

### HIS PARENT'S OPINION.

He's never been to college and has little use for books,  
Except the ones with lots of pictures in.  
He's not a fluent talker, though you'd think it from his looks,  
But pretty soon we think that he'll begin.  
We don't know how he learned so much.  
You'd be surprised to see what marvelous intelligence he shows,  
It's just a source of never-falling wonder, sir, to me,  
The heaps of things our little baby knows.

Some children are accomplished; they can do a lot of things,  
And do a number of them fairly well.  
One dances to perfection and another plays or sings,  
Or in some other manner may excel—  
But not at two years, often. They're comparatively old.  
Our little skeezicks now is barely two.  
You hardly would believe me, I imagine, if I told  
You half the things our little one can do.

I've heard of other babies that their parents brag about,  
They're prodigies, you'd naturally think.  
The fond and foolish fathers quite believe it all, no doubt,  
But I just smile and turn my head and wink.  
I'm not disposed to blame them for their foolishness a bit,  
They've got to make the most of what they've got,  
But if you saw our youngster you would cheerfully admit  
The cunning little rascal beats the lot.

—Chicago News.



"Times are not what they used to be," the old house complained, rattling one of its loose shutters dismally.

"Once I was the finest and the proudest house in town, now I'm a bad property. No one wants me to live in; I'm too old-fashioned. I've been all kinds of homes for the friendless, but even they don't stay. I'm too drafty and expensive to keep up. Here I am, going to wreck and ruin outside, and inside, my furniture is going to wreck and ruin, too.

"Once I was an aristocratic mansion, built on the edge of the town in the center of beautiful grounds. Now my grounds are like a swamp. The grass is never cut, the trees are never trimmed and my flowers have all run out from lack of cultivation. There are cracks in my walls. My floors are sagging and my frescoes are flaking off. It's hard luck for an old house to be a bad property.

"The family that built me and lived in me through three generations is dead and gone. I belong to a distant



"ONCE I WAS AN ARISTOCRATIC MANSION."

relative. He has no sentiment and doesn't care to preserve me for the sake of family associations. 'Sometime,' he says, 'the land will be good business property, let the old house go.' I suppose because the city is growing so fast out this way, in time my land will be valuable. I hear it roaring toward me—the city—and I hate the sound. It'll tear me to pieces some day and I won't be even a memory.

"My family was rich and well born. I've seen all sorts of happenings under my roof. There have been courtships, and marriages, and births, and funerals, and sorrows, and gladness. It was all gladness for a time, then there began to be sorrows. I forget those. I forget the funerals and remember only the gay days when there were dinners, and balls, and parties, and music, and dancing.

"I remember the days when my cellars were filled with the fatness of the land and we kept open house from one New Year's day to another. There were big fires glowing and crackling on my hearths in winter, and there were soft, flower-scented airs stealing through the lace curtains of my windows in summer. I've heard lovers whispering their vows. I've seen brides welcomed home and I've seen the daughters of the house have grand weddings and go to other homes as brides. Time went with dancing feet when I was in my prime and they pointed me out as the finest residence in the town. It's all changed now. There's none to come and go or to keep my doors from rusting on their hinges. There's none to watch for another's coming through my windows. There's no youth, no life, no light within my walls because I am too expensive a place for the poor to keep up, and too old-fashioned for the rich. Besides that, I'm not in a good part of the city. It's sad to be a bad property.

"The holidays are especially hard to bear. In the old days I was filled to overflowing with company. My, my, what pranks they played! And what dinners were cooked! My big kitchen! I can smell the roasting meats

and fowls to-day, and the sweet, spicy fragrance of the plum cakes and puddings.

"Christmas was a merry time. What presents they exchanged, what surprises they gave one another! No sleep till late on Christmas eve, and up before daylight in the morning. Children's feet went pattering across my floors to get the Christmas stockings, filled to bursting, hanging before the fireplace of my biggest chimney. I heard whisperings and giggling, then that nearly made me burst my sides with longing to laugh in sympathy.

