Chatham Record.

H. A. LONDON,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION,
$1.00 PER YEAR
Strictly in Advance.

The Chatham Record.

VOL. XXIII. PITTSBORO, CHATHAM COUNTY, N. C., THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 1900. NO. 1.

Chatham Record.

RATES
OF
ADVERTISING

One square, one insertion - $1.00
One square, two insertions - 1.50
One square, one month - 2.50

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ROCK ON ELMWOOD HILL.

An Irish-American Romance, Written for This Paper.

BY WILLIAM J. FLORENCE.

CHAPTER I.

A BIT OF IRELAND IN AMERICA.

The town of Elmwood used to be a farming suburb of New York City. Now its boundaries are obliterated, and it is a section of the city lying between Central Park and the Riverside Drive, and nearly built up with fine residences. Between the time of these two conditions it had a period of occupation by small gardeners and others, who lived in the humbler kind of homes, some of which were mere huts on the rocks. The grading of the streets left some of these structures at a conspicuous elevation, and the artists of the magazines and other illustrated periodicals were fond of sketching these picturesque views. The poorer shanties were occupied by squatters, but the next grade better yielded ground rent, however slight it might be, to the owners of the land. But there came a point in the extension of the city's building limits when, by means of a city ordinance, these objects were swept out of existence.

The early moon of an August evening was shining on Elwood Hill and was favorably lighting it up as a remarkably close resemblance of a rural scene in Ireland. On the shelving rock stood two cabins, composed of a miscellaneous collection of materials, yet formed into a rude semblance of cottages. Vines covered some of the lack of architecture, and the moon was not severe in exposing the points of ugliness. They leaned against each other, back to back, as though for mutual support, each being conscious of its own structural frailty. A pigsty was close by, and a pen for goats, while small patches of garden had been made of the soil which covered a portion of the stone. Up the ledge a stairway led, by means of an interspersion of rock-hewn and board-built steps, from the street to the cabins. Up this ascent climbed a policeman in uniform. He had been detailed to serve notices of ejectment to the inhabitants of Shanty Town, as the neighborhood was commonly called, and his day's task had reached into the evening, ending with this visit to the homes of the O'Rourkes and the Beggs. The occasion was, indeed, like that of an eviction in Ireland. There had been plenty of warning, however, and when Phelim O'Rourke, smoking in front of his door, saw the approaching he knew the errand before it was delivered. The visitor simply handed a paper to him, and delivered a similar one into the adjacent premises of the Beggs. O'Rourke put on a pair of iron-bowed spectacles, shielded the flame of a match with his palm, and by the flickering light slowly read the formal notice. A learned man in his way was O'Rourke. He had once taught school in his native Ireland, and his head was full of book learning which had no practical value to him in actual utility. He was a vague dreamer, an inventor of wildly impracticable theories, and altogether a man entirely unsuited to earn a living in a city where adaptability is the first element of personal success. Instead of making and realizing simple plans for the support of himself and his wife, he gave his thoughts to almost if not quite irrational philosophizing.

It was different with his son, Donnell O'Rourke, a handsome young fellow, who joined him. His hair had the auburn of Ireland in its close-cropped efforts to be curly, his face bore the open good-humor of his race in a peasant costume, instead of the clothes of a New-Yorker, he would have looked like a veritable "broth of a boy," but his tongue had lost the brogue of his native land, for he had emigrated in childhood. Even his father's Irish speech was but faintly characteristic, as he handed the document to Donnell and asked him what he thought of that.

"I think it is time we quit the shanty and the rock, anyhow," was the spirited reply. "I'm earning $12 a week as a lawyer's clerk, and in a year I'll be a lawyer myself. If you can somehow bring in as much, father, we can afford to live in better quarters."

The one lacking thing to complete the Irish-American scene agreeably was a pretty colleen, and she came into it from the residence of the Beggs. Wide-open gray eyes, with dark lashes, had Nora Begg, and the clear white of her cheeks was freckled like the stipple of an engraved face. She seemed younger by two or three years than Donnell, who was 20, and like him she had been brought across the ocean too early in life to leave the brogue of Ireland on her tongue. A modest girl, and a neatly dressed one, was this New York colleen of Elmwood Rock. Close dwellers there had she and Donnell been, and closer yet had their hearts become. When she was told that the eviction was a certainty, and thereupon Donnell asked her to walk with him she blushed a little, but took his arm, and it was evident that their conversation would relate to the question of a future home. Even the abstracted Phelim O'Rourke vaguely understood that, as he watched them out of sight.

