THE RED CLOUD CHIEF.

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RED CLOUD, - - NEBRASKA.

THE GOLDEN SILENCE.

What though I sing no other song?
What though I speak no other word?
Is silence shame? Is patience wrong?—
At least one song of mine was heard:

The echo from the mountain air,
The ocean murmur, glad and free—
One sign that nothing grand or fair
In all this world was lost to me.

I would not wake the sleeping lyre;
I would not strain the chords of thought;
The sweetest fruit of all desire
Comes its own way, and comes unsought.

Though all the bards of earth were dead,
And all their music passed away,
What Nature wishes should be said
She'll find the rightful voice to say!

Her heart is in the shimmering leaf,
The drifting cloud, the lonely sky,
And all we know of bliss and grief
She speaks in forms that can not die.

The mountain peaks that shine afar,
The silent stars, the pathless sea,
Are living signs of all we are,
And types of all we hope to be.

—*William Winter, in Baldwin's Monthly.*

NOT PREPARED.

She leaned her head on shapely hands,
And let her girlish fancy rove;
Amid the dingy diagrams
She dreamed of lovers and of love;
When— "Take the blackboard, if you please,"
Snapped out the grim professoress,
"And find the sine of 12 degrees
And 30 minutes"—more or less.
She started up with flushing face,
And looked around the room half scared;
Then said, remembering the place,
"Not prepared!"

She had a lover like a prince,
A loyal lover, too, I wis;
And though she feigned indifference,
Her foolish little heart was his.
So, when upon the star-lit strand
He spoke of all his hopes and fears,
And pressed her soft patrician hand,
He told his love to willing ears!
Though still she would not yield as yet,
Lest he should think she really cared,
But whispered low, the sly coquette,
"Not prepared!"

They were engaged and then again
To test that lover's fealty,
She treated him with cool disdain,
And flirted most outrageously.
But when her lover came no more,
She wrote and said, remorsefully,
"Will you not seek me as before—
Redeem your pledge—and marry me?"
The answer came, with blush divine
She broke the waxen seal half-scared;
Then weeping, read the single line—
"Not prepared!"

—*Acta Columbiana.*

THE WARNING OVER THE WIRES;

Or, the Message that No Man Sent.

The 6:20 evening train, No. 39, was over an hour late that night. Cause enough, Heaven knows. For 12 hours the storm had raged, and now, instead of showing any signs of breaking, the rain came down in torrents from an inky sky, and the thunder rumbled ominously overhead. A bad storm to drive an engine through, as any body would have known, and the wonder is that No. 39 was not three hours late, instead of one. Old Luke Granger, the trustiest, nerviest engineer on the road, rounded the curve just below Red Ravine Station at 26 minutes past 7. I saw breathed a sigh of relief when I saw the headlight cut a hole in the darkness. The second station-bridge might have given way in a storm like that, and I was beginning to get nervous over this thought.

Somehow every thing made me nervous that night. It was just the kind of weather when things look all out of gear any way. Then, I suppose, the knowledge of that money-package being due, and its failing to come on the 11:30, as it should have done, had its effect on me. I didn't relish the idea of keeping $13,000 in cash until the next day. Eldridge & Ricketson had been down themselves to meet the morning train, and, if the package had come, I could have turned it over to them at once, and that would have been the end of the matter. But it didn't come. That's a way things have in this world when you most want 'em.

There wasn't a soul at the station that night except myself, and there were only two passengers who got off the train. I speak of 'em that way, not meaning to be disrespectful or make light of solemn things; only it's habit, I suppose; for most people would say there was only one passenger that got off at Red Ravine, seeing that the second of 'em was carried out of the express-car in a wooden box. Usually, when a body was coming on, I got word of it beforehand, but this one took me quite by surprise, and added not a little to the nervousness I already felt.

"Who was it?" I asked, as the box was carried into the station.

The passenger who had got off the train, and who was a stranger to me, answered my inquiry:

"The body is that of my sister-in-law," said he. "She was the niece of Thomas Eldridge—doubtles you know him. Her death was very sudden. She is to be buried in Mr. Eldridge's lot, here."

"Then I suppose the lady is to be left in my charge until to-morrow?" said I.

"Yes," answered the stranger. "Do you suppose I can get to Mr. Eldridge's myself to-night?"

"Well," I replied, "it's a good four miles, and in such a storm as this—"

"I'll wait until to-morrow," interrupted the stranger. "There is some sort of a hotel here, isn't there?"