"And New Year's day! Ah, then was the time when open houses were in fashion and I was the favorite of them all. There was the rustle of rich silks through my halls. Beautiful ladies thronged my parlors, and gentlemen who came to call, forgot to go away and spent the day, unwilling to leave my comfort and attractions. In the evening there was always a dance in the ball-room at the top of me. I have a spring floor up there that was like air for light feet to trip across, and I've heard the violins and the 'cello and the booming bass viol make the sweetest, saddest, most bewitching music that set me to throbbing on my foundations.

"Times are not what they used to be. Nobody keeps the holidays now as they did when I was new. The wind howls leily and cruelly in the cold throats of my chimneys. There are no leaping fires on my hearths to drive it back; there's nothing but silence and chill and emptiness.

"I can almost see the old judge again—he was the last of the family—going down the walk. He was a stately gentleman and clung to the old customs and style of dress. The new generation of people laughed because he wore a swallow tail coat to church and kept on making New Year's calls long after every one else had stopped. Toward the end he came back to me looking sad and weary. Probably he was not made to feel cordially welcome where he went. He was like I am, a survival of other years. The holidays became hard for him to bear, and, though his form was erect and his beard carried proudly to the last, I think he was glad to go. Sometimes I wish I would take fire and burn. At least I should be warm again all over.

"Christmas was a horrid day."

"After all, there is a bright side to being a bad property. Something happened to me to-day that makes me face a new year more willingly. I am to be of use and appreciated. Someone is coming to live in me. In truth, they've come already. I can hear her singing now while she moves about and puts my furniture in order.

"It was only a few hours ago when I felt a key turning in the lock of my front door. It was so long since a key had been turned there, that it shrieked as if in pain. The next thing I heard was a fresh young voice saying: 'Isn't this a dear old house. I shall love to live here, sweetheart.'

"Then I heard a man's voice speak. 'Can you really be happy in this old barn of a place, dearest? (Upstart.) We may not have to stay here long, but they were so anxious for someone to live in it, they let us have it rent free and that was a great inducement with an income like ours,' he went on. 'Perhaps I shouldn't have married you until we had more money.'

"He said this a little wistfully, and I began to like him better. 'It's a lovely place; so stately and old-fashioned. We need live in only two or three of the rooms, but in summer we can throw it all open and pretend we're grand people,' the girl's voice answered. 'You couldn't have mar-

ried me if I hadn't been willing, and I was very willing, sweetheart, so very willing, I can be happy anywhere with you. We can save money while we live here and that will be such a comfortable feeling.'

"Dearest!" the man's voice said. "There was a little silence. I am a wise old house. I've seen such things before, and I knew what was going on. They were in each other's arms, standing together on the threshold of a life, which, to their vision, was all rose color, love and happiness. I've seen it all before. I'm a wise old house.

"The girl wanted to stay from the moment she entered. There was no going away to return to-morrow for her. 'No,' she said, 'let's begin the new year in our new, old home. I'm going to hang my hat up and make myself at home right away.'

"She had such a sunshine voice, and her step was so light and springy I could hardly feel her feet pressing my floors when she stepped.

"They threw open my long-closed shutters and let the sun stream in through my chill, gloomy rooms, driving away the shadows. They built a fire on the hearth in the very heart of me and I began to feel life pulsating through my dry old boards. After a while the man went away to get their belongings, I heard him say. The girl walked with him to the door and they kissed each other good-bye as if their partings were for always instead of for an hour. It is comforting to have youth and love within my walls once more. I've missed them both for so long.

"The girl watched the man out of sight and then came back to me, crooning a happy, little song. She went through all of me with housewifely care and a tiny frown of responsibility on her brow. It was funny to watch her.

"Dear, dear," she said, 'such an awful lot of dust everywhere. What a shame to neglect this beautiful old place.'

