

Farmer Joy's "Arrantin'."

The jolliest farmer was Ephraim Joy,
Gray-headed and bent, with the heart of a boy.
He whistled all day as he plowed or mowed;
He hailed each neighbor upon the road;
He petted his cattle and called every one
By some comical name—for the sake of the fun.
He sang at his milking, and pitching his hay:
He always was sunny whatever the day.

He carried his cream to the neighboring town;
Three days in the week he rode up and down.
Still singing or whistling or resting his team
After climbing the hills or crossing the stream.
Not a single house did he ever pass by
Without stopping his horses and waiting to cry:
"Well, neighbor, anything wanted my way?
I'm a-goin' a'arrantin' most of the day."

And all of the farmers who plodded along
With never a smile or a note of a song—
Who never found time to get out the "shay,"
And take wife and children off for a day.
Who thought it was queer in old Ephraim Joy
To be jolly and merry—so much like a boy.
Were all very glad, when he went up and down,
To have him do "arrants," if need be, in town.

He was postman, expressman and messenger, too,
No one caught him forgetting a thing he could do;
And you'd never have guessed he was sixty years
Old.

If you'd seen him "a-arrantin'," as he'd been told,
Though empty his milk cans, he'd always a load
When he started his horses again on the road.
His face was so bright and his manners so gay,
"The more arrants the better," it seemed he would
say.

How often I've wondered, while thinking of him,
With my heart full of love, while my eyes have
grown dim,
Of the help and the comfort which he always bore
To the sick and the sorry, the weak and the poor.
He did errands of mercy and love unseen,
As well as the "arrantin'" known to men;
And I know if such work is the angels' employ,
They have one helper added in Ephraim Joy.
—Caroline B. Lerow in Good Cheer.

An Intelligent Horse and Mule.

Our Methodist friend, the Rev. Mr. B., told us the other day of a preacher he knew who owned a horse that he had been driving for eighteen years. The preacher told our friend that he had so often driven the horse to church and left him standing near by that the horse had earned the Doxology, and whenever it is sung he begins to neigh, knowing that he is either going home soon or going to a neighbor's to dinner. This reminds us of one of our friends in Dooley county who owns a mule about 20 years old. The old mule knows when it is 12 o'clock by the sound of the dinner horn, and whenever he hears the horn, if it is a mile away, he begins to bray, and increases his speed with the plow until he reaches the end of the row, and then he stops and refuses to move until the harness is taken off.—[Hawkinsville (Ga) News.]

A Fashionable Mistake.

He had been to the city and went home brimful of news.

"You 'member the Smiths?" he asked his wife, "th' Silver Crik Smiths, them as got rich on the'r gran' feyther's money."

Yes, she remembered them.

"I seen 'em. They're way up; live in a gran' house on a street they call 'thavenoo.' They ride in a double kerriage and have no end of money."

She said she s'posed as much.

"But, dumb sakes! 'Mandy, you wouldn't want ter change places with her. I see her a minnit an' I didn't hev the heart to speak t' her."

She said she'd like to know why; stuck up thing!

"No, she ain't, Nandy, not now. She's bin humbled rite down to the dust. She's as blind as a bat."

Blind! She guessed not.

"But she is. Fust, she didn't kno me—me that's rid down hill and played tag with her

when she warn't knee-high to a turkey. Then, Mandy, tho' her eyes were wide open, she went rite along the streets all dressed up in fine close, and a leetle mite of a dog was leading her along. He was tied to a streeng, and she had hold of tother end of the streeng. Now, Mandy, how'd you like to be her?"—[Detroit Free Press.]

Idleness.

Never be idle. Idleness means ruin just as stagnation means decay. You can catch better things than early worms by rising early in the morning—something that will color your cheek, quicken your pulse, brighten your eye, and give you such an appetite as will make breakfast a pleasure, dinner a treat, tea a delight and—no room for supper. Besides, it's only one early bird that catches the worm. Every early boy can catch the benefit I speak of. And what the boy learns to love the man will turn to deeper account, while his hay will be better and more abundant than an idler's; his corn, his carrots and his cucumbers will be finer, better and more abundant, too; and just when the idle man is thinking that he ought to have a fortune, the early one will be wrapping his up and running off to bank with it. The boy who says it's music to hear the milk-man and chimney-sweep from between the sheets will most likely take to his bed to escape his creditors by-and-by.

