

HIRAM BAKER'S MORALIZING.

Sometimes, when I read of the men
Who're on the tip-top notch of fame,
While every tongue and every pen
Is payin' tributes to their name,
And when I think how close and small
My life and lot is on this earth,
I have been fool enough to fall
Into the blues and hate it all.
And envy looker men their berth.

Sometimes, when some chap wins the prize,
And writes his name amongst the best,
I think, 'spos I'd his chance to rise,
His education and the rest,
I wonder if I couldn't alumb.
The ladder jest as quick as he,
And then it almost seems a crime
That he should feast, while, all the time,
There's but the hard, dry crusts for me.

But, then again, I think, suppose
That all our brains was same as his,
Who'd plow the furrows, plant the rows,
And do the common stunts there is?
If everyone could greatness share
This world would stop, I guess we'd find:
We can't all fancy-work prepare,
The few have pleasant tasks and fair,
The many's got to git the grind.

God made us all, and put us here
As part of His almighty plan;
And each one's got his duty clear:
It's just to do the best he can.
And if my place in life ain't what
I'd like to have it, nor as great,
Why, if I can, I'll change my lot,
And, if I can't, whate'er I've got,
I'll try to keep my furrow straight.
—Joe Lincoln.

MISS FEROBIA'S FAILURE.

BY HELEN WHITNEY CLARK.

"You're a stannin' in yer own light, Feroby." Timothy Filbert shook his head solemnly as he spoke. He was a large man, with small, light-blue eyes and a chronic stoop in the shoulders, suggestive of a too steady application to the plow.

"You're a stannin' in yer own light," he repeated, impressively.

"Mebbe you're right, Timothy," admitted his sister, meekly. She was not naturally of a meek disposition, but there are times when the most spirited person feels crushed by circumstances, and such a moment had come to Miss Ferobia. Timothy felt somewhat placated by the unexpected admission.

"Tain't too late yet," he suggested, briskly, taking his seat at the breakfast table, where his sister was already pouring the coffee. "You jest say the word, Feroby, an' I'll give Jason Smallweed a hint that you've changed yer mind."

His pale-blue eyes glanced inquiringly at his sister, but Miss Ferobia's momentary meekness seemed to have vanished as unaccountably as it had appeared.

"I haven't changed my mind," she retorted with much asperity. "I won't marry Jason Smallweed, nor nobody else. I'll stay right here an' keep house for you the balance of my days."

Timothy wriggled uneasily. He had his own reasons for not appreciating the generous offer. To fortify himself for the disclosure which must be made he swallowed half his coffee at a gulp. "I—I—the truth is, Feroby," he stammered, with a crimson countenance, "I felt so sartin I was a-goin' to lose you, I—I asked Nancy Garget, an' she said she'd have me."

The cat was out of the bag now, and Timothy mopped his face with his handkerchief and breathed a sigh of relief.

But Miss Ferobia, like a sensible woman, bore the shock bravely.

"And how soon am I to give up my situation?" she asked.

Timothy grew uncomfortable again. "Hey? Oh!—why—you needn't to be in a hurry. It won't come off for a week yet," he hastened to explain. "An', of course, you know I wouldn't hev nothin' again yer stayin' right along, same as ever, only Nancy, she—"

"You couldn't hire me to stay," was the reassuring answer, and Timothy congratulated himself on having the matter so easily settled. "It puzzled me consider'ble to know why Timothy was so sot on me changin' my mind," reflected Miss Ferobia, as she washed up the breakfast dishes and polished the knives and forks. "But it's plain as a pike-staff now. I might o' knowed he was sayin' one word fur me an' two fur hisself."

Miss Ferobia was as unlike her brother in appearance as she was in disposition. While he was stoop-shouldered she was straight as an arrow. And though, as she admitted, she was "getting along" in years, her bright eyes and fresh complexion contradicted the assertion.

At her brother's request she remained at her post until the wedding was over and the bride installed in her new home.

There was very little congeniality between the two women, and Mrs. Timothy Filbert was disposed to triumph over her sister-in-law.

