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Miscellaneous.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT HORSES.—Hay oats make the best feed for horses that are obliged to work hard and regularly. If the hay is cut and the oats bruised or ground, the whole mixture moistened, the horse will eat his rations quicker, digest them sooner, and thus have more time for resting and renewing his power for labor. Farmers' horses that work little during winter may be kept cheaper by cutting and mixing bright straw and hay in equal quantities, and adding a ration of steamed potatoes or raw carrots. Colts should be fed liberally on good hay—bright clover is best—and bused out; give them a roomy box stall in stormy weather and during nights. Litter freely, and do not let the manure accumulate under them. Sawdust or spent tan makes good and convenient bedding; in cities and villages they are often cheaper than straw. Groom horses well, and let them have exercise every day, a run in the yard is excellent. See that stable floors over basement are good and strong. Arrange the feeding racks so that the dust and hay seed will not fall into horses' manes or eyes; some horsemen build their mangers too high, thus forcing the animal to take an unnatural and painful position when eating. Farm horses that are not working should have their shoes taken off, and those that are driven on the road should be kept well shod.

tail, and as far as his "personal" fortitude is concerned, is no more disturbed at being pursued by one than another. As for other scarecrows that come behind, they are mostly familiar to the animal, and the more fully the horse can perceive them the more quietly does he submit to their approach. Then it is such a pity to cover up one of the most brilliant features of this most brilliant creature. The horse has borne such a hand in the civilization of this rough and tumble world, that it seems not so much a cruelty as a discourtesy, as well as disgrace to hide his form with embarrassing toggery. No wonder we estimate the force in the world as horse power; no wonder the Romans and Germans, each in their own language, designated their aristocracy as riders; no wonder their descendants made chivalry a synonym for their highest virtues. Let the horse be given his due, and unblinded.—*English Journal.*

The Best Time and Method of Applying Lime to Land.

Lime has been said to be improperly classed as a fertilizer, not really adding any fertility to the soil. Whether this theory be correct or not, there can be no doubt of the increased productivity that has been found in almost every instance in which it has been used to increase the productivity of the soil. The least that can be said in its favor is that it renders available in plant-food that would, were it not for the application of lime, remain in the land dormant, as it had long lain. This chemical action is very beneficial. Not only is it necessary that the elements of fertility be in the soil; these elements must be in such a state as to be available for the growth and maturity of plants in their every stage. Lime also enters, more or less, into the composition of all plants, more especially wheat and clover, and for the successful cultivation of these, more than for other plants; it is necessary that there be a certain amount of lime in the soil, and that it be available as a fertilizer. Lime has been sometimes said to impoverish the soil. It is a powerful stimulant, and under its influence the soil yields up for the maintenance of plant-growth more food than it would were there no application of it. This is what the fertility of soil is good for, and the benefit expected from every stimulant. A large produce at once instead of a much less produce, slowly yielding year after year. Lime is most beneficial on strong clay and rich loam lands; it has no effect on wet, undrained soils, but on no other lands is its effect greater and more marked than such land when drained. The nutritive properties that were almost wholly inoperative in consequence of the pent-up poisonous water are at once purged of these four qualities so injurious to plant life and by the chemical action of lime transformed into wholesome plant-food. Lime should be applied to the surface, as its tendency is to sink in the soil, and if buried deep it in a short time gets beyond the reach of the roots of young plants. Our mode of application was to spread it on the surface from the cart with a shovel, evenly, at the time of sowing the seed and harrow it in with the seed. We applied it to each division of the farm every seven years, fresh slacked from the limekiln, thirty lime barrels, or about thirty bushels to the acre. We never mixed it with barn-yard manure as it would set the ammonia, one of the most valuable constituents of the manure, in compounds of muck, earth from headlands, &c., and always mixed lime liberally.

What to Eat with our Bread.