While Phelim O'Rourke was still meditating upon the document, his neighbor, Micky Begg, zigzagged up the stairway. Micky was a sad example of intemperance, and he had just returned from the "berren" of old Pete Metlathery. As the bottle was passed around very freely after old Pete was put under the ground, Micky was full to the back teeth. To show his sobriety he called upon O'Rourke to see him jump from the three-legged stool, which stood by the doorstep, to the bottom of the washtub. He put himself in position and said: "See me leap, and then say if I'm drunk. Hurroo!"

"Are you comin' in, Micky?" came in a woman's feeble voice from within, for poor Mrs. Begg was a helplessly, hopelessly bedridden invalid.

"Divil a step till O'Rourke sees me leap from the tub to the stool. I can leap like a goat, me darlin'." And giving a spring in the air Micky came down with a thud, nearly crushing a goat that was comfortably sleeping near the cabin door.

"A nice example you are, Micky," said O'Rourke, solemnly, "to come from a funeral as drunk as a piper. Get up, Micky, here comes the priest."

Sure enough, Father Hanley, who was returning from old Metlathery's funeral, came along. Micky had picked himself up, brushed the mud from his clothes, and put himself on the stool before the Father came up.

"How are you, Phelim?" said the priest. "And the children? Well, I hope, God bless them."

"Yes, Father, they are well and can eat as well as any children on the rocks. I wish you would speak to Micky, Father. He wants looking after. To-morrow morning he has to be up bright and early, for we're going to be evicted. Look at him as drunk as a fiddler."

"Yes," said the priest. "I watched him at the funeral. The death of old Metlathery should be a warning to him. That sinner did not draw a sober breath for many months. Do you hear me, Micky," said the priest, shaking up his stupid parishioner.

"Don't you want to buy him, Father?" replied Micky. "He's as fat as butter."

"He's thinking of selling the pig," said O'Rourke apologetically. "It's got to be made a residance of, and he's drunk enough to fancy he's back in Ireland—bound for a fair with the porker."

"Listen, Micky," said the priest. "You see how that to per Metlathery died, did ye not? What can you expect to gain by this constant inebriety. Think of Metlathery's end, my man?"

"He'll roast like pipe clay," replied Micky, in a maudlin manner, his eyes now half opened, and tears running down his cheeks. "And," he continued, "if it wasn't for the black spot on his body he'd bring more in I'm axin."

"Oh, you are incorrigible, Micky," said the priest, as he neared with laughter at his parishioner's answers.

A shout of laughter was heard as three pretty, bright-faced children came up the hillside, and, with hands filled with wild flowers, came running toward the priest, who received them with a kiss for one, an embrace for another, and taking the smallest in his arms held her high in the air till she laughed with childish glee. They were O'Rourke's youngsters, and had stayed till dark in Central Park, thus getting home by moonlight.

"Well, darlings, I'm glad to see ye this blessed summer evening. You are all as pretty as the flowers, and reflect great credit on your loving mother, who takes such good care of you."

It is something to be remembered, the fondness the Irish children have for the priest. The appearance of "The Father" in an Irish village is the signal for a general assembling of the children, who run toward the good man, and, clinging around his legs, with shouts of welcome, hug and kiss him in token of their love and veneration. The rocks of Elmwood presented the same characteristics.

"Run into the house, my darlings," said Father Hanley. "I want to speak to Mr. Begg on a matter of business. Come here, Micky, you are sober enough to listen to what I have to say. Lady Maud Tennison, from the big house at Kilbona, where you came from, has written me a letter. She was very fond of your Nora before you emigrated. She has lost her own daughter since then, and she writes that she constantly thinks of her dead pet's foster-sister, Nora."

"Yes, father," said Micky, now perfectly sober from his short nap. "Her ladyship was always fond of Nora, and Nora seemed quite taken wid her, too. She is a true good lady, and a Christian woman. Sure, didn't she put a beautiful stone over the corpse of cold Carolan in Kilbona Abbey, at her own expense, the darlin', and ain't she loved by the poor people, from one end of Loch Bernid to the other. God bless her!"

