

### LOVE'S SEASON.

Love doth a tenant of the spring become:  
Of summer hours when skies of brilliant blue  
Tempt bees and katydids to gardens new:  
When the woodpecker with his distant drum  
Is heard, and when the cricket's restless thrum  
Makes autumn musical; when Winter's few  
Delights of Nature blossom into view:  
Love makes the year, complete, its constant  
home.  
Whatever the days or months for us unfold  
Love has one season in its rounded rhyme,  
Love's sun turns darkest skies to brightest  
gold,  
And makes of time a period sublime;  
From cradle-ymn to bells at Life's night  
toiled  
Where Love dwells it is summer all the time.  
—Dexter Smith, in Boston Transcript.

### A Moccasin Among the Hobbits

BY RICHARD M. JOHNSTON.

I vary well remember Little Joe Hobby, who, when I was a child, was one of my father's near neighbors and friends. He was not so very, very little. He called him so in distinction from a big cousin of the same name. Everybody liked him. Even Maggy Tiller over and over again said that she thought a great deal of Joe. Yet she gave her hand in preference to the big cousin, and so Little Joe, sorrowful as it all was, had to bear it as well as he could. Maggy, noticing at her very last refusal how hardly he took it, offered the consolation, which at such a time, if a girl would only reflect for a moment, is the very poorest to be thought of. She told him to never mind, for that it wouldn't be so very long before he would find a girl to suit him to a t, and then he would be just running over with joy that he hadn't married Maggy Tiller. Indeed, Maggy was very sorry for his distress, so she must say something, and she didn't know of anything better. Then he rose, and, after shaking good-by, said:  
"No, Maggy, I can't get you; but I'll never marry anybody else."  
He went to the wedding, and with the other guests extended congratulations, and partook with reasonable zest of the good things. Afterwards he was as good a neighbor as before, and a good cousin to both. My father said, out of course only in the family, that if he had been in Maggy Tiller's place he would have taken Little Joe, and let Big Joe go somewhere else; for in his opinion Little Joe was more of a man; and so, he suspected, thought Maggy's mother. However, he added, nobody can ever foresee what girls will do in such cases.  
Joe—Little Joe, I mean—tried to go along about as he had been doing before his bad luck, as he called it; for he never denied a single thing. But he was healthy in mind as in body, and he felt that if Maggy and the other Joe could do well, so far as he was concerned, they were welcome to do so. Indeed, he was a better friend to them than Jim Hobby, Big Joe's older brother, whom Maggy had cast aside also, and who in a pet went off and married Mandy Brake, who wasn't as pretty as Maggy and had rather poor health besides.  
And they did do well—that is, moderately well. If Big Joe's industry, management and prudence had corresponded with his physical proportions, they would have done splendidly. As it was, out of the good piece of ground which they owned, they made quite enough to live on, and perhaps a trifle over; but not high what Little Joe, who continued to live with his mother, contrived to put aside yearly for rainy days.  
The two families lived only a mile apart, and visiting continued to be kept up the same as if nothing had happened. In decent time after the birth of their baby, Little Joe went over there and handed around his congratulations again. When the baby was named Joe, he had to congratulate again; and he did so, like the man he was. It may have seemed to him somewhat monotonous whenever he was there that the father was everlastingly saying that in some points, indeed in almost every single blessed point, he had not a doubt that that baby was ahead of anything of its age that could be found in the whole State, let alone the county.  
"Why, Joe," he said, more times than his hearer could recall, "Maggy'll tell you herself that sometimes I have to lose my male from the plough half an hour before the dinner-blow, I want to see him so bad.—Look-ee here, Joe," he said high as many times to the baby, "you know who that is sitting in that chair? You don't? Why, that's your cousin Joe, same name as you. Not named after him exactly, but all the same. Ask Cousin Joe if he don't wish he had a Joe like you."  
At such times Maggy smiled a little scold; but it did no good. He would go on about it, and keep it up, not even stopping at the dinner-table, occasionally getting up and making Little Joe get up, repair to the bed or the cradle whereon that baby was lying, and note how, when he was not crying, he would be trying, just for the fun of it, to ram his fists or the coverlet into his ever-open mouth. And then sometimes he would crown all by crying to the youngster about thus:  
"Going to be a big man some day, aren't you?—a heap bigger than Cousin Joe."  
Such things he did often, not from any thought of malice towards his cousin, but out of mere exuberance of the consciousness of his superiority to him. Little Joe endured it all, and did what he could in simple ways to help them along. Once, when the baby was thought to be dangerously sick, he went there at night, and, while the father slept, watches with the