"Yes, a good one. You'll have to foot it, though; but it's only a matter of a quarter of a mile, and you can't miss your way, for the road up the hill leads straight to the house."

Here I made my way out onto the platform again and made my way to the express-car, where the money-package, which all along I had secretly hoped wouldn't come, was delivered to me by the messenger. As he gave it to me, he said:

"You'll want to keep a sharp eye on that, Billy. There's enough in it to make one of your Red-Raviners put a bullet through your head and never give you the chance to object."

"I'll look out for the Red-Raviners, and the package, too," said I, confidently enough. But, if the truth had been told, I didn't like the suggestion which the messenger had made.

The train moved off quickly, and I swung my lantern, as was my habit, by way of bidding good-night to old Luke Granger. Then I went into the little station-house with the package clutched tightly under my rubber-coat, expecting to find the man there who had come on with the body. But he had gone, being anxious, no doubt, to get to the hotel as quick as possible. No. 39 was the last train which stopped at Red Ravine until 6:10 the next morning. So my work for the night was done, and I had only to lock up the doors, see that things were all right about the place, and sit down to my newspaper in the little room which served as my sleeping quarters.

Twenty years had passed since I first found myself installed at Red Ravine as telegraph operator in the railway station. Being content with the humdrum sort of life, and faithful to my duties, I had come by degrees to attend to all the work which the place required. That is, I was the ticket agent, the baggage-master and the keeper of the station, besides acting for the express company and continuing my charge of the telegraph key. These combined labors made it pretty close work for me, but they all yielded a very comfortable income; and, as I was troubled with no unsatisfied ambitions, I counted myself well fixed. As I have intimated, I kept in the station, partly to keep guard on the Company's property, and partly from choice; for, being a bachelor and without kin, I had nothing to attract me elsewhere. My duties had grown a sort of second nature, and I had lived in the little town so long that the younger generation had come to speak of me as "Old Billy." That was, I suppose, because my hair was getting gray and my joints a trifle stiff.

The Red Ravine Station was a wooden building, about 40 feet long by 20 wide. It was divided into two compartments, the larger one being for freight and baggage, and the smaller one for passengers. My own little room was only a piece partitioned off from the freight quarter, about 10 feet square, and connected by a door with the box of an office in the passengers' room, which served both for selling tickets and holding the telegraph key. In this latter apartment, also, was placed the old-fashioned iron safe, in which I locked up valuable express packages when any happened to come to Red Ravine. The village, I ought to explain, had grown up entirely through the influence of the great iron-works of Eldridge & Ricketson. There were rich beds of ore a few miles to the north, and these, as well as the big foundry, which employed four or five hundred hands, were controlled by the firm I have mentioned. There has been some trouble at the works recently—a strike or something growing out of delay in paying the men their wages. That is how it happened that the $13,000 money package came into my keeping for a night.

Well, when I had made all snug about the station, and got off my wet clothing, I sat down comfortably with pipe and newspaper, to enjoy my customary reading. The storm outside continued to rage more and more fiercely, but within things were as cozy as could be. I had a blazing fire in the stove, a cheerful light, an easy chair, plenty of good tobacco—the one luxury in which I was really extravagant—a fresh newspaper, and a bottle of good Holland gin, wherewith to make my regular nocturnal toddy. Certainly, these were pleasant surroundings for an old fellow like me, and, as a rule, they yielded as much solid comfort as a man has a right to expect in this world. But that night things all seemed out of gear, as I have said. My pipe didn't soothe me as was its wont; try as I might, I couldn't get interested in the newspaper; an uncomfortable feeling of dread—a feeling that some shadowy but horrible thing was about to happen—possessed my mind; and even when I mixed up a toddy considerably stronger than usual it failed to bring the relief I had hoped for.

"It all comes of that pesky money-package," I muttered to myself. "Why couldn't it have got here on the 11:30, and saved me the job of keeping it over night?"