"I s'pose you wasn't a-coutin' on your brother marryin'," she remarked, disagreeably, as she combed out her ink-black tresses before the square-framed looking glass in the best room.

"He had a right to please hisself," rejoined Miss Ferobia, composedly.

"But what are you going to do?" persisted the bride. "As I told Timothy before I promised to have him, the house wa'n't big enough for two families, an' you couldn't expect to stay after I come."

"An' as I told him, I wouldn't stay if he paid me for it," retorted Miss Ferobia, emphatically.

"Oh, you're mighty independent," sniffed Nancy, tossing her head. "I suppose you're a calculatin' to take up with Jason Smallweed. You wouldn't ketch me marryin' a widdener," she added, maliciously. "If I could, I'd be the tablecloth I wouldn't be the dish rag. But I s'pose it's Hobson's choice with you."

The truth was, that she was

afraid her sister-in-law might still manage to retain a place in the household by hook or by crook, and she was determined to provoke an altercation in order to prevent such a sequence.

But Miss Ferobia was not to be drawn into a quarrel.

"He may be Hobson's choice, but he is not mine," she returned, coolly. Nancy, however, was as persistent as a gnat or a gadfly.

"I don't doubt but what you'd rather have Felix Byefield," she suggested, slyly; "but you needn't to count on gittin' him, fur he's a-keepin' company with the Widdler Cheeseman, an' everybuddy says they're a-goin' to marry after harvest."

It was a random shot on Nancy's part, but her black eyes sparkled with malicious triumph as she saw by her sister-in-law's burning cheeks that the poisoned arrow had struck home.

Miss Ferobia deigned no reply, however, but went coolly about preparations for her own departure.

She had rented a small cottage and a few acres of ground a mile or two from the old homestead, and Timothy could do no less than get out the spring wagon and drive her to the new home.

It was yet early in the springtime, and the wild plum trees were white with bloom. The tall maples and elms by the roadside swung their light tassels in the soft breeze, and myriads of buttercups and purple hued pansies dotted the grass-grown lanes.

"I dunno what you wanted of so much ground 'round your house," remarked Timothy, reflectively, as the wagon rolled easily along. "Half an acre would have been enough, I should say."

"No, it wouldn't," maintained his sister, stantly. "I'm a-goin' into the gardenin' business, to raise truck fur the markets."

Timothy whistled.

"You'll make a failure of it, sure as guns," he declared, ruthlessly.

But Miss Ferobia was not to be discouraged.

"There's plenty of men make a livin' at it, an' why not me?" she asked. "I've got a little money laid by to start on. An' I've got a stout pair of arms, and never was sick a day in my life; so why should I make a failure of it?"

But Timothy only shook his head and remarked, vaguely, that it was "onpracticable, and she should find out," and declined to commit himself further. And the conference was cut short by their arrival at the cottage.

It was a lonely place, but Miss Ferobia was blessed with strong nerves, and solitude had no terrors for her.

She had accumulated a few odds and ends of furniture from time to time, the gifts of various friends and relatives, which went a good way toward furnishing her diminutive dwelling.

And when they were arranged to her satisfaction, and a square of bright rag carpet tacked down in the centre of the room, Miss Ferobia felt as happy as a king.

She was too tired after her day's work to do more than take a cup of tea and retire to rest. But a comfortable night's sleep on the old-fashioned square-posted bedstead restored her energies, and for the next few days she was as busy as a nailer over her preparations.

Len Dodson was hired to plow the "truck patch," a cow with a young calf was bargained for, and a few fowls of the Plymouth Rock and Dorking species were purchased and were soon cackling vigorously around their new quarters.

After a little more help from neighbor Dodson, and a vigorous use of the hoe on Miss Ferobia's part, the ground was in readiness for planting, and the ambitious market gardener sat up till long past her usual bedtime looking over her stock of seeds and selecting those requisite for immediate use.

There might still be late frosts, she reflected, and such tender plants as beans and cucumbers, summersquashes and nutmeg melons would be better out of the ground than in it for a few days to come. But beets and lettuce, spinach and marrowfat peas and rutabagas would stand anything short of a regular freeze, and might be safely planted at once.

