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The Chatham Record.

Telling the Best.
Out of the house where the slumberer lay
Grandfather came one summer day.
And under the pleasant orchard trees
He spoke this wise to the slumberer:
"The cover bloom that kissed her feet
And the people bed where she used to play
Have honey store, but none so sweet
As ere our little one went away.
O bees, sing soft, and bees, sing low,
For she is gone, and loved you so!"

A wonder fell on the listening bees
Under those pleasant orchard trees,
And in their lot that summer day
Ever their murmuring seemed to say:
"Child, O child, the grass is cool
And the posies are waking to hear the song
Of the bird that sings by the shaded pool,
Waiting for one that tarrieth long."
'Twas so they called to the little one then,
As if to call her back again.

O gentle bee, I have come to say
That grandfather fell asleep today.
And we know by the smile on grandfather's face
He has found his dear one's hiding place.
So bees, sing soft, and bees, sing low,
As over the honey fields you sweep;
To the trees above and the flowers below
Sing of grandfather's last sleep.
And ever beneath those orchard trees
Find cheer and shelter, gentle bees,
—[Eugene Field in Chicago News.]

ALDA.

Over was so flabbergasted in my life," said Miss Miriam Mills.
"So—what?" queried the deacon.
"Miss Miriam laughed.
"Yes, I know," said she, "I don't suppose you can find the word in the dictionary. But it expresses just exactly my meaning. I'm puzzled—ah—ah—to my wife's end."
The deacon laid down the whetstone wherewith he was sharpening his keyhole blade.
"What about, Miriam?" said he.
"About Alda. There's her name, to begin with."
"It is sort of a queer name," admitted the deacon, smiling.
"It was not a young man, but when he smiled his white ruffled face lighted up, like a beam of sunshine on a rough rock, and his dark-gray eyes sparkled."
"Opposite him stood Miss Miriam, tall and lean, like a homopop, dressed in lilac calico, and topped off with a knob of sandy hair.
"She was fully ten years older than the deacon, and by virtue of those ten years ruled him as an indulgent mother rules a little boy.
"But I could get along with that," said Miriam. "She didn't name herself, an' I don't suppose she's to blame for the outlandishness of the thing. But I can't do nothing with her. That's why I'm flabbergasted."
"You picked her out yourself, didn't you, at the Home for Homeless Girls?"
"Of course I did. But she don't 'pear like the same girl now that she did then. She was a little downcast thing, as pale as a sheet, and quivering all over, if you did but look at her, an' 'twas all you could do to get 'Yes' an' 'No' out of her. But now—"
"Well, ain't she quiet enough now?"
"Quiet! I heard the greatest screechin' yesterday, an' I ran to the ten-acre meadow, makin' sure the black bull had broke loose, an' there was Alda on the very tip-top of Balloon Rock, with her hands clasped over her head, hollerin'."
"Mersey me!" says I, "what's the matter?"
"Nathin'," says she, lookin' sheepish. "But the sun 'shore an' the birds was whistlin', an' I felt just like singin'. Mother used to sing," says she.
"Where?" says I.
"On the stage," says she.
"An' omnibus stage?" says I.
"No," says she; "where the people and the footlights are. But mother died of consumption," says she.
"And last week I went out to the barn to get some eggs, and there she was carried up in the haymow, readin'."
"Alda, says I, "why ain't you to work? I set you to weedin' them young beets."
"I did weed 'em," says she, "till I was it ed; and I'm goin' back to work when I'm rested."
"Look here," says I, "this won't do! You can't come and go as you choose. You're my girl now, and you've got to do as I say."
"And she never answered a word, but just threw down the book and fashed off like a streak o' lightning. And there in the barn chamber, when I went into it, was the biggest 'lot o' fixins!' She had partitioned it off with the horse blankets, and there was the wooden settee in one, and a lot o' posies in no handle'd picture in another, and a lot of old picture-papers in another.
"Aldi! says I, callin' out of the window, "what's all this?"
"It's home," says she.
"Fiddlisticks!" says I. "Come and