Just at that moment came a terrific clap of thunder, and a flash of lightning vivid enough to make the lamp seem dim. I had locked up the package in the safe, and put the key—there was no combination lock—in my pocket. But I had not the largest faith in the security of the old safe. It had occurred to me often that a person could open it, even if he wasn't a skillful cracksman. It was my custom to leave my door open between my little room and the Ticket-office, so that if Red Ravine was called on the telegraph-key I could hear it. The instrument had been clicking away at a great rate for the last hour; but as it was none of my business, I had paid no attention to what was going over the wires. I judged now, from the clearness of the lightning and the jerky sounds of the instruments, that the storm was playing the mischief with the messages. I passed into the Ticket-office, where a light was left burning, and stood for some time thinking whether the money-package would be less exposed in the safe than it would be under the mattress of my bed; and I finally concluded that the latter place would be hardest for any possible thief to reach. So I took out the heavy brown envelope, and stowed it away under the mattress. Then I took a second glass of toddy, which was usually against my rule, but which I thought the circumstances warranted.

Once more I sat down to my newspaper and pipe, but with no better success than before. The storm seemed now to have centered right over the little station. Peal after peal of thunder rent the air, and the lightning played about the sky like phosphorus on an inky background. If you have ever chanced to be in a telegraph office during a thunder-storm, you may have seen the electricity dash down the wires in a way to make timid people nervous. Even veteran operators, like myself, wouldn't want to undertake to receive that sort of message. I was tempted to close the key, but the meaningless ticking had a sort of fascination for me in the mood I then was. It was like the incoherent mutterings of a maniac, where now and then, at long intervals only, could one distinguish a word or sentence. Maybe the extra allowance of toddy had made me more imaginative than usual, and given a weird coloring to my thoughts; for, listening to the rapid click-click, I remember of fancying that some spirit-hand had got hold of the key, and was pouring out a wail of woe over the wires.

I was too restless to sit still and too nervous to go to bed. Besides, even if I hadn't been so upset in my mind, it is doubtful whether I could have slept through such a storm as that. To occupy myself about something, I relighted my lantern, went out into the freight-room, examined again the bolts of the doors and the fastenings of the windows, and returned to my room more worried and upset than ever. Just as I was entering my own nest, the light of the lantern fell squarely on the wooden box. Oddly enough, until that moment I had forgotten all about the dead young woman. Thinking so steadily of the $13,000 had, I suppose, driven the box out of my mind. But I can't say it was any comfort to have it brought back now; for a corpse is never the most cheerful of company, and, feeling as I did then, I would a great deal rather have had no company at all.

It must have been the imp of the perverse, I suppose, that compelled me, after the box had been brought back to my mind, to leave the door open so that I could sit and stare at it with morbid curiosity. As I have already said, my sleeping apartment was partitioned off from the freight room, and was connected with the latter by a door. The body had been placed in such a position that, when this door was open, the head of the box was in sight. Two or three times I got up to shut the door, but some strange fatality drove me back to my chair, and caused me to keep in view the box with its sad freight. All this time the storm raged, the thunder discharged its mighty batteries, the lightning dashed, and the mad ravings of the telegraph continued. I caught my hand trembling as I tried to refill my pipe. Nervousness, no doubt; but possibly an observer might have thought Old Billy was frightened.

I had just risen to wind the little clock on the shelf, when suddenly out of the hitherto meaningless ticking of the instrument sharply and distinctly came to my ear these sounds:

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which in spoken words meant:

WATCH THE BOX!

I started as if a charge of electricity had shot through my frame. I could fairly feel my face grow white. I stood motionless, clutching the back of the chair and with my eyes riveted in a vacant stare at the table in the ticket-office. I knew this was no work of an excited imagination. The words, to my practiced ear, were as plain as if shouted in clarion tones. There had come no call for Red Ravine, and the message ended without signature or mark, but abruptly, as it had begun. More than that, it was not the writing of any operator on any section of the line. I would have sworn to that with as much positiveness as you would to the tones of a voice with which you were familiar. In the dot-and-dash alphabet we learn to distinguish who is handling the keys almost with as much accuracy as others distinguish hand-writing. And in all my experience I had never heard the sounder click off a message like that.

While I stood dazed and almost paralyzed—for you must remember that Old Billy's nerves were strung to a terrible pitch that night—the rapid and unintelligible click-click was resumed as if a demon again had got hold of the key. It was fully five minutes before I mustered courage to pass into the ticket-office and sit down at the table myself. Not once in that time had I turned back to look at the box. Almost on the instant of my sitting down at the table the clicking stopped short, as it had done before, and then those words were repeated:

WATCH THE BOX!

Every dot, every dash, every letter, every word, came with such horrible distinctness that it seemed to send a sharp pain tingling through my ears. It was like the loud whispering of some ghostly voice. Then, again broke out the jargon of sound that turned the clicking into meaningless confusion.

