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WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN.

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-cock,
And the cluckin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,
And the roo'er's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
Dit's then the time a feller is a feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of gracious rest,
As he leaves the house bare-headed and goes out to feed th' stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

Their's somepin kind o' hearty-like about the atmosphere,
When the heat of Summer's over and the coolin' Fall is here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossoms on the trees,
And the hummin' of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the bees;
But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze
Of a crisp and sunny morning of the early autumn days
Is a picture that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty rustle of the tassels of the corn,
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the morn;
The stubble in the furries—kind o' lonesome-lik', but at all
A-precisin' sermons to us of the barns they grew to fill;
The strawstack in the medder, and the resper in the shed;
The hosses in their stalls, below—the clover overhead—
O it sets my heart a-lickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

—Benj. F. Johnson, in *Indianapolis Journal*.

WHICH WILL SHE CHOOSE?

"Great news, girls!" cried pretty Belle Winters, as she came dancing into the parlor, where a group of young girls were assembled. All belonged to what they proudly denominated "The Cranston Benevolent Sewing Society," and they met punctually every Wednesday afternoon, at the house of some one of the members; but, if truth must be told, the amount of talking done exceeded the amount of sewing, as a thousand exceeds a single unit.

As Belle's exclamation reached their ears, every needle was suspended in mid-air, as its owner eagerly demanded: "What is it? Tell us quick, Belle."

"Well," said that young lady, as she subsided into a chair, "I met Joe Richards this morning, driving with such a splendid-looking man. O, I can tell you he was just perfect! And I wondered who he could be, and made up my mind to find out. So I was thinking and thinking about it, as I walked here this afternoon, and just as I turned the corner of this street who should I meet but Joe and this same gentleman walking. Joe stopped and begged to introduce his friend, Mr. Kingsley, and then said that Mr. Kingsley was an old school-friend of his, who had just returned to Frankfort, and he had promised to bring him here to Cranston for all the parties this winter, so he should depend on us to invite him. Of course I said we should be happy to do so."

"O, of course!" echoed all her listeners, sympathizingly.

"There is the sociable for next week, Belle; did you invite them to that?" asked Lizzie Cutler. "You were on the inviting committee."

"Certainly, I did!" responded Belle. "And what did they say?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Why, what would they say?" laughed Belle, with a little triumph in her tones. "Promised they would come, and each begged for the first dance, of course."

"And which did you choose?" was the next question.

"Mr. Kingsley, to be sure. I can dance with Joe any time, besides I promised him the second!"

Her auditors looked slightly disappointed, but all were accustomed to yielding the first place to Belle, and she was such a general favorite that there was never any hard feeling on the subject.

"Joe said something," continued Belle, "about Mr. Kingsley's brother. They had turned half away, and I did not hear distinctly. It will be fun if there are two additions of that kind to our stock of beaux."

"Well, I am sure such additions are needed," cried Addie Palmer, "for there are scarcely a dozen young men in Cranston, and Joe is the only one who ever drives over from Frankfort to attend any of our parties!"

"Mr. Kingsley may as well stay away for all we shall gain," laughed Lizzie Cutler, "for Belle will monopolize him, as she does every one." There was, however, no unkindness or jealousy in the remark; Lizzie thought Belle perfect, and would have quarreled on the spot with any one who dared to disagree with her.

"All I want is a fair field and no favor," said Belle, merrily. "If Mr. Kingsley prefers any of you girls to me, I am perfectly willing. But, now, to complete the arrangement for next week," and thereupon followed a long and earnest discussion of order of dances, the music, supper and toilettes, during which sewing was a thing forgotten, and if the poor of Cranston were waiting for the Benevolent Society to clothe them, it is much to be feared that they would have little to protect them from the winter's cold.

The night for the sociable arrived in due season, and with it Mr. Richards and his friend, whom he impartially introduced to every young lady of his acquaintance, but though gay and polite with all, Mr. Kingsley was at Belle Winters' side whenever it was possible,

and Lizzie Cutler's prediction that Belle would monopolize him, seemed likely to prove true.

"I meant to have told you more about Harry's brother the other day, Belle," said Mr. Richards, coming to Miss Winters, who was in the same cotillion with Joe and Lizzie Cutler.

"Your brother, Mr. Kingsley?" asked Belle of her partner.