"Listen to me, Micky. If you're sober enough to comprehend. Lady Maud writes that she will adopt Nora as her own daughter, if she can get a complete and legal release from her parents. I suppose it's Oonah that I must see about it."

"Yes, yer reverence. It's the mother that decides."

"Is she able to see me?"

"I'll go in and try."

The priest entered the cabin and found the bedridden Oonah Begg lying awake on her couch. She was feeble with an incurable malady, which had been caused by a street railway accident a year before and which was sure to result in her death at no distant day. He gave her a priestly blessing and then delivered his errand—very gently and considerately, for he knew that no true mother could at once tolerate the suggestion of giving away her daughter. When he had at length read the letter to her and she fully comprehended it, she cried:

"Oh, I couldn't do it, Father. I couldn't. It would kill me."

"It is a pity it isn't Doll that somebody wants," the priest exclaimed, "and not the daughter that is a comfort to you."

"Don't say one word, if ye plaze, against me boy. May be he isn't what he ought to be, but I am in hopes he will come around in time."

"Well, I hope so," and the priest indulged in the frankness of advice common to his profession in dealing with the poor and ignorant of their parishes, "but he'll have to mend a deal to become a good boy. I see him too much with the toughs and the gangs. But there, don't cry, Oonah. We'll try to reform Doll, and as to Nora, think the matter over. Remember, she will receive a good education and become a grand lady. Won't that be a satisfaction to you, for you know that you haven't long to remain wi'her. Think it over, Oonah."

Father Hanley emerged from the cabin to find Phelim O'Rourke and Micky Begg engaged in a dialogue in which the talk to all being done by Phelim. That learned and erratic man was discoursing upon a subject which, so he was telling, he had elucidated in a speech on the previous evening before the Kosmic Club. That was a body which met in the back room of a saloon, and was composed of a dozen all but irrational theorists, each one of whom consented to listen to the whimsicalities of the rest for the sake of being heard patiently when his own turn came. They were so thoroughly at variance with all established things that they wouldn't even spell the name of their club in accordance with the dictionary, and at times they took to adopting long resolutions directing how the affairs of the universe ought to be conducted. Phelim O'Rourke was about the oldest of them all. The address that he had delivered, and about which he was talking to the bedfuddled Micky, he had forwarded as a theory which, even to his companions, seemed singular indeed. It had kept them so interested that they had neglected the convivial function of the club. Their beer glasses had been empty for a quarter of an hour before he finished, but upon his conclusion the mugs were quickly filled, and the overtopping foam ran down their sides to the table.

"Here's to the noise," said one, "that Mr. O'Rourke's theory may never be tested on O'Rourke's self." That was drunk with noisy laughter, so O'Rourke confessed in his account to his neighbor. And yet he declared that he had impressed his fellow-members immensely.

"You've brains enough and to spare, Phelim," said the priest, after listening to enough of the confusing narrative to understand that O'Rourke was full of some new, strange and impracticable doctrine of his own invention. "Why don't you use your education sensibly, as your son does well does. He'll be a successful lawyer one day, for he's strengthening his head by good work, while you're stuffing yours with your philosophical rubbish."

While the priest was speaking Doll Begg came up the stairway, go to the priest a none too respectful "good-evening," and sloached into his humble home. He was not an ill-looking fellow, but his manner betrayed bad habits and a reckless disposition. The three men conversed a few minutes about the impending eviction. Then they were startled by an outcry. It was the feeble yet shrill voice of Oonah Begg, and they hurried into her cabin to find out what was the matter with her. She lay with her eyes closed, and exhaustion expressed in her thin, wan face. Doll Begg, her lurking son, sat in a chair tipped back against the wall, with his arms folded hard, one leg crossed stiffly over the other, and his scowling brows so lowered over his eyes that only half their evil light was visible.

"What is it?" Father Hanley asked, taking a seat on the edge of the bed, and holding one of the invalid's hands. "Has the boy been doing anything to you?"

"That's right! Doll exclaimed. "Ask her—don't ask me. Of course, she'll tell you the truth, and I won't."

"Did he strike you?" the priest asked, seeing a red mark on the woman's wrist, as though she had warded off a blow.

