

UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES:—

At length we may safely say "the ice bonds of winter are broken;" the only vestige that remains is here and there a tiny bit of snow and ice, hiding in out-of-the-way fence corners. Ere this letter reaches you, you will have gathered the little hepaticas that so bravely creep out as soon as the snow is gone, and when it is time to write you again, the woods, with their freshly budding trees and carpets of mayflowers, will be indeed marvels of beauty. How invigorating the air now feels! A walk on one of these bright April mornings seems to give one a new lease of life—that is, a walk in the country. Here in the city it is already almost as dry and dusty as in summer, yet never a pale sweet flower lifts its tiny face, never a lay from a wild song bird have we, to remind us that spring, the beautiful, is really here.

Long ago on the farm, we used to be very busy sugar-making at this time of the year, and a jovial time we had. I presume there are few country children who do not know all about it, perhaps better than I could tell them. And at school, about this time, too, we used to construct rafts (from the logs and pieces of boards that the spring flood washed away), and have a fine time sailing. Boys and girls joined indiscriminately in this sport, and the boys got me also very impartially distributed. I, for one, got my own share, but in those days I did not mind it. Now, however, I fear such a wetting would give me an attack of rheumatism.

Let poets call April fickle if they will. Her smiles and tears may come at rather unexpected moments, but when we remember the promises she holds forth, we can forgive her everything else. "Promises, indeed!" I fancy some of my girls are contemptuously saying, "it is easy to see that Uncle Tom does not know what house-cleaning means, or he would not value April's promises so highly." But really, my dear girls, even a boy may be very useful at such a time, at least so my mother and sisters evidently thought, for they generally contrived to keep me occupied while that all-important performance was in progress.

One occupation that should be of equal interest to my nephews and nieces is gardening. Suppose you make a bargain, and the boys attend to the vegetable garden and leave the flower garden to their sisters. Even those who have not an elaborately designed lawn and garden may have an abundant supply of sweet flowers all summer by cultivating a small plot of sweet peas, pansies, mignonette and phlox. These I mention particularly, because they are so easy to raise, bloom so long, and are all general favorites. I assure you if you were cooped up in a large city for a few years, you would better appreciate the blessings of country life. In the city there are, of course, some very fine gardens, but those belong to the fortunate few, while the poorer and even the middle classes enjoy no such luxuries. Indeed it is almost pitiful to see the efforts of some of these to induce a few spindling plants to drag out an existence in the narrow back yards into which, not unfrequently, it is impossible to coax a ray of sunshine. The dime novels rarely show this side of city life, but it is nevertheless too true.

I am very sorry to see our list of solvers remaining so small, although I have tried to offer greater inducements by giving prizes every three months instead of only once a year. Now I hope to hear from all our old and a great number of new friends during April, May and June. I have so little space to devote to the puzzles that I am often forced to reject some very good ones. But if your first effort is not successful do not stop short, but try again. One of our contributors offers a special prize of a cloth-bound book to the boy or girl under eighteen years of age sending the best list of answers to puzzles during these three months; the winners of the regular prizes for that time to be excluded.

I have received complaints from solvers that their names do not appear sometimes when they have sent correct answers. This is due to the fact that many of their letters do not reach me until after the list has gone to press, but they receive credit for them just the same. I regret that I am unable to give a prize to each, but I strive to distribute those I have as impartially as possible.

UNCLE TOM.

Useful Table.

The following table will be useful to those readers who may at any time deal in the articles enumerated. Every farmer should paste this in his scrap book.

Firkin of Butter weighs	56 lbs.
Barrel of Flour	196
Pork	200
Potatoes	200
Fish	56
Onions	112
Beef	296
Gallon of Honey	12
Chest Tea	68
Cord of dry Maple	2862
Hickory	1369
Busht of Charcoal	30
Quintal of Fish	100

The World's Fair Cook Book.

We would draw our readers' attention to the very best cook book that the combined skill and ingenuity of 200 of America's foremost women could devise. It contains two thousand choice recipes, and almost every recipe is over the autograph signature of a lady manager or the wife of a governor, and representing the different States, and contains as well about 100 photogravure portraits of the lady managers and other choice contributors.

The book contains over 600 large octavo pages handsomely printed and bound in white oilcloth. In it are included almost every conceivable dish for the table, besides useful hints upon various things such as Setting the Table, Table Etiquette, Party Suppers, How to Carve, etc., etc.

The price of this book is \$2.50, but we present a copy free for three new subscribers to the Farmer's Advocate at \$1.00 each.

This excellent cook book can only be obtained in Canada from us, as we have bought the sole right of the sale of it.

The International Office and Family Atlas of the World.

1. This work contains maps of all foreign countries and divisions of the world.

2. Elegantly engraved maps of all the States and Territories.

3. Many miscellaneous maps and charts of an interesting character.

4. Voluminous reference tables of History, Finance, Politics, Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Manufacturing, and general information.

A fine, large, cloth-bound volume replete with valuable information and a book that will be constantly referred to in any intelligent household.

Price, \$4.50. This fine Atlas will be sent Free, furnished postage paid to any one sending us in the names of four new paid subscribers.

Do You Know

That eggs covered when frying will cook much more even?

That if you heat your knife you can cut hot bread as smoothly as cold?

That camphor menthol is an excellent inhalant if one is suffering from catarrh?

