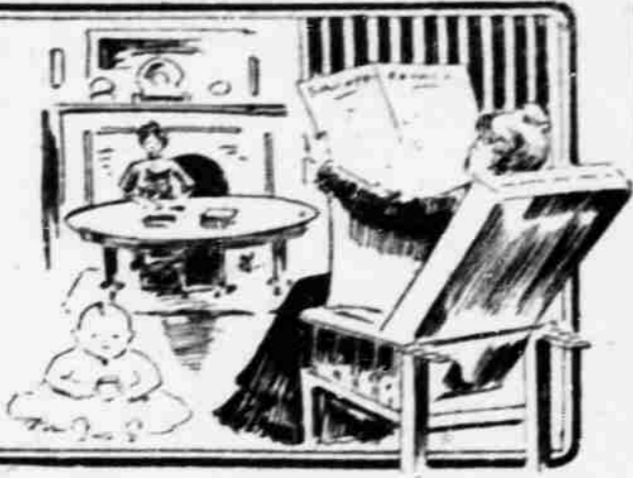


The Home-Corner



HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD.

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood
about
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard
bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the
swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the
blossom
Leans to the field and scatters on the
clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's
edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each
song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could re-
capture
The first fine careless rapture?
And though the fields look rough with hoary
dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's daisy—
Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

—Robert Browning

SPRING HOUSE PRISONERS.

"Hey, there, Aunt Jane, wait a minute, and we'll bring you a treat, if you'll let us ride home with you!" a voice from somewhere up in the air called as Miss Jane Lee traveled slowly along the shaded road in her rickety barouche, drawn by the most leisurely of bay mares. In answer to her name, Miss Jane looked up quickly. By the roadside was a large, thickly grown peach orchard, whose boughs were laden with the most alluring fruit—soft, pink, velvety. Some of the most luscious-looking peaches hung on branches, which extended out over the road, as if designed especially to tempt the wayfarer. Suddenly Miss Lee caught sight of two very familiar-looking wayfarers perched in one of the topmost boughs, with juice running down their chins.

"Wait a minute, Aunt Jane, and we'll bring you a treat, if you'll let us ride home with you!" the boys repeated, as they began to descend the tree with bulging pockets.

"I'll wait for you, and you may ride home with me; but I do not wish you to bring me a stolen treat, thank you," was the firm response. "This orchard and these peaches do not belong to you, do they?"

"Aw, no'm; 'course they don't," Jerre Toad, her older nephew, argued, as he pressed a large ripe peach temptingly upon his aunt. "It's old man Tibbs' orchard, but he has more peaches than he can ever use; and he won't miss these. Our taking these few won't hurt him—"

"No, your taking those few, or even more wouldn't hurt him; and he'll never miss them," Miss Lee agreed, as she refused the offered fruit, and drove on down the road, when her nephews had climbed into the vehicle.

"But your taking them does hurt you; for taking what does not belong to you is just plain stealing; and whether or not the owner will miss what you take doesn't matter so much as the principle of the thing. You can't afford to steal, for it hurts you yourself, and belittles your character."

"Maybe you don't know just how sweet and fine and juicy these are, Aunt Jane," Jerry observed, slyly, as he bit into a particularly luscious peach. "But how about Cousins Rose and Billy and Kate; are they coming out to supper tomorrow night? You said you were going to invite them today while you were in town, you know," he quickly added, by way of changing the subject of conversation.

"Yes, they're coming; and I got pineapple at the market this morning; and we'll have your favorite dessert, pineapple sherbet," Aunt Jane announced, smilingly.

"Fine!" exclaimed two voices at once from the rear seat. "And Kate'll sing for us, and Billy'll tell us some dandy new stories."

"Oak Lawn," Grandpa Lee's big, old-fashioned house where the Todd boys were making a very happy vacation visit, was the scene next day of busy preparations for the guests, who were to arrive that evening. The guest chambers were aired and freshened up, vases of roses from the garden were placed on the tables, and Aunt Dinah was preparing such a menu as had made "Oak Lawn's" hospitality famous throughout the county. But the train out from town was not on time, and supper was to be a whole hour later than usual, so the boys got almost unbearably hungry, as they lounged in the hammock, waiting for the arrival of the guests.

"It'll be a half hour before they get here yet," Jerre observed disconsolately, as he examined his newly-acquired property, a small watch. "Come on; let's go down to the spring house and get some fresh water."