A good deal was said, last summer, about "bread and water" as food for the laboring man. I could not help thinking how few people eat bread that is really good and nourishing, and how difficult it is at present to supply ourselves with pure water. The bread that most people eat, can not alone furnish such nutriment as the body (and mind) require to promote their growth and vigor. Even when our bread contains all the elements of the grain needed for our nourishment, it can not alone satisfy the demands of a healthy appetite. We must have something with it, to add variety, and to give that contented condition to the stomach so necessary for perfect nutrition. Setting aside meat and butter—for most people will supply themselves with these as they are able—let us think of some simple inexpensive dishes which may make our good bread go down more easily, and set more comfortably than it would alone. I have had this to consider a good deal in working for myself and the children, in their father's absence, where no warm drinks were used, and where meat was seldom at hand.

I will stop right here to say that "in the abstract" I do not believe in "fifteen-cent dinners for the laboring man" and his family, nor in pinched supplies that taste of the coppers they cost for anybody. I wish that you and I, and all of us, could go, when we are hungry, to a table bountifully supplied with a great variety of nutritious and delicious kinds of food, perfectly prepared and beautifully arranged. And you should take a bunch of grapes and a cracker, or a cup of milk, and you a sandwich, or you a bit of beef steak and a plate of soup, just as we felt inclined. But for most of us this is simply impossible. Mary, who wrote to me for advice about cheap living, is trying to economize in every reasonable way in order that she and her John may ere long have a home of their own. Some of the rest of us live under the shadow of unpaid taxes, or interest on mortgages most difficult to raise. For all of us, economy is a good thing, but those of us who are poor, are often driven to pinch ourselves. So we will not now say a word about canned fruit, or a supply of the most tempting articles of food to be found in the market. Just here we will only consider what inexpensive dishes we can eat with our bread to make a good meal, besides meat or butter, or milk or tea, or coffee. Among vegetables, first comes the potato. But if simply boiled or baked, it becomes itself only a part of the background (so to speak) of the meal, and it also needs something—meat, butter, or milk—to go "with it." When warmed over, and seasoned with butter or cream, and salt, it will do for a kind of sauce; also, when mashed, and well seasoned, or when made into potato pudding. Indeed, the potato seems almost indispensable as a part of a warm dinner, for all of the other vegetables relish rather better when a simple little potato goes with them. Sometimes this every-day vegetable must be omitted. Mashed turnips or squash, cabbage chopped and cooked with milk, onions boiled in milk (or thickened with a milk or cream gravy made with them after the water is poured off, or onions sliced and cooked for half an hour or more in a covered frying pan, with a tablespoonful of butter and a little salt, salsify cooked with cream gravy, and parsnips cooked the same, or in other ways—all of these, and other vegetables, go to make up a wholesome variety, using only one or two at the same family-meal. But every one of them must be thoroughly cooked, and then not one will sit hard on the stomach, or tend to a gaudy production of gas. Sweet corn, both fresh and dried, helps well to fill the bill of fare. We must not forget beans, which abound so in nourishment. But they must be very thoroughly cooked. For soup they should be boiled about five hours. Seasoned then with cream, or butter, and with salt, they ought to be relished by everybody. However I may have seasoned this soup, my children always wish to add milk upon their plates. Baked beans must either be boiled until very soft before baking, or must be baked a long time—from three to six hours, if not previously very tender—with a good deal of liquid in the jar, or pan. Those who use pork at all, usually put a piece of fat salt pork in the dish of beans prepared for baking. But some of us very much prefer a seasoning of cream or butter. Split-peas, or common unsplit dried peas, boiled five or six hours without meat, is very nutritious, and much liked by many. I season it with salt, and cream or milk if I have it—the more the better—then mix with butter.

I have said nothing about fruit sauce, but there is a demand for variety in the Topics as well as in our meals, so I will change the subject at present.

KITCHEN AND MARKET GARDEN.