learn it all right out. I want this room to store things in."
"And then she began to cry.
"I never had a home before," says she. "Can't I keep this one?"
"Poor child!" said the deacon, feeling the edge of his scythe to see if it was sharp enough. "It was 'most a pity to disturb the place, wasn't it?"
"Child!" echoed Miss Miriam.
"Why, she's sixteen—old enough not to want a play-place like a baby."
The deacon was silent. How could he make his practical, level-headed sister comprehend the sentiment of the thing?
"She's a pretty good worker, ain't she?" said he.
"Yes—by fits and starts. But you can't never depend on her. I tell you, William, that play-actin' blood's in her, and there's no gettin' it out. She dances and sings and flies around like all possessed as long as she feels like it, and then she seems to think that 'bein' tired' is a sufficient excuse for anything. I asked her 't'other day why she was so different now from what I noticed at the Home, and says she, 'Oh, I was struck dumb for fear you wouldn't take me! I was so tired of that place! And if you hadn't took me, I should have run away.'"
"Alda," says I, "you mustn't talk so."
"Well, I should," says she.
"Poor little girl!" said Mr. Mills.
"There she comes now, with her apron full o' wild red plums!" said Miss Miriam, with a start. "And I left her washin' down by the brook. Why can't she stick to her work?"
For Miss Mills, like many another good housekeeper, had made an outdoor laundry in the summer time in a shady nook by the brook, where a huge kettle boiled under a gipsy crotch and the water supply bubbled past over a bed of stones.
Alda Black came slowly up the path. She was unburnt-haired, with one of those radiant complexions that are slightly marred by freckles, and reddish hazel eyes full of weird lights—a strange-looking girl, yet singularly attractive.
"See what I found in the woods," she said compositely.
Miss Miriam pushed aside her trouble with such alacrity that the red plums flew this way and that.
"I don't care what you found," said she. "What business had you in the woods?" Have you finished the washing?"
"I couldn't," shivered Alda. "It made my arms ache so. I never washed before."
"Then it's high time you learned," said Miss Miriam. "Go back to your tubs, and don't let me see your face again till the wash is all done. It's not a heavy one, and I've told you just how to do it."
Alda's countenance fell.
"An' I to work all the time?" said she passionately.
"That's what we're put into this world for," said Miss Mills, didactic.
"I don't like to work," pleaded Alda. "Not all the time, I mean."
"It don't matter what you like or what you don't like," said Miss Miriam, sternly. "Go back and finish that washing at once!"
Alda looked at her mistress with slant red lights in those wonderful liquid eyes of hers. For a second it seemed as if downright rebellion were impending.
The deacon, still polishing the glittering scythe blade, awaited the climax, not without interest.
But finally the girl turned around and went back to the shady spot where the kettles boiled and the water went singing by.
And there, as afterward transpired, she sat, reading an old story paper, and eating late blackberries, until the horn blew for dinner.
"I was tired," she said indifferently. "I couldn't work any more."
Miss Miriam's slender thread of patience gave way, at this last transgression.
"William," said she to her brother, "I've made up my mind at last. Aunt Dorcas Keep wants a 'help' up in the Black Woods. Aunt Dorcas is a woman who won't stand no nonsense. She was matron in the penitentiary for ten years. If there's any work in Alda, Aunt Dorcas Keep'll get it out of her. I'll send Alda there instead o' going myself, this harvest time!"
"Ain't it a pretty rough place to send the child?" asked Deacon Mills, dubiously.
"It's just the sort of place she needs!" retorted his sister. "I wish you'd harness up and take her over right away. I must get rid of Alda somehow."
But the house seemed strangely lonesome when Alda Black was gone. The sweet, piercing voice, exclaiming over the refrain of old ballads, the mer-

