brother and schemes for my future. I must speak to Nolah about her naps; she must not fold them in fancy shapes; and Agnes would need better butter paddles. Her balls looked rough and sticky. There had been no alcohol provided for the coffee urn in the morning. I thought I had best make memoranda of these things as I thought of them, so I rose, found my pen and pencil, and by the light of a candle on the table beside my bed began to jot down various items for my use on the morrow. I mentioned these things in this painstaking way to prove I was not asleep, nor dreaming with my eyes open, nor indulging in romantic fancies.

The clock in the room below was striking twelve when I saw my door open a little way very gently. I suppose the new bolt had not caught when the door was closed, and I was adding to my memoranda "a hand lock oiled" when the fingers of a small hand appeared, clasping the door as if the intruder hesitated on the threshold.

Presently the door was pushed quickly open, shut again (I heard the bolt click), and the figure of a young girl stood within. She was clad in oriental garments. Her head was covered with a white cloth, which she dropped upon entering, disclosing a delicate, dark and very beautiful face. Her hair was parted in a thin, long, black braid, gold cord and tassels tying it at the end. A hand of gold sequins bound her brow. Similar bands and chains fell over her bosom and encircled her arms and slender ankles. Her robe was of striped silk—white and yellow, and bound about her waist with a fringed sash of blue and crimson, and she wore a little black velvet jacket embroidered all over in gold. She stood quietly at the door, looking around the room, and once her dark, lustrous eyes gazed earnestly at me. I was not frightened. I observed every detail of dress and gesture. I was always one is intensely surprised one cannot speak for awhile. After a few minutes, more or less, she moved forward and stood motionless in the centre of the rug. Another pause and then she knelt, threw her head backward and clasped her hands in an attitude of supplication. I distinctly saw her expression of agony and fear as she gazed upward. Instantly a bright scimitar, held by an invisible hand, circled above her, descended, and I severed her head from her body!

Shriek after shriek brought my household to my bedside. Almost fainting with terror, and with my hands pressed over my eyes, I could not explain for a moment. "Oh, John," I gasped; "the girl!"

"Where?"

"There, there on the carpet."

I felt my brother's hand on my brow, and his voice sounded far away as he said quietly, "Miss Nellie has been dreaming, girls. She is overdone. And Nolah, bring me a quilt and a pillow. I will lie on the sofa awhile after I give her a powder."

My brother raised me to give me the soothing powder, and with my amazement everything was just as I had left it upon going to bed—the blue rug, little rocking-chair, dim light from the coal fire. I was overwhelmed, but I told John the whole story. He did not rally me or ridicule me. He looked with interest at the dark spot, bade me say no more, that he would not leave me alone and I must try to sleep.

The next morning when I opened my eyes I found my brother dressed and standing beside me. "I have let you sleep, little girl," he said, "and after all my visits over I am going with you to dine at Delmonico's. I'll run in in time to go with you to church. And—Nellie, don't mention your dream to anyone."

"But John, it was no dream! I was wide awake and writing. Look, here are the notes I was taking."

"Ah, well, the girls think it was a dream. It will be better to let it pass as such with them. We will not tell it! People might say that we had taken too much Westmoreland punch!"

I came very near being indignant with my

brother. I resolved to say no more. The rug I perceived had been removed, but I was too proud to ask questions. My brother brought me a pretty violet pin with a diamond centre, and what is more, he sent me to Tuxedo to spend Christmas week with my mother's old friend, Mrs. Morris. When I returned on New Year's eve he had put all my belongings in the front room, and my own room was entirely empty.

"Front rooms are best," he explained; "the street noises prevent your feeling lonely."

I had prepared a basket of New Year's gifts for all the patients in John's hospital, and wishing to make each one as personal as I could, I asked for a list of the names of the sick people. John hesitated.

"All of them are very few just now," he said, "pretty books and flowers except one, who is in the last stages of consumption and would hardly notice your gift."

"Please let me give it," I entreated; "I will keep the lilies for her. Let her feel that some one cares for her—some other woman."

John looked puzzled.

"All right, little woman," he said; "have your own way. I'll take your basket for you."

It was New Year's eve and quite late in the evening—warm and foggy again as it was on that Christmas eve. We walked together to the hospital and John introduced me to his patients—some of them boys and young girls—and waited while I talked a few minutes with each one and presented my pretty presents.

"Now for the poor dying woman," I said. John hesitated. "All right," he said, "it is kindest." He led the way to one of the sitting rooms. A hospital nurse was seated beside a cot, but she rose upon our entrance and left the room. Approaching for I knew I was in the presence of death, I started with surprise at the figure before me.