The difficulties in keeping stored roots where unusually mild weather has prevailed have been alluded to. This weather must also unfavorably affect plants in cold frames, which have thus far required the ashes but a few days this season, and it has been almost impossible to maintain the dormant state so necessary to their proper wintering. Beyond thorough exposure and shading with a portable covering, the gardener can do nothing to counteract

Hot-beds for starting early plants will be required in the warmer States. The rule is to make the bed six weeks before it is usually safe to set plants in the open ground; consequently, the earlier the season opens in any locality, the sooner should this preparation be begun. In these "Notes for February" of last year, the matter was treated in full detail. Our space now will allow of only a brief summary.

Cold frames and hot beds are the same in all respects, save that the latter is warmed by a layer of fermenting manure. Cold frames are used for keeping cabbages, lettuce, and other nearly hardy plants, through the winter, and to forward plants. Besides these, the frame may be used for sowing seeds, and, though the results will not be so early as in a hot bed, some weeks may be gained. By exposure to the sun during the day, and covering the sashes before the heat declines in the afternoon, the interior can be kept quite warm. For a hot bed, sashes, frame, and manure are needed. The usual size of sash, 2x6 feet, with five rows of 6x8 glass, set in rabbited bars, with run lengthwise—there being no cross bars, but the glass is lapped about one-fourth inch, without putty at the lap. These sashes are sold at the factories, glazed or unglazed. The frame is built in a pit, 2½ feet deep, 6 feet wide, and of a length to hold the number of sashes. The pit is lined with rough boards, nailed to posts, and which extend above the surface of the ground a foot at the rear, and 4 to 6 inches at front. Sashes should be provided from front to rear, where each pair of sashes meet, to guide the sashes, and to hold them when pushed part way down.

The manure may be all stable manure, or mixed with one-half, more or less, of leaves. It should be in a heating state, and put into the pit with coarse and fine equally distributed, heating the layers down with the fork, and when full, tramp the manure down level. Spread on six inches of rich soil (put under cover last fall) and place the sashes.

Sowing the Seeds.—The heat of the bed will first be too violent, and the seeds must not be sown until it declines; when the thermometer shows about 50°, it will be safe to sow the seeds, which should be in rows four inches apart, and running from front to rear. We prefer sowing seeds in boxes or flats, which are wooden trays about two inches deep, with bottom and sides securely nailed. They are made from soap boxes and similar packages, one of which will make two or three. Where these are used, only two or three inches of soil are placed on the manure, and the boxes, in which the seeds are sown, are set upon this.

Care of the bed must be thorough, as the neglect of a few hours will ruin all. The temperature should be kept as near 75° as possible; this is maintained by tilting or pushing down the sash when too warm, covering on cool nights; shading on hot days. Besides this care, which will be needed each morning and evening, and often in sudden changes, the plants must be watered, the soil stirred between the rows, and be tipped, if too thick.

Window boxes answer nearly all the purposes of a hot bed for a family garden, in which the number of plants required is small. The boxes, or flats, already referred to, or other convenient box, will answer. A kitchen window is preferable to any other, as the air is usually more moist. Sow seeds in such window boxes, and when the plants are up, turn the boxes every day, to bring the opposite side to the light, and keep them from growing to one side. When the seedlings get two or three "rough" leaves, those beyond the seed leaves, they should be "pricked out" or planted in other similar boxes, setting them an inch or more apart, according to kind. The young plants may grow in these until time to put them in the open ground. Set the box out doors in the middle of every mild day, or open the windows, in order to harden the plants.

The kinds usually sown in hot beds, frames, and window boxes, are cabbages, cauliflowers, and others of that family; lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and egg plants; the last two will do a month later. Cucumbers, melons, and early squashes may be started later, a few seeds to give plants enough for a hill, in a small box or four-inch pot. The roots of these are large, and do not succeed in a small pot.—*Am. Agriculturist.*

The "Messing-up" Plover says that eggs should be washed and cleaned every day, especially while hatching their hair; increase their salivance of grain as their labor increases.

That Wife of Mine.

CHAPTER VII. (Continued.)