"I love that girl.

"He came back in a very short time, considering what he had to do, and they're here to live. I suppose some day they'll go away like all the rest of my people, but I won't think about that now. Their names are Dearest and Sweetheart, at least I have not heard them call each other by any different, but they're names I love, and it's years since they've been spoken within my walls.

"There's a home fire burning on the hearth in the heart of me. It's good to be alive and warm at the heart. It brings back youth and happiness to be warm at the heart."—Toledo Blade.

### Climate and Consumption.

We are to-day learning the truth that there is no particular climate for consumption. Wherever can be found pure air—the less moisture in it the better—there will the sufferer from tuberculosis be able to fight his disease—sometimes to a successful finish—if he can at the same time obtain the proper rest and food.

Two generations ago this doctrine would have been hooted at as the delusion of a madman, yet it is the truth. The mountain sanatoria of Switzerland, the pine woods of Prussia, of Canada and of New York, the ice fields of Alaska bear witness to it. Tuberculosis is stopped by the pure air of all these varied climates; and it has been accident far more than design, experience far more than theory, that found this out. One generation ago the whole Southwest would have been at the North with the picturesque bowie or Colt, had any one dared openly to assert, much less to insist on, such a perilous doctrine, but to-day those who are seriously studying the facts feel compelled to acknowledge the truth of it, while the advocates of climate per se are beginning to say—nay, are eager to have us understand—that their climate is not everything; that it won't work miracles, and that there are some cases of consumption that their glorious climate will not cure; and—what a change!—there are to be heard protests, here feeble, there vigorous, against the unhappy habit long ago planted by the Southwest, now firmly rooted in the North and East, of sending all sorts and conditions of tuberculous patients by tens, by thousands, by tens of thousands, into that climate to be cured.—Albert Hale in Reader.

### The American Chameleon.

The American chameleon, a small lizard (*Anolis carolinensis*), inhabits various parts of the southern United States. The little animal has the remarkable habit of quickly and completely changing its colors, varying from brown to yellow of pale green. Its food consists of insects. The little animal is perfectly harmless to higher forms of life, is often kept as a pet, and has been worn attached to a chain as an ornament.

The toes are provided with adhesive pads, which enable the lizard to run upon smooth vertical surfaces.—St. Nicholas.

We all of us claim to be natural, but we all of us know that the only time when we are not putting on is when we are asleep.

### LIFE PRISONER OF LOVE.



Forty-five years ago, when the events that led to the present state of affairs began the farm of the Plumers was known far and wide for the excellence of its cattle, its sheep, its orchards, from which came the finest apples and from them the best cider in New Hampshire; the abundance of its hay, its acres of thriving woodland and its fertile pastures.

Old Ephraim Plumer, the grandfather of the present generation, had come from "down Rochester way" when the great oak tree that stands in front of the house was about as big as "a common stake," to quote the phrase attributed by legend to the first settlers. He bought a small tract of land and he bulled him a small hut.

Things were prospering with him and when he died his son Samuel erected the present large house and found it necessary soon after to add a great barn to the original hewn-oak one, so fertile did the hay fields prove.

So when Joseph Plumer, the present bedridden one, came to young manhood it was with as brilliant prospects as were possessed by any farmer in New Hampshire. He had two younger brothers, Ephraim and Samuel, Jr. It is these who take care of him to-day, preparing his food, making over his bed at times, tending him at all times as they might a helpless child.

Joseph entered his twentieth year sturdy and looked upon with pride by his father as his very worthy successor. And it was just here that love entered the game, not to glorify it as love has so often done, but to start the unfortunate chain of events that has ended with the present misery.

It began when the young man went with his father one bright May morning to purchase a yoke of oxen. While the father talked trade the son wandered from the circle of mere business things and in his meanderings came upon the pretty daughter of the owner with whom his father was busy.

