

LIFE.

Life is like the ocean, broad and deep; Billows of emotion over it sweep; We must battle boldly with the tide, lest it waft us solidly far and wide.

Life is bright or dreary where we dwell; Though our feet are weary, all is well; Ever bravely pressing on our way, fairer is the blessing day by day.

Life is like a jewel in the rough; Cut it, be not cruel; Just enough; Polish, till its glory, full, divine, tells a noble story, even this.

—Corn C. Bass, in Boston Transcript.

OCTAVIA'S HOUSEKEEPING.



HEY are coming, Viny!" Miss Nancy Crowfoot tucked her ball of blue yarn into her apron-pocket, and shading her eyes with one hand, looked down the lane, where tall mulberry-trees threw their long shadows on the velvet grass.

"Coming, Miss Nancy!" echoed a sweet voice. And pretty Viny Mavis hastily shoved a gooseberry pie into the oven, and came out on the back porch, with its drapery of pink and violet-cupped morning-glory vines.

She, too, gazed eagerly down the long lane, and soon the sapphire-blue eyes sparkled and the pink-tinted cheeks broke into dimpling smiles.

"It's them!" she cried. "I could tell old Dapple's jog-trot a mile away." Viny had been up since peep of day, when the first touch of pink blushed in the eastern sky, and when the thrush and the cat-bird were thrilling their earliest morning peeps.

She had milked the sleepy-looking cows, their down-lips still wet from contact with dripping grass, and had breakfast ready just as the crimson sun was peeping over the cloud-capped bluffs, lining the shores of the great Father of Waters.

It was an extraordinary occasion, as Farmer Mavis was going to the railroad station, twelve miles distant, to bring home his only daughter, Octavia, from boarding school.

"Don't you bother yourself about breakfast, Viny," said the farmer, good-naturedly, as he lighted his cigarette at the kitchen fire. "I'll eat a snack, and hey breakfast when we get home."

But Viny would not hear it, and with her own hands she fried her uncle's favorite pancakes, yellow with eggs, poured his coffee, and set a glass of fresh, sweet milk at his plate.

"Dinner will be all ready when you get back, uncle, so bring a good appetite," she said, kissing him good-by.

It was a happy family that dwelt at the old brown farm-house. Farmer Mavis was good nature personified, and Miss Nancy, the housekeeper, was a sweet-tempered old maid; not so very old, either, for youthful wrinkles still lurked in her soft-brown hair, and her cheeks were as rosy as a winter pear-min just touched by the frost.

She was a distant connection of Farmer Mavis, and had kept home for him ever since the death of his wife, six years ago. Viny was his niece, and was as dear to him as an own daughter.

Great were the preparations which were made for Octavia's home-coming. Miss Nancy had secured the windows and made up the plump bed, with fresh, lavender-scented sheets and pillow-slips, and the best homespun coverlet.

And Viny had cooked a substantial dinner—roast chicken and cream biscuit, new potatoes and green peas and cauliflower, with custard and gooseberry pie for dessert.

In the meantime, Octavia was on the cars, speeding along at the rate of a mile a minute. She was a sharp-featured, thin-lipped girl, with light hair, and face as freckled as a turkey's egg.

"I am going home to keep house for my pa," she had said, affectionately, to her girl cronies. "To be sure, he has a sort of relative keeping house now—and old maid—but I shall soon set her aright. I detest old-maids!"

In the time Octavia reached home, she bestowed a cool nod on Miss Nancy and touched Viny's finger-tips frigidly.

kin think so, that's all! Fetch along the coffee, Viny."

"I shall take the head of the table myself now, Miss Nancy," declared Octavia, as she came down to breakfast, in a pink morning-dress, not at all suitable to her light complexion and red hair. "Pa can't afford to keep a hired housekeeper, now I'm at home, so you had best look out for another situation. Of course we could give you references for honesty, and so forth, and Octavia jingled the teaspoons in the cups, and took her place at the head of the table with a flourish of trumpets, as it were.

Great was the surprise of Farmer Mavis when Octavia informed him that Miss Nancy was going away. "Going away!" he repeated, staring half stupidly at his daughter.

"That's what I said, ain't it?" snapped Octavia, tartly. "Going away. She knows you don't need two housekeepers; and now I'm here, of course it's my place."

So there was no help for it, and Farmer Mavis harnessed up the horse, and helped Miss Nancy into the spring-wagon.

"That's the last of her, thank goodness!" muttered Octavia to herself when old Dapple had trotted out of sight; "and I'd give Viny her walking papers, too, if it wasn't that I really need somebody to do the help of the kitchen work. But I'll teach her to know her place. She's no better than a servant-girl, if she is pa's niece. And when Archie Grey comes to pay the visit he promised I shall keep her out of his sight, or of course she'd be a-setting her cap for him when she knows how rich he is."

The sun had slipped quite out of sight in the crimson west, and night-hawks and bats were flittering about in search of their prey, when the sound of wheels was heard in the lane, and old Dapple came trotting into sight as briskly as if he had been in the pasture all day, instead of traveling twenty-four miles to and from the railroad station.

"Pa's come!" announced Octavia, sailing out to the back porch, where Viny sat, with drooping head and aching heart, sighing over the happy days that were gone forever. "And—good gracious! he's brought Miss Nancy back again!" she cried, snappishly, as two figures came up the walk in the purple gloaming.

"Oh, no, Octavia, I ain't brought Miss Nancy back!" returned her father, good-naturedly. "This here's my wife, Mrs. Jeremiah Mavis. I hadn't no use for two housekeepers, you know," he added with a sly twinkle in his eye, "so I concluded to keep Nancy."

Octavia tossed her head, and flounced off to her own room. "I won't stand it!" she declared to herself. "I'll marry Archie Grey, and snap my fingers at pa and all the rest of them."

She went sulkily down to breakfast the next morning, without deigning a glance at her stepmother, who sat at the head of the table, pouring out coffee. Her father seemed in high spirits.

"Wal, Octavia, if you can't be the housekeeper, you kin soon hev Viny's place, I reckon," he remarked, with twinkling eyes. "One weddin' makes many, they say; an' she's a-goin' to be married afore long."

"Married!" Octavia was thunderstruck. "Yes," said Farmer Mavis, while Viny blushed like a brier-rose. "Archie Grey has been a-comin' to see her, off an' on for a good spell now; an' yesterday we met him nigh the parsonage, an' he asked me plump out for Viny. So I said I reckon I could spare her, seein' you was home now, to take her place."

Viny made a pretty, dimpled, blushing little bride, but Octavia is an old maid still.—Saturday Night.

A Color-Bearer's Medal. During the war the color-bearer of the Ninety-ninth Illinois Regiment was Thomas I. Higginson, now of Hannibal, Mo. In the assault on Vicksburg, May 22, 1863, the Ninety-ninth Regiment was ordered to charge without looking back. It was confronted by the Second Texas Regiment, and sent back in confusion. But Higginson literally obeyed orders. He did not look back, but bounded forward, his colors held high and bravely flying. When he was within forty yards of the enemy, so great was their admiration for his bravery that word was passed along the line that he was not to be shot, and all firing ceased. When at length Higginson realized his predicament, he turned to retreat, but was ordered inside the Confederate breastworks. He was held by the enemy for several days, and treated more like a guest than a prisoner. A short time ago the Secretary of War granted him a medal on the affidavit of several of the soldiers of the Texan regiment.—Success.

To Build a Thousand