We told the story of the salted supper with great glee. The professor laughed merrily, and declared that hot biscuit was bad for the digestion, and that, for his part, though he always ate it when it was set before him, he was very glad of the more wholesome cold bread.

I had never seen my good friend and brother Conrad in better spirits. He was really, as Lissa said afterwards, jolly. Everything pleased him, and he praised and ate the preserves extravagantly.

Splendid time! Lectured to a large house—voted of thanks, and fifty dollars. Meant to bring Lissa some fruit or flowers, but (here he played a little nervously with his fork) he staid so late in his geological researches, that—that it wasn't really possible. Fine country up there, splendid rocks; reminded him of Germany more than any place he had been in. Liked the people—ahem! that is, he hadn't seen much of the people; and then he enquired in a roundabout way if Lissa had met any of his friends.

'Of course you mean Miss Walters,' laughed Lissa, while Jo put down her pen hastily.

Miss Walters was the daughter of the Dean of the University; splendid girl, not beautiful, but with a face sufficiently striking to attract the attention at once. Here was a lovely and most lovable character, and in the German class she invariably carried off the honors. We thought, Lissa and I, that Conrad was in love with her. He watched her lips when she spoke; there was a certain indefinable tenderness in the way he pronounced her name, and the little germ-hints in his reveries, sufficiently strong to give Lissa the clue to his thoughts. And Miss Walters did not seem averse to his attentions. He walked home with her sometimes from lectures; and the Dean was very particular and precise, and seldom allowed any one the pleasure of his daughter's society, for she was his only child and like the very apple of his eye.

'I mean—any of my friends,' said the professor cheerfully, 'Miss Walters among them of course, and he blushed a little, and very graciously offered Miss Jo the bread-plate, which she declined, as there was no bread on it. There was no use in his begging pardon; everybody laughed, though there was a little vexed look between my sister's eyebrows, and I knew from that moment that she was no friend to Miss Walters.

'Conrad, do you know, dear, that this is your fourth cup?' asked Lissa, archly.

'Ah, yes, but I am so thirsty! I had a hard walk of it to-day—yes, a very hard walk; and I went without my dinner too, but that you know is nothing.'

'Without your dinner!' cried Lissa, 'and not a bit of hearty food on the table. Dear me! Tiddy must get some cold meat immediately. Call Tiddy, somebody.'

'My dear, you forgot that Tiddy is engaged,' I said in my softest and slowest tone. A look of annoyance crossed Lissa's expressive countenance, but she was equal to the emergency.

'Oh, yes! I did forget,' she responded with a significant gesture, which meant, 'Don't tell Conrad just yet.' But I knew where the meat is. Come, Charlie, the tea-table is for me too much; and off I went like a big boy at her back.

'I don't know what to speak to Conrad—how to explain it, I mean,' she said gravely, as I lifted the heavy lid, and she deftly carved a few thin slices of cold mutton. 'I wish that thoughtless fellow had got his dinner. Tiddy saved this for breakfast. You men are so much alike!'

'Yes, we are something on the same pattern, I suppose,' I rejoined; 'but why don't you want to let Conrad know about the baby?'

'Well, simply for the reason, I suppose, that he will laugh at me.'

'Ah! who is afraid of the world now?' said I triumphantly.

But Conrad is not the world, don't you see? If it was anybody but Conrad, I wouldn't care. She held the plate of meat in one hand, and had taken up the candle, poisoning it at such an angle, unconsciously, that she made of herself one of the finest Rembrandt paintings in flesh and blood that I had ever seen, more beautiful than any in the gallery.

'What are you looking at me for so?' she asked as I stood transfixed.

'I was only wishing I were an artist, and could take the light and shadow of your face just now,' I made reply.

'Nonsense! You will do what Conrad failed to do,' she said, blushing.

ing—spoil me, if you praise me so much.'

'But how do you know I was praising you? I only spoke of the lights and shadows.'

'Then you didn't think it was pretty?' she said naively. It was so much like a woman's.