And, late though she sat up, the first pink flush of early dawn did not find

Miss Ferobia napping the next morning, nor for many mornings to come. She was up with the birds, and after a hasty breakfast on tea sallied, and loed and raked, weeded and transplanted, till her back ached and her fingers grew sore and her nose freckled and her cheeks tanned. But gardening is hard work, at best, and though Miss Ferobia labored with a will, the grass and weeds would creep in here and there in spite of her vigilance. The purslane—"pusly" she called it—and horse nettles grew faster than her butter-head lettuce or white spine cucumbers.

Then the weather was not always propitious, and her first planting of sugar corn and early rose potatoes rotted in the ground.

But Miss Ferobia, nothing daunted, replanted the vacant rows with later varieties, and in due time the seeds sprouted and gave every promise of a luxuriant crop.

But from that time on it was, as the little woman declared, a "tussle" between herself and the weeds.

While she was hoeing her cabbages and kohlrabies and weeding her silver-skin onions, the cockle burrs and wild morning glories were flouring among her sweet corn and potatoes.

She worked early and late, however, to eradicate the tenacious interlopers, and finally succeeded in accomplishing her task. When lo! one unlucky night Farmer Nubbins' pigs forced their way through a broken panel of the fence and played havoc among the growing crops.

Small wonder, indeed, if our heroine lost her temper at last and pelted those pigs with clods, or whatever came handiest, and even whacked one of them across the snout with the hoe handle.

But with all her efforts it was late in the day when the last one of the marauders was disposed of and the fence patched up, after a fashion.

(I will say here, in parenthesis, that I do believe a woman could vote, and even make laws, and execute them, too, as well as a man, under some circumstances. When I say "under some circumstances," I mean if she were not hampered by prejudiced and unreasonable colleagues. But when it comes to patching rail-fences, the least said about woman's capabilities the better.)

However, Miss Ferobia's workmanship, if not exactly artistic, was sufficiently ingenious to prevent further incursions in that direction.

But for some reason, from that time on the Fates seemed to turn a cold shoulder on her efforts.

The rabbits feasted on her early York cabbages and marrowfat peas, the striped bugs worked destruction on her cucumbers and Cassava melons, the Colorado beetle devastated her potatoes, and the squash bugs ate up her Boston marrowns and atty-man squashes. The foxes, minks, owls and hawks, to say nothing of opossums and weasels, thinned the ranks of her young Dorkings and Plymouth Rocks; and, to make matters worse, her cow turned out to be a "jumper" and brought disgrace on herself and trouble on her mistress by daily raids on Farmer Nubbins' cornfield.

This was the last straw, and, like the mythical camel, Miss Ferobia broke down under it.

"There ain't no use a-tryin'," as I see," she lamented, dolefully as she set out her one cup and saucer, in readiness for her tea. "A lone woman don't have no chance at all. An' here I've spent all my money, an' my garden ain't with shucks. An' Timothy, he'll say he told me how 'twould be, and that I'd better o' married Jason Smallweed. And I almost believe I would— No, I wouldn't, either. I won't take up with a crooked stick, if I be nearly through the woods—"

"Evehin', Miss Feroby," interrupted a cheery voice, and there, framed in the doorway, stood Felix Byefield, a smile brightening his honest, sun-browned face.

Miss Ferobia shook hands with her visitor, and drew forth a chair for him, with a secret fluttering at her heart as she remembered her sister-in-law's insinuation.

But Felix was evidently bent on making himself agreeable.

"An' so you've struck out for yourself," he observed. "Gittin' along first rate, I opine. You must show me your garden."

"I haven't got no garden, an' you shan't see it," declared Miss Ferobia, inconsistently. "It's all choked up with weeds—I couldn't keep 'em out. An' what with the bugs, an' the rabbits an' pigs, I ain't got a cabbage-head left skeerely."

"Sho' now, you don't say! Why, if that ain't too bad," responded Felix, sympathetically.

"An' the varmints has took all my young chickens," continued Miss Ferobia. "An' Farmer Nubbins is a-goin' to shoot my cow, an' an'—"

The thought of all her woes was too much for her, and she began to sob hysterically.