"Yes," continued Joe, as Mr. Kingsley bowed assent, "his twin-brother, and so like him that you could hardly distinguish one from the other. His name is Ashton. I want you to ask him over to your sociables too."

"We shall all be very happy to do so, I am sure," answered Belle. "You must be sure to bring your brother with you, at our next dance, Mr. Kingsley."

"Thank you," he said, with a little hesitation, "not with me, I fear; but I will send him in my stead. Our father is old and infirm, and we never leave him alone."

Belle bowed in acquiescence. "Very well, then," she said, "we shall be glad to see either of you."

At the next sociable, Mr. Ashton Kingsley was presented to the fair ladies of Cranston, by Mr. Richards. Their opinions in regard to the brothers were freely expressed when the sewing society met on the following Wednesday. Some pronounced them so much alike that it would be impossible ever to know them apart. Others thought Ashton somewhat taller than his brother, and believed his hair and eyes were darker. Most considered him more quiet and reserved than Henry, and all agreed that Belle was likely to appropriate both.

It certainly seemed so as the season wore on, and one or the other of the twins was Belle's devoted cavalier at every dance and sleighing party, and many were the discussions as to which she would choose. If such discussions came to Belle's ears, she would laughingly suggest that she might never have the chance to choose either.

"O, but that is all nonsense," Lizzie Cutler would cry. "Any one can see that you will have the chance soon enough."

"Well, then," said Belle on one of these occasions, with a sudden gravity of demeanor that made all her companions believe that she had really decided the matter, "then I will tell you what I think I will do!"

"What?" exclaimed every one, eagerly crowding about her, in their anxiety to know Belle's preference.

"I'll choose both!" and Belle laughed gaily at the disappointed group.

But in her own mind Belle was debating the same question. She could scarcely be blind to the fact that she was likely to be called on to decide between the two brothers. With Henry she was gay, ready for any frolic or mischief, and found him such a willing participator; though upon occasion he would reveal plenty of good sterling sense, as much, perhaps, as Ashton, who, while equally pleasant, was more reserved in his manners. Belle, according to her varying mood, sometimes preferred one, and sometimes the other, till she was half-inclined to think she could never choose.

One day while thinking over the matter a sudden idea struck her. At first she rejected it as utterly impossible, but the more she pondered the more convinced she was that she had now found a way to make her decision, and she resolved to watch carefully for any proof of her own theory. This she did, and grew more and more confirmed in her belief; her intimate knowledge of Joe Richards, who was a distant cousin and a life-long confederate in every bit of mischief or practical joke, much aiding in her decision.

Therefore, when, toward spring, Belle received a letter from each of the brothers, each containing an avowal of their love for her, she was not unprepared. Both were earnest, manly letters, though differing in style as the brothers differed in character. Henry's was more lively and playful than Ashton's, but in one respect they were alike. Each stated that he knew of his brother's feelings toward her, and that they had agreed to write at the same time, asking her to choose between them, and pledging themselves that the rejected one, whichever he might be, would henceforth regard her as a dear sister, and harbor no ill feeling to her, or his more fortunate brother!

"This," added Ashton, "is perhaps taking it too much for granted that one of us may find favor in your eyes. If not, we will, at least, endeavor to console each other."

A quizzical smile hovered round Belle's mouth as she wrote her answer—answer, for she wrote but one, and addressed it to the two brothers. Listen, as she reads it over, half-aloud:

To Messrs. Henry and Ashton Kingsley:
Please accept my sincere thanks for your kind and flattering notes. Having duly considered the contents, I have decided that I will accept both of you. I shall be happy to see you to-morrow evening.

Yours,
BELLE WINTERS.

Was there ever before such an answer written by a girl to two offers of marriage! Yet its oddity did not seem to trouble Belle, who sprang lightly up from her desk, and donning her outside wraps quickly conveyed her letter to the post.

It must be confessed, however, that on the evening of the following day, Belle grew decidedly nervous.

"Suppose I am mistaken, after all," she thought, "how shall I ever get out of the scrape? I half wish I had never written that letter, but I never can do anything like other girls." She paced her room excitedly for a few moments, then said aloud: "I may as well make myself presentable; perhaps some one may come; though I may have offended past all forgiveness; at any rate, I will be ready, and if worst comes to worst,

I must put a brave face on it, and turn it all into a jest."

Very "presentable" she certainly looked, though unusually pale, when a half-hour later, as she sat alone in the parlor, the servant announced Mr. Kingsley.