'No, I thought it was beautiful,' was my response, with a kiss that nearly put out the candle—for we used that primitive light when we went through the passages, and as yet had no gas-fixtures put in.

Conrad protested against the trouble, but ate his cold meat with an appetite. Suddenly a strange sound saluted our ears. It was an infantile scream and a lusty one.

'The baby is crying!' exclaimed Lissa, with an expression I feel it impossible to describe.

'The baby! what baby?' and Conrad laid down his knife and fork, and it seemed as if all the colour went out of his face.

Euter Tiddy, her turban awry, her face flushed in that peculiar hue which denotes trouble in the sable soul, her neckerchief torn and otherwise disturbed, her forehead and mouth puckered and quivering.

'Ef dis yer child hasn't got a small debble inside o' her, den I ain't a baptized Christian,' said poor Tiddy, and then stopped breathless. The change to a brilliant light worked wonders; the small woman stopped, and began looking round out of eyes rimmed with large salt-water brilliants, till it seemed as if her glance fastened itself on the professor. As for him, his eyes grew large and his forehead paled and paled.

'Well,' he panted, 'I—I'm surprised. I—I'm astonished. I—I may say—I'm haunted,' he added in a curiously changed voice, and his hands trembled as he wiped the perspiration from his temples.

'Hy, fessor!' exclaimed Tiddy, her wrinkled brows clearing up a little as she began "tassing" the baby. 'I's glad ter see yer home, an so's this blessed baby, I reckon.'

'What—what? Where—where did you get it?' gasped the professor, rising and steadying himself; then, catching himself up with a haggard smile, 'It—it's a queer sight in this house.'

'Some man's been done gone sot dat ar chile on the steps, and den he flew,' said the old woman with characteristic gestures, pawing the air with her unoccupied arm, and looking like an animated wind-mill.

'How do you know it was a man?' I asked, eyeing my friend Conrad with some surprise. 'Did you see him?' Conrad turned away abruptly.

'Man must 'put it dar, shore, 'cause man don't kar what becomes of his sort, ginly. Didn't see God lookin' right down on him, reckon.'

'They were all intent upon the baby, and it was well, I saw, without seeming to, that Conrad staggered as he moved, and his face was certainly a study.'

'Copped, are you sick?' asked Lissa, suddenly turning round.

'Not at all, but very tired,' he replied quietly. 'I believe I'll go to my room.' She went up to him with a good night kiss, and threw her arms about his neck.

'Would you keep it, Conrad, the poor little forsaken thing?' she asked.

'I know you will say yes.'

'Of course,' he responded feebly.

'You dear old goose!' and there was a rapturous hug.

'Conrad says yes, without an if or an and,' said Lissa, turning to me as he left the room; only she said it in the most curiously broken language which I cannot render here, her way of saying it making its chief charm.

CHAPTER VIII.

It must have been eleven o'clock when Lissa graciously accorded me her company that night. For full two hours she had been trotting between my room and Jo's, bringing me accurate reports of the situation, and at last assuring me that the baby was asleep for the night. I hoped so, but doubted it.

A light knock at the door confirmed my fears. Lissa had retired; but I fully expected a message from the infantile side of the house.

A haggard face met my gaze: it was Conrad, in his dressing-gown, his hair brushed from his forehead, his expression unbecomingly.

'I came down to ask you up into my room. Is Lissa asleep?'

'I don't think she is,' I replied.

'Can you come up for a few moments? I have something to tell you.'

His manner was so earnest and solemn, that I felt a thrill of dread tingle through my nerves.

'Certainly I can come, though it's rather late,' I said.

'I know it, but I won't keep you much as we give our cook Tiddy?