"He didn't strike me," she responded. "He tried to rob me. He knew my hundred dollars had been drawn from the savings bank, that I had it here under my pillow. It's part av what the railroad folks gave me for the accident and now we've got to use it for the farm of a place to live in. When he thought I was fast asleep, he comes in on tiptoe, and feels for it. But I was awake, and I screamed with all me might, which wasn't much. I'm sorry to tell it av him, but, sure, the priest ought to know it. And I had to call for help, for he'd have stolen me money."

The priest patted the woman's hand, and said soothingly: "Never mind it—never mind it." But turning to the young man he addressed him with bitter emphasis: "Doll, I knew you were a brute. How it came to be so I don't know, for your dying mother here is a good woman and your father's one fault is the drink. I have known of your striking your poor, helpless mother, and that is both a vicious and cowardly. Now you've turned thief—a most contemptible thief—for you'd steal the very money that she received in payment for her life. Doll, take my warning. You'll come to some bad end if you don't reform yourself."

Doll said nothing, but sullenly unfolded his arms, unscrewed his legs, picked up his hat and sloached out of the cabin. He stamped down the stairs to the street, and bent his steps toward the groggery, where his gang congregated, bent on to get drunk if whisky could be obtained without money.

Micky Begg was sober by this time, and his customary affection for his wife manifested itself in the exclamation: "I'll thrash the divil out of him—that's what I'll do."

"Don't do that," Oonah said. "Leave him to Father Hanley. May be he'll be sorry when I'm dead, and do better." She closed her eyes and was silent for a minute; then she said, with a sad smile: "There's pleasant news. Anyhow, it's pleasant to me. The doctor was here. He said I wouldn't live longer than six months at the most. There, Micky, don't be sorry. All I thought the sufferings—the days and nights av dreadful, dreadful pain—was going to last longer I'd be in despair. But the doctor is certain about it. He says I'll die within six months."

"And there's no possibility of your recovery," Phelim O'Rourke inquired, with a singular manifestation of interest. "You've got to lie here, and do nothing but suffer, and wait for death?"

"Hush, man," the priest whispered. "It's the truth, but don't speak it to her."

The priest and the neighbor bade the Beggs good-night, and departed.

CHAPTER II.

MICKY AND THE WITCH.

At daylight next morning Micky started for the stockyard at the river's side underneath Washington Heights, driving the pig before him. He felt full of Irish patriotism, for was he not almost taking a pig to the fair? And wasn't the proceeds to go to pay the ground rent of his doomed cabin, before the eviction of the family, and the demolition of the structure. Micky lighted his pipe, and as he trudged along the road would whistle a bar or two of some reel or jig between the whiffs of his "dudheen," while his mind was filled with Lady Maud's request to bring up Nora as her own. "Why not?" thought Micky. "Heaven knows we have as much as we can do to bring up the little wans, and if one was gone there'd be more for the rest;" and then, as if ashamed of the selfish view of the matter, he muttered: "No; give away me own flesh and blood? No; better starve foorst." And then the idea of Nora becoming a fine lady and living in her carriage, while people would tip off their hats to her, took possession of Micky's brain. "Why not, indeed? Sure, she's as pretty as Lord Lorne's daughter, and may be I'd get a chance to be a gatekeeper or roadmaster on the estate, Begorra. Nora can go! We'll all be rich one of these days."

"O long there, ye divil," as the pig tugged at the rope around his neck, and with the natural disposition inherent in pigs to go the wrong way, he darted between Micky's legs, upsetting him. The rope slipped from his neck, the pig started back the road he had come. Micky picked himself up and ran in pursuit with many a wild and wicked oath. "Bad luck to ye as a racer, but I'll pay ye off for this when I catch ye," said Micky, as he ran for dear life after the porker. When he captured the pig which he did after a long chase, he struck upon a new idea. "I'll put the rope around his waist," said he, "and then, begorra, I can drive him either way."

The stockyard was reached in an hour, and Micky sought a purchaser. But no one seemed inclined to buy a single pig. He saw them in the pens by the thousand, but they had come by car loads from the West, and there was nobody to buy one lone pig. Noon passed without giving poor Micky an opportunity to dispose of his charge.