Where was the other brother? Only one entered, and if Belle were pale, he was deathly white. No look of an accepted lover, but more that of a man who had lost all he holds dear on earth, was on his face, as with a sort of desperate courage he walked up to Belle, who had risen silently to receive him.

For a moment he stood before her without speaking, without looking at her, then cried out impetuously: "Belle, Belle, can you ever forgive such deception? It seemed but a jest till your note came, and then I realized in a moment what I had risked, and how by my folly I had lost you."

Belle could not speak; the ready retort or saucy jest which she usually had at command failed her now, but she shyly extended her hand, while she smiled re-assuringly upon her lover.

"Belle! Do you mean it! Can you pardon me?" he exclaimed, as he covered the little hand with kisses.

Apparently Belle did mean it, and some minutes passed in a blissful silence, before Mr. Kingsley kindly inquired: "And how long have you known of the deception, Belle? All the time, or did Joe turn traitor?"

"He was traitorous enough," said Belle, in her usual merry tones, "if, as I imagine, he was the originator of this fine plot against an unsuspecting maiden's peace of mind. No, I did not know all the time, and hardly know when I began to suspect that Henry and Ashton Kingsley were one and the same person. By-the-by, which are you?" she asked, archly.

"I am both. My name is Henry Ashton Kingsley," was the reply.

"So I imagined, for after I once had a suspicion of the truth many things confirmed it. For instance, one day you dropped a card on the table, and it had 'H. A. Kingsley' written on it. Another day, when you came as Ashton, you attended to something which had happened when you were here the previous week; though it was as Henry that you had then been here. But tell me," she continued, "what made you ever think of thus personating two brothers?"

"I used often to do it at school," replied Mr. Kingsley. "It was commenced by my schoolfellows declaring that in my different moods of grave or gay, I was as unlike as if distinct boys, after which they called me Henry when lively, and Ashton when quiet, and I used to take much delight in making the two characters as unlike as possible. When I came to Frankfort, Joe revived the old joke, and finally proposed that I should appear at Cranston in my two characters, and thinking it would only be for once or twice, and never dreaming how far we should carry it, I consented! I assure you, I have been well punished, since I found how much I had risked by my folly."

Great was the excitement when Belle told of her engagement. Not a stitch of sewing was done at the Benevolent Society meeting that afternoon, except which Belle did herself, as she sat with pretended calmness, listening to their comments, for she had explained that there was but one Mr. Kingsley. Weary at last of their endless exclamations, she sprang up to leave, saying as she did so: "At least, you must acknowledge that I have kept my word, for I always told you I would take both, whenever you wondered 'which will she choose?'" — *Ballou's Magazine*

And Now Toronto Has a Sea-Serpent.

Yesterday morning was cool, and perhaps this was the reason why some of the workmen engaged at the targets on the Garrison ranges say the serpent they saw was not more than fifty feet long and the size of a man's body. The story, as told by one of them, is in substance as follows: Between eight and nine o'clock, while placing the targets in position on No. 1 range, a boy rushed up saying that there was a queer thing floating near the shore. Some of the men were curious enough to leave their work and hasten down to the shore. There, sure enough, was a large bluish-gray mass floating lazily near the shore. It had every appearance of being asleep, as its body yielded to every ripple. Part was submerged, but the upper portion of the head floated just above the water. That part which was visible was covered with short, stiff bristles in front, which increased in length toward the sides, and extended for a distance of about ten feet on each side. The back, or at least that portion of it which appeared above the water, was lighter colored than the head. A good view was had of the monster for upward of three minutes, when, suddenly raising its head out of the water, it gave a swish with its tail and started directly south, in the direction of one of the steamers. Its head, as it raised it above the water, was very much like that of an eel, with the exception of the long, trailing hair or whiskers. Its eyes were small, and as it dashed off one of the men said he thought he heard it give a short, sharp bark. A line of foam marked its progress out into the lake for about half a mile, when, turning sharp around, it dashed toward the Exhibition wharf, and again out into the lake, where they soon lost sight of it. The men did not appear at all anxious to speak of the matter, as they feared their veracity would be questioned. As it is, their story is given for what it is worth, but surely the word of three men who saw it is worth that of thirty who did not see it. — *Toronto Mail*.

—New York has averaged much hotter weather this summer than New Orleans, and Memphis thinks of putting in her claims as a summer resort.

Youths' Department.

THE DEAD KITTEN.