'So I told Lissa I was going up stairs with Conrad, and would be back soon; then I followed him on tiptoe, warned by Lissa, as I left, not to wake the baby. I am afraid I said, 'Confound the baby!' with unnecessary vehemence, even under my breath. As I passed Jo's room, I know I knocked over a pyramid consisting of waiters, cans, and goblets, sufficient to rouse a whole orphan-asylum; and that further, the professor's dressing-gown, catching in some other surreptitious article, dragged it clattering for what seemed a mile of druggat, bringing us both up standing, and looking at each other with mingled 'hair, and that expression of risling terror and malignity which fortunately can be substituted for something worse.

'For out of the mouth of man cometh—you know the quotation—especially when he is grieved at heart.'

We gained Conrad's room at last, a pleasant student's apartment, bright and choice books, chiefly his German collection, where his flute-stand and music-rack, guitar and fiddle, had each their appropriate place; Lissa's taste having contrived a recess for the bed, which was curtained off from the rest of the room. Conrad gravely shut the door, locked it carefully, placed two chairs opposite each other, and gravely beckoned me to seat myself.

With a feeling that some dread incantation was about to be inaugurated, I sat down facing him.

'You will be astonished to learn,' he said—the tassel of his study-cap throwing a portentous shadow over his nose—that I left that baby upon your doorstep.'

I don't think a cannon-ball passing within an inch of my left temple would have more completely stunned me out of my self-possession, I could only draw back in my chair and look at him. I suppose I said 'with some emphasis—'

'You!'

Though I was not really conscious of having spoken, for he answered, 'Yes; and I count it an almost miraculous coincidence; for, I assure you, I didn't mean it.'

'But my dear fellow,' said I, 'where in the name of wonder did you get it?'

He began to tell his story, and I began to laugh. Not even the thought of that sleeping cherub downstairs restrained me. I saw him blundering about without his glasses. I followed the fortunes of that unhappy baby with smothered breath, until he came to the place where his carriage failed him, and he wandered about the streets with which ordinarily he was familiar, like a blind man. Then, as I saw him deliberately place the unconscious Arab on his own doorstep, the ecstasy culminated; I silently went down on my knees, and then I rolled and laughed, and laughed and rolled, till I brought down the music-stand and all its accompaniments, upon my head, while the professor stood protesting and laughing alternately, declaring that I would wake up the household, and adding, with tears in her eyes, that he didn't see as it was any matter to be merry aw.

A knock at the door which brought me to my senses. I opened it, and there stood Lissa, curiously involved in her double shawl, and pale as any host.

'My dear! I cried, in consternation.

'I heard such dreadful noises; and then I dreamed that you and Conrad were fighting one of those miserable German duels. Of course I was very foolish, as I always am, and dreadfully frightened.'

'You silly child! The idea of my fighting with Conrad! We had a little business together; that was all,' I said, screwing my mouth; and then I turned to him.

'Not a word, yet a while, I muttered in an undertone: 'keep your secret and I will keep mine. Goodnight; and we parted. I left Lissa at Jo's door, going just to look at baby; and I didn't see her again that night, for no sooner did my head touch the pillow than I was asleep; and though I wake tolerably late—just in time generally to see my wife putting on the finishing touches at the mirror—I failed to hear the first rustle, or catch the light of eyes watching for me, the next morning.

I did not see much of the baby that day. Lissa walked herself into a fever in search of a nurse; and I found myself confronted by a moon-faced young lady of French extraction, extravagantly attired, when I returned from the office.

'We want a nice looking nurse, you know,' said Lissa; 'and so few will wear the real bonnet cap!'

'What do you give her for her nice looks, my love?' I asked, pleased to see her pleased.

'Only twenty dollars a month.'

'My child!' I exclaimed, agast.

'Do you know that is nearly twice as much as we give our cook Tiddy?'

'Why, I could hardly get her to come, because we kept not a carriage, was Lissa's reply.

'So she expected to be taken for an airing every day or two, did she? What that baby will cost us!'

Lissa drew back a little potulantly.

'If it cannot afforded be, then I will send her away,' she said.