"Come here, avick," said he, addressing a little ragged boy. "Mind this darlin' while I go to take a bite. I'm hungry and must eat, or I'll drop with the waitin'." And giving the pig in charge of the boy, Micky skipped off to a sheleen where he disposed of two great pieces of bread and took three noggins of whisky in the space of half an hour.

Just then an old friend of his, one Tommy Kane, came in.

"Ah, ha, Tommy! how are ye, and how's the ladies? Come, have a noggin wid me," said Micky.

And another drink was the result. Now, Tommy took a turn at treating, and down went two more glasses. By this time Micky was half drunk, and the thought of the pig took possession of him.

"Hould hard, Tommy," said he, refusing another glass; "I'll drink no more till I sell the pig."

And he zigzagged back to the yard.

"Here is the owner," said the boy, who by this time had got tired of his charge, and was talking to a well-to-do looking man; "here's the man as owns de pig."

"Do you want to buy him?" asked Micky, addressing the man, who was an overseer.

He laughed at the proposal first, but seeing that Micky was in earnest he listened to it. A bargain was struck and the pig transferred to the custody of the new proprietor, while Micky returned to the sheleen to spend the "luck penny" with his old friend, Tommy Kane. Drink after drink was now the order of the day, until Micky had spent a dollar of the money he had received for the pig, and was so drunk he could hardly stand. Tommy had dropped in a dark corner of the sheleen and gone fast asleep.

It was quite dark when Micky started homeward, and with much difficulty he picked his way through the park skirting the Hudson and toward Hoboken, two miles away. Micky was not so drunk as to forget the letter from Lady Maud and her desire to adopt little Nora, and as he staggered from one side to the other he would his organ out "Me little Nora will be a fine lady, and me, her father, will be a gentleman, begorra."

He was now approaching a deep cut at the foot of Tenth street. This was a place which Elmwood tradition said was haunted by fairies. But Micky was filled with courage, for the whisky had fired his blood, and he did not care a straw for man or devil. So, with an effort to steady his pace, and wrapping his long coat around his legs, he boldly plodded on. He had not proceeded more than a quarter of a mile before the whisky began to die within him, and he felt impelled to sit down on a rock by the wayside.

Strange music was heard, as if from afar, so soft and distinct that the faintest sound came to Micky's bewildered ears. Nearer and nearer it came, now a trifle louder, now dying away in the distance. Suddenly the grass at Micky's feet became strangely illuminated with tiny glass lamps, which hung like lighted dewdrops from each blade of grass, while hundreds of little dwarfs, little men and women dressed in spangled green dances and leaped about, keeping time to the fairy music. These tiny creatures were not larger than pins, yet were perfect in form and features. They were a merry set, and clapped their hands with glee, as they laughed and shouted in the moonlight. Presently from their midst came one, a queer-looking old fellow, with a large red nose and the most comical of faces. His little eyes had a merry twinkle, and though he was no bigger than Micky's little finger, he quieted aside his companions, who seemed to hold him in great esteem, for they ceased their dancing and shouting at his approach and bowed down respectfully to him as he climbed up Micky's leg and took a seat on his knee.

"Oh, Lord, but this is a queer party I've got into," said Micky, as he looked at the little old man on his shoulder.

"Hush, mortal mortal," chuckled the old man, while the myriads of tiny creatures at his feet peeped from their shelter behind sticks, blades of grass and grains of sand, as if intent on Micky's words.

"Would you like a drink of whisky, me darlin'?" again queried the sycophant, for the old fellow was both.

"I would indeed," said Micky. "My mouth is as dry as a lime kiln."

"Come along, then," said the old man, leaping from Micky's shoulder to his knee and with another leap to the ground. He led the bewildered Irishman across the road to a cabin, well lighted and warm, in strong contrast to the dark pathway. Thousands of little fairies, each with his little lamp lighted, appeared in front of him.

"Across the ring," by the powers, I'm afraid I'll step on some of yez little fellows and crush a few thousand av them wid me feet."

"Never mind them," said the old man; "they can leap, are of them, and a deed will save them all the door."

"Indeed, sir, enough, for the most Micky said, his companion leaped like a flash of the cabin the tiny musicians flew away, their lamps gone like one of a million on the shutters. Micky and his conductor crossed a threshold. Within the back stood a little bar, or drinking stand, on which were arranged a row of various colors. With a bound the old fairy sprang upon the counter, and showing a button with his heels disappeared as if by magic behind all. Long without speaking a word.