I sprang up from the table, and, with the now strengthened conviction that it was no delusion, no fancy, but that the sound had come plainly over the wires, I felt my courage returning, and resolved to heed the mysterious warning. The rolling of the thunder and the mad roar of the storm no longer depressed me. I stepped boldly back into my own room, and rested my eyes unflinchingly on the wooden box. What was its mysterious freight? Why had the phantom of the storm sent those startling words over the wires? What unknown hand had reached out from the very lightning itself to warn me of some impending danger? These questions rushed through my mind as I felt the dread fear disappearing, and found myself of a sudden grown strangely calm.

The clock struck 10. I turned to the shelf, and, with a hand that no longer trembled, inserted the key, and wound it composedly. Would it be the last time that I should perform that simple task? No matter. Happier than most men, because content with my humble lot, it should never be said that Old Billy flinched in the face of duty. For that night it was my duty—my one sacred, all-important duty—to guard the treasure left to my safe-keeping. And guard it I would while life remained.

When I had finished winding the clock, I took down from the shelf an old rusty pistol, which had lain for years undisturbed. It was not loaded, nor had I either powder or bullet anywhere in the station. But the weapon was ugly looking, and carried a sort of silent force in case of too aggressive argument. After examining the rusty lock, I put the pistol on the table, made a fresh glass of toddy, drank it, lighted my pipe, and—closed the door that opened into the freight-room. Now that I was thoroughly myself again, I found it easy enough to shut out the sight of that ominous oblong box.

It was not until the clock struck again, that is, eleven—that I made up my mind to go to bed. All this time the storm held on, although the thunder had begun to rumble more distantly. I threw off my coat and slippers, put out the light in the ticket-office, and turned that in my sleeping-room down to a low flame. Then I drew the money-package from under the mattress and pinned it securely to my woolen shirt under my vest. This done, and with the table so placed that I could reach both the lamp and the pistol, I opened the door into the freight-room some three or four inches, and then threw myself upon the bed. Just as my head touched the pillow the instrument, which had grown quiet now, clicked off for the third time, loudly, distinctly, slowly, its words of warning:

WATCH THE BOX!

This time the warning was not needed. I had not gone to bed to sleep, but for the very purpose of watching the box. Standing as it did, with the head close to the door, and therefore close to the box itself, the bed afforded the very best point from which to keep an eye on the suspicious freight. Had my faith in the telegraphic clicking been less, or had my own sense of a great responsibility deserted me for a single moment, I should certainly have given up the job of watching as foolish; and, in that case, it is not likely that this narrative would ever have been written. But I believed in the thrice-repeated message, and I did not let drowsiness overcome patience. Twelve, one, two—how very slowly the hours seemed to drag themselves! The low flame of the lamp went out, as the oil had run dry. What a relief it was to hear the clock strike? At last, somewhere about midnight, the storm had broken. I could see the stars as they came out, through the window in the freight-room, which was on a line of vision with the box. How strangely still it seemed after the mighty roar of the storm and the sharp claps of thunder! Not a click from the instrument now. Not a sound save the steady ticking of the clock. Still I lay listening, watching, with faculties all alert and my eyes always on the oblong box.

A little past two—perhaps ten minutes. The silence almost painful in its profoundness. Nothing but the tick-tick of the clock, which to my eager ear had taken on this sound, which it kept repeating over and over:

"Watch—the—box! Watch—the—box!"

What was that?

Not the clock, not the telegraphic instrument. No, it was the sound as of the grating of iron. Faint, very faint, yet still audible to my ear. Breathing regularly and deeply, as one breathes in sleep, I lay and listened. Another interval of silence, and then the grating sound came again, this time a trifle louder than before. The light of the stars shining through the window made the objects in the freight-room just visible. Almost simultaneously with the second grating noise I saw the cover of the wooden box slowly from the end furthest removed from the bed. I could feel my heart thumping away, like a sledge-hammer, but I continued to breathe heavily and to watch keenly. Gently and noiselessly the cover was pressed upward until it reached an angle which completely shut out from my view the window beyond. A moment later the figure of a man came out from the shadows, while the box-cover was let down as noiselessly as it had been raised.

This, then, was the burden of the box. This was the meaning of the mysterious warning which the sounder had spoken.