ry laugh, the glancing to and fro of the shining red-brown head, the masses of wild-flowers which the girl was wont to put everywhere, were missed beyond all Miriam Mills' calculation. Still she scorned to complain.
But one April day the deacon came in and found her on the calico cushioned settee, with a white, drawn face.
"It's that old rheumatic pain again, William," said she. "I—I guess you'd better go after Alda again. I need someone to help me, and I somehow think Alda would suit me. Aunt Dorcas will spare her, I know."
"Miriam," said the deacon, soberly, "I wasn't meanin' to tell you, but Alda ain't over in the Back Woods any more. Aunt Dorcas Keep she worked the girl potty hard, and Alda ran away."
"Run away! Oh, I hope she ain't fell into no bad hands!" gasped Miss Miriam.
"She went to the pastor's house. The pastor's wife took her in, and she writ to me—Alda wanted her to write—that she'd make a good home for the child. They were educatin' her up, and trainin' that sweet voice of hers for the choir, odd times, when she wasn't workin' about the house. And I've heard tell she was engaged to the organist, a likely young fellow that owned a good farm there."
"Then," said she, "she won't come!"
"We might try," said the deacon.
"And he went for Neighbor Dalley's wife to stay with Miriam while he hitched up the horse and drove to Putney Parsonage.
Alda ran joyously out to meet him. How she had changed! How the good pastores had trained and civilized her! To the deacon, who had not seen a woman under sixty, except on Sundays, all winter long, her beauty seemed fairly dazzling. Yes, she would go to take care of Miss Miriam. Of course she would go! Wasn't Miss Miriam that first released her from the bondage of the unlaborable home?"
"Home?" Did Miss Miriam really want to see her? Oh, if Miss Miriam only knew how she, Alda, had longed to see the farm again and the wash-place by the brook and the Balloon Rock!
Yes, of course she would go! And George Albee, the young organist, himself helped carry her trunk out to the deacon's wagon.
But not until they were well out upon the road did Alda look up into the deacon's face with brimming eyes, and say:
"Oh, I have been so homesick—so deadly homesick—to see Miss Miriam again—and you!"
"Me!" repeated the deacon; and every drop in his veins seemed turned to little tingling prickles. "Mr. Alda!"
Miss Miriam received Alda with open arms.
"Child," said she, "I never knew how much I should miss you. After this you must never go and leave me any more—unless," checking herself abruptly, "it is true about Mr. Albee. Are you really engaged, Alda?"
Alda colored rosy-red.
"Oh, Miss Miriam, I am married!" she confessed.
"Married! Oh, Alda!" groaned Miss Mills. "Then you never can stay here!"
"Yes, she can, too!" broke in the deacon, his countenance all one broad beam. "It's me that she's married to. It come to me all of a sudden on the way home that I loved the girl, that I couldn't no ways do without her. And she said she loved me!"
"Yes, I did!" broke out Alda, with shining eyes.
"And we just stopped at the Methodist minister's and got married. So Alda will stay and nurse you after all."
"And she's welcome as flowers in May!" said the spinster, "after a moment of the bewilderment. "But I do declare, I never thought o' that way out of it!"—[Saturday Night.]

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.
HAROLD AND THE MOON.
Harold, our darling 2-year-old,
Awaking suddenly last night,
Was very restless till mamma
Showed him the heavens sparkling bright
Then, looking straight up at the moon,
He gave a merry little shout
An' said, "Oh, what a gate for lamp
An' me-a-goin' to blow it out."
His blue eyes shining and his mouth
Looking like rosebud red in June,
He blew and blew and lo! a cloud
That moment passing, hid the moon.
"Me did it," cried he as he turned
And flung his dimpled arms about
His mother's neck. "Me said me would,
Me blowed 't hard me blowed it out."
—[Detroit Free Press.]

THE LETTER M.
It is a curious fact that the sound of the letter M is, in almost all the known languages, to be found in the word which stands for mother and nurse. Perhaps this comes from the fact that it represents a sound existing in nearly every spoken speech, and has the same pronunciation in them all; and being exceedingly easy to utter, almost speaking itself, as it were, it is one of the first sounds that children make, and naturally becomes mamma.

THE EAR OF CORN.
A farmer went into his field with his little son to see whether the corn would soon be ripe.
"Father, how is it?" said the boy, that some stalks bent so low and others hold their heads so high?"
The father plucked off two ears and said: "See, this ear which bent modestly if full of the finest corn, but that which stretched upward proudly is quite barren and empty."
"To carry one's head very high, is often the sign of vanity."