mother during the silent hours. Before Big Joe was awake next morning he would be gone to his work. During that time Jim Hobby never once came there. His wife did, and wanted to help; but Maggy, knowing that she was not strong enough to do any good, thanked her and sent her home.  
One would think that such as that ought always to come to an end. Sometimes it does, as in this case it did. Early in August, when the baby was only a few weeks old, Big Joe got sick himself. People said it was from having had too much Fourth of July. Whatever was the cause, no sort of medicine, old women's nor doctors', could cure him; and so he died, leaving Maggy a poor, lonesome widow. With her baby she moved back to her mother's, and it was not so very long before she began to look as bright as ever, and perhaps some prettier.  
I could not undertake to say exactly how Little Joe felt on the occasion of his cousin's death; but he said and he did what was becoming,—no more, no less. He helped to put him away decently, and then helped Maggy to do what was to be done before she could get back to her native place. As for the baby, while he did not—because he could not—show the pride which his father indulged, yet he was even more considerate of its wants. It was only a few minutes' walk to the Tillers', and he went there almost every day. The devotion shown by him to that baby was not without its return, as it was not long before the latter showed himself to be as well pleased with his cousin's society as ever he had been with that of his father. Even Jim began to take an interest which he had not shown in his brother's lifetime.  
During the summer days of the following year, when Maggy's work took her out of the house she put the baby in his cradle, which she had removed to a nice spot in the shade of a large Mogul plum-tree that stood not far from the dairy. Occasionally she went by to see if any wood-insect had invaded his couch, or, if he was awake, to have a little chat by way of reassuring him against any sense of abandonment or too profound solitude. For he was not one of those exacting babies who are everlastingly wanting to be waited on, and shaken up, and sung to, claiming all the attention they can get, and more besides, not only in the day, but in the very night. What that baby wanted, after his many meals and his as many sleeps, was the consciousness that congenial society was in convenient call. His health was as perfect as the very morning, and whenever he cried you might feel sure either that a pin was sticking somewhere, or that something else was the matter which no grown-up person could be expected to endure without complaint. At such time, when Little Joe was there, he hovered around that cradle as if the most precious of his treasures lay therein.  
Such devotion, in all the circumstances, must have touched any heart, unless it were of stone. Yet, when, towards the beginning of the fall, Little Joe began to plead as once before he had done so all in vain, Maggy cried and begged him to stop it. He did as he was bidden, but with an inward resolve not to stop for good as long as things stood as they were. For she showed as plainly as day, even to the humble Little Joe, that she didn't want him to quit coming to the house, particularly now that Mrs. Jim Hobby had died, and so another gloom had been thrown over the family.  
Little Joe would have been ashamed to be called a hero if he had known what that meant. Yet in the action which I am now going to tell, my father used to say that there was as heroic behavior as much of that one reads of in the careers of those who