With cat-like tread the figure moved toward the door of my room. Still I lay as in deep sleep. On the threshold the figure paused, and a moment later a single ray of light like a silver thread pierced the darkness and fell upon the bed. Luckily, it did not strike my face, and in an instant I had closed my eyes. As I had anticipated, the ray of light was directed toward my pillow, and by the sense of feeling I knew it rested a moment on my face. Satisfied that I was in deep slumber, the figure, still with cat-like tread, glided through the bedroom and into the ticket-office. My eyes were wide open again by this time. The light from the dark-lantern had increased, but its rays were now turned toward the safe. Obviously the robber believed the treasure he sought was there. I waited until he had knelt down to examine the lock, and then, with step as noiseless as his own, I slipped from the bed and toward the half-open door. So intent was he in examining the safe that it was not until I was within reach of him that he heard me. He sprang to his feet, bringing the glass of the lantern full into my face, and reaching for his revolver, which he had laid upon the top of the safe. But he was too late. With the rusty old pistol, held by its long barrel, I dealt him a crushing blow on the head just as his fingers grasped his own weapon. He fell heavily, without uttering a groan. The lantern was extinguished as it fell, and with trembling fingers I struck a match and lighted the lamp in the office. As its rays fell upon the upturned face of the robber, I saw that blood was flowing from the wound I had inflicted, and I saw, too, that the man's face was delicate in its outlines and intelligent in expression. I had time to notice no more, for I felt now that the long, nervous strain was over—now that the danger was past—the need of aid. So, after hurriedly binding the unconscious man's feet and arms and bathing his head in cold water, I pulled on my boots and overcoat and started in hot haste for the hotel.

Half way on the road I met a covered carriage, drawn by one horse. I took it to be the turnout of Matthews, the hotel proprietor, and, wondering where he could be out for at that hour, I shouted his name. I got no response. Then I cried out at the top of my voice:

"I've killed a burglar down at the station!"

Whoever was in the carriage must have heard me, but the horse only quickened his sharp trot and disappeared in the darkness.

They give me a great deal more credit, the people of Red Ravine, for that night's adventure, than I deserve. And I do not blame them for laughing at how things came out. For when a party of us got back to the station, my unconscious burglar had disappeared, and the tracks next morning showed that the covered carriage, which I had met on the road, had drawn up at the platform. Who was in it? Well, I couldn't swear, but I have a notion that it contained the gentleman who had come on with the dead body. At all events, neither he nor the body was ever seen in the town again. I had the satisfaction of delivering the money-package safely to Eldridge & Ricketson, but the check they gave me was really not merited. For what would have happened had it not been for the mysterious message which no man sent?

A Duel to the Death.

Mr. H. Thomas has just arrived in the city from Hot Springs, and, having been a witness of the desperate encounter which recently occurred between Col. Robert Alexander and Col. Smiley, at that place, gives the facts which we spread before our readers. Col. Alexander and Col. Smiley were prominent claimants of mining lands at Silver City. Some dispute arose as to a claim. Being unable to settle it satisfactorily, the dispute augmented into a quarrel, and the quarrel into violent threats. It was well known that both parties were men of nerve. Smiley had won a reputation of being desperate in a personal encounter. Alexander, though he had never been credited with shedding blood, was considered a man with whom it would not be safe to trifle. All efforts to settle the misunderstanding failed, and those who were acquainted with the circumstances expected that bloods had would be the ultimate result. Several days ago, the day when the encounter took place, Smiley came to Hot Springs. Alexander was in the town. Smiley went to the bank and asked of the Cashier:

"Have you seen Alexander?"

The Cashier replied that he had not seen him, but understood that he was in town.

"I am going to kill him before 4 o'clock," exclaimed Smiley, and, turning, left the bank. After leaving the bank, he had not gone far when he met Alexander. The furious aspect immediately assumed by each man illustrated the fact that violence would ensue. Alexander drew a large revolver, and, rushing upon Smiley, struck him over the head. Smiley staggered back, and drew a French self-cocking revolver, and, with a rapidity almost beyond the capacity of enumeration, fired six shots at Alexander. Three shots took effect, a ball striking each arm and another going through his lungs. Alexander's pistol dropped from his hand. He attempted to recover it, but his right arm had been paralyzed by the ball. He grasped it with his left hand, but the left arm having been also wounded, he was unable to wield the weapon. Smiley was upon him. With a cool, desperate presence of mind, Alexander kicked his pistol into a saloon, near which the encounter occurred. Then entering, he stooped and caught the muzzle of his pistol with his left hand, raised it up, and cocked it with his foot. He lifted the pistol from the floor. Smiley stood outside, peeping around a door-post, with only a part of his head exposed. Alexander nervously lifted the weapon, took deliberate aim and fired. The ball plowed along the post behind which Smiley stood, half burying itself, and, striking Smiley in the forehead, went through his brain. Smiley fell dead, and Alexander, turning, sank from loss of blood.