"Don't cry, Miss Feroby; please don't," urged Felix. "He shan't shoot your cow, I promise you."

But Miss Ferobia shook her head and dried her eyes on the corner of her apron.

somewhere. I can cook if I can't make a garden."

"No need to hire out," put in Felix, eagerly. "I—want somebody to cook fur me. Say you'll marry me, Feroby!"

But Miss Ferobia in her surprise stared at him, then hung her head, blushing like a girl.

"It's so—sudden," she whispered. "What's the odds?" asked Felix, boldly. "I wanted you long ago, only I couldn't somehow git the courage to ask you. Say yes, won't you, Feroby?"

And after a little more urging Miss Ferobia did say yes, and felt very well contented with her future prospects, in spite of her weedy garden.

"Timothy will say the truck business was a failure after all," she reflected, as she washed up her supper dishes at night, with a very light heart, "but he can't say it wasn't a successful failure, anyhow."—Waverley.

THE CENTRE OF POPULATION.

Where It Has Been and Where the Next Census May Show It to Be.

By the first national census taken in 1790, when the population of the country was not much greater than of New York city today, says the Sun, the centre of population was twenty-three miles east of Baltimore. It was still in the neighborhood of Baltimore, though to the west of that city, in 1800. In 1810 it was near Washington. In 1820 it was at Woodstock, Va., and 1830, 1840 and 1850 in the present state of West Virginia. In 1860 it was a little to the south of Chillicothe, Ohio, this being the first official appearance of Ohio as the centre of population, though it has remained the political centre of population steadily ever since.

In 1870 the centre of population was on a line in Ohio between Chillicothe and Cincinnati; in 1880 it was in the neighborhood of Cincinnati, and in 1890, the year of the last national census, it was in Decatur county, Ind., near the Ohio boundary, and on a line between Cincinnati and Indianapolis. The government estimate of the present population of the United States, exclusive of countries over which its sovereignty has been extended, was 75,000,000 on June 1, and all sections of the country have participated, though not equally, in the growth of population since 1890, when it was 62,600,000.

By the coming census the Ohio and Mississippi Valley states will probably be shown to have gained less from direct foreign immigration than in any previous decade, while the citizens of the Middle and New England states have, relatively, gained more. There has been a substantial increase in population, larger, probably, than in any period since the close of the civil war, in the southern and south border states, and a much larger increase in those of the southwest, most notably in Texas, the total vote of which increased from 230,000 in 1880 to 340,000 in 1890 and 550,000 in 1896. The population of Texas (2,200,000 in 1890) is probably near 3,600,000.

A state census taken of Kansas in 1895, on the other hand, showed the population of that state to be less than in 1890, while in the same period the population of New Jersey had increased 16 per cent. Between 1890 and 1895 the population of Florida increased from 390,000 to 465,000, while the population of South Dakota (328,000 in 1890) was returned as 330,000 five years later.

The growth of population in American states between 1890 and 1900 will be in accordance with the increase of the urban population in each rather than with the gain in agricultural districts. As a majority of the cities are in the north, it appears likely that the "centre of population" in 1900 will be on or near the banks of the Wabash in the state of Indiana, at some point northwesterly from the present centre and nearer the Illinois than the Ohio state line.

A Mixed Relationship.

Over the line in Ohio county, a man named Miller married a widow who had a grown-up daughter. His father fell in love with the step-daughter.

The father became the son's son-in-law and the step-daughter became his mother. Recently the son's wife had a child. The child was Miller's father's brother-in-law and Miller's own uncle, for he was a brother of his step-daughter. Miller's father's wife—his step-mother—also had a son, who was, of course, Miller's brother, and incidentally Miller's grandchild, for he was the son of Miller's daughter. Thus Miller's own wife was his mother's mother and Miller became his wife's grandchild at the same time. And then, to top the whole thing off, as the husband of his grandmother he was his own grandfather.—The Pathfinder.

He Had a Strong Argument.

