

The Blue-Looking Bird.

A tired, worn-out mother, who had gone to the country with her little girl, sat under a tree. Soft air came down across a clovered slope, and silken grass hung over and fluttered on the dimpled surface of a rivulet. The yellow poplars were in bloom, and the humming-bird, with her Easter dress still new, twittered in ecstatic vanity at a woodpecker that sought to woo her. A handful of violets, held by the little girl, were yellowed by a dandelion. She was a pale child, with, it seemed, a premature plenitude of brown hair. She had never seen the country until that very day, and she could scarcely believe that she was permitted to gather the flowers.

"Won't the policeman come and take them away from me?" she asked, looking about timidly and sitting down beside her mother.

"No, dear, there are no policemen in the country."

"Then why don't everybody live in the country?"

"If everybody did then there would be need of policemen."

"But we could live here, couldn't we?"

"No, for there would be no work for me to do."

"But you wouldn't have to do any work if you lived here."

"Oh, yes, dear, I should have to work no matter where I might be."

"Why?"

"Because I am poor."

"Who made you poor?"

"Oh, don't ask such questions, Mary."

"You never did anybody any harm did you?"

"Never in this world."

"And have rich people done harm?"

"Some of them have."

"I am too tired to gather flowers. Will I catch cold if I lie down here?"

"No," the mother answered, making a pillow of a shawl, "lie down and go to sleep."

"And if that big blue-looking bird comes back will you wake me up so I can see him?"

"Yes."

She was soon fast asleep. The tired woman bent over her. Cattle came down and drank at the brook. A farmer boy, breaking up the corn land in an adjoining field, cast glances at the sun, as though longing for the noon hour, and a foot-sore man, with a rusty bag thrown across his shoulder, trudged wearily down the road.

A woman in a far away door-yard stood with a bread-tray resting on a low gate post, and cheerily called the chickens.

The little girl awoke. "Where are my flowers?" she asked.

"Here they are, dear, just where you left them."

"I dreamed that the policeman came and took them. Did the blue bird come back?"

"No, but he may be back after awhile. Do you feel rested?"

"Almost. I wish you would sing to me."

"Oh, I can't sing now, Mary, I declare I can't. It is almost as much as I can do to talk."

"Please sing just a little bit of a bit."

"Precious, I really can not. Don't you know that I have not been able to sing any since I had that awful cold in the winter? Come, let us go up to the house."

They went to a farm house not far away. A brusque woman was sweeping the yard. A lazy dog with one eye shut, lay on the porch.

"I reckon you find it mighty lonesome out here," said the farmer's wife.

"Oh, no," the city woman replied. "This is the only resting place I have found for many a day."

"Well, I guess it does keep a body on the move in the city, havin' to go to so many balls and parties."

"I do not go to any. I work in a shirt factory."

"Why, I didn't low that city folks had to work at all. I always thought that the folks in the country had to keep them up in their idleness."

"And my little girl expressed the opinion just now that the people in the country did not have to work any. Her idea of work is that the laborer must be shut up in a house."

"Ho, that ain't no work at all," spoke up a slouching boy that had left his plow and came to the well to get a drink of water.

"If I didn't have nothin' to do but stay in the house I wouldn't care whether Sunday came or not. It's been' out in the br'illan' sun that makes a feller hump."

"Mamma," said the little girl, "I want to lie down. I am tired."

"I am afeard," said the farmer's wife, "that you brought her here too late, and I don't know but you came too late yourself."

A little white face in a beautiful tangle of brown hair. A high, old-fashioned bed, white plaster kittens on each corner of the mantel-piece and a clock ticking midway between them. It was late at night, and the tired boy snored in the "ratter" room just above. The mother and the farmer's wife sat beside the bed. The child had been sleeping. Suddenly she awoke.

"Won't you sing to me?" she asked.

The mother tried to sing, and then sobbed on the pillow.

"You can't sing, for you have such a cold," said the child. "Did the blue-looking bird come back mamma?"

"No, angel."

The tired boy snored in the "ratter" just above. The child was asleep—sleep for evermore. A handful of flowers lay on the bed beside her. The policeman did not come and get them—Opie P. Read.

The citizens of the United States have made the startling discovery that what they had been considering an impregnable defense is really a wall so weak and insufficient that "a coach and four" can be driven through it. Their Alien Labor Law, thanks to the hair-splitting abilities of some of their legal lights, has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. And this is the way interested parties propose to evade the provisions of the law. Instead of importing contracted labor, which is prohibited, the "bosses" propose to delay the matter of settling the question of wages until after the arrival of the workman who thus enters the country under the head of a still laborer, upon whom the obnoxious law lays no restrictions. Accordingly the New England contractors, hampered by a strike among the freestone cutters, have advertised in all the leading papers in England for freestone cutters, telling them where to apply upon arrival and what the pay was. A large force is said to be coming. The Government is at its wit's end to prevent it, and the local labor unions are furious, though to stop these men coming would be to stop all immigration.

Farming in the States.

The proposition assumed by Mr. C. Wood Davis in his interesting article in the April *Forum*, viz., that the farmers of the United States are not prosperous, is confirmed by some startling figures collated by Hon. J. M. Fippen, of Tipton county, in the state of Indiana. "The county of Tipton," says Mr. Fippen "has a rich soil of black sandy loam, unsurpassed by any in the State of Indiana, or even in the broad Mississippi Valley. It has been in a high state of cultivation for the past twenty years, yielding annually during all this time, in amount, more than double its consumption. Its people are industrious, prudent, economical, and intelligent to a degree unsurpassed in any county in the State. But they are not contented, and they are not prosperous. Year by year they have been 'running behind' as their phrase is—that is, their debts have been increasing faster than their income or the value of their property."