A large crowd witnessed the encounter, and the greatest of excitement prevailed. The wonder is that several men were not killed, for when Smiley fired the six shots the sidewalk was crowded with people. The weapons used were not parlor pistols, but the brand intended to kill, almost regardless of distance. One of the balls from Smiley's pistol went through a signboard and buried itself in another. The mark on the door-post, made by the ball which killed Smiley, is full six feet from the sidewalk. Nine men out of ten would have escaped, as the deadly missile would have passed harmlessly over.

Alexander, at last accounts, was suffering greatly, and is not expected to live.—*Little Rock (Ark.) Gazette.*

A Distressing Mistake.

A distressing case has occurred in the best circles of our most select society. It has come out that a certain lady, Mrs. A., called on Mrs. B. one day last week. The ladies stand on about a level socially, the father of one having been a successful wagon-make and the other a thrifty carpenter. Both are in comfortable circumstances now, and are nice sort of people. There was nothing wrong in one of these ladies calling on the other. It was a nice and proper thing to do. But the wretched part of the business does not lie there. Both ladies have been residents of Saratoga less than a year. Neither had called on the other before. In a thoughtless and unguarded hour Mrs. A. said to herself that she would call on Mrs. B., forgetting that Mrs. B. had resided in town just a week longer than herself, and that therefore a call was due first from Mrs. B. to her. But the mischief is done and the thing is all over town. No one regrets it more profoundly than we do. For if there is one thing more than another that we pride ourselves on here in Saratoga, when the mixed summer multitude is gone and the summer dining-room is boarded up and the extra bedding and dishes are put away snug for the winter, it is our social etiquette.—*Saratogian.*

FARM TOPICS.

[From the New York Times.]

SPREADING MANURE.

Spreading manure is a seasonable work. The effect of the manure may be greatly increased by judicious spreading. To put it up in heaps, as is very commonly done, is wasteful. A field so manured, at harvest time shows the spot where every heap lay by a green cone of vegetation above the regular level. Grain on these spots is apt to be laid and damaged. Manure has been wasted there which would have done good elsewhere. So, in making heaps in the field, not only is manure wasted, but the work is doubled by the second handling. In spreading manure now, it will be labor well spent to follow with a fork and break up the lumps and scatter them even.

USE OF FERTILIZER IN THE DRILL.

A very important consideration in applying artificial fertilizers in the hill or the drill is that the early vigor of the crop enables it to appropriate much more nutriment from the soil than it would otherwise be able to do. An early and quick start often saves the crop, pushing it beyond danger, and securing it from harm from insect pests. Insects doubtless hunt by scent. The cut-worm discovers the tender cabbage or the spire of corn by the aid of its olfactory nerves. If this is true, a light dressing of strong-flavored chemical fertilizer may mislead it and drive it away from the corn. Or the acrid effect upon its susceptible locomotive organs, whether we call them feet or "prolegs," or whatever else they may be, may be disagreeable, if not injurious. But the main point is, with every crop, to give it a vigorous start; to push it ahead from the first, and to encourage the roots to spread far and wide for food, which they will find for themselves as soon as they can take care of themselves. And this is precisely what is done by fertilizers.

POULTRY CHOLERA.

This destructive disease has begun its annual ravages. It is peculiarly a disease of the winter, when constant corn-feeding, close confinement to unwholesome quarters, and general disagreeableness and unhealthfulness of treatment bring on intestinal disorders. The bright yellow evacuations and paleness of the comb and wattles denote bilious and intestinal derangement. The disease is a true typhoid and enteric fever. The liver is diseased, and the bowels are inflamed and gangrenous. It is virulent and contagious, and spreads from farm to farm rapidly. In my case last year, it affected every farm along a road 10 miles from where it started, until it reached mine, and, in spite of every precaution that I then knew of, it affected my flock to some extent. By cleaning down the house, digging up the ground, covering every thing with hot lime-wash, killing every fowl that was sick and burying the carcases, the disease was arrested after some loss. This year it is again prevalent, but only one of my flock has been affected so far. The hen was removed into a separate shed and put in quarantine; a full grain dose of blue pill was given daily for four days, but no food. After four days a baked potato, hot from the oven, was mashed with plenty of salt and pepper and given to the hen. She ate this with eagerness, and I considered her safe. One hot potato, well peppered, was given daily until, the door of the shed being left ajar, she escaped and returned to the flock, weak, but otherwise well. If any new case occurs, the blue pill and a course of starving will be tried again, but, by giving plenty of hot baked potatoes, with pepper and salt, and the use of disinfectants, I hope to avoid the disease.