A young Irishman once went to a kind-hearted old squire for a recommendation. An elaborate one was written and read to him. He took it with thanks, but did not move. "What's the matter with it?" roared the squire. "Oh, within', sorr," said the lad, quickly. "Well, then, why don't you go?" "Sure, sorr, I though on the strength of a recommendation like that you'd be wanting to hire me."

DEVOTION OF A FISH.

It Follows its Owner Around After the Manner of a Dog.

A gentleman walking one evening in the park at Durham, England, the seat of the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, came to a pond where fish intended for the table were temporarily kept. He took particular notice of a fine pike, of about six pounds weight, which, when it observed him, darted hastily away. In so doing it struck its head against a stenter hook in a port (of which there were several in the pond, placed to prevent poaching) and fractured its skull, thereby turning the optic nerve on one side.

The anguish evinced by the fish appeared most horrible. It rushed to the bottom, and boring its head into the mud, whirled itself around with such velocity that it was almost lost to sight for a short interval. It then plunged about the pond, and at length threw itself completely out of the water on to the bank.

The doctor caught the fish and upon examination found that a very small portion of the brain was protruding from the fracture in the skull. He carefully replaced this, and with a small silver toothpick raised the indented portion of the skull. The fish remained still for a short time, and he then put it again into the pond.

It appeared at first a good deal relieved, but in a few minutes it again darted and plunged about until it threw itself out of the water a second time. A second time the gentleman did what he could to relieve it, and again put it into the water. The pike continued for several times to throw itself out of the pond, and, with the assistance of the keeper, the doctor at length made a kind of trepan for the fish, which was then left in the pond to its fate.

Upon making an appearance at the pond the following morning, the pike came to the edge of the water and actually laid its head upon the physician's foot. The doctor thought this most extraordinary, but he examined the fish's skull and found it going on all right. He then walked backward and forward along the edge of the pond for some time, and the fish continued to swim up and down, turning whenever he turned, but being blind on the wounded side of his skull, it always appeared agitated when it had that side toward the bank, as it could not then see its benefactor.

Next day the doctor took some young friends down to see the fish, which came to him as before, and at length he actually caught the pike to come to him at his whistle and feed out of his hands.

With other persons it continued as shy as fish usually are.

This was a most remarkable case of gratitude in a fish for a benefit received.

Largest Moose Known.

At the Academy of Science in Lincoln park, Professor Woodruff and an assistant are setting up what is without doubt the largest moose ever killed. It will be on exhibition within a month, and the public will have a chance to see this giant of the northern woods.

This moose was killed the latter part of October, 1898, by an Alaskan Indian named Shopnegon and a squaw man, Ripstein, about thirty-five miles back of Valdez, just over the big glacier near the Copper river. It was purchased by C. F. Perolat of this city, and brought to Chicago last November, where it was sold for \$1000.

The immense size of this animal can be better judged when a glance is taken at the following measurements:

The spread of the antlers, 73 1/4 inches; height of moose from hoof to top of antlers, 8 feet 6 inches; height from hoof to top of forehead, 6 feet 4 inches; length from tip of nose to hock of rear leg, 15 feet; weight when killed, 2000 pounds.

No other such moose was ever heard of in this country or any other, and the academy is proud of its possession.—Chicago Chronicle.

Diminutive Bicycles.

In these days of mammoth undertakings, monster buildings, gigantic everything, it is refreshing to turn aside to the Lilliputian land and study the smallest things in existence. Biggest does not always mean best, as the owner of the smallest bicycle in the world will tell you. This diminutive bike is owned by a young Briton, whose home is at Karachi in India. The frame of the wheel is 9 inches, the wheels are 12 inches, the gear 40 and the weight 1 1/2 pounds. The smallest working model of a bicycle was made by an American diamond cutter. It is a pretty novelty. The frames, rims and pneumatic tires are of silver, the spokes of the thinnest gold wire, the chain is of steel, each link being forged and put together separately. The whole machine is barely two inches in height, and is richly encrusted with diamonds.

A Very Expensive Fad.

"He—I'll grant that your income would be enough for us to marry, if only you didn't have such expensive fads."