There lay the restless form, emaciated face and fast-fading eyes of my Turkish peddler. Across his knees lay the haunted rug, one edge of which he held fast in one of his thin hands. In the other he clasped a long, thin braid of dark hair, tied with a tarnished gilt cord and tassel.

"Poor fellow," said John; "so far away from his home." I was dreadfully shocked; but I laid my hand gently on his, and placed my purse in his bosom. He gazed at me earnestly, murmured "Zuleika!" and gasped and expired.

My brother knows he can always expect me to be sensible. I never wish him to keep painful things from me. Why should he bear everything and have no one to speak to.

Sitting beside the fire that night we talked the matter over. "It is a most strange occurrence," he admitted; "I found this Christmas morning. He was desperately ill. I took him with me to the hospital, and soon saw all was over. I gave him back his rug, and he has bequeathed it to me. It is almost priceless in value. It was the dower of his bride. She was found upon it dead, the night of her marriage."

"Perhaps he killed her," I said, "what do you think?"

"I know he did," replied my brother. He told the story in his delirium. Fortunately no one understood him except myself. I picked up a little of the language when I was in Constantinople. He thought she had been unfaithful. He has wandered all over the world, poor and penitent."

"The miscreant!" I exclaimed, "I am sorry I touched him."

"Gently, little sister," said John. "Remember that 'who with repentance is not satisfied, is not of heaven nor earth.'"

John sat silent a few minutes and then rose with a sigh and stood before the fire. "Did you notice the long tress of hair?" he inquired.

"Severed by his scimitar?" I ventured to ask.

"Precisely. I had it buried with him. He left no papers—and as to his rug, I shall have it cleaned, fumigated, exercised sprinkled with holy water and sold. The Turkish minister will tell me of some good charity for girls in his country, and there the money must go! I don't want it!"

"Dear John, do you suppose—" I began.

"Yes, I do suppose," said he, taking me by my shoulders and giving me a little shake. "I do suppose that there are many dreams in our philosophy, and I suppose we had just as well understand about matters we can never understand. Zuleika and Mahmoud are now upon equal footing and can settle their own affairs, and I have had enough of them and am glad to be rid of them.—S. A. P. in Home Journal."

The outbreak of Asiatic cholera at Baku, on the shores of the Caspian, cannot fail to create a widespread feeling of alarm throughout Europe. For on the occasion of its former invasions of that continent the dread disease has invariably obtained admission by way of Baku. A quarantine of the most stringent nature has been maintained there for several months past. But apparently the precaution has been of no avail. The danger of when it is borne in mind that at least two-thirds of the petroleum used in Europe is shipped from Baku. Should the apprehensions that prevail on the subject become realized, it would prove the death-blow of the popular theory, according to which mineral oil in its crude state is the most powerful disinfectant destroyer of cholera germs.

The vehemence with which the Twin cities, Minneapolis and St. Paul, have kept up the strife over the question, "Who is bigger?" and the fear that according to present prospects the war would be long and injurious, have led the authorities to order a recount. Speaking of this new enumeration the Chicago Times is led to remark: "There is to be an official recount of the population of Minneapolis and St. Paul, and it is now probable that the names on the gravestones will be omitted and that the ghosts of dead men, who opportunely wandered around in that region, are not residents, as was claimed by the first figures. Leaving these out, and figuring on the decrease in population in Minneapolis since the original count was made caused by the flight of crooked enumerators, the big claims of Flour city men will have to be amended."

## AGRICULTURAL.

### The Over Fatted Beast.

As the season of fairs is not far off, and that of fat stock shows will not be long thereafter, it is well to consider the effect of feeding for show upon such animals as are to be sold to the butchers for immediate use as food, or otherwise retained upon the premises as breeders.

A thin beast is of course unfit for show, and it is equally true that the flesh of a beast in a state of poverty is unfit for human food. But it is equally true that except to the eye of the novice the excessively fatted beast is, to a degree, a monstrosity. No infant in a baby show, nor any man or woman on a street or elsewhere, receives compliments on great fatness.

It is a perverted taste that brings encomiums upon the excessively fat beast in the show ring; for the beast is drifting from its natural state of usefulness, whether this be in the breeding yard or upon the butcher's hooks.

The two extremes, scant flesh and great obesity, should be ruled out of all exhibitions where usefulness is the end sought.

Rules governing fairs should so far make it a misdemeanor to greatly overfeed as to entirely change the drift of public sentiment on this subject. There is no diversity of opinion as to the end sought being usefulness and profit to the grower; yet, such extremes are tolerated and even encouraged, that the points of usefulness and profit are overlapped, the real ends sought being thwarted.