PRUNING ORCHARDS.

The present is a good time for pruning orchards. This work is often done, apparently, for no other purpose than to do some sort of perfunctory work in hashing up the trees. Trees should be pruned and thinned out, and so, with ax in hand, the owner goes over them and butchers them miserably. The rough wounds inflicted do not heal, but rot begins, and in a short time the trees are useless, if not dead. How rare is it to come across a good looking old orchard, venerable with age, but yet trim, neat, and sound in limb and trunk. Fruit trees exist in Europe that are historical in their age, and in this country there are trees from which the old Indian tribes gathered fruit before they were crowded from the banks of the beautiful Delaware. But now, an orchard 30 years old is a ruin, and unless trees are planted every few years, a farmer must buy his fruit. Much of this is due to the rough pruning the trees undergo, and more to the continual cropping of the orchards. Perhaps something of it is owing to the root grafting which does not seem to produce long lived trees, top-grafted trees seeming to be more vigorous than others. But bad pruning has much to answer for. One can not prune by system. Each tree must be studied separately and in regard to some definite principles. For instance, pruning is intended to relieve the tree of useless or superabundant wood; to take away less important branches that crowd and press upon others; to reduce the quantity of bearing wood, and so preserve the vitality and balance of the tree; lastly, to remove disfigured, blighted and diseased wood. Now, with these rules in mind, let one examine carefully each tree before he cuts away a twig, and note where and what he should cut away, and then mind how he cuts. No ax should be used about a tree except to cut it down when it cumbers the ground. A sharp, fine-toothed, long, narrow-bladed saw is the proper pruning implement. A sharp knife with a curving blade that makes a draw-cut, and a pot of shellac varnish should go with the saw. Every thing that is removed should be cut close to the main wood, trimmed smoothly with the knife, and the wound covered with the varnish. The varnish is shellac dissolved in alcohol. This leaves a water and air proof covering over the wound. The work may be begun now and continued as opportunity offers. There need then be no hurry. Young trees should be put in training now for future pruning. Three or four main limbs only should be left, so as to balance the head. All in-growing shoots should be removed close to the main branch, so that no bud is left to sprout. Each main side limb may fork into two or three sub-branches, spreading fan-like around the central limb, if there is one. The sub-branches should be encouraged to start low, so that a low, round, compact, spreading head may be produced. Much may be done in forming the head by tying down, or hanging weights upon limbs that are inclined to wander from the way they should go, so that when they are old they will not depart from it. "As the twig is bent the tree is inclined," and a piece of hemp twist will soon bring a crooked young tree into a regular and handsome form.

—Formerly women never were invited to any notable banquet or breakfast. At the authors' breakfast, given to Oliver Wendell Holmes on his seventieth birthday, woman in literature was recognized for the first time on such a grand occasion. Some twenty lady contributors to the *Atlantic Monthly* were present among the great Yankee literary lights.

—Lemon Pie: Grated rind and juice of one lemon, one and one-half cups of sugar, one egg, a piece of butter the size of a walnut, one heaping tablespoonful of corn-starch or flour, one cup of water; dissolve the corn-starch in the egg and a little water, and cook before filling the pie. Made with one or two rusts, as preferred.

HINTS FOR THE HOUSEHOLD.

The Table.

—Molasses Cookies: One cup of molasses, one-half cup of sugar, one-half cup of butter, one teaspoonful each of salt, soda, and ginger. Mix hard.

—Sugar Cookies: Two eggs, two cups of sugar, one-half cup of milk, one cup of butter, one teaspoonful of ginger, and one-half teaspoonful of soda. Mix hard and roll thin.

—Corn Bread: Beat two eggs light, mix with one pint of sour milk, add a teaspoonful of soda, one pint of corn-meal, and one tablespoonful of melted butter.

—Coffee Cakes: One heaping cup of brown sugar, two-thirds cup of thick sour cream, two-thirds cup of buttermilk, one teaspoonful of soda, ginger, and a little salt. Mix soft and roll.