Well, the maid was pretty and the time was spring! And in a few moments what cared Joseph for oxen or the way they were traded? The only thing he remembers about the trade to this day is that one of the oxen had a splash of white on its side.

After that Joseph went over the hills again and again to the house of the man who sold oxen, but oxen had nothing to do with the case now. It was the old story of the man and the maid, and though she was only 16 she was willing to marry Joseph when he asked her—was he not the most eligible swain in all the countryside?

He went home and announced the bliss that had come to him to his father. But father, forgetting the days of his youth, demurred.

"Why," remarked the father, "in the first place the girl is only 16 years old."

"But we love each other," cried the youth, "and we must marry."

"You can not; the girl is only 16. What you need is work, not a wife."

"Well, then, I tell you, father," exclaimed the lad, "you who care more that I should work than that I should be happy; for every one of those sixteen years I will refuse to work. I will live here, but I will not work. I am going to bed now and I will not get up to-morrow until I choose. And if I so choose I won't get up at all."

It was by that statement, combined with the inherent stubbornness that had characterized the house of Plumer for years, that Joseph condemned himself to all these years of imprisonment.

The next day he would not come from his room. His father pleaded with him, offering everything but his consent to the marriage. But the boy was obdurate.

The father did not attempt to starve his son out. He directed that food should be sent in at each meal time and that Joseph should have anything within reason that he asked for.

It is not recorded that the boy ever attempted to communicate with the girl for whom he had gone into voluntary imprisonment, but she heard of it somehow and soon after a new wooer came and won a bride. And both are dead and gone long ago.

There came a draft in the civil war days and Joe was named. This was two years after he had ceased from all toiling and spinning. He was told that he was on the list and he went to Portsmouth to be examined.

There the physicians passed him, but he insisted that he was sick. His family somehow wanted him at home, so they hired John E. Goodwin, a prominent shoe manufacturer, to go to Portsmouth in his interests.

There year after year he has stayed. Through the windows he can look out upon the hills of his childhood.

He knows every bush, every hollow, every tree. Year after year, day after day he has conned the scene till the very stones are familiar.

The reporter was led into the kitchen through a dining-room which was furnished with absolutely nothing but a magnificent grandfather's clock and a small collection of priceless old cups and saucers.

After Ephraim had recalled that his father died twenty-four years ago—remembered it on account of the fact that the old man had purchased a ram three days before the event—the reporter was led in to see Joe, as the vernacular of the household called him. It is a little room with two great windows, through which one may look out across the valley. He is in a great four-poster bed, strung with ropes in the fashion of our great-grandfathers, which sags in the middle.

One can scarcely see why it should sag with the weight of the skeleton that sits upon it.

His beard and hair are long and unkempt. His voice is a hoarse whisper.

"I have had eleven doctors," he said, "and only two of them have ever done me any good."

"I wish I had my health and strength and was young again. I would marry and have my children to comfort me." He sighed as his lifeless hands dropped back upon the coverlet.

### Her First Turkey.

It was the day before Thanksgiving, Mrs. Ray's first one as the mistress of a home. Mary, the cook, had been hurriedly called away by the sickness of her mother. Fortunately, the deserts had already been made. But there was the turkey to be stuffed and roasted.

Mrs. Ray before her marriage had been a teacher of embroidery, and she knew very little about cooking. She did not feel well enough acquainted with the neighbors to ask them how to prepare the turkey.

With determined air she went into the kitchen, put on Mary's big blue gingham apron, rolled up her sleeves and with a shudder attacked the turkey.

No cook book could be found, so the stuffing had to be from an original recipe. After the stuffing was made and coaxed into the turkey, the question arose how to keep it there during the roasting. Mrs. Ray was sorely puzzled. Then a happy thought came to her. She made two buttonholes, sewed on pearl buttons, and buttoned the stuffing in.

Time flies so fast as a man grows older that it seems to him he has his Sunday clothes on all the time.