Don't talk to me of parties, Nan, I really can't go to them. When folks are in affliction they don't go out, you know.

I have a new brown sash, too, it seems a pity—oh!

That such a dreadful trial should have come just yesterday!

The play-house blinds are all pulled down as dark as it can be; it looks so very solemn, and so proper, don't you see?

And I have a piece of erape pinned on every dolly's hat;

Tom says it is ridiculous for only just a cat—but boys are all so horrid! They always, every one, delight in teasing little girls—and kitties, "just for fun."

The way he used to pull her tail—it makes me angry now—

And sent her up the cherry tree, to make the darling "meow!"

I've had her all the summer. One day, away last spring, I heard a frightful barking, and I saw the little thing

in the corner of a fence; 'twould have made you laugh outright

To see how every hair stood out, and how she tried to fight.

I shooped the dog away, and she jumped upon my arm;

The pretty creature knew I wouldn't do her any harm; I hugged her close, and carried her to mamma, and she said

She should be my own wee kitty if I'd see that she was fed.

A cunning little dot she was, with silky, soft gray fur; She'd lie for hours on my lap, and I could hear her purr;

And then she'd frolic after when I pulled a string about, Or try to catch her tail, or roll a marble in and out.

Such comfort she has been to me I'm sure no one could tell, Unless some other little girl, who loves her pussy well.

I've heard about a Maltese cross, but my dear little kit

Was always sweet and amiable, and never cross a bit!

But oh, last week I missed her! I hunted all around;

My darling little pussy-cat was nowhere to be found. I knelt and whispered softly, when nobody could see:

"Take care of little kitty, please, and bring her back to me!"

I found her lying, yesterday, behind the lower shed;

I thought my heart was broken when I found that she was dead.

Tom promised me another one, but even he can't see

No other kitty ever will be just the same to me!

I can't go to your party, Nannie—Macaroons don't suit me;

And ice-cream—I know I ought to try and not give way;

And I feel it would be doing wrong to disappoint you so—

Well—if I'm equal to it by to-morrow—I may go!

—*Sydney Doyle, in Wide Awake.*

THE WOODPECKER.

Of all the birds that earn their living by toil, perhaps none work as hard as the family of woodpeckers. From morning to night they are busy as busy can be, boring into trees in pursuit of insects for food, or chiseling out holes for the purpose of making their nests, and often during the night, when not at work, they sleep in the same painful posture they take during the labors of the day.

Have you ever heard this wonderful bird work? You have seen a man drilling a hole in a rock I am sure, and you have also heard the sound of his tool, with its click, click, click. Now the woodpecker has a drill that he works with in the same way, and what do you think it is? Nothing but his little bill, so made that he can drill holes in the trees, and you can hear the sound of his tool just as you do that of the blaster of rocks.

If you were here among the beautiful hills and valleys, you would find plenty of woodpeckers, and they are all carrying on these mysterious knockings, many times repeated, and very quickly, too. You would be surprised, too, that any birds so small could make themselves heard so distinctly, often at a distance of several hundred yards, working for two hours together upon the same tree.

They seek trees that are decayed in the trunk and branches, because wise little birds know well that insects are seldom found in live wood.

But how about the queer instrument that performs this arduous work? It is a curious contrivance enough, more like a chisel than anything else, it is hard and solid, too, and is worked by powerful muscles, which act upon the neck and direct its incessant blows, sometimes penetrating even to the pith of the wood.

But wonderful as this instrument is, there is yet another inside of it more curious, on purpose for pulling out the worm or insect it finds in drilling—a very long, straight tongue, which ends in a hard, bony point like a needle or thorn. This is arranged with sharp teeth, pointing backward, very much like the barbs of a fish-hook. Is this not a curious arrangement? two instruments in one.

But how can the bird manage to use them both at the same time? Let us see. While the woodpecker is busy at his drilling, the two parts of his bill are closed tightly together, making a good wedge-pointed drill, and at the same time a snug cage for the insect catcher. As soon as he comes to an insect, he opens this drill and pushes this long tongue with its barbed end into the insect and quickly draws it into its mouth.

Now, because he has to strike so hard in drilling, the bones of his head or skull are made much stronger and thicker than most birds, for you know that such heavy blows would jar them too much if they were weak heads. And God knew all this when He made the woodpecker, and provided for it.

