

## Constipation

Baked sweet apples, with some people, bring prompt relief for Constipation. With others, coarse all-wheat bread will have the same effect. Nature undoubtedly has a vegetable remedy to relieve every ailment known to man, if physicians can but find Nature's way to health. And this is strikingly true with regard to Constipation.

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# Lax-ets

ALL DEALERS

## A Contest With the Weather Bureau.

(F. E. C. ROBBINS.)

"The young man in the linen suit, after attending to the slight errand that had brought him to Lufkin's store at Hardback Corner, lingered for a little chat with the proprietor, who looked as if he might be a character."

As the visitor had approached the store he had seen a letter-carrier driving away from it, and this fact suggested a conversational opening that has come to be a favorite with the summer visitor.

"This rural free delivery is a great institution," he began, graciously.

But he perceived at once that he had made a mistake. The reply elicited was in itself non-committal. "Mebbe 'tis and mebbe 'tain't." But the scorn that the old storekeeper continued to throw into his tone left no doubt as to his attitude toward this innovation in country life.

For more than thirty years Moses Lufkin had been the postmaster at Hardback Corner. The salary had not been large, but, as he had often been heard to say, the honor was something. Besides, as "trade follows the flag," so does it come to the store in which the government post-office is domiciled.

Furthermore, in the little gatherings of farmers who came for mail and remained for conversation, Mr. Lufkin had been something of an oracle.

But now all this was changed. The post-office had been abolished, trade had fallen off somewhat, and worst of all, the ex-postmaster's authority, even in that special subject which he had made a lifelong study, was no longer unquestioned. No wonder he could not be roused to any enthusiasm over the blessing of rural free delivery!

Perceiving this, the young man hastened to change the subject, selecting a topic this time that is supposed to be safe on all occasions. "Ah, I see that we are likely to have another fine day to-morrow," he said, glancing at a thin sheet of paper lying on the counter.

"Well, if we do, it won't be because that thing says so," returned the old gentleman, as testily as before. "I verily believe there's been more hay spilled in this vicinity since that rural carrier began to bring those predictions than there had been before, for I don't know how long. Why, if I'd made as many mistakes in twenty years as the government has in two, I'd have given up trying altogether!"

"Indeed! I judge, then, that you are something of an expert yourself in forecasting the weather."

"Well, I ought to be. I've been studying into it for going on forty years."

"It is certainly quite a study," said the young man. "At any rate I have found it so."

Then, answering a look of inquiry, he added, "You see, I'm in the weather business myself to some extent. I am an assistant observer of the Weather Bureau."

"What! You help get up these government predictions?"

"In a way, yes."

The old man stared for a moment at this embodiment of what had been to him hitherto only an impersonal rival. "What may I call your name?" he asked.

"Dole. Clarence Dole, at your service. Here is my card. I am taking a little vacation, and am staying at Mr. Blake's, on the hill."

"How long are you going to stay in these parts?" demanded Mr. Lufkin, with interest.

"About two weeks, I think."

"I want to know! Well, now, I suppose you're laughing in your sleeve at my setting up to be a better weather prophet than the government. But I'd like to put the thing to a test with ye, and I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll write out my prediction every day before the government's gets along, and I'll stick 'em up side by side on the wall. Then you and I'll keep tally how they come out. Do you dare to try it?"

Mr. Dole replied good-naturedly that he would be glad to watch the result; and without attempting any new lines of conversation, he quickly took his leave.

"Who is that gentleman going down the

road, grandpa?" called a voice a moment later.

The old man's stern face lighted up with pleasure at sight of the young lady standing in the doorway, but he answered curtly enough, "Oh, it's a young chap that's boarding at Blake's—Dole, he says his name is. Claims to be a weather observer for the government."

"Mr. Dole of the Weather Bureau! Why I know him," said the young lady. "He attends our church in the city. He is a very pleasant young man."

"He is pleasant-spoken enough," admitted her grandfather, "but I know what he thinks. He thinks an old codger like me can't foretell weather, but I'm just going to show him his mistake."

For the next two weeks Mr. Lufkin devoted himself to his task with an absorption characteristic of the specialist. Every day the rival forecasts were placed conspicuously on the wall, and every day Mr. Dole, according to his promise, called to compare them, and to discuss the degree of fulfillment of those of the day before, after which it became quite a habit of his to make a social call at the storekeeper's pleasant home near by.

The news of the contest also spread among the neighbors, with the result that visits to the store became almost as much a matter of course as in the old days of coming for the mail.

For a week or so honors were about even. Indeed, the rival forecasts were quite similar in substance, although worded differently, as Mr. Lufkin scorned to imitate the phraseology of the Weather Bureau.

But at last an issue was fairly joined. On Wednesday afternoon the narrow slip of paper emanating from the Weather Bureau bore in modest type this prediction:

"Increasing cloudiness Thursday, with light rain in the afternoon or night," while beside it on the wall might be seen the announcement, scrawled in red chalk, "A little hazy tomorrow morning, but it will burn off, and be a toler'ble warm day."

On Thursday morning the sun rose very clear and then within two hours went into a cloud, which was a bad sign. It sprinkled a little by nine o'clock—a "drought shower," Mr. Lufkin called it. But an hour later the sun was again shining brightly, and for the rest of the day there was an almost cloudless sky. It was warm, too.

There was no room for controversy. The weather prophet of Hardback Corner had scored a success, and the "government" was beaten.

Mr. Lufkin was not only gratified, but considerably emboldened by his success. A neighborhood picnic to take place on a small island in Long Pond had been planned for Saturday, but on Friday the native prophet shook his head ominously.