"Very well. Finest Mogul plum-tree in the neighborhood."  
"Jes' so. Well, soon as I got in the yard, and shook hands with Maggy, I went on silent to see the baby, who him and me are first-rate friends, we are."  
"So I heard. Go ahead."  
"When I got there, lo and behold, there were a great big full-grown highland moccasin quilled up on the baby's breast, all exception of his head and his neck, which stood high up, and his eyes a-viewin' of the child, like he were studyin' where he'd begin on him. I holloed out, I did, and Maggy she come-a-runnin' up; but I pushed her back and told her to stay back and keep silent. She done it. She put one hand on her breast and lifted the other towards the sky. At that minute Jim come in the gate, and he run up to see what were the matter. Then he told me to stay there and watch the snake till he could run in the garden and cut a forked stick and prong him with it. So Jim he left, and the fight begun. Soon as the thing saw me, he whirled his head away from the baby for a strike at me. And, squire, it were the fiercest, beautifullest thing you ever laid your eyes on. He were certain, well as I were, that it were a life-and-dath case; because there wasn't any chance for him to get away into the woods, and I no doubt he saw fight was in me. But I didn't have one blessed thing except my hands, and if I'd had a stick the question would be what to do with it, him a-layin' there on the baby. To make things worse, he woke, the baby did, and he began a-smilin' at me, and I were skeered nigh out of my senses, thinkin' he might kick or throw up his hands, so the snake would turn on him again. Then I got mad, sure enough, and I said to myself, 'No, sir, not that baby. If its got to be anybody, it shall be me.' Every time I made a grab at its neck, he dodged and struck at me. Well, sir, it's wonderful how supple the thing were. I thought I had him once or twice, but he slipped from my fingers like a piece of ice, and mighty nigh as bold, and several times with his strike he were in the width of a hair of gettin' me. All of a sudden I thought of my hat, and thinks I to myself, 'Blast you, I'll try to give you!' And I done it, after a few wipes at him; but as I was pressin' him down he put his tooth in the ball of my left hand thumb. But I grabbed him by the tail, give him a whirl or two like a whiptong, then, fetchin' a jerk, slung his head off. You know that's the quickest way in the world to kill 'em. Then Maggy come up, she did, and she snatched up her baby, who was kickin' his level best at the fun; but I told her to lay him down for a minute, take a twine string out of my coat pocket, and tie it tight around my thumb where I were holdin' it. For don't you know, squire, it come to my mind that very minute of Jay Roberts losin' his whole thumb three year ago that a moccasin bit, and that under the water? Yes, sir, that it did. Maggy screamed, but she done as I told her. Then I told her to go and make a pot of red-pepper tea, boilin' hot, not thinkin' there was a drop of sperits in the house. Soon as she got away, I hauled out my knife. I give it a wipe or two on the bottom of my shoe, and then— Well, squire, whoever thinks there's a fun in outfin' off their own thumb at the jint, they're welcome to it. But I grinned and got through with the job, and by that time Maggy's ma got back. She told Maggy to fling that pepper tea away, and then she got out a level tumblerful of whiskey and come out and made me drink every drop of it. And then, while Maggy was fixin' to tie up what was left of my thumb, she, a-knowin' I couldn't carry all that load of whiskey, she made me go to bed, and, tell you the truth, squire, I never remembered another thing till next mornin' daybreak, when I woke up, callin' for water."  
"But where was Jim all this time?"  
"They told me after it was all over that Jim came back with his forked stick, a-sayin' it took longer than he thought to get one to suit. Missis Tiller said she thanked him, and told him that he better put it away careful, as it might come in handy next time."  
"That's Jim; that's exactly Jim," said my father. "But, Joe Hobby, don't tell me you came away from that house without gettin' Maggy's word, after what I told you of the importance of being brisker in some of your ways, especially since Jim has become a widower."  
"Oh, no, sir. I thought it were a good chance to follow up your advice, and I put in for her as well as I could; and she said that, in all the circumstances, she wasn't sure but what it was her duty."  
"That's good! That's first-rate!"  
"But, law, squire! she declare she must put off the weddin' for at least one whole year."  
"Nonsense! You tell Maggy, from me, that, after all you've done for her and that baby, I say that I think it very hard to be putting it off so long, and that if any accident was to happen to you in all that lonesome while she'd never forgive herself."  
He carried the words, and in a few days afterwards reported that they had compromised on Easter.—[Lippincott.

### THE JOKER'S BUDGET.

#### JESTS AND YARNS BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Same Thing—He Couldn't Afford To—On One Condition—Two Opinions—And That's a Fact, Etc., Etc.

#### SAME THING.

"I see," he began, as he entered the office of a plumber, "that some one has invented a cut-off or valve or syphon by which a water pipe is prevented from freezing, no matter how much exposed."  
"Yes," softly replied the plumber.  
"Good thing."  
"Very likely."  
"Come into general use?"  
"Yes."  
"When it does you plumbers will have to take a back seat, eh?"  
"No. Takes two pounds of solder just the same, and we get in three hours' extra work."—[Detroit Free Press.

#### HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO.

Mr. Suburb—Well, I was never more surprised in my life. I had a long and serious talk with a stranger whom I met on the train, and who do you think he was?  
Editor Weekly Fun—Give it up.  
"He was Mr. Button-buster, one of your chief humorists."  
"What about him?"  
"Why, he didn't crack a joke all the time we were together."  
"His jokes are worth \$5 apiece."—[New York Weekly.

#### ON ONE CONDITION.

Tramp to lady of the house—I'm starving to death! Can I die out in the barnyard?  
Lady of the House (graciously)—Yes; if you won't crawl under the barn.

#### AND THAT'S A FACT.

Although it causes one to sneeze Much more than one is pleased at, The grip is plainly a disease That isn't to be sneezed at. —[New York Press.

#### UNSELFISH.

"Your husband borrows a great deal of trouble, it seems to me, Mrs. Blue."  
"Yes, but he is unselfish with it. He always shares it with me."

#### HIS ACTIONS BELIED HIS REPUTATION.

"I've always heard that you were of a generous disposition, John," said the maiden, as her lover almost hugged the breath out of her; "but I can hardly believe it."  
"Why can't you?"  
"Because I find you always near and grasping."—[New York Press.

#### THE PARTING.

It was 5 o'clock p. m., and George Montgomery had been spending the afternoon with sweet Lillian Luray.  
"Good-by, darling," he said, fondly, as they stood in the darkened vestibule.  
"Good-by, George," she murmured, nestling her head in the time-honored place.  
"Good-by."  
"Good-by."  
"In every parting, dearest, there is the image of death," he whispered, holding her close and kissing her passionately, "and we may never meet again."  
"Oh, George, darling," she said, clinging to him most fiercely.  
"Who knows, my own what may happen between this hour and when we meet again?"  
"Mizpah," she breathed, and threw her arms about him convulsively.  
"Yes, darling," he spoke tremulously, "let us keep that word as our shield and armor."  
"And you will come back to me; to your own little loving Lillian, George; to the same beautiful and brave George you have always been?"  
"Trust me, Lillian, darling; trust your George."  
"Oh, darling," she said, strong in the faith of women, "I do trust you. How could I love you so if I did not? and she kissed him fondly.  
"Then I shall come again, Lillian, my own."  
"But when, George? When?" she asked anxiously.  
"At 8 this evening, darling."  
"Oh, George," she wailed, "will it be so long as that? So long, so long?"  
He took her in his strong arms, tenderly.  
"Darling," he whispered, "make it 7.30!"  
And it came to pass as he had spoken. —[Detroit Free Press.

#### DESPERADOES' EXCHANGE REMINISCENCES.

"Yes, I was a great desperado in my day," said the reformed train robber, shaking his head sadly and with much humility. "I once held up a whole train-load of passengers single-handed and alone."  
"That was quite a feat," said the retired auctioneer, with a dreamy, far-away look in his eye, "but I once knocked down a whole railroad."—[Chicago Tribune.

#### THE SOWER AND THE REAPER.

Old Moneybags, his whole life through, Worked—stormy days and sunny; And now his heir is working, too, To spend the old man's money.

#### SUITABLE FOR THE OCCASION.

"Chicago won't be satisfied with traction cars during the celebration of '03," remarked the Snake Editor.  
"Won't eh? Hadn't heard of that," replied the Horse Editor.  
"No; she will adopt the Colum bus." —[Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

#### BAD MUSIC.

May—Now, wouldn't you call Professor Pounderofski's music heavenly?  
Frank—Possibly; it's certainly quite unearthly.

#### HAD A BETTER JOB.

Employer (impulsively)—Miss De Pinkie, Clara, will you marry me?  
Pretty Typewriter—What? And give up my \$20 a week salary? Not much.—[New York Weekly.

#### AFRAID OF IT.

"Will you pass the butter, Mr Wickwin?"  
"Not if I see it in time to turn and go the other way, madam."