A DEN TAKES CARE OF A KITTEN.
The little 8-year-old son of Harry Alexander has a hen at his home in New Bern that is taking care of a young kitten in the place of a brood of chickens, and it is apparently as fond and proud of it as though it were a young chick. The boy found Biddie sitting on her nest in the barn, and putting his hand beneath her to see why she was hovering was surprised to find the kitten. The foster mother was very indignant and vexed when her little charge was temporarily removed, and picked viciously at the boy's hand when he removed it. It was returned to the nest. It was supposed some cat had taken her young offspring to the nest for safety, and the female gallus domestica insisted on taking it in charge. There is no accounting for the strange freak taken now and then by some animals in adopting and caring for the young of some other species. —[New Orleans Pleasure.]

SWALLOWS AND CROWS.
Among the courageous small birds may be counted the family of swallows. The writer has often seen barn swallows fly downward and peck at the cat and dog, and more than once a sharp twitter, a whir of wings and a peck on the hat has reminded her, when standing in the barn door, that she was intruding on the swallows' precincts.
About a half-mile from the house is a high bank which is the home of a colony of bank swallows. The earth for some distance is thickly perforated with the roundish holes leading into their nests.
Not far from this bank a quantity of corn was one day scattered by accident upon the ground. The crows were quick to discover what had happened, and swooped down and began to devour the windfall.
Some of the swallows spied them at once and gave the alarm. I chanced to be setting beneath a tree in full view of the scene. In less than a minute after the crows had settled to feeding, more than a hundred of the bank swallows had darted from their holes, and with angry twitters fell upon the intruders.
The attack was a complete surprise to the big black fellows, and, as if realizing the futility of trying to cope with their small assailants, they rose from the ground in a body and took flight.
The swallows pursued them darting, diving, striking at them, above, below and from both sides. The crows were routed completely and took refuge in a dense piece of woods a quarter of a mile away. Then the triumphant swallows turned about and sailed homeward, uttering many chirps and twitters of satisfaction as they flew.
For the hour or more that I remained in the field not a crow was to be seen near the corn. The swallows were masters of the field.—[Youth's Companion.]

Teacher—What is the capital of California?
Freddy Fangle—Its glorious climate.

THE PURSER.
A Steamship Official Whose Duties are Many.
Takes the Tickets, Keeps the Log and Hunts Stowaways.
The purser on an Atlantic liner wears one gold stripe, on a black velvet band. He is one of the most important officers of the ship, and he has a lot of things to do. He is in charge of the passenger department and all stores, and signs all requisitions with the chief steward. He is the financial agent of the owners aboard ship. He collects the tickets from the passengers, sees that they are all properly berthed, and acts as a general business manager. All mails are in his charge, and any specie on the ship in transmission is in his personal care, and while it is on board he must not leave the ship.
The purser's work at sea begins with the muster of the crew before the passengers come aboard. After the muster of the crew is dismissed all the steerage and second cabin passengers are mustered, and have to pass the ship's doctor and a Board of Trade man. After that the purser receives the saloon passengers and settles them in their rooms. That generally takes the time of the first day. There are always in the busy season disputes about rooms and berths which he must settle. Everybody who wants to know anything about the ship asks the purser. He is expected to run a bank for the accommodation of the passengers and to decide bets in sporting events. People who want to change their berths have to see him, and those who do not want anything come to see him because they don't want anything. His office bell rings all the time. Bills for storage, cartage and such things, incurred through the office, are brought to him to be paid and then disputed. All in all, his life is about as pleasant as the chief steward's.
The morning after leaving port he takes the steerage and second cabin tickets. The steerage passengers are all mustered at one end of the ship and the other end is carefully searched. Then the tickets are taken and the passengers allowed to go to the end of the ship which has been searched, while the other end is searched. In this way nobody escapes and stowaways are caught. The second cabin passengers are mustered in the saloon and their tickets taken. They are then sent on deck and the cabin searched.
The saloon passengers give their tickets to the bedroom stewards, who when he has gathered all the tickets for his section turns them over to the purser. There are several lists which the purser must make out while at sea. On west-bound passages he makes out three passenger manifests, one for the State Board of Immigration and two for the custom officers. These lists give the name, age, sex, residence, nativity, and occupation of each passenger, and the number of pieces of his baggage. The cargo manifest for all pieces of cargo, the names of the shipper and consignee, the marks on the boxes and a description of the goods. All packages of freight of value are taken in personal charge by the purser and locked in specie vaults.
Every morning at 10:12 o'clock he goes with the doctor and chief officer on an inspection of the ship. Four or five other times during the day he makes the rounds, and always the last thing he does at night before turning in is to make an inspection. There are a hundred little things for him to do, such as changing money and making the Associated Press abstract of the log. He is the only one authorized to send letters and telegrams ashore by the pilot at Sandy Hook or at Queenstown. He keeps the crew list and the articles and makes up the official log of the ship, in which is kept the record of all occurrences of interest and of all offenses by the crew. This is done for the Board of Trade, so that when the men are paid off in Liverpool by the purser, for every fine or deduction from their wages he must show the entry of the occurrence of the offense in his official log book.—[New York Sun.]

