

At the End of the Road

THEY a'n't to know a thing about it unless they mistrust. It's to be a real surprise," said Lou Harlow, poisoning herself, like one about to take flight, in the doorway of Mrs. Green's kitchen. "You must come, Mrs. Green. 'T will do you good to get out. You're too much shut up. Sarell will miss you if you don't come. She'll want to see her near neighbors. If nobody else is there, get 'Rastus to bring you down."

Mrs. Green set the teapot farther back on the stove and murmured an indefinite "M'm." The milk-house door opened with a rattle of pails. Lou's eyes turned slightly in that direction as she talked on persistently.

"Brother Ed was going to stop yesterday and invite you, but he had to go another way, so I stopped in now. It's rather late to be giving invitations, I know; but it's all been planned in such a hurry that we are out and out surprised. I thought, too, that I might stir you up to coming better than I'd could. It does seem too bad not to have a lot of folks at a tin wedding surprise party. Everybody's to bring something besides refreshments, you know. I've the cutest little oatmeal cooker that I got at the 5-cent store in the city, and I shall take that. Well, I won't hinder you any longer from your supper. Good-by. Now do come if you can. Good-by."

The kitchen door timed its closing with mathematical accuracy to the issuing of a young man from the milk-house. Through the window Mrs. Green saw Lou's innocently surprised start and cordial bow, but the bit of talk that followed was inaudible to her. She felt certain, however, that it was about the surprise party.

"If those Harlows a'n't managin'!" was her mental comment. "But it'll take more'n a pretty puttin' on to make Lou one mite engagin' to 'Rastus, I guess."

"'Rastus came in presently, and, after washing at the sink, sat down to supper. He was thin and not over tall, with a vivid boyish complexion and a chin like his mother's, marked by a decision that almost severe coldness of gray blue eyes accentuated. It was only when 'Rastus smiled that one knew how winning his face could be.

"Lou Harlow stopped in to ask us to a tin wedding surprise at her brother Will's. Probably she mentioned it to you," said Mrs. Green, as she poured the tea. "I shall have to carry something in the shape of tin. I wonder if the dipper I got of that peddler last week won't do. I took it for rags. They do pay so little for rags now, I declare it's hardly worth savin' 'em. If it hadn't been for them old overalls of yours I shouldn't made out enough to get this dipper."

"Likely they won't have more'n seven dippers," said 'Rastus, helping himself to a second dish of apple sauce.

Mrs. Green looked disturbed.

"Well, dippers is handy. Every house-keeper needs two, and they use up quick. Dippers nowadays ain't what dippers used to be. There's hardly one to be got but has a weakness in the solderin'. I don't know what's more provokin' than to have a dipperful of water come splashin' on to the floor and leave nothin' but a handle in your fingers."

"The quick, bright smile flashed over 'Rastus' face.

"Better carry a pan or something of that kind."

His mother took the suggestion as profoundly serious.

"I haven't one I could spare. Can't we stop for the Blake girls, 'Rastus? They like to get out, and it's rather far for 'em to walk now, they're fallin'." I declare it goes to my heart to see poor Miss Betsey so meechin' lately. She doesn't seem to know whether her things is on straight or not. Last Sunday 'twas all I could do to keep my mind on the sermon for wantin' to straighten her false front. 'Twas twisted so the parin' was over one eye. And it's real pathetic to see Miss Harriet hoverin' about her sister and fussin' to make her comfortable, when all the time Miss Harriet's the oldest. Miss Betsey ain't but 68. I shouldn't wonder if 't would chick 'em up considable to go to the surprise party this evenin'."

"Well, you can take 'em; I'll walk. 'T would be too crowding in the buggy for us all, and I don't want to get out the business wagon. There's a spoke loose."

Mrs. Green looked narrowly at him; the repose of his face indicated nothing.

"But, 'Rastus, I can't hitch old Nell. You know how she acts the minute we get out—a caperin' and pullin'."

"I'll be on hand to look out for you."

'Rastus pushed away his chair, and the door closed after him.

'Rastus was not long in finishing the chores. When he had harnessed old Nell to the Concord buggy and hitched her to a post by the back door he came in to shave. Mrs. Green was sitting by the kitchen window, dressed in her best gown—a black alpaca, with fashionably large sleeves. It had just been made over, and the size of the sleeves was supposed to offset the scantiness of the skirt. At any rate, as she told the neighbor dressmaker, "there wasn't any more pieces, and 'twas better the scrimp'n should come in the skirt, for one's skirt didn't show in one's coffin, and if she was to die sudden before styles changed, why, the waist would do nicely for her to be laid out in."

