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On the Threshold.
While I was singing yesterday,
Beneath the lilacs, dear,
A little bird perched overhead
As if it longed to hear.

THE DEACON'S DINNER.

The good housewives of the neighborhood often said that Mrs. Smart ought to be the happiest woman in the world.
"Such a nice house as she lives in!" said Miss Bryce, who, poor soul, taught the district school, and "boarded around," like the scape-goat in the Scripture wilderness.

pairs of shoe-strings; and eight coils of tape, which is an insult to one's common sense! If I could reconcile to my conscience, I'd fling the whole collection into the fire; but I was brought up to economize. What do you think, Ella? Would it be a sin to annihilate all these pitfalls to my epantinity?"
"It is rather a problem," said Ella Dale, soberly.

laughed too, although he had not the least idea what he was laughing at. The deacon started as if he had suddenly become all eyes.
"Juliana," said he, "what is the meaning of this?"
"It means, Ebenezer," his wife responded, "that you have spent my housekeeping money for cheap peddler's wares, and that Ella and I determined to serve them up to you for dinner! And what you don't eat, we are going to burn; and henceforward, whatever is bought has got to be of a good quality, or I won't have it in the house! Because I have come to the conclusion that charity is one thing and justice is another. And if you give me money for housekeeping, it isn't fair for you to spend it in buying articles which no one can use!"

BEECHER ON BUSINESS.
An interesting Discourse on Practical Affairs.
The Foundations that are Necessary to Every Man's Success.
In the course of a recent sermon Rev. Henry Ward Beecher said:
"Men who live righteously have all the secular things necessary to happiness. Obedience to divine law and secular prosperity go hand in hand. There is no directory in the world like Solomon's proverb. One would think Solomon had lived in New York, for you will find there all you know and a good deal more. Every man who is successful must have a foundation. He must have health, strength and common sense, which is the most uncommon of all. He must have industry and good management. He must confine his mind to his capabilities. A man six feet tall can reach higher than a man only five feet in height no matter how hard the other may try. An unthinking brain cannot be a philosopher and a man without genius cannot produce poetry, of which we have ten thousand instances.

in what is called prosperity there is often not a particle of true enjoyment. There are thousands of men in dingy shops who are happier than others in palaces. I don't believe bloodsuckers of gold are happy. I would rather be a healthy, respected poor man than the richest in the world, whose name is only another for gold, so far as happiness is concerned."
Remarkable Memories.
There was a Corsican boy who could rehearse 10,000 words, whether sense or nonsense, as they were dictated, and then repeat them in the reverse order without making a single mistake. A physician, about sixty years ago, could repeat the whole of "Paradise Lost" without a mistake, although he had not read it for twenty years. Euler, the great mathematician, when he became blind, could repeat the whole of Virgil's "Eneid," and could remember the first line and the last line in every page of the particular edition which he had been accustomed to read before he became blind. One kind of retentive memory may be considered as the result of sheer work, a determination toward one particular achievement without reference either to cultivation, or to memory on other subjects. This is frequently shown by persons in humble life in regard to the Bible. An old beggarman, at Sterling, known about fifty years ago as "Blind Alek," afforded an instance of this. He knew the whole of the Bible by heart. Inasmuch that, if a sentence was read to him, he could name the book, chapter, and verse; or, if the book, chapter, and verse were named, he could give the exact words. A gentleman, to test him, repeated a verse, purposely making one verbal inaccuracy. Alek hesitated, named the place where the passage was to be found, but at the same time pointed out the verbal error. The same gentleman asked him to repeat the nineteenth verse of the seventh chapter of the Book of Numbers. Alek almost instantly replied: "There is no such verse. That chapter has only eighty-nine verses." Gassendi had acquired by heart 6,000 Latin verses; and, in order to give his memory exercise, he was in the habit of daily reciting 600 verses from different languages.

A SHORT CORK CHAPTER.
A Light Subject, and Yet One Full of Interest.
Where Cork Bark Comes From, and How it is Utilized in Various Ways.
"It's funny what prejudice will do," said a well-known cork merchant. "We are compelled to import every year several thousand dollars' worth of hand-cut corks. These come chiefly from Germany. They are not so good as the machine-cut corks of our own country, as they vary in size and are not approximately round. A machine-cut cork will always fit the bottle it is made for. Yet some of our old German bottlers and druggists are so prejudiced in favor of the products of fatherland that they will buy hand-cut corks every time. Of course, price may have something to do with it, for it is a peculiar fact, and one showing how cheap labor can get, that those corks cut one by one by hand in Germany are brought over here, tariff paid, and then sold a little cheaper than our machine-cut corks. The cork business is growing very rapidly. This is a great country for bottled goods, and bottles must be corked with something. There are twenty-three cork factories in the country, but the one in Pittsburgh of which we are the branch works up a little more than one-half of all the cork imported every year.
"Cork, you know, is the bark, not the wood, of the cork oak. All our barks come from Spain and Portugal. There they keep cork woods. It doesn't kill the tree to take its bark away, and it can be skinned every six or eight years. About \$1,000,000 worth of the raw bark is brought to this country every year. There is no tariff on it, but a tariff of 25 per cent. on the manufactured product. The importations of manufactured corks run about \$1,000,000 a year. The cork is first to be steamed up before it is cut. Corks are made in thousands of sizes and grades, from the sizes of a pin head up to four meters in diameter. We keep 60,000 and grades in stock. There's a little cork that sells at 6 cents a gross, and yet every cork has to be handled three times in the manufacture—once in cutting, once in tapering, and the last time in assorting into grade from the other.
"None of the bark that comes over in the ships goes to waste. We used to burn the refuse, but we know better now. It's between the joints, right under the roof of this building, we have packed fifteen inches of granulated cork. Last summer this upper floor was as cool as any floor in the building. The heat can't get through that cork protector. The palace car builders use the same stuff to pack under the floors of their cars to dealer the sound and under the roof to keep the heat out. I sold fifty car loads of granulated bark to a certain gentleman to pack under the tools of his refrigerator cars as a non-conductor of heat. He has saved thousands of dollars in ice by the use of that substance and has hoped that none of his competitors would catch onto the scheme. But he hoped in vain.
"The finest of the refuse is used by picture-frame makers in decorations. They sprinkle it on their bronzed or japanned frames. See that picture? Well, this old castle along the Rhine, the rocks, hills, trees, vineyard, flowers and birds, an exquisite landscape is it not? are all made from cork pressed like paper mache. It is German novelty, and a neat one. Fruit and egg cases, ice boxes and ice machines, are often packed with granulated cork, which cost only two cents a pound. —Chicago Herald.