"He—? Expe sive fads? What expensive fad have I?"

"She—Me, for instance.—Lustige."

A VICTIM TO ADVICE.

A wise old man was Ebenezer Barr, Who always tried to do as he was bid; They said, "Go, hitch your wagon to a star"—

And Ebenezer did. But, oh! what trials he had to endure When that cantankerous star he tried to drive! It would have been a marvel, I am sure, Had he come out alive.

For of the science of astronomy So ignorant was Ebenezer Barr, He made an awful blunder, and, you see, He chose a shooting star.

And though he sat up firmly in his place, Determined he would conquer his wild steed, That star went plunging madly into space At more than lightning speed.

Of course the poor old fellow was thrown out— His was a fearful fate; and they do say That Ebenezer was without a doubt, Drowned in the milky way.

HUMOROUS.

Teacher—What can you tell me about the rabbit? Pup.—Its left hind foot is lucky.

"What a sanguine disposition your wife has!" "Yes; she never lets up when she has decided what I ought to do."

"Eeverly, did you enjoy your European trip?" "Yes; didn't meet a soul who succeeded in borrowing money of me."

He—Miss Putnam is in her declining years, I take it? Her Rival—Well, if I were a man I wouldn't run the risk of proposing to her.

"No," said the corn-fed philosopher, "a man should not tell a woman he will love her always, unless both of them are young enough to believe it."

Clara—I never sing except for my very dear friends. Maude—There's where you make a mistake. You should sing only for your worst enemies.

"Dear Tim—I'm sending you my old coat by parcel post, so I've cut the buttons off to make it lighter. But you will find them in the inside pocket.—Yours truly, Pat."

"Do you think, Mrs. Spately, that this hat is a little too gay for a matronly woman like me?" "Not at all, my dear. You know that you're years younger than you look."

Sister (meditatively)—All geniuses seem to be absent-minded. Why is it you never hear of dull people being so? Bobby (promptly)—Pshaw, it's just because they haven't got the minds to be absent.

"Of course, as a general thing," she said, "I don't believe in marrying a man for money. But marriage is such a lottery, you see, and it's just as well to know for sure that there's something about him you'll like."

Miss Quickstep—What part of town are we driving through, Mr. Fiddle? Fwedly—I haven't the least idea. Miss Quickstep—I was aware of that. Still, I thought it possible you might know what part of town we are driving through.

"Oh!" sighed the poetic lady, "had I the wings of a bird!" "Don't!" protested her husband. "Don't wish for the wings of a bird. If you had them some other woman would probably be wearing them on her hat before the season is over."

Old Lady (on ocean steamer)—Mercy me! Is this all one ship? Travelled Granddaughter—Why, yes, grandma, and we haven't walked a quarter the length of it yet. Old Lady—Gracious! How near will we be to the land when we get to the other end?

Mrs. Teller—She told me the whole story word for word, just as I have repeated it to you, and she made me promise not to whisper a word of it to anybody. Mr. Teller—But you told me, my dear. Mrs. Teller—Yes of course, but I didn't whisper, did I?—Chicago News.

He—What sort of a footstool was that you gave your husband? She—What are you talking about? I didn't give him any footstool. I gave him a beautiful hand-worked cover for the mantelpiece. He—Oh, that was it. I know he told me it was something he could put his feet on.

"It is only right that I should tell you," she said, "that father has lost all." "Not all!" he exclaimed. "Yes, all," she asserted. "No," he said firmly; "not all. You are still left him. I could not be so cruel as to add to his misfortunes. Tell him—tell him for me that my generosity impels me to leave him what little lies in my power."

Four Queer Names.

A man registered in a Cleveland hotel the other day, giving his place of residence as Sleepy Eye, Minn. Half an hour later another guest registered from Painted Post, Iowa. The clerk paid no special attention to this, but when the next man to register boldly wrote "White Pigeon, Mich.," after his name, both the clerk and the bookkeeper began to get interested. While they were talking about the queer names that had been given to some of our western towns a dignified-looking man stepped up to the office, whirled the register around and scrawled "Horseheads, N. Y."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.