A moon in its second quarter was showing above the eastern horizon as

'Rastus walked across the lots after helping his mother off. Beyond, at the end of the lane, was another house, old-fashioned and yellow-painted. There lived Mr. and Mrs. English, two childless, middle-aged people. They were coming up from their house now. As he waited by the fence in the shadow of a lilac bush he could see them distinctly in the clear moonlight, two somewhat bent figures, stepping irregularly. Between them walked another figure, with youthful poise of head and shoulders, and his heart gave a queer little jump at the sound of a girl's laugh.

"If I haven't stove my thumb into this cake," Mrs. English was saying. "Never mind, ma. Turn it 't other side to when you hand it in, and nobody'll notice," suggested her husband. The musical girl laugh sounded again. "Let me carry it, Aunt Martha."

With a thrill of satisfaction 'Rastus saw the napkin-covered plate change hands. The slim, quick-stepping figure was ahead of the others now. As she reached the gate he seized the coveted opportunity, and moved forward, awkwardly snatching off his hat.

"Good evening, Miss Holland. Let me open the gate for you."

Never did gate latch so long refuse to lift; and when she had passed through was it not to pause and turn back with a pretty "Oh, dear!" and he blessed the rose branch that caught her skirt, and so held her for his releasing. "Thank you," she said demurely, looking at him with the moonlight in her eyes. Old Nell came up at a brisk trot, but his mother was alone, sitting very erect and holding the reins far apart.

"The Blake girls couldn't come. Miss Betsey had a bad turn last night, and Miss Harriet didn't want to leave her. So you see you could have rode down well enough. I know you've spoiled your new shoes a-trottin' through the wet grass 'cross lots."

"Well, you won't have to ride home alone," said 'Rastus, happily, as he helped her out. What were new shoes in comparison with that interchange of glance from a girl's eyes. "I don't believe the Harlows were very much surprised after all, mother. When I got here every window was lighted. We're early, too."

One by one, in twos and threes, and merry family loads, the guests arrived; and there was talk and laugh and interchange of kisses among the women; an awkward standing aloof or scraps of neighborly chaff among the men, until the elder masculine element drifted to the kitchen, the younger to the long hall, and the sitting-room circle was strictly feminine.

Lou Harlow, bustling about among the guests was more busily hostess like than Mrs. Harlow, herself. "Sarell never mistrusted until the last minute," she was telling every one. "When we suggested her fixin' more'n usual for the evening, she said she just knew something was up."

"Yes, it was a real surprise until then," corroborated Sarell Harlow, her usually quiet face very animated. "I didn't suppose any one would remember that Will and I had been married ten years to-day. It's real pleasant to have one's friends so remembering."

Mrs. Green, taking inventory of the tin things on the table, smiled benignly upon the speaker. She had found but one dipper among the pile, and naturally felt the prestige of being the only person who had given an unduplicated article. Mrs. Dodgson, the local merchant's wife, began talking at her elbow.

"How nice Lou Harlow looks to-night. That lace at her throat is very becoming. I hear something about her and your 'Rastus. How's that?"

Mrs. Green drew herself up stiffly. "Folks can hear a good deal," she said.

"'Rastus looks rather young to think of marryin'. And Lou—why, she's—let me see." Mrs. Dodgson screwed her face into arithmetical puckers. "She's three years older'n 'Rastus! I remember she was born the same year as my Ameret."

"Oh, well, it's the fashion nowadays for men to marry older'n themselves," Mrs. Green answered, with a blandness born of remembrance that Mrs. Dodgson's own son had wedded a woman ten years his senior—a widow with an overgrown daughter just entering her teens—and that the affair was very displeasing to his people.

But her neighbor's friendly inquisitiveness set her into a new train of thought. What if Lou Harlow had fancied? Before her rose a vision of heavy bread, cake smelling of salerat, careless housekeeping—which she knew to be the rule at the Harlow homestead; she thought of what it would be to live day after day with Lou's giggling laugh, her persistent chatter and good-natured officiousness! Looking across the room at one who but a few hours ago she had characterized as "that flitterin' little Holland girl," she noted with a stirring of pride akin to what she felt in 'Rastus the trimness of the black-gowned figure, the quiet manner, the delicate contour of a face whose prettiness did not conceal decision and capability. 'Rastus was talking with her now, his attitude marked by that new dignity which his mother had noticed of late. Something in the turn of his head reminded her of his father when he had come courting out Pemmewasset way, where she lived as a girl.