A loaf of bread so puffed up by chemicals as to unfit it for use upon the table would certainly be ruled out by the proper committee. Yet from year to year awards are made upon breeding cows and upon heifers intended for breeding that have had their usefulness utterly taken from them by such long continued and excessive feeding that every generation of tissue is crammed till densely so. Impregnation becomes difficult, and not in a few instances impossible, simply because the ovaries and fallopian tubes are hemmed in by pressure, and prevented from acting in the way intended by nature.

Regarding the fatted steer, made so for show purposes, it is well known to many that the carcasses of some of these have been bought by hotel keepers, and that the long continued excessive fat state had so dwarfed the muscular tissues and so filled these with grease as to have changed the flavor, rendering the meat entirely unlike a properly fed and fatted beast; this being carried to such a degree that the meat was rejected by guests.

The rich juices that belong to meat properly fitted for use as food are in over-fatted meat driven out, mere fat being substituted. The term "ripeness" when applied to an overfatted beast, is a perversion of the term. The meat is over ripe, and like an over ripe peach—has, at one period during the feeding process, been just right for the butcher's knife. It has seen a condition which, if a vein had been opened and the hide taken off at that time, the palate of an epicure would have asked for nothing better. But, as with the peach, the grape and the nectarine, when held too long, the flavor that invites gives place to that which repels.

No committee on fruit awards premiums upon specimens that have passed the state and condition of highest flavor and usefulness. Fruit that has passed its best state has a condition akin to degeneration of the muscular state of obesity. The muscles of the body are so pressed upon, so restricted in motion, and so excessively charged with fat, that while fatty degeneration may not fully occur, there is so near an approach to this that the natural flavor of the meat is so nearly destroyed that it is far from satisfactory when served upon the plate.

As fully outlined in these columns a year ago, the state of perfection is reached in meat when animals are so bred that there is within the muscles' cell tissue into which fat may be deposited, resulting in that state known as "marbling." When this marbling occurs early in the fattening process, we are quite certain to have well flavored, juicy meat as the result. But, as stated, when the fattening process is pushed beyond a reasonable limit and long continued, a degree of degeneration of the lean tissues will occur; and thereupon all inviting flavor is parted with, and we have not by any means the taste of meat under a state of decay, but it has a greasy, ill-flavored taste. The meat may reasonably be suspected of having approached too nearly to a state of degeneration of tissue.—G. S., in Chicago Prairie Farmer.

Why Thunder-Storms Affect Milk.

During electrical disturbances it seems that cream and milk are put into a condition to sour easily. The probable cause of this the editor of the Cultivator (Albany) explains as follows: The effect of an electrical discharge is to decompose a portion of the atmosphere, by which ozone is produced. This substance has peculiar properties from its intense activity as an oxide of oxygen, and its action believed to be, and may be, fresh wine during what are known as thunder-storms. The ozone is diffused through the air, and is believed to be the cause of the strong acid odor which prevails after the storm is passed. No doubt if the milk is submerged in water, and access of air is prevented, no result of the kind need be apprehended; and as the more milk is exposed to the air the more it will be affected by the ozone, the milk in open shallow pans will be acidified more readily than that in deep pails, although these may be open. In our experience, however, the writer adds, we have never had any milk affected in this way, either in shallow pans or deep pails, and are of opinion that the heat of the air preceding thunder-storms is more directly the agent in the souring of the milk than the ozone that may exist in the air after the storm is passed. Carefulness to maintain a proper temperature, by closing dairy houses and cellars against the outer atmosphere, will be a means of safety.

For designating him as a rag-seller instead of a dealer in bric-a-brac one Roy has entered suit against the publishers of the Quebec Directory for \$2,500 damages. Verily this is an age of fine distinctions.

solved in warm water, of which a few drops only are required for each gallon of cream. But good taste and common sense (both of these are collateral) forbid the use of any coloring whatever; the natural "gilt edge" of the chlorophyll of the fresh grass clover, or of the corn or other soiling fodder, is alone sufficient to give the delicate primrose yellow of the best butter. And such fodder by foresighted plans laid for the season before the work begins.

### The Power and Price of Skill.

BY PROF. JAS. ROBERTSON.