How a Spanish Nobleman Won a Hazardous Wager.
A wealthy gentleman of Basque descent lived in the city of Mexico. He was a good deal of a nudcap and noted for his daring eccentricities. The reigning Viceroy, a Spanish nobleman was especially objectionable to him, and one day when the Basque gentleman was among some lively and congenial friends, talk fell on the law which provided that no one other than the Viceroy might drive about with

spotted horses. This was a privilege which the Viceroy was very zealous in maintaining.
As a result of the discussion the Basque gentleman, something of a "cavaliers," as they say in Spanish—a wild fellow as we would put it—wagered with a Mexican marquis that he would himself litch four spotted horses into his coach, and drive through the principal streets of Mexico. Twenty thousand dollars was the amount of the wager.
In a few days a handsome coach, with four spotted horses, was driven up the main avenue of the city past the present Hurbide Hotel to the very gates of the viceregal palace. The coach was driven several times up and down in front of the palace, while sentries presented arms, thinking it to be the viceregal coach. Some one ran up stairs and informed the Viceroy himself of the presence in the street of a coach with spotted horses, and our went the pompous Spanish viceroy, to a balcony to see, with his own eyes, the defiance of his privilege and infraction of the law.
The Basque gentleman leaned out of the window, saluted the Viceroy most graciously, and then ordered the coachman to enter the main courtyard of the palace. On reaching the very heart of the viceregal authority the Basque alighted, passed gravely up the staircase to the viceregal apartments, and, to the astonishment and dazed functionary, said: "Knowing how fond you were of horses, I have come to present you with a coach and four as an expression of my sincere admiration!"
The Viceroy, perforce, had to accept the handsome gift, and could say nothing.
The coach and horses cost \$3000, and the clever Basque pocketed \$17,000 profit when the wager was settled.—[Boston Herald.]

Fibre From Palmetto Leaves.
Near Jacksonville, Fla., a company has commenced the business of converting the leaves of the common scrub palmetto into a fibre fit for commercial purposes. The process of transformation is not at all complicated. The work is done by a machine so simple in construction that a boy can manipulate it. The leaves of the palmetto are placed between washers and are carried by them into a box furnished with two revolving cylinders, each having teeth that tear the leaves lengthwise into long strips. This process finally divests them of the soft vegetable parts which enter into their composition, nothing remaining but the tough fibre. This is then forced down a chute to a lower floor, where it is dried and packed in bales ready for shipment. Although the industry is yet in its infancy, many uses have already been found for the fibre, the principal demand at the present time being for stuffing mattresses and upholstered furniture. It costs only about one-fourth as much as moss.—[Carpet and Upholstery Trade Review.]

Horse Superstitions in Arabia.
The horse is involved in the most ancient superstitions of the people of Arabia. They believed him to be endowed with a nature superior, not in degree only, but in kind, to that of all other animals, and to have been framed by the Almighty with a special regard to the convenience of man.
One of their oldest proverbs tells them that the horse is the most eminent of dumb brutes, and that the most meritorious of domestic animals is that of feeding him. Mohamet himself inculcated a lesson of kindness to the horse when he said: "As many grains of barley as are contained in the food we give a horse, so many indulgences do we daily gain by giving it." The belief is widespread in the East that all pure Arabian horses are descended from Mohamet's five favorite mares, upon one of which the prophet fled from Mecca to Medina.—[St. Louis Republic.]