When came a homeward movement

among the guests, Mrs. Green paused, talking in the open door on her way out. Her quick eyes had recognized two young figures at the gate, and she turned her back upon them, barring the progress of Mr. and Mrs. English.

"I have enjoyed it all so much; haven't you, Miss English? I do think a surprise tin weddin' the best way of rememberin' the anniversary—it don't make so much work for the folks of the house. Seems to me it's a pretty long while since you and your husband have been up to take tea with me. Now, why can't you be a mite more neighborly and come soon? Say Wednesday. Nothin' to hinder. Well, I'm real glad. And you are to bring your niece. Not havin' any girl of my own I like to see a bright face like hers 'round once in a while. I guess 'Rastus must have got the horse unhitched by this time. Good-night."

'Rastus was patting Nell's nose as he stood by her when his mother came out. Retta Holland was still at the gate, waiting for her aunt and uncle, and Mrs. Green smiled at her as she passed. Mother and son drove along the bush fringed lane a plodding gait; for old Nell seemed in an indolent mood, and 'Rastus loth to urge her on. The moonlight lay white and beautiful over everything.

"I've asked Mr. and Mrs. English to tea next Wednesday," said Mrs. Green. She cleared her throat at the eager interest on 'Rastus' face, and adieu what she knew would establish perfect understanding between herself and him. "And I've asked the niece, too."

"Have you? In 'Rastus' voice was a thrill of such gladness as comes when one is 23 and in love for the first time. "Have you?"

How much the boy looked like his father in spite of having her eyes and chin! Mrs. Green felt a sudden all-embracing motherliness that let the girl of his love into the depths of her heart. But she only said, in a matter-of-fact way:

"I should think 't would be real lonesome for the Englishes bein' as their house is where there a'n't never any passin'. I should hate to live so far from folks. I wouldn't for anything."

'Rastus turned and looked back toward the old yellow house. To him it seemed that under some circumstances he could live his whole life at the end of the road.—Independent.

Assorted Voices.

It is a well-known fact that voices differ greatly according to nationality and geographical position. Thus, in Russia, one hears male voices which are absolutely unique in the lowness of their compass. The Italians, on the other hand, are notable for their fine tenor voices. Some Asiatic nations, according to Engel, sing in shrill notes by straining the voice to its highest pitch; others delight in a kind of vibrato or tremolando. Some sing habitually in an undertone, others in a nasal tone. Lichtenstein, in describing the singing of a Hottentot congregation in South Africa, observes that among all the singers, consisting of about a hundred Hottentots of both sexes, there was not one man with a bass or baritone voice; all the men had tenor voices. The Chinese voices seem to bear some resemblance to the weak character of the people. A military man who had three years' service in the country declares that he never once heard a Chinaman sing from his chest.—Gentleman's Magazine.

Another Burns Relic.

There has come to light in one of the auction rooms an interesting relic of Robert Burns. It is an ordinary businesslike tumbler, inclosed in an oak case lined with velvet and secured by a Brahmin key. The tumbler has engraved on it the following inscription: "This glass, once the property of Robert Burns, was presented by the poet's widow to James Robinson, Esq., and given by his widow to her son-in-law, Maj. James Glencairn Burns, 1840." The James Robinson to whom Jean Armour gave the relic was a Sunderland gentleman who became, by marriage, connected with the Burns family. The box is made from one of the piles of Old London Bri'ge, with some lighter pieces of oak, relics of the Royal George.—Scotsman.

Moses Was a Gentleman.

The Christian Register reports that the question, "What was the general character of Moses?" drew from one child in a Sunday school the reply: "A gentleman." Not understanding, the inspector asked why. "Please, sir, when the daughters of Jethro went to the well to draw water the shepherds were in the way, but Moses helped them and said to the shepherds, 'Ladies first, please.'"

Shopping for Prospective Wives.

Among the peculiar customs of Mexico is one which makes it particularly incumbent upon engaged young men to go shopping for their sweethearts before the ceremony takes place which unites them as one. Young men go up to the City of Mexico from interior towns and lay in a stock of finery for their prospective wives in the most natural and matter-of-fact way.

First American Geography.

The first geography printed in this country was compiled by Jedediah Moss, and published in 1789, for the use of schools. The attempts at maps in this publication were extremely crude, and gave a very imperfect idea of the outlines of the countries they were supposed to represent. It is said that only twenty-five or thirty copies of this work are now in existence.

The Earth's Land Surface.

Three-fourths of the earth's land surface cannot be cultivated, owing to mountain ranges, swamps and barren ground.