'It shall be afforded, mine trow, if it pleases you,' I said; 'it is to be presumed that this young lady will mature as fast as others of her species: that is, that all traces of childhood will have vanished by the time she attains her fifth year, and she will begin to attainize for the benefit of the young gentlemen hereabouts.'

'You do make everything into fun,' she said, her face still clouded.

'Not you, my darling; I never make fun of you, whatever you do.'

'And—and you won't scold, if I tell you there is something else?'

'Of course not. What is it—a new bib and tucker?'

'A—a baby-carriage.'

'Oh! and visions of new and expensive nursery furniture floated in blue and gold through my imagination.'

'Yes; I went up to Locke's, because that you told me never to go but to the very best places; and it is such a beauty!'

'I dare say,' I responded gravely.

'With the dearest little white satin curtains, that draw at the back, and don't not let the sun in at the least.'

'Do not, my dear, I corrected.

'Yes, do not let the sun in at all.'

'Don't let any sun in.'

'Yes, don't let not any sun in; that is what I meant to say; she went on excitedly, her eyes sparkling, and her cheeks brightening, so that I entirely forgot my surprise in contemplating her beauty.'

'And what did the carriage cost?'

'Why, I think, and she scrutinized the carpet—I think he would take under ten dollars for cash.'

'Ah! you mean take off.'

'Yes; yes; take off, and let me have it for seventy-five dollars.'

It was rather steep, considering I was unwittingly called upon to do the duty of a step-father; but I kept my temper, and mused in silence for the space of a minute and a half.

'And then—she broke the silence—a dead pause again—I got the bathing-tub.'

'My dear,' said I explosively, 'there are bathing-tubs in the house, extremely fine ones, that cost me a mint of money.'

'But not bathing-tubs for a baby,' she said quickly.

'Oh, that wife of mine!'

'No; that is very true, I said quietly. 'I didn't allow for the baby when I put them in.'

'Besides, if we are going to have a nursery, we must have things a little suitable to it. And so I bought a chair, and some jingles, and rubber for its teeth to gnaw on like a little mouse; but they will all be here in a short, small time, then you shall see them.'

I put on a pair of mental spectacles of the largest magnifying power, and took my wife by the hand.

'You are the most charming woman in the world,' I said; 'but at the same time, allow me the liberty of adding, the completeness little fraud that ever a good-natured man was humbugged by; and I surveyed her with my sweetest smile.

'Frod,' she ejaculated. 'What's a frod? Charlie, are you making fun at me?'

'No, my dear. I am not making fun at you, or of you; but I wish you to look at this matter in a light of sober common sense. This is not our child. No amount of dressing, or caring for, or spending, will make it our child.'

'It is God's child,' she said in a quavering, solemn little voice.

'Ahem! well, that may be,' I said, clearing my throat. 'Undoubtedly there is some truth in your assertion, if not more; but at the same time it is only thrown upon our hands for the present. Don't you see, it may be claimed by somebody.'

'She shook her head.

'Oh, no, no! Mothers only leave their children when they die. No living mother could do so!'

'We don't know: there may have been reasons, powerful reasons—hunger, distress.'

'I would die with it, then! I would die with it!' she cried passionately.

'What would you have done, reader, with that wife of mine—that is, if she had been your wife? Actually the words stuck in my throat, and, with some other indefinable sensation, produced such a choking that I let silence do duty for speech for a considerable period.

I don't mind saying that things danced about somewhat through the mist that happened in my eyes just at that period, including Lissa, who seemed indulging in a remarkable kind of polka, now here, now there. At last—I hated to do it, but tears running down a man's nose, you know, have a ridiculous effect—and so I took out my handkerchief, and, pretending to sneeze, rubbed my eyes dry.

'Lissa,' said I, looking serious, 'I don't see the least of it, and speaking w. I give you carte blanche to any extent save absolute ruin. Amen.'

'Why, I could hardly get her to come, because we kept not a carriage, was Lissa's reply.

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'And—and you won't scold, if I tell you there is something else?'

