

## BITS OF LIFE'S MOSAIC.

[Written for THE COURIER.]

THE baby has julled off his shoes and stockings and is playing on the floor. The room is warm and well-lighted. A hot fire in the large coal burner throws a glow over his pretty rosy face as he runs about the room. His little pink toes wiggle and twist and when he suddenly stubs one of his tender little toes against a chair he runs crying to his mother. He buries his head in her lap and she pets him and soothes him; he snuggles up close and is happy. But there are other barefooted babies out in the drouth stricken districts. There are babies that go barefooted day and night. They play about on the floor, but the floor is bare and cold. Their little toes are bare and pinched. They cry and run to mother, but mother, too, is cold and cannot soothe her littly baby's pain. Her own heart is so sad and heavy that not even the crying of her barefooted baby can stir her from her lethargic misery.

It is a fearful country—that drouth stricken land. Level, bare, bleak and awful. The sod houses huddle down near the barren prairies. There is not a shrub, a bit of brown grass or even a corn-stalk to relieve the awful monotony. There is a dreary sameness that tries one to death. The only changing thing in all that land is the sky. And yet even the sky has almost been changeless this past fateful year. The bald old sun has shown his blasting face nearly every day through the whole year. The clouds have deserted the sky that covers the stricken land and the pitiless sun has had its way alone. The winds travel over the level stretches and blow the sand in heaps and mounds. Above the graves of discouraged dead, it heaps shifting mounds as unstable and wandering as were the people who lie buried beneath the bald old sod. The hungry cattle wander to and fro, and piles of ghastly bones lie here and there, a silent indication that hunger has struck home with his blunt dagger and taken the lives of the poor dumb, helpless cattle.

What bitter suffering must pierce the heart of the man who sees about him his wife and babies, suffering with want and cold? He is helpless to relieve their wants. Far from friends, without money and without hope. The gaunt eyes ever staring at him when he is awake and haunting his brain when he is asleep. And even when he leaves the house the poor dumb animals follow him about with eyes that have the same fearful, beseeching look. Is it not strange that we hear of so few that are driven to desperation? One would think that suicide would be rife in such a land; but patience seems to have taken her hold upon the hearts of the people and though all is gone but hope, yet she shines brightly and lures the starved people on toward the future.

One thing we are thankful for, and that is that Nebraska people are not selfish. And that the people are opening their hearts and giving liberally for the aid of the drouth stricken west. And the sad-eyed mothers gazing from their low grass-fringed doors across the ghastly heaps of drifted sand may see food coming to their little ones. The west seems God-forsaken this year, but perhaps after all the great Father is walking amidst His people in the cold and hungry western land.

WILLIAM REED DUNROY.

## TO A WATERCOLOR.

Sweet Phyllis, maid of yesterday,  
Come down from out that frame,  
And tell me why you looked so gay—  
Likewise your other name.

Had bold Sir Plume confessed his love  
And asked you if you'd wed?  
And had he called you "Lovey-dove?"  
And how long are you dead?

Where did you get that wondrous gown,  
Those patches and that hair?  
And how were things in London town  
The last time you were there?

And did you die a maid or wife,  
Your husband lord or knave?  
And how did you like this jolly life?  
And how do you like the grave?

—TOM HALL.

## BOOTS BY THE QUART.

In South street, New York, there is an Italian who runs a Yankee notion stand. He speaks English after a fashion, but cannot read a word of it. The fact has made him an easy prey for a heartless joker.

His stock of goods includes almost everything from peanuts and chewing gum to suspenders and waterproof jumpers. Until recently he has displayed no placards giving the prices of his wares, but the other day a man offered to paint all the signs that the Italian needed free of charge. The offer was joyfully accepted. The signs were painted and placed in position. Crowds were attracted to the spot, and visions of sudden wealth danced before the Italian's eyes. Here are some of the inscriptions painted by the mountebank:

CAPE ANN BOOTS!  
Only  
50 Cents a Quart.

CHEWING GUM!  
All Kinds  
Only 2 Cents a Yard.

They were prominently displayed near the top of the stand, but they were eclipsed by these a little lower down:

PEANUTS!  
Raw or Roasted,  
82 a pint.

SUSPENDERS!  
Baked, Fried or Boiled,  
With Edible Buckles,  
20 Cents a Plate.

The placard that won the most admiration and of which the innocent merchant was particularly proud was an oblong affair, gorgeous in colors. It read:

Gold Plated Brushes.....5 Cents.  
Diamond Studs.....3 Cents.  
Collar Buttons.....\$10 Each.  
All Pocket Knives.....Free.

A few minutes after the signs had been put into place an old sailor was trying to buy two quarts of Cape Ann boots for a dollar, and the Italian was getting black in the face trying to make him understand that the boots were "four dol' a pair." Many similar scenes were witnessed. Finally a sympathetic friend exposed the fraud to the victim and the pasteboards were removed.

## NO TIME FOR GOMMON SENSE.

Looking over the curriculum of one of our high schools, and conning the examination papers at a certain commencement, we could not help thinking:

That we teach the children Danish,  
Trigonometry and Spanish;  
Fill their heads with old-time notions,  
And the secrets of the oceans;  
And the cuneiform inscriptions,  
From the land of the Egyptians;  
Learn the date of every battle;  
Know the habits of the cattle;  
Know the date of every crowning;  
Read the poetry of Browning;  
Make them show a preference  
For each musty branch of science;  
Tell the acreage of Sweden,  
And the serpent's wiles at Eden;  
And the other things we teach 'em  
Make a mountain so immense  
That we have not a moment left  
To teach them Common Sense.—*Truth.*