HOW MEAT IS SLICED

(Its Thickness, Matrimony, Many Races of Men.)
A member of the Professional Women's League who has traveled extensively in foreign lands said that you can classify the people of the world by the way they cut their meat, says New York exchange.

The powerful physical nature of the Anglo-Saxon is well illustrated by the size of his roasts and the immense shoulders of his mutton. The more artistic nature of the Frenchman is shown by his cutting his meat into thin slices of beef, into epigrams and into the filmy folds he calls "rosbif."

The Arab cuts his meat into a thin slice, wraps it around an iron skewer, boils it over a charcoal fire, and, lo and behold, there is the famous kabob orange to say, it is very rare for the Anglo-Saxon to cut his meat thin just as it is rare for the eastern races to serve it in massive portions. Yet we could improve our daily bill of fare, especially in the summer season, by adopting many of the dishes and methods of these other races.

Thus the kabob system may be applied to any kind of flesh or fowl and produces a crisp, palatable and nourishing culinary creation.

Another series of very pleasant dishes are made by cutting meat into long strips about the size of a lead pencil and frying them, after they have been salted and peppered, in either their own fat or in olive oil. The liquid should be very hot before the meat is put in, so as to close up all the pores and keep the juice within the fiber. These pencils, when cooked properly, are clean, delicious, brittle and very appetizing. Still another system comes from Italy and Spain in that very attractive preparation known as fritas. These consist of little pieces of meat about the size of a hickory nut. One will be made of beef, another of lamb, a third of chicken, a fourth of duck, a fifth of corned beef, a sixth of cold beefsteak. The greater the variety the more successful the dish. These pieces are well seasoned, being rubbed with a clove of garlic, salted, peppered and usually touched with a drop or two of onion juice. They are then dipped in batter and fried over a very hot fire. When they come out, all look alike, so that the guest has the additional attraction of novelty, variety and surprise.

The toughness of the kidney disappears almost entirely if it be cut with a sharp knife as fine as Saratoga chips, or, better still, if it be put through a meat cutting machine and reduced to a mere pulp. The great advantage of this style of preparation is that it makes meat absolutely safe.

All flesh is liable to contain within its fibers the germs and even the bodies of internal parasites. These are killed by the high temperature and long exposure. Nevertheless, in many pieces of roast beef as served upon the best tables in the land there are undereone centers where these organisms may be alive. The eater does not know the difference, because they are hardly discernible to the naked eye. Cutting it fine and thin, however, and then cooking it, even for a few minutes, absolutely destroys all life.

Spending a Million.

"I had a million dollars,
All in a chunk, you know,
I'd stick right to the fellers
A thousand plunks or so!
An' then give paw a thousand
So he won't have to work,
An' buy a candy store, an' let
You kids go in an' clerk!"

"I had a million dollars,
You fellers wouldn't see
Me chasin' with the rich bugs
Er in socie-tee!
That's where a feller's foolish,
An' 'tain't no way to be—
I'd give you kids this minute
That's allus stuck to me!"

"I had a million dollars,
We'd start right where we are
An' take a trip to Yurruip,
All in a private car.
An' ride past "Sissy" Jones',
An' wouldn't be here!
Hey, Jimmy, that ain't his'n!—
You promised me the core!
—Indianapolis Sun.

Woes of Linemen in Africa.

A telegraph line is being built across South Africa and occasionally bits of information regarding the undertaking find their way to civilization. These reports show that the hardships suffered by linemen and the difficulties they are compelled to overcome are something tremendous. The line has now been carried up to the southern shore of Lake Tanganyika. During the last 200 miles the road was impassable for vehicles and all the supplies and material had to be transported by carriers. One section of the line passes through a swamp in which vegetation grows to such a height during the wet season as to top the wire and cause troublesome leakage. The natives cannot be induced to go in during the season and cut down the weeds owing to the swarms of crocodiles. On another section the elephants have caused several interruptions by breaking off the poles. In some of the forests through which the line passes trees are met measuring over 100 feet in circumference. Some of the ravines are impassable even to the linemen during the rainy season owing to the paths being under water and the rank growth of vegetation.

One Opinion.

"What a sour individual! What's he growling about, anyway?"
"Oh, he complains that he hasn't got what he deserved in this world."
"I should think he'd have cause to rejoice on that account."—Philadelphia Press.

Some people are so suspicious that they are a wonder that they trust themselves.

DOINGS OF WOMEN

DRESS AT HOME.