Following is a brief report of an address delivered at the dairymen's convention in Stratford, by Prof. Jas. W. Robertson, Dominion Dairy Inspector:—

And then a man's skill should penetrate all his work, right from the beginning to the end. A man should never try to sell what is barren of skill, but in all his efforts should try to apply skill, skill, skill, and whether he works in a field or a factory, or only thing he can sell honestly at a profit is his skill, and therefore a cheesemaker should sell his skill, and make himself rich by selling what God gave him a chance to have lots of—skill, talent. [Applause.] When a man sells anything of a farm or a factory, he sells something of a three-fold character: Some material, some labor and some skill. There is this difference: when a man has material and sells that there is nothing left where the material was. When a man has a ton of plant food in his soil and sells that there is nothing left of that ton. When a man expends a great deal of strength and sells labor, he has nothing but exhaustion and what there was before.

But when he sells skill, the more he sells the more there is left to follow, and it is like the widow's cruse of oil and the meal—the more there is taken out the more there is left to take. If the man who keeps 14 cows gets \$200 will, instead of these 14 cows, he will just have to keep five cows and get the same pay as the man who keeps the 14. If you take the cost of the farm or the cost of the feed and the interest on capital invested, the balance is left for labor and skill. The man who keeps five cows instead of 14 and gets \$200 gets big pay for skill. When a man sells pork he does the same thing.

When a man sells hogs whose main occupation has been to squeal he does not sell any skill that way. [Laughter.] There are long-tongued hogs that live for a year and a half on a man, and then are not willing to die at a profit for his benefit. [Renewed laughter.] A man cannot sell skill in such a package as that, but is trying to sell squeal, and it is not marketable either through a hog or any other channel that the world knows of to-day. And let me say further, when a cheesemaker brags about his own great ability to make fine cheese, and when a buyer comes around and finds the ability turned out, he is trying to sell squeal to the buyer, but he cannot succeed in that effort.

If I were occupied in the dignified calling of the law I would consider that my occupation was to sell skill, and if I tried to sell squeal my client would think I was worth \$100 less than nothing per hour. [Renewed laughter.] So, whether we work in a cheese factory or on a farm, if we use skill we will find a good market always. When a man sells a horse for a high price, what does he sell? What do you think he sells? Great hay? Not a bit of it, but when he has fortified his skill to raise a good horse he will get a good price for it, and for his skill which it embodies. A man says, "I am going to be a well-known man in years to come. I am going to get some large blocks of marble, and I am going to chip off enough marble to make these blocks smaller and different in size and shape; then, when I have made these blocks into shapes about the dimensions of a man, I will sell statutory and get my name perpetuated through the ages as a famous sculptor." And he sells strength, and out of his marble block he makes a marble stump, and cannot sell the marble stump except as material for road-making. Another man says he will sell skill.

From a marble block he makes a statue that looks back at him almost as though it had life. That man has materialized his skill, and he can sell that skill for anything he asks, and that skill is more skillful than when he began. The man who applies skill to his work in any honorable honest line of endeavor becomes a more skillful man, and the cheesemaker who earnestly strives to sell skill glorifies work that erstwhile he thought to be drudgery. He is verily doing part of God's work in reasserting his right to have dominion in the world over the products which he handles for the service of men; to do that well he requires skill.

How to Pack Butter.

Dairymen or farmers who are packing away butter for future sale in the hope of getting better prices by and should remember that only good butter, well packed and stored in a dry cool place on benches elevated at least eighteen inches from the ground, will keep in good condition. The butter must be freed from every taint of the buttermilk; cooled before it is packed; salted evenly and thoroughly, so that the brine is mixed all through the mass and is not in excessive quantity; the packages must be new and wholly free from taint, and must be solidly filled; each packing covered with brine until the next layer is put in and then sprinkled lightly with dry salt; and when filled a cover of clean muslin dipped in brine should be laid on the fastened down. Good butter well packed in this way is safe to hold for higher prices, while "fresh creamery," especially that which is made from sweet cream, must be sold at once, regardless of low prices caused by a temporary oversupply. Where ice or other methods of cooling, such as a clean special subcellar, are available for storing butter there need be no hurry to sell on a falling market. An excellent subcellar for storage is one 12 or 14 feet deep, made in dry soil, and walled up with brick; (but it does not matter if there is a well in the bottom) if the water is pumped and kept fresh.) A tight floor is made over the top and a shed is built over it. The bricks are white-washed and a glazed window is put in the floor. Shelves are ranged around the wall for supports, and the butter packages rest on these. The well may be protected by a curb 3 feet high around it.

The use of carrot juice for butter coloring is wholly inadvisable. The albumen in the juice quickly decomposes and spoils the butter. If coloring is used in spite of all objections, let it be the clear annatto, dis-