To assure himself of the correctness of this complaint, Mr. Fippen consulted the county records to ascertain just how much this indebtedness had been at the close of each ten years, beginning with 1850. To his surprise he learned that while the amount of real estate mortgages in the county amounted in January '90 to \$156,129 in Jan. '90 it had swelled to \$2,277,435; the value of real estate meanwhile increasing from \$408,910 to \$2,399,685; that is to say, while the value of real estate in the county increased not quite sixfold in the forty years, the amount of mortgages increased almost fifteen-fold. Now is this the only discouraging circumstance, for the further estimate of Mr. Fippen the earnings of all capital in farming are not over 8 per cent., while the current rate of interest is 4 per cent. Clearly, a farmer who pays 8 per cent. on half his capital and makes but 4 per cent. on the whole cannot get ahead. Considering the many advantages and few drawbacks which characterize the country in question, the view presented of the condition of the agricultural population of the country is far from hopeful or satisfactory.

A Wonderful Japanese Family.

"A thousand years in one household" (*ikka sen-nen*) is an old Japanese saying, employed with reference to an event which, in respect of extreme rarity, may be classed with the sight of a dead donkey or a tinker's funeral. The *Hochi Shimbu* says that an instance may at present be found in the household of a merchant called Mizuma Gensuke, who resides in Kanazawa, in the Saitama district of Sado. The family consists of the following members: Great-great-grandpapa Gengo (aged 130), great-great-grandmamma Tomi (aged 132), great-grandpapa Genbei (aged 101), great-grandmamma Miyo (aged 99), great-great-grand-uncle Yoshi (aged 105), great-grandpapa Gensuke (aged 81), great-grandmamma Kimi (aged 79), grandpapa Gompachi (aged 61), grandmamma Ioyo (aged 60); papa Genkichi (aged 40), mamma Tomo (aged 38), uncle Genroku (aged 35), son Genshichi (aged 14), daughter Tokiji (aged 5). The united ages of the fourteen amounted, at the close of last year, to 980, and consequently became 994 on the first day of this year, according to the Japanese method of calculation. Next New Year's Day, supposing that death had not intervened meanwhile, the aggregate ages would be 1,008, and as 994 is nearer 1,000 than 1,008, the family have resolved to celebrate their *ikka sen-nen* this spring by a visit to the shrine of Ise, and afterwards to Kioto, where the whole fourteen, from the little tot of 5 to the grayhead—if he still has any hair—of 130, will do their sight-seeing in company.

Saying Grace.

"Farmton" says, in the *Advance*: "Frequently am I invited to tea at the house of some parishioner. A blessing is always asked at the table. As I sit down it is easy for me to detect whether the blessing represents a custom. The behavior of the children, as well as the behavior of the maid, is a clear indication of whether the paternal-familias is accustomed to say grace. I am frequently asked to say grace, but I rejoice in the growth of that custom by which the visiting minister is not asked. It is, I think, becoming more usual for the head of the family, as we call by courtesy, no matter how it may really be, the husband and father, to say grace himself. It is, I think, a right which belongs specially to him; a right, of course which he may delegate, if he pleases, but a right which I am always glad for him to keep and to exercise. There is a special fitness in him who represents the household asking God's blessing upon the household as it gathers about the table. The same principle applies to the pronouncing the benediction in the public meetings of the church. It was formerly the rule for the most distinguished or oldest of those ministers present to pronounce the benediction. But now the custom is obtaining for the pastor himself, whoever may be present, to pronounce these words of valedictory blessing. It is fitting; this privilege and this duty belong to him, as the father, the minister of his church."

Shall Women Be Allowed to Vote?

The question of female suffrage has agitated the tongues and pens of reformers for many years, and good arguments have been adduced for and against it. Many of the softer sex could vote intelligently, and many would vote as their husbands did, and give no thought to the merits of a political issue. They would all vote for Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, for they know it is a boon to their sex. It is unequalled for the cure of leucorrhoea, abnormal discharges, morning sickness, and the countless ills to which women are subject. It is the only remedy for woman's peculiar weaknesses and ailments, sold by druggists, under a positive guarantee from the manufacturers, that it will give satisfaction in every case, or money will be refunded. See guarantee on wrapper around bottle.

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Charles Saunders, the professional champion court tennis player of England, signed articles for a professional court tennis match for the championship of the world, of which Thomas Pettit, of the Boston Athletic Club, is the present holder. On Saturday next Pettit will sail for England to prepare for the contest.

Miss Emily Harper, of Alexander, Genesee county, New York, is a female Hercules. She didn't discover her strength until the other day. Having broken a lamp, her mother chided her. In reply the girl gave her mother an affectionate hug. The woman dropped to the floor insensible with two ribs broken.

It Depends on the Liver.

"Is life worth living?" somebody asked, and the facetious reply was, "That depends on the liver." Health and happiness are twined together. If a man's liver is out of order, his whole system is deranged. He suffers from top to toe. This is the time to take Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets. These efficacious little globules are as much in advance of the old-fashioned, griping, drastic pills as electric lights are ahead of a wick stuck in whale oil.

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The youth whose attentions were ignored by the young woman said that his trouble was slight.

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THE TRANSFER BOOKS will be closed from the seventeenth to the thirty-first day of May both days included.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS will be held at the Banking House of the institution, on WEDNESDAY, the Eighteenth day of June next. The chair to be taken at noon.

By order of the Board. (Signed) D. COULSON, Cashier, The Bank of Toronto, Toronto, April 23, 1890.

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