A GREAT mistake which married women often make is that of becoming very careless of their dress and general appearance in the house when no company is expected, the wives of men with a limited income are they who are most prone to err in this respect from a foolish idea that dowdiness means economy, and nothing is more fatal to the happiness of a family than the unfortunate notion that "anything does when we are alone—we must keep our finery for those occasions when we have visitors." Many a man is tempted to leave his home, tired of constantly meeting a shabby, untidy wife, and to seek amusement and gaiety elsewhere. On their return from business husbands or brothers like to see their wives or sisters looking fresh and neat and a little bit smart. No extravagance need be indulged in—a blouse of some bright color, a cheap lace collar, a bow of pretty ribbon, and the hair neat and becomingly arranged will make all the difference in the cheerfulness and attractiveness of the home. A child should be taught from an early age to be tidy and clean to meet its father, and those who are old enough to take their meals with their parents should never be allowed to come to the table until face and hands have been washed and hair brushed—boys as well as girls. They should also be taught that neatness and politeness in their own family circle are even more important than when in company of visitors or in another person's house. The husbands also should be careful to remove all traces of the dust and dirt of the office or workshop and pay a little attention to their toilet before taking their place at the table or fireside.

Costumes of a Hundred Years Ago. History repeats itself, and so do fashions at times, consequently many of our readers may be glad to see sketches of the way their ancestresses dressed a hundred years since. Without wishing to imitate in detail the costumes here reproduced, they may be useful in suggesting fancy costumes if any should desire to represent their great-grandmothers. The costumes we publish were originally intended for wear in winter. The costume in the left hand top corner is described as a straw bonnet trimmed with green ribbon, a silk pelisse of the

and to do anything that is lawful for woman to do, and if he proves hard and unkind she has no relief or redress, except in public opinion. The property which was hers before marriage becomes her husband's, and he can dispose of it according as he sees fit, even in the face of her opposition. Supposing that the pair should be divorced, the husband still retains the wife's money. German wives, as a rule, seem happy enough, but in consideration of the antiquated laws under which they live it would be well for English and American girls to consider the matter very seriously before bestowing their hearts and hands on German men, however charming they may be and whatever their social standing.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Bracelets the Thing Again.



At no time in years has there been such a demand for jeweled arm ornaments in New York as now. The styles are numberless, and the cost runs from a few cents to thousands of dollars.

Women Should Learn to Laugh.

Laughter is a good, healthy, muscle-making, lung-developing exercise, and it is as good for girls as boys. And humor can be cultivated in a girl's mind without any abatement of the dignity and modesty and charm of her womanhood. Not the unpleasant and constant frivolity evidenced in "smart" speech or quickness or repartee, but the humor that looks at the world with a twinkle in the eye and sees its absurdities, its smallness and its fun.

It should be part of every woman's mental equipment, for women are called upon to bear so many of life's small worries as well as its greater ones. The bringing up of children, the care of servants and the many social duties that become a burden—all are made easy and possible to put up with by the woman with an unflinching sense of the bright side of life. It is a sense that lasts through life, through its many ills, its disillusion, its tribulations, even its tragedies.

The face that wears a smile is everywhere welcome; the smiling, cheery guest is a joy forever; with our common sense, our tact and our kind courtesy to guide us, and with the corners of our mouths turned upward, we may at any time and at all times be a benediction to our friends.—Woman's Home Companion.

Trial of Blushing.

Blushing seems to be a real trial to a great many young girls. The blushing face is an evidence of a refined and sensitive mind and there would be something strange about a young girl who never blushed. A blush is a sign hung out by nature to show where purity and honor dwell. The poet Gray says charmingly:

The rising blushes which her cheeks o'er-spread
Are opening roses in the lily's bed.

Abnormal blushing is a most uncomfortable ailment and is often a symptom that the victim's health is not quite what it should be. Blushing is always a mark of sensitiveness and the over-frequent blushing of the young girl generally subsides as the years go on, but it is to be hoped that she may never lose her power of blushing, for that would indicate a decrease of mental refinement.

Household Service a Profession.

Mrs. Ida Foster Cronk, a Chicago lecturer, champions the hired girl. She said: "Household service is a profession for every one engaged in it. Parents who have daughters in shops and factories have said they would be glad to have their children in families if household work was surrounded with proper dignity. As a matter of fact, every honorable occupation that is performed to the best of one's ability and with due regard for the comfort of others, and at the same time allowing one to get some pleasure out of life, is serving a worthy and dignified purpose in this great world."



Clothespins boiled a few minutes and quickly dried, once or twice a month, become more durable.

For sore throat try a compress of cold water.