That a little flour dredged over the top of a cake will keep the icing from running?

That the white of an egg, with a little sugar and water, is good for a child with an irritable stomach?

That clear, black coffee, diluted with water and containing a little ammonia, will cleanse and restore black clothes?

That a large slice of raw potato in the fat when frying doughnuts will prevent the black specks from appearing on their surface?

The Yankee stops a panic or restores confidence by going like a rifle ball straight at the mark. "Where was Starvation Camp located?" said a Hartford man through his nose to the great explorer, Stanley. "On the banks of the Congo," answered the traveler. "Waal, then," said the Yankee, "why didn't you fish?"

An old mule cart used to haul up the currency from the Printing Bureau to the door of the Treasury Department. Every morning, as regularly as the morning came, that old mule would back up and dump a cartload of the sinews of war at the Treasury. A patriotic son of Columbia, who lived opposite, was sitting on the doorstep of his house one morning, looking mournfully in the direction of the mule. A friend came along, and, seeing that the man did not look as pleasant as usual, said to him, "What is the matter? It seems to me you look kind o' disconsolate this morning." "I was just thinking," he replied, "what would become of this government if that old mule was to break down."

Puzzles.

PRIZE PUZZLE.

1—CHARADE.

It's round and square, it's short and long, of many shapes and sizes.
In it, you'll sit to hear a song, it guards the richest prizes;
It makes your garden trim and neat, no house can be without it.
On railway journeys you'll it meet, and porters never scout it;
I gave it to a man one day, he thanked me fair and roundly.
Then gave it to a friend in play, who forthwith thrashed him soundly;
It screens the soldier in a storm, it holds the soldier's kit,
Behind four horses, when 'tis warm, I like on it to sit.

ELIZA STEVENSON.

2—CONUNDRUMS.

Why is the ADVOCATE like (1) Ottawa City; (2) an educated person; (3) a perpendicular line; (4) Christmas?

ADA ARMAND.

3—CHARADE.

A bell was hung in the market place,
It was made by men excelled ONE TWO galore,
And it caused much joy for the populace,
For of SIX they had often wished it to FOUR.

The Mayor of the town and the Counsellors all,
Turned out in the front of the crowd so great;
THREE was there, and went to the Town Hall,
Where speeches followed at a great rate.

And FIVE cannot conceive what loyalty was shown,
As the bell tinkled out its shrill TOTAL song;
And many a good citizen expressed the wish,
That it would fill its post both well and long.

THOS. W. BANKS.

4—SQUARE WORD.

If on the sea you ever sail,
And leave the dear old land,
You'll find you are surrounded by
My FIRST on every hand.

My SECOND, "apart from others,"
Looks rather glum and dull,
And, like me too, it is "single,"
But that's not wonderful.

My THIRD in every house is found,
Abanging on the wall,
It may be in the kitchen, but
It's seldom in the hall.

The soldiers, in yon fort upon
The rocky dizzy height,
Are watching, calm and steadily
My FOURTH both day and night.

The poor and needy of our land,
In numbers growing vast
"Depend on" others for support,
And now this is my LAST.

GEO. W. BLYTH.

Answers to March 1st Puzzles.

- 1—A person's eyes.
- 2—Sup-er-a-bun-dance.
- 3—There-in.
- 4—F R A M E
R A V E N
A V E R T
M E R L E
E N T E R
- 5—Prize puzzle.

Names of Those Who Have Sent Correct Answers to March 1st Puzzles.

A. R. Borrowman, Henry Reeve, Geo. W. Blyth, Addison Snider, Lena Richardson, Jacob Mueller, Joshua Umbach.

Domestic Arts.

IOTA.

In the earlier ages, it was not inconsistent with dignity to act in what would now be accounted the meanest of menial employments. Among the ancient Egyptians, the women were occupied abroad in trade, merchandise and agriculture; and descending to periods less remote, we find that in Lesser Asia, where it would seem that women were far from being so much neglected as in many other parts of the world, even those of the first quality were not ashamed to perform the office of a washer-woman; and a similar practice afterwards prevailed in Greece.

In the heroic ages, the Grecian wives and daughters, of whatever quality, were not brought up to idleness. Penelope, queen of the famous Ulysses, is so frequently introduced by Homer at her loom, that almost every one has heard the story of Penelope's web. The famous Helen, while confined by the besiegers of Troy, employed herself on embroidery, which represented most of the battles fought between the Greeks and the Trojans; and Andromache, when she heard of the death of Hector, embroidered a representation of that tragic scene, and adorned it with flowers.

But such employments and works were not the sole occupation of the women. The same Andromache, who with her needle painted the fall of the hero of her country, was not ashamed to feed and take care of the horses of that hero, when living.

Besides the arts of weaving and embroidery, which were not unknown to the women in the patriarchal ages, the Grecian fair ones employed themselves in spinning which they performed standing—and in every other branch of the manufacture of cloth, a custom which continued during the most polished periods of Grecian history.

Alexander the Great, and many other heroes and statesmen, wore garments spun and woven by their wives and sisters. During the chivalrous ages in Europe, various kinds of needlework formed a material part of female employment; and many women of the first rank were themselves taught, and instructed their daughters in the art of flower-ing and embroidery, which they practiced to such an extent that much of the furniture of their houses was decorated in this manner with their own hands.