"All right," Bob, the youngest brother, agreed; and the boys ran down the green, sloping lawn to the old stone spring house. There was always plenty of fresh water in the big wooden bucket on the shelf on the ell gallery; and this was the first visit the boys had paid to the old spring house since their arrival at "Oak Lawn"; therefore they noticed with interest the recent improvements. "There was a new roof, and a new door

replaced the rickety old door which had hung on rusty hinges last summer.

"Let's see what improvements they've made inside," Jerre suggested, as he peeped through the half-open door. "My, but look at those fine watermelons—two of them. Now I know what it was Uncle Mose brought down here covered up with the buggy rug when he came home from town today. He was hiding them from us," the lad exclaimed, as he caught sight of a couple of big, fine melons shining in the clear water. "Come on in, Bob; let's have a feast. We'll eat one and leave the other. Grandpa won't care if we have one, and Uncle Mose had no business hiding them from us, for they belong to grandpa. Everything on this place belongs to grandpa."

"Maybe we oughtn't to take what doesn't belong to us," Bob argued, feebly, looking wistfully at the tempting fruit.

"Aw, pshaw, we're welcome to what belongs to grandpa!" Jerre urged.

"Yes, if he says we may have it," Bob tried to protest, but already the older brother had ripped out his knife and the crimson heart of the watermelon lay open; so the younger brother stepped quickly inside the spring-house.

"You might close the door," Jerre suggested, with a decree of caution; and, the door being hastily closed, the boys were soon lost in the delights of the luscious melon—the first they had tasted that season. In a marvelously short time every particle of the melon, save the rind, had disappeared.

"Now we'll take this rind and throw it in the brook, and wash our faces and hands and hurry back to the house before the company comes," said Jerre, arising and turning the doorknob. However, he turned again and again in vain, for he could not open the door. It appeared to be locked fast. Bob added his strength to his brother's, and the boys beat and pushed upon that door with ever so much might; but it remained unmoved. Gradually they realized that they were locked up in the spring house, which was some distance from the residence, and that they could not make themselves heard through the thick stone walls or little barred window that far off, and that they could only wait till somebody came their way, which might not be till next morning, when Tim, the hired boy, came down for fresh water for breakfast. Time went on slowly. Gradually the faint light through the tiny window faded into darkness. In the distance the supper bell sounded, and then the boys caught their names on the air. It seemed that they were being eagerly called, but never were the calls close enough for their loud answers to be heard. Somehow their voices seemed unable to get out of the stone prison. Once Jerre caught sight of Tim, carrying a lantern about the yard, as if searching for something; but he did not come near the spring house. Oh, they never knew how long it was before the door suddenly opened to reveal Uncle Mose standing there, holding up a lantern and gazing dazedly at them; but they were so wearied and distressed that they almost wept with relief at the sight of him.

"Well, mercy me!" exclaimed the old man, almost dropping the lantern. "What yo chill'en up to, anyhow?"

The watermelon rinds and the boys' expressions answered the question eloquently, and indicated also that they had been amply punished for taking what did not belong to them.

"I reckon you-all chill'en didn't know we'd done had a spring lock put on this here do', so it locks when you shut it; nor that I done got them melons for the comp'ny to eat to-night," said the old man, picking up the remaining melon, and leading the way to the house.

Bob and Jerre did not join the guests in the watermelon feast. They preferred to eat cold supper in the kitchen and go quietly to bed. But they've never been known since that night to take anything which did not belong to them.—Baptist Boys and Girls.

NEIGHBORS.

Mrs. Enderby let her sewing drop unheeded into her lap with the happy little sigh of contentment. All the rest of the long June morning stretched before her in lovely profusion, hers to spend as she chose, for Bobs was packed off to his nap, Katie-in-the-Kitchen was wrestling stoutly with domestic problems, and Mr. Enderby had gone to town, not to return until the midnight train.

"And I can have dinner any time I like," she chanted happily to herself, not that she was dilatory by nature, or that her husband fretted unduly at delays. She was merely thankful for an unaccustomed sense of security. "Oh, my lovely, long leisurely day!" she added, letting her eyes sweep to the distant, low-rising mountains purple in the morning glow. Her glance wandered to the large, white house at her own hilltop; then the brightness of her look faded a little, and a worried frown crossed her forehead.