Not only that, but in doing this hard drilling he must hold on tightly and firmly, or he would slip, as soon as he began to work, and here is a provision, too—he has given him a most singular claw, consisting of four thick toes, two

turned forward and two backward, the one resembling a spear, being longest and stoutest, and joined to a very short and muscular foot, which enables the bird to cling very firmly, and creep in all directions around the trunks of trees.

His tail, too, with its ten stiff quills bent inwards and ending in stiff, hard points, is used as a sort of rest, when he is employed in an uncomfortable position.

About the last of May the woodpeckers prepare to build their nests. They have a good deal of hard work to do beforehand. The male bird takes the first steps by cutting a hole out of the solid wood as round as if done by a pair of compasses. He is occasionally relieved by the female, both working with great diligence, and although they bore six or eight inches down into the trunk of the tree, making their nests very roomy, and as smooth as if polished by an experienced hand, they are seldom more than a week in their construction. Though the nest is so large, the entrance is just fitted to the size of the owner. Often while they are working they carry out the chips, strewing them at a distance, to prevent suspicion. When all is completed, the bird thoroughly examines every part, outside and in, with great care, as every one should do who is about to occupy a new dwelling. She then takes full possession, and lays her six beautiful white eggs upon the smooth bottom of the cavity, or on a bedding made of the chips that have been dug out. If the woodpeckers have had harder work in the construction of their snug little chambers than some of the other birds, they have the advantage of them in this, that they are lodged "high and dry," when others are exposed to the peltings of the midnight storm.

When the young are hatched they are, of course, furnished with wings, but they go very little from the confines of their own home—like some retiring families, that we have known, who do not care for outside society. They seldom share in the sports of other birds or in their vocal concerts, and yet they have their own weird songs, which have rather a melancholy strain.

Some of the woodpeckers are very elegant. Among them are the gold-winged and red-headed, both of which are to be found here. At the very earliest and sweetest hours of the morning you can hear them calling to their mates, apparently talking up the work of the day before them.

The ivory-billed woodpecker is the prince among them all. This powerful instrument is as white as ivory and elegantly fluted, and can dig into the hardest trees. The head and bill of this strange bird used to be in great repute among certain Indian tribes, not only for ornament, but as a sort of amulet or charm, and brought fabulous prices by way of trade.—*Mrs. G. Hall, in N. Y. Observer.*

Willie's Spelling Lesson.

"C-r-a-b, lobster," lisped the little fellow at his knee.

"No, no, Willie! C-r-a-b spells crab, a little fish whose bones are on the outside."

"O, how funny!" laughed Willie. Then, taking a long breath, he bent his curly head over the primer, so full of words and pictures. "R-a-t, mouse-trap!"

Surely he knew that word, for he had a little trap like the one in the picture.

"O, Willie," I said, "your eyes are sharper than your ears. R-a-t spells rat."

"Isn't that a mouse-trap?" he asked, pointing a fat little finger at the picture.

"Yes, dear! R-a-t spells the little fellow you see inside."

"What a silly spell!" cried Willie, throwing down his book in disgust.

"You are not very wise yet, my darling. Try, try, try again," you must think all the time. Now here is an easy word. Will my little boy look?"

Willie did look, and his blue eyes grew brighter.

"That's easy," he cried. "M-a-n, papa."

"Why do you think m-a-n spells papa?"

"Because—"

"Because why, dear?"

"The hat is like papa's."

"Whose hat, Willie?"

"The man's!" he answered.

"Ah, that is it! M-a-n spells, not papa, but—"

"Man!" the little fellow was sure this time.

"Yes, dear! And c-r-a-b spells—"

"The funny fish with the bones outside his skin."

"Crab, Willie. Now listen to the sounds of the letters."

Very soon he had learned his spelling lesson—three words—easy for big folks, but hard for little boys and girls.—*Our Little Ones.*

—In Merchantville, N. J., a magistrate fined a boy \$1 for swearing. This furnishes a basis for calculation to a brother of Colonel Sellers, who lives in Camden. He reckons that in Camden County there are 70,000 people, half of whom swear. That would be \$35,000 for an oath apiece. Each fellow swears fifty times a day. That makes \$1,750,000 daily income, \$12,250,000 per week, and, counting twenty-six good working days to the month, \$318,500,000 each month.

—A man has been arrested in New York for counterfeiting theater tickets. His villainy has put him in "a box," but he sighs for the family circle.—*Steukenville Herald.*

—New York City consumes 1,000,000 watermelons a year.