#### WARM ENOUGH.

New Boarder (shivering)—The house seems very cold, madam.  
Mrs. Slimdiet—Does it? Why, I'm as hot as fire.  
"Hum! Pardon me, but why does the end of your nose look so blue?"  
"Oh! that comes from my aristocratic ancestry."—[Good News.

#### A SMART HUSBAND.

Mr. De Fashion—The paper says sealers are disappointed at the low prices obtained for skins in London this season.  
Mrs. De Fashion—That's splendid! You know I need a new—  
Mr. De Fashion—The paper says the furs are very cheap, dirt cheap.  
Mrs. De Fashion—I never did care much for seal-fur. It's too warm.

#### ABSENT-MINDED.

"You did not attend Blogster's funeral?"  
"No," said the absent-minded man. "I was so busy. I'll go to his next one, sure, busy or not."—[Indianapolis Journal.

#### THE FLOWERS OF THE FAMILY.

The youth was most prudent and careful In making a choice of a wife, So he married 'The Flower of the Family' And she is the thorn of his life.

#### IRISH PUNS.

Charles Lamb made some famous puns, and his mantle seems to have fallen upon his namesake, Charles Lamb Kenney.

The popular journalist was dining at the house of a friend, and by chance swallowed a bit of cork with his wine, which gave him a severe coughing fit.  
"Take care, my friend," said his next neighbor, with a very brilliant attempt at wit.  
"That's not the way to Cork."  
"No," gasped the sufferer, "it's the way to kill Kenney."—[London Truth.

#### MONEY EASILY EARNED.

"What? Another new dress!" said a married man to his better half, as the parcel was opened.  
"Don't distress yourself," she replied. "I paid for this out of my own pocket."  
"Oh, indeed! But where did you get the money from?"  
"I sold your overcoat," was the cool reply.

#### MRS. SCRIMP'S GARDENING.

Old Friend—Did you have much of a garden this year?  
Mr. Scrimp (of Scrimville)—No; it didn't amount to much. In the spring I gave a grand garden digging tournament, the young men who dug the most to have the pick of the girls for the evening, and it worked well, but it cost me 'most two dollars for refreshments. Then I had a planting bee, and that wasn't so expensive, only the planting wasn't half done. Later on I tried to get up a wedding festival, but somehow the young folks sort of lost interest, and I gave up gardening in disgust.—[New York Weekly.

#### THE REASON.

"Why is the road to destruction broad, papa?"  
"It has to be, my son, to accommodate the travel."

#### THE BLIGHTED YOUTH.

I paced the floor in anguish wild, Or sat in deep dejection; I felt extremely sad and riled, I had had my first rejection.  
I went to bed and groaned all night, To die my aim was steady! But I fell asleep at broad daylight, And slept till lunch was ready.

#### NEW THE MEN.

Salesgirl—I wish to resign my place. I'm going to be married to Mr. Clipper, of the ribbon counter.  
Manager—My dear child, that is no reason for stopping work. Keep your place.  
Salesgirl (a close observer)—It won't do. I'm afraid if I don't knock off and do nothing, he will.—[Good News.

#### AFTER THE BALL.

She—Has papa asked you about your income?  
He—Yes.  
She—And you told him that little fib about the large salary?  
He—Yes.  
She—I'm so glad.  
He—Well, I'm sorry. He borrowed \$50 from me on the spot.

MR. JAMES BROWN, who lives near Bealington in Braxton County, W. Va., has probably the largest beard in this country. He is 6 feet in height, and has neither shaved nor trimmed his beard or moustache for thirty years. The ends of his moustache extend beyond his fingers' ends when his arms are outstretched. He carries his wonderful beard and moustache braided and tucked inside his shirt, but does not hesitate to show it to any one who may desire to see it.

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

No handsomer fish swims than the rainbow trout of California. It is not only handsome, but "game," and as a food is toothsome. The enterprise of stocking the rivers of Arkansas and Missouri with the rainbow trout is reported to be a most gratifying success. It bids fair to become one of the most desirable varieties of the salmonidae for pond and stream culture. This trout grows and breeds fast. The office of the United States Fish Commissioner at Washington is receiving a great many requests for specimens.