"I rather calculate that picnic will have to be put off," he said. And early in the afternoon he seized his red chalk, and wrote in flaming characters:

Look out for thunder showers and high wind tomorrow.

The report from the Weather Bureau, arriving a little later, said:

Fair and warmer Saturday.

This left the community somewhat in doubt, although the young people who were especially interested in the picnic, were inclined to believe that "Uncle Lufkin was a little off that time." This opinion was strengthened the next morning, for never did dawning day give fairer promise of good behavior.

"Do you really believe, grandpa, that there is any danger of showers?" asked Fannie, pausing irresolutely in her task of filling her lunch-basket.

"Now, Fannie," broke in her grandmother, impatiently, "don't you mind a word that your grandpa says. It does seem as if he had gone clean daft about the weather. It's going to be as nice a day as heart could wish. Of course you will go to the picnic. All the folks will. I declare, I'd go myself if I wasn't so lame."

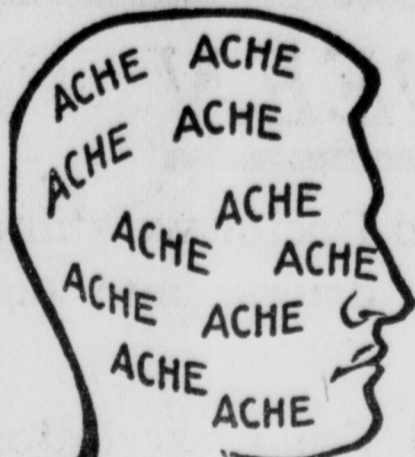
The old gentleman, thus discredited in his own house, started off in decided ill humor, and shut himself up in his deserted store, out of sight if not out of hearing of the merry party that soon passed by.

"I wish it would rain pitchforks and blow great guns!" he muttered, as he went outside late in the forenoon and cast a searching look at the sky. "No, I don't, either!" he declared the next minute, in a tone of repentance. "I hope they will have a first-rate good day, and I guess they will, fast enough."

In this bitter mood he seated himself on a much-whittled bench just outside the door, and was soon peacefully engaged in the never-

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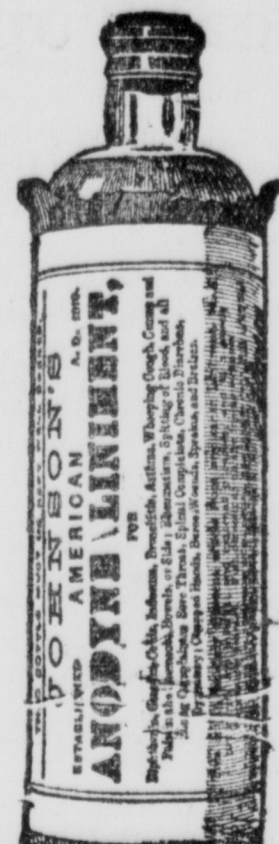
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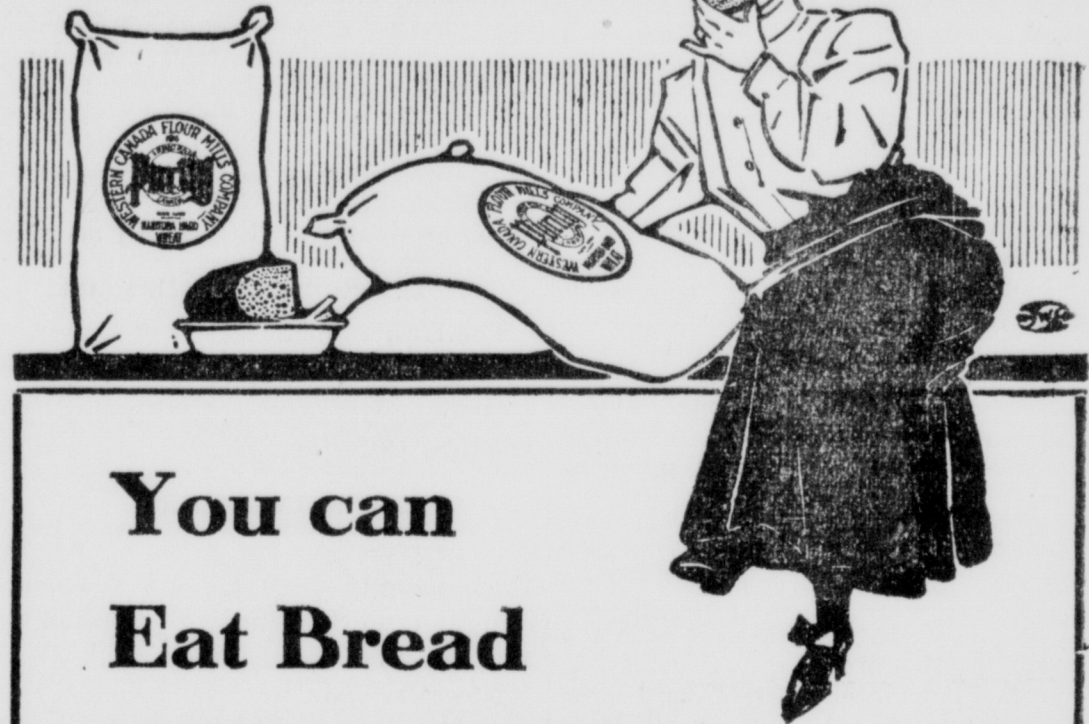
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