A Fun-Loving Seal.
The mother seal at the Zoo got rather gay last Sunday afternoon while a big crowd of ladies, gentlemen and children was standing around eagerly watching the baby seal. The mother seal would watch and see where the crowd was thickest, slide quietly under the water, come up close as possible to where the crowd was, and then, with seemingly pure devilry, jump up and splash the water in such a way as to cover and wet every one within twenty feet. And it kept this sort of fun up all the afternoon. No matter on which side of the tank the crowd got, the seal would make a quiet sneak under the water, and then, quick as lightning, show up near the crowd and get in its funny business.—[Cincinnati Enquirer.]

What is Love?
Love is joy, and love is sorrow;
Love is sweet and bitter, too;
Love is old as all creation,
Yet is love forever new.
Love is deep, and love is cruel;
Love is tender, love is kind;
Love will come not at your bidding,
Yet no place but love will find.
Love will die unflinching for you;
Love will kill as quick as hate;
Love will brave the wrath of thunders,
Yet will weep if barred by fate.
You that love can have my pity,
You that have not love at all,
I will love out of compassion,
Love will soon give you a call.
—[Libbie C. Baer in Arkansas Traveler.]

HUMOROUS.
A tramp spends his life going to dinner.
A new choirmaster in a church ought to make everything just hum.
It is singular how a surgeon retains his popularity when he so often cuts his friends.
First dude—I say—aw—where did you get your hair cut? Second dude—On my head.
Man—Why don't you follow some trade? Tramp—I did sorry, but I never caught up with it.
Mrs. Strong—The greatest thing is—what you are! Her Pretty Niece—Wrong, auntie; the great thing is, what you wear.
"Oh, what a precious little money bank!" exclaimed a visitor at the Jangles as she examined Freddy's birthday gift. "Yes," said Freddy, "and there's a precious little money in it, too."
He—So you positively will not give me one kiss? And I had a ten-dollar bet with Tom Bickles that you would! She—I am sorry for you, but I have a bet with him of a box of gloves that I would not!
"In those idyllic days," began the new boarder, "butterflies." "Indeed it does," interrupted the landlady as she snatched the butter-plate, "but you're the first one that had the consideration to speak of it."
"Isn't it a wonderful lesson for man—the way a canary caged for life sings and sings and sings all the time." "Lesson? I think it is a bad example. If a man were as vindictive as that he'd be executed."
Chief of Police—Have you given any work to that crack detective put on by the board? Captain—"He had one job." Chief—"Did he catch 'em?" Captain—"Catch 'em? Why, say, chief, that fellow couldn't catch cold."
Young Muselman—Miss Clara, beg pardon, but recently your mamma, don'tcher know, quite disarranged me. Perhaps you are not aware of it, but you have acquired a chronic habit of staying at vacancy." Miss Clara—"You silly boy! How can I help it without being inattentive to you?"

Extraordinary Provision of Nature.
A wonderful place is Tinajas, about thirty miles southwest of Mission Camp, Arizona. The mountains at this point have one face of hard, smooth granite. All the waters falling on this entire basin are, by a most extraordinary provision of nature, combined with the efforts of primitive man, made to flow through a succession of nine wells or tanks, carved in the solid granite of which the mountain is composed. These remarkable receptacles are placed or excavated, one above the other, the upper tanks being approachable only by a difficult and circuitous route through a perfect chaos of gigantic detached boulders. The lower tanks are easy of access, and are often drained of their contents by men and animals traveling between Yuma and Sonora. To one standing at the foot of the mountain on which the upper tanks are situated no indication of their existence is afforded, nor does climbing the smooth, steep mountain side seem possible to one unacquainted with the way. This latter fact is not deplorable, because the upper tanks have never been known to be dry. Within two miles of these Arizona wonders are certainly 150 or 200 graves, each marked by rows of stones laid in the form of a cross. These are the resting places of men, famished for water, who had expended their last strength in reaching Tinajas, only to find the lower tanks dry, and, ignorant of the upper ones, had lain down in despair to die.—[St. Louis Republic.]

Encouraging.
First Youth (at Hallway depot)—Traveled far?
Second Youth—Not yet, but I expect to before I stop. I am going West to seek my fortune.
First Youth—I just got back. Lend me a dime, will you?—[Good News.]