[illegible]

[illegible]

The countless shapes grown on flower garden [illegible] in the early pearly morning [illegible] Take a leaf of the lilac. Will [illegible] quicker than any magic [illegible] one has been known to [illegible] half an hour.

AGRICULTURAL.

Water For a Crop of Corn.

About 27000 pounds of water per acre is the estimate for a crop of corn. Such a weight of water would crush a strong building, and yet more than that quantity falls upon an acre in the course of a year. It is not so difficult to charge this water use to prevent its loss. It is known that if a pile of water is covered loss evaporation occurs. If the land is cultivated frequently the loose dirt on the surface prevents evaporation and the water is retained in the soil for the use of the plants.

A New Device to Save the Swarm.

Every person who has kept bees has lost a valued swarm or more as by squeezing the swarm is often swarm. Some are sure to be not away the best one can do. A writer in the Germantown Telegraph tells his method as follows:

"I have used a device like this: Take a piece of board, say ten or twelve inches square, bore nine or ten inch holes in it, and in each of these holes stick a rye straw. Get a board stick four inch in diameter feet long, tie it on end in the hive board and when your bees swarm, cover the straw ends, and carry it around among the bees where they seem to be most, and they are quite sure to "settle" on them. Then you have only to carry them down before the already prepared hive. You see this saves climbing on limbs, cutting off limbs and lowering them down, which needs a special kind, and even then, for one reason or another, they are forced off and the work has to be done over. This method simplifies matters, is very practical, is easily done, and there is no patent on it."

Planting Flat Seed.

The first important thing is to get good seed. Buy from a reliable seedsman, for it does not pay to waste time with poor, unreliable seed. If we have some of our own seed, saved from the year before, see that it is best. For we are than once a good and fresh. Next see that the soil in which it should have been put there in the fall, or if not, see that the plants have been prepared from some other place. Put it in a box, pan or anything else convenient, and set near the fire or in any other warm place. In three or four days, be drive out the plants and get warmed through. Occasionally give a stirring to break up the lumps, so that there is no mold to have at most through. When it is sufficiently warmed and saturated, easily pulverized, take an old spoon, saucer or some such thing, and set all your dirt through it into the boxes that have been prepared for your seed. Pack it down rather closely, sow the seeds but not too thickly. Then put a thin even layer of the dirt over them, and again pack down with a board or some flat article. Sprinkle lightly with tepid water, and set in a warm place to sprout the seed. Cover the box remote from window, or any cool place, until seven or of the seeds or more appear, when the temperature can not fall below sixty degrees. The box must be established by malnutrition. A normal temperature until the plants are a good start, giving to the seedlings plenty of sunshine. After the plants have their third or fourth set of leaves, and seem to be crowded in the box, it will help them to transplant in small pots or boxes. Give them plenty of room to grow in. After they are transplanted they may be set out of doors on warm days that they may be hardened, so that the change, when they are planted in the open ground, will not have any effect on them.—The Agricultural Epitomist.

Keeping Animals Too Long.

It is a very commendable and humane feature of sentiment to feel regret, for it indicates an appreciation of the fact that one is both to feed, and yet a farmer who is raising animals for feeding cannot let sentiment interfere with what he knows to be good business. Others keep on the too long simply because they happen to be ignorant of the best time to dispose of them, and they keep waiting for a better price in the meantime to help them get good returns. Sometimes this delay in the hope of doing better proves helpless a farmer to carry 1,000 lbs. live from month to month and he cannot know it a year has elapsed. The animals are insatiable eaters up all the profit they ever would have made for their owners, and at the same time are passing the prime of life, when they sell at the best prices.

We cannot afford to keep cattle one day longer than the time they reach full maturity or prime of life. Up to this period they have been gaining in weight and at a cost of feed that has been a profit on their investment. Beyond this period the cost of feed for fattening on their increase in weight is greater than the amount of flesh. Liberal feeding of growing and maturing animals is the best of the farmer or breeder can do, because the final results in excellent animals depend on their being kept in good condition from the time they are dropped all the way through. There is no further gain.