'Of course not. What is it—a new bib and tucker?'

'A—a baby-carriage.'

'Oh! and visions of new and expensive nursery furniture floated in blue and gold through my imagination.'

'Yes; I went up to Locke's, because that you told me never to go but to the very best places; and it is such a beauty!'

'I dare say,' I responded gravely.

'With the dearest little white satin curtains, that draw at the back, and don't not let the sun in at the least.'

'Do not, my dear, I corrected.

'Yes, do not let the sun in at all.'

'Don't let any sun in.'

'Yes, don't let not any sun in; that is what I meant to say; she went on excitedly, her eyes sparkling, and her cheeks brightening, so that I entirely forgot my surprise in contemplating her beauty.'

'And what did the carriage cost?'

'Why, I think, and she scrutinized the carpet—I think he would take under ten dollars for cash.'

'Ah! you mean take off.'

'Yes; yes; take off, and let me have it for seventy-five dollars.'

It was rather steep, considering I was unwittingly called upon to do the duty of a step-father; but I kept my temper, and mused in silence for the space of a minute and a half.

'And then—she broke the silence—a dead pause again—I got the bathing-tub.'

'My dear,' said I explosively, 'there are bathing-tubs in the house, extremely fine ones, that cost me a mint of money.'

'But not bathing-tubs for a baby,' she said quickly.

'Oh, that wife of mine!'

'No; that is very true, I said quietly. 'I didn't allow for the baby when I put them in.'

'Besides, if we are going to have a nursery, we must have things a little suitable to it. And so I bought a chair, and some jingles, and rubber for its teeth to gnaw on like a little mouse; but they will all be here in a short, small time, then you shall see them.'

I put on a pair of mental spectacles of the largest magnifying power, and took my wife by the hand.

'You are the most charming woman in the world,' I said; 'but at the same time, allow me the liberty of adding, the completeness little fraud that ever a good-natured man was humbugged by; and I surveyed her with my sweetest smile.

'Frod,' she ejaculated. 'What's a frod? Charlie, are you making fun at me?'

'No, my dear. I am not making fun at you, or of you; but I wish you to look at this matter in a light of sober common sense. This is not our child. No amount of dressing, or caring for, or spending, will make it our child.'

'It is God's child,' she said in a quavering, solemn little voice.

'Ahem! well, that may be,' I said, clearing my throat. 'Undoubtedly there is some truth in your assertion, if not more; but at the same time it is only thrown upon our hands for the present. Don't you see, it may be claimed by somebody.'

'She shook her head.

'Oh, no, no! Mothers only leave their children when they die. No living mother could do so!'

'We don't know: there may have been reasons, powerful reasons—hunger, distress.'

'I would die with it, then! I would die with it!' she cried passionately.

'What would you have done, reader, with that wife of mine—that is, if she had been your wife? Actually the words stuck in my throat, and, with some other indefinable sensation, produced such a choking that I let silence do duty for speech for a considerable period.

I don't mind saying that things danced about somewhat through the mist that happened in my eyes just at that period, including Lissa, who seemed indulging in a remarkable kind of polka, now here, now there. At last—I hated to do it, but tears running down a man's nose, you know, have a ridiculous effect—and so I took out my handkerchief, and, pretending to sneeze, rubbed my eyes dry.

'Lissa,' said I, looking serious, 'I don't see the least of it, and speaking w. I give you carte blanche to any extent save absolute ruin. Amen.'

'Why, I could hardly get her to come, because we kept not a carriage, was Lissa's reply.

'So she expected to be taken for an airing every day or two, did she? What that baby will cost us!'

Lissa drew back a little potulantly.

'If it cannot afforded be, then I will send her away,' she said.

'It shall be afforded, mine trow, if it pleases you,' I said; 'it is to be presumed that this young lady will mature as fast as others of her species: that is, that all traces of childhood will have vanished by the time she attains her fifth year, and she will begin to attainize for the benefit of the young gentlemen hereabouts.'

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