"The new people are moving in today," she said, half-aloud. "Will they be anything like the Babbitts, I wonder?" "I hope—" she rocked restlessly—"I mean I wish if there are fairies one would come this very minute and give me three wishes. I'd lump them all in one, and wish for a real, truly neighbor to drop right down here this minute. No, not drop down, she added, sinking back in her chair as she remembered Mrs. Babbitt's wide circumference. "She'd shake the porch to pieces. But I mean a woman of my own age, a friend I could 'neighbor.'" she went on, half aloud, for like Alice in Wonderland, she had a habit of self-conversation. "Mrs. Babbitt would never let me do anything for her, yet she lavished her sometimes it's blessed to give, too."

Her cheeks flushed uncomfortably as she remembered how her simple gift of cinnamon roses had been returned by a glorious bunch of Jacqueminots, how her cake had been patronized and she herself urged "not to overdo with just one servant, my dear," and worst of all, how Mrs. Babbitt never ran out of supplies and forgot to order them at the last minute. Mrs. Enderby bent over her seam again, and longed for a fairy more than ever.

All at once there was a swishing of silk skirts, and she looked up to see a young woman, quite out of breath and very pretty, who held out a bowl beseechingly.

"Will you lend me some coffee?" she pleaded. "I'm Mrs. Coolidge, your next-door neighbor, you know. We're moving and I forgot to order any—Mr. Coolidge says I always do.—and I knew from the nice look of your house you'd let me have some. No, I'll just wait here and look at your lovely view. I believe it's better than yours."

Mrs. Enderby returned with a bowlful of coffee, a heart full of happiness, too, to find her guest bending lovingly over the old-fashioned roses.

"May I cut you some?" she asked, half timidly.

"Oh, will you really?" cried Mrs. Coolidge. "I love them so. They grew all round my home when I was a child, and now all of ours, are such grand, formal flowers."

When her neighbor had disappeared up the long drive, her arms full of coffee and roses, Mrs. Enderby took up her sewing again with another happy sigh.

"And to think there are people who don't believe in fairies!" she said.

THE SWEETEST FLOWER THAT BLOWS.

It blooms in many gardens, the world over. It blossoms in every season, all through the year. But it grew first in the gardens of heaven. You may guess its name; but first let me tell you a story. I know a man who had a little girl and dearly loved her. This little girl caught the fragrance of the beautiful flower as she lay upon her mother's breast. She learned to love it, and planted it in her own garden. When she grew to be a woman she went to live in another country, among people who hardly knew even the name of the beautiful flower and whose lives were

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KEEP YOUR BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS.

The following, taken from Farm and Fireside, applies to others as well as farmers:

"I met an angry man today. He said: 'Here I've gone and killed a fine fat beef. Jones and Robinson each engaged a quarter, and neither came after it. Warm weather has set in, and the meat won't keep, and I don't know what to do. If I go to town and engage it, they may come and get it while I'm gone, and if I don't, it will spoil. That's several times I've been hung up this way.'"

"This is merely a sample of the unbusinesslike methods of many, too many, farmers. They engage a thing in the heat of talking, and then in cooler moments regret their haste,

and never notify the unlucky owner of their change of mind, so that he refuses good offers, or chances, and is involved in loss and vexation.

"They say to a storekeeper, 'Well, I'll be in on Thursday and bring you ten bushels of that kind' (vegetable or fruit), and on Thursday go to hauling wood or husking corn, and don't go until Saturday. Meanwhile the merchant has sold part of the expected load and has to make good from outside stock picked up as he can.

"When you promise a man to be at a certain place at a stated hour, be there. No matter who comes, or what presses, be right there; and when you are there talk business. Attend to business, and then go home.

"If you engage any article, if only one chicken, deliver it on time, if you have to carry it.

"Thus you get the reputation of being a man of your word. The industrial world moves on the efforts of the dependable men."

very sorrowful. There she planted the seed of the flower she loved.

One day she went to a house where a baby had died. They do not speak our language there, and she could not talk with the sad mother. But she had the flower with her; and that can talk in all languages. As she sat beside the weeping mother, remembering how her own baby had died, she pressed the poor woman's hand and they cried together, without a word. The next day she gathered a few flowers from the fields and helped the mother prepare the little body for the grave. Do you wonder that that mother leaned upon her and kissed her?

I do not know the names of the flowers she gathered for the little coffin, but I know well the flower that meant most to the mother's heart. It was the flower I am telling you of, which grew first in heaven, which all of us can have if we will plant the seed. Have you guessed its name? It is Love!—Rev. Frank T. Bayley.

Blot out Christians from the calendar of time, and we lose not only a day, but an era. All that has happened since has been more or less affected by it. But for it there would have been no advancement in morals, no great uplift of the human heart. For ages the world had been plodding on, and so far had failed to find its King.—Selected.

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