Prime cattle sold in the market brings somewhat more than a fat and well-fleshed animal. It indicates a certain breed, or at least a good grade, and by the use of them the farmer has kept ahead of the times. Good feeding is necessary to make the most of the breed, but it is not the only thing. The animals must have inherited the tendency to fatten easily. Breed is a very important factor.

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[illegible] ter always to tell just when it has reached its full prime, but it is more profitable to sell just before that period, and thus lose the few extra pounds she may have gained, than to hold her a few weeks beyond full maturity when she gains nothing in weight and loses in quality. Most of us are inclined to hold our cattle too long, and it may well be of value to some of us to look into the matter. Are we hampering ourselves by holding cattle over for higher markets when they should be sold at once, or are we selling them just as soon as they have reached their prime and are in the very best condition for the market.—E. P. Smith, in American Cultivator.

A Convenient Barn.

Modern laying roofs are hard to operate in the old-fashioned string part rectangular style of building, and a frame with an open center like the one shown in Fig. 1 is coming into use. As is from the free swing of the horse fork, it has the advantage of allowing hay or grain to settle without interference from cross girts.

Fig. 1 represents a plank frame which is shown in detail in Fig. 2. In place of

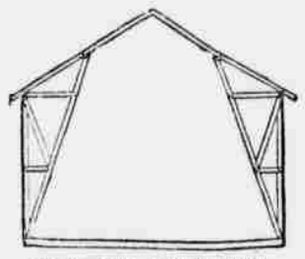

FIG. 1.—OPEN CENTER FRAME.

the usual upright post a plank post is made by nailing one plank to the edge of another, T fashion. Two planks nailed to the foot of this and extending to the purlin with the braces, as shown, form a truss, which takes the place of the usual cross-feed frame.

Fig. 3 shows the barn in perspective and Fig. 4 shows the ground plan. The break between the stanchions is a gate for carrying feed through to the box stalls. The dotted line extending across

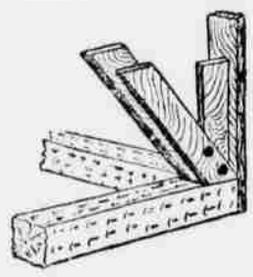

FIG. 2.—DETAIL OF PLANK FRAME.

the barn by the side of the drive floor is really the imaginary boundary of the feeding floor. A slight additional expense would have provided a partition with rolling doors, similar to that in the rear which separates the stable from the boxes, thus inclosing the stables. Over the stables and boxes is a loft with a tongued and grooved floor. The mow floor is also matched.

Nearly under the granary window is a chute by which the cats enter the barn through a circumfluous alley around the granary. They say this entirely prevents the depredations of rats and mice. For my part, I should have preferred hung the granary with sheet iron, which could have been done for three cents per square foot.

The "lean to," which forms the ma-

FIG. 3.—BARN IN PERSPECTIVE.

nure pit, was built under a separate contract. The timber for sills and ground floor, and also the stones for underpinning, were furnished by the party for whom the building was erected.

The site was that of a former barn that had been destroyed by lightning, and stood away about four feet in the rear, six by eight inch posts, sixteen feet long, were used instead of the T plank ones in this particular building. The dimensions were sixty by thirty feet. The building complete, with mows full, in working order, and two coats of princess metallic paint, with

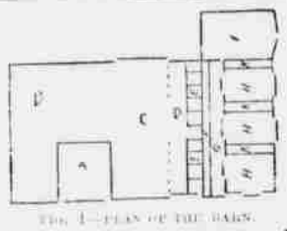

FIG. 4.—PLAN OF THE BARN.

A, stable; B, [illegible] C, drive floor; D, [illegible] floor; E, [illegible]; F, [illegible]; G, [illegible]; H, H, box stalls; K, K, mows; L, manure pit.

while I saw it was put up a year ago last June. Probably $120 would have to be added to that amount to duplicate it today.

The fact that the builder was architect, contractor, boss carpenter and superintendent combined probably saved him not even with that addition to the expense it is a cheap barn, considering its capacity, and for those desiring that combination comes to meet the requirement in an effective manner.—Thos. Mershall in Country Gentleman.

OUR BUDGET OF HUMOR

LAUGHTER-PROVOKING STORIES FOR LOVERS OF FUN.