—Doughnuts: One cup of sugar, one coffee-cup of sour milk or buttermilk, two tablespoonfuls of melted lard, one teaspoonful of soda, and a little salt and nutmeg. Pour lard over the sugar before mixing with the other ingredients.

—Steamed Brown Bread: One cup of sweet milk, two cups of buttermilk, one-half cup of molasses, one cup of flour, canielle is preferred, two heaping cups of meal, and one heaping teaspoonful of soda. Steam three and bake two hours.

—Pumpkin Pie: The less water you use to boil your pumpkin in the better. Slice the pumpkin, and don't scrape it too much inside—the inside is the best; stew with water, in which you put a pinch of salt, until the meat is tender; mash it and pass it through a fine sieve while it is hot; after straining, add an eighth of a pound of butter, if you have about two quarts of stewed pumpkin; now, to every quart of milk add three eggs, beating up your whites and yelks separately; use white sugar, and sweeten to taste, cinnamon and nutmeg; I don't use any ginger; when you bake your pies you want a hot oven; pour it on thick; a thin pumpkin pie is not right.

—Baked Dried Peas: Three pints of dried peas, seven quarts of cold water, three pounds of bacon or salt pork; pick over the peas, wash and soak them over night in cold water, drain and pour them into a pot with the bacon or pork, the latter previously cleansed; cover and boil gently; remove the scum as it rises; when the peas become soft drain and mash them, put them into a baking dish, smooth the top, place the bacon or pork on top, put the dish into the oven, and bake brown. The liquor from the peas may be strained, put into a pot, thickened over the fire with Indian meal (about four or five tablespoonfuls to a pint) and boiled gently about one hour. When cold it may be sliced and fried.

Miscellaneous.

—Turpentine will remove ink from white wood work.

—Cockroaches may be driven away by putting Scotch or other high-dried snuff round their haunts.

—A mixture of oil and ink is good to clean kid boots with. The first softens and the latter blackens them.

—Waterproof Whitewash: Slake half a bushel of lime with boiling water, and cover to keep in the steam. Strain and add five gallons of hot water, three pounds of ground rice boiled to a paste and hot, half a pound of Spanish whiting, and one pound of clean glue dissolved to a thin paste. Stir the whole, and keep it covered for a few days. The whitewash must be used hot, but one pint of it will cover a square yard.

—Coal oil—crude petroleum—is the cheapest and quickest dressing for steel and iron surfaces that are to be kept from rusting over winter, such as plows, cultivators, scrapers, etc. I don't see why it would not have been just the thing to have wiped our laid away stove-pipes with last spring, if we had thought of it in time. Unused sheet iron rusts in summer more than it wears in winter, and the civilized nostril is become so accustomed to coal oil smoke that a few minutes of it, more or less, at the time of rousting out winter stoves would add but a trifle to the usual fume of that chaotic period.

—To sweep and dust a room properly is an art, and like all fine arts has a right method. Well done, it renovates the entire room, and the occupant takes possession feeling that "all things have become new." It is not merely a performance of the hands, but a work into which taste and judgment, in other words, brains must enter. Are these closets opening into the room to be swept? Arrange the shelves, drawers or clothing preparatory to sweeping-day, then let this be the first to be swept. Cover the bed with soiled sheets, as also all heavy articles that can not be removed, first, however, having carefully dusted and brushed them. Remove all furniture that can be easily set in hall or adjoining room, having first dusted it; then, taking a step-ladder, begin to sweep or brush, or wipe the cornice and picture cords and pictures. Draw the shades to the top of the window, or if there are inside blinds, dust them carefully. Open the windows. All the dust left in the room now is in the carpet or air, and the current of the windows will soon settle it. Now begin to sweep, not towards a door or corner, but from the outer edges of the room towards the center, where the dust will be taken up with a small brush and dust-pan. Go over the room once more—this time with a dampened broom; that removes the last bit of dust and gives the carpet a new, bright appearance. Replace the articles of furniture as soon as the air is entirely free from dust, uncover the rest and the room is new and clean. All this seems an easy thing to do, but there is not one in a hundred that will follow out the details. Some will sweep the dust into the hall or from one room to another, and then wonder why their house is so dusty again. Others forget cornice and pictures, and thus leave a seed of future annoyance, while a third class will do all but using the damp broom, which is as the finishing touches to a picture.

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