The discovery that alloy of nickel adds immensely to the resistance of steel armor has given a boom to mines of that metal. A body of nickel owned by a Canadian company has been purchased by an English syndicate for \$2,000,000, the consumption of the bargain evidently being hastened by the results of experiments made in this country. Nickel is a comparatively scarce metal, but if the demand for it is considerably increased, as it promises to be, no doubt additional deposits will soon be discovered.

Those who have studied the wheat problem most thoroughly anticipate that the high table lands of Mexico will be the next competitor of the wheat growers of the United States. Mexico is largely in the tropical regions, but it has every variety of climate, and on its high lands wheat is a certain crop. Its lack of railroad facilities for marketing its product has kept the wheat growers of Mexico from exporting very largely. But there must soon be railroads, and then Mexico will become a wheat exporter on a larger scale than now.

The Pacific Medical Journal recently contained an editorial article on the relation of color-blindness to accidents on sea and land which deserves more attention than it is likely to receive. The point made by the article in question is that whereas the most rigid inquiry is insisted upon land, as in the case of locomotive engineers and firemen, nothing of the sort is required at sea, the consequence being that men are on the lookout who may be entirely unable to distinguish between the red and green lights of an approaching vessel.

ONE of the oldest libraries in the country is the Charleston library of South Carolina, whose charter bears the date of 1748, when George II. was King. The original charter was incorporated in the General Statutes after the war of the Revolution. A bill to incorporate "the trustees of the endowment fund of the Charleston Library Society" is now before the State Legislature, the trustees believing that a permanent endowment will attract the gifts of men of means to the old library. Under the terms of the act the society is authorized to hold real and personal estate to the value of \$250,000.

ACCORDING to all accounts there has been an important increase in the flow of natural gas in the Western Pennsylvania fields during the past three months, due to the bringing in of a number of new wells which have been producing largely. The new discoveries have been made principally in the Allegheny and Washington fields, southwest of Pittsburgh, and some of them have been in virgin territory. At Graperville one well is thought to have opened an entirely new horizon. If this opinion be correct the development possesses great importance, since the wells of that productive district have hitherto drawn from one reservoir only.

THE World's-Fair directors are making a fight against a company which proposes to erect an "Eiffel" tower on a site contiguous to the exhibition grounds. The company offered to construct the tower on the grounds, but the directors wanted 50 per cent. of the receipts, and, as an offer of 25 per cent. by way of compromise came to a thing, war was at once declared between the two parties in interest. The company then leased a tract at Sixty-third street and Grace avenue, and were boasting of their victory when the directors notified them that the erection of the tower proposed would be in conflict with the ordinance regulating the height of buildings, and declared that a protest would be made before the Public Works Department. Local observers of the merry war predict that the result will be a compromise, and that the Fair will have a taller tower than Eiffel's after all.

THE Chesapeake Bay Dog Club, of Baltimore, is arranging for an exhibit at the Columbia Fair in Chicago, to be illustrative of a typical Maryland sport, the shooting of wild ducks. The club proposes to place on the lake at the fair a double sink box and a complete stool of 500 decoys. Another stool of decoys, not so large, is to be properly laid out for a bushwhack boat which is also to float on the lake. A third lay-out will be in front of a ducking-blind, and a fourth around a tub. The sink-box and the tub are strictly Maryland institutions. It is intended also to have a big gun-skiff, in which will be mounted the big gun formerly used by the father of the great Havre de Grace gunner, "Wash" Barnes. The bushwhack boat and the big gun-skiff will use the stool of decoys alternately. One or more expert duck shooters will be in attendance to give exhibitions. J. D. Mallory, of the Chesapeake Bay Dog Club, will supply from his kennels several of the true type of Chesapeake Bay dogs. The intelligent work which the dogs can do while in the water will also be shown. When gunning from the blind the dog will be made to retrieve some object which will be thrown overboard for him. The true type of Chesapeake dog is rare, and the animal will doubtless attract attention. A "tolling" blind will also be erected, and one or more "tolling" dogs will be worked from the blind.