Indecision.

I love her! Words cannot express
The joy with which her presence fills me.
The soft touch of her hand, her dress
Against my arm with rapture thrills me.
I yearn to call her mine, but still
(Excuse me if my sorrows trouble you)
She says I am her dearest Will
And writes it with a lower-case w.

Fresh as a rosebud newly born
With morning's dew-drop still upon it;
Graces that ne'er did queen adorn,
Worthy of poet's noblest sonnet;
A heart as sunny as a bird's,
Ah, were I free my life to pledge her!
Were I but sure she'd find my words
Sweet as her heroes' of the "Ledger"!

I sang to her an old, old song,
(An excellent hint from Coleridge taking)—
The tale of one whose heart had long
With untold love been slowly breaking.
I ceased; but though upon her face
Love, pity, maiden shame were blended,
Instead of Genevieve's embrace
She only murmured, "That is splendid!"

Queen of home arts, she seems to cast
Sunshine and song 'round all who meet her.
No rare Madonna of the past
Was ever purer, gentler, sweeter.
A home with her—but no, I fear
It cannot be. How could I bear
To hear her play, year after year,
Her single piece—the "Maiden's Prayer"?
JACOB F. HENRIK.

Her Weakness.

About forty years ago, Abby C— was the leader of society in her native town, a small Southern city. She had many lovers, and women of every age admired and imitated her. There were many prettier girls in the town, many richer and more clever than she. But Abby among them was like a queen in her court. Her charm was her excessive gentleness, and the loving grace with which she yielded her opinions and wishes to her companion of the moment.

It is true that her companion of the next moment found her just as pliable and ready to take part with them. Friends, too, to whom she had been confiding and affectionate at school found themselves wholly forgotten when they met her after a year's absence. But her spell was just as potent and her love as demon-

strative after they had been together ten minutes.

Abby was not insincere. She felt and meant all the affection which she expressed at the time; but, vine-like, she rested on the nearest object, whatever it might be, and cared nothing for those who were out of reach. She engaged herself to one man, and afterwards encouraged two others to become deeply in love with her and to propose marriage, simply because she "could not bear to hurt them" by showing them that it was impossible she should marry them.

After she was married she was by turns a fashionable woman, caring only for dress and amusement, a noisy advocate of reform, and a slipshod novel reader, according as she fell under different influences. Her husband's wishes and tastes were remembered only when he was present. A foreigner of low rank and lower character almost persuaded her to elope with him. Her husband died and left her with two boys, who learned to drink, gamble and follow desolute courses unchecked. She "could not be harsh with them lest she might lose their love."

She died a few months ago, and despite all her charms of sweetness but few tears of regret fell on her grave. She left no place empty in the world. She had not brought help or hope to a single human soul, during her whole colorless life.

The character as well as the body needs backbone. Do not, girl-readers of the *Companion*, be deceived into believing that the feminine charm implies weakness of resolution.

The Deathless Mother Love.

At this time mothers all over the country have put the last lingering touch of grace into the folds of girlish garments. Folded with utmost care dainty gowns and saucy ribbon-decked aprons, sent already shining linen back to Ann for an extra polish, "Kate likes them so stiff and glossy," and away down in some unexpected nook has tucked a box of Kate's favorite bonbons, where she will find them and think, as she takes them from their hiding place, "that is just like mamma!" But there is something else hidden in the great trunk that Kate will not find, though it is hidden everywhere. In the soft pink dressing gown for Kate's study hours, in her room, in the dainty French slippers that perk up their slim heels near, in boxes of gloves and softest flannel, not a thread or ruffle but holds the sacred thoughts and tender wishes of that loving mother. Dear little maiden, send a thought sometimes to her.

Neat and pretty bureau or wash-stand covers are made of scrim or dotted muslin in scarf shape, trimmed with deep lace and lined with pink or blue silesia.

Very many are making pretty tidies, or chair-backs they are called now, of the pretty cretonnes so much used. Use three stripes, the centre one dark, the outer two light. Turn the edges, and crochet an edge of shells all around the stripe, making it pointed on the lower edge, and about three or four rows of shells around each stripe. Join together, finish the pointed ends with tassels, and baste silesia or muslin on the back of each stripe to make it firm.