Would It?—Possibly—Tommy's Understanding—How Could They?—His Offence—Checking the Rising Sex—It Would Be Just Lovely, Etc., Etc.

If you cross a stick across a stick,
Or stick a cross across a stick,
Or stick a cross across a cross,
Or cross a cross across a stick,
Or cross a cross across a cross,
Or cross a crossed stick across a stick,
Or stick a crossed stick across a stick,
Or stick a crossed stick across a crossed stick,
Or cross a crossed stick across a cross,
Or cross a cross across a crossed stick,
Would this be an acrostic?
—Answers.

Possibly.

Lord O.—"You're a girl after my heart."

She—"How do you know? I maybe after your title."—Harlem Life.

Tommy's Understanding.

"What does it mean, Tommy," the Sunday school teacher asked, "where it says 'they rent their clothes?'"

"I suppose they wouldn't afford to buy them," replied Tommy.—Detroit Free Press.

How Could They?

She—"Beside she had other pretty little loves, as he doubtless you have noticed."

He—"No, I suppose they don't often. At least, not more than once."—Pearson's Weekly.

His Offence.

"What was the cause of the latest quarrel between Mr. and Mrs. Bickerstaff?"

"Mrs. Bickers caught her husband lying on one of her sofa cushions."—Harper's Bazar.

Checking the Rising Sex.

"Woman ought to have admiration—her touch will calm and purify the turgid, muddy pool of politics."

"Now, go slow, Eliza; you've temporarily overlooked the Empress of China."—Chicago Record.

It Would Be Just Lovely.

Dolly—"That perpetrated pain makes me think—"

Polly—"Makes you think of what?"

Dolly—"Wouldn't it be a lovely thing if they would make perpetrated orange blossoms?"—Detroit Free Press.

Avoiding the Cuneiform.

Professor's Wife—"I always have our pies made square."

Visitor—"Why is that?"

Professor's Wife—"Oh, Professor is so absent minded that if a pie were cut in wedges he would be apt to cut his piece out of his head."—Indianapolis Journal.

The End Near.

First Horse—"How long do you suppose we shall continue to hold pretty as beasts of burden?"

Second Horse—"Beasts of burden? You don't know what you are talking about. They make automobiles now that carry twelve men and six guns."—Chicago Record.

Just "Using" the Old Man.

Mrs. Mann—"I am afraid, Martha, young Mr. Style is not altogether correct in his habits."

Martha—"Oh, you think that because he and pa are such good friends but after we are married I shall insist upon Charles having nothing to do with pa."—Boston Transcript.

Its Educational Value.

Towne—"This war, after all, has been a great lesson to the Turkish."

Browne—"That's right. I guess there's lots of people who never knew before the war broke out that there were such things as kopjes, spruits, and kloofs, let alone how to spell 'em."—Philadelphia Press.

A Way They Have.

"Billy never tells a funny story when his wife is around."

"Does she contradict him?"

"No; but if he doesn't begin the story correctly in every minute particular, she takes it away from him, tells it accurately in small details and leaves out the point."—Detroit Free Press.

He Had Had Experience.

Miss Sentiment—"Were you ever disappointed in love?"

Eligible Widower—"Twice and a half times."

Miss Sentiment—"Twice and a half times?"

Eligible Widower—"Yes, twice married and once rejected."—Omaha Bee.

A Feminine Trait.

Mrs. Hoon—"They say that Mrs. Swiftsmith is greatly troubled with insomnia."

Mr. Hoon—"Yes; I understand that she discovered the fact a week or so ago, that her husband talks in his sleep, and she hasn't slept a wink since for fear of missing something."—Harper's Bazar.

Extremes.

She deprecated his fervent compliments.

"I look like thirty cents!" she sighed, with quivering lip.

"You look like ninety nine cents, my darling!" protested her tenderly misled.

Now the truth, doubtless, lay somewhere between these two extremes.—Detroit Journal.

Ancient Humor.

At the convention the ancient forms were readily adhered to.

"Hail! O King!" cried the courtiers.

And the new monarch responded:

"Thank you ever so much, but if it's all the same to you, I would rather reign than hail."

This all hands felt heartily, just as if this were the joke of 100 years old.—Detroit Journal.