In the Firelight.
The fire upon the hearth is low—
And there it stillness ever waits
Like troubled spirits, here and there
The firelight sheds its fluttering gleams
And as the shadows round me creep,
A child's rattle trembles in the gloom
And softly from a further room
Comes—"Now I lay me down to sleep."
And, so-a-ho, with that little pray'
And that sweet lullaby in my ears,
My thoughts goes back to distant years
And lingers with a dear one there,
And I lean my chin 'em there.
My mother's face comes back to me—
Crouched at her side I seem to be,
And mother holds my hand as now.
Oh, for an hour in that dear place!
Oh, for the peace of that dear time!
Oh, for that child's first bedtime!
Oh, for a glimpse of mother's face!
Yet, as the shadows round me creep,
I do not seem to be asleep.
Sweet memory of that treble time
And—"Now I lay me down to sleep!"
—Regina Field.
HUMOROUS.
Society gossip is only chin-deep.
In a coat of paint has no buttons on it.
The character of the Chinaman is apt to be wish-bone washy.
No one can surpass a deaf mute in expressing silent contempt.
An onion is very aromatic, but you couldn't carry it in your pocket for a cent.
"Love is blind," but it gets along remarkably well without the aid of a guide.
Little Jack: "My mamma's new fan is hand-painted." Little Dick: "Paah! who cares? Our whole fence is."
The reason a miser can find no interest in poor people, is because they have no principal.
Ella Mathilda: "Have you ever read any of Holmes' works?" Charles Augustus: "Oh, yes, I have read Holmes' Sweet Home."
Seven hundred and fifty-dollar fans are very common in New York, but sensible girls don't look for such presents. They buy a fifty-cent fan and \$75.00 in oysters and all theatre tickets.
"Smith, did you see my wife go down this street?" "Yes, she passed about an hour ago." Wonder what my chances are for overtaking her? "Good. The sidewalk is just lined with show windows."
One hundred and fifty inventions relating to roller skates have been patented since January 1, and yet it is safe to predict that when a skater unexpectedly sits down with a dull, sickening thud, the language used on the occasion will be the same as that employed last year.
The First Umbrella in London.
In Red Lyon square lived, in former days, many notable persons. Among these was Jonas Hanway, well known as the benevolent traveler, the founder of Magdalen hospital, and last, but not least, as the introducer of umbrellas into London. Hanway, who lived at his house in the square in 1876, was the first man who ventured, after his return from Persia in delicate health, to walk about the streets of the metropolis with an umbrella over his head. It was a bold proceeding for, although others ultimately followed his example, some time elapsed before the fashion became general, and it was so regarded as a sign of individuality to use umbrellas that those who carried them were exposed to much "chaff" and unpleasant jeering from the London gamins of the day. Strangely enough, the high position the umbrella has attained in political circles of late is foreshadowed in one of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife," where Alisa says, as though she were addressing a liberal candidate for parliamentary honors of the present time:
Are you an oar? Now is your boat at rest?
Now will you get a shelter—an umbrella
To keep the scolding world's opinion
From your hat or crest.
The umbrella may be glorified by Mr. Gladstone, but it would be unjust to ignore the fact that it is really indebted for its greatness to the grand old man of Red Lyon square.—St. James's Gazette.
Mexican Love for Children.
One trait of the Mexican character deserving of all praise is the national love for children. Mexico is the children's paradise. Children are loved and petted in public to an extent that makes an American, used to the stolid ways of his own country people open his eyes in astonishment and pleasure. There is no affection in the matter. A baby is every one's admiration, and here you may see fathers out walking with their children for the pleasure of the children's company. In shops and all places where people meet children are petted, and a baby in a shop is seized and carried by an army of male admirers.—Boston Herald.
A Practical Sailor.
He was a cheery lawyer, and she a woman of property. Said he:
"Do you love me?"
"Indeed, indeed I do," she murmured.
"Well, one deed will be quite enough," he said "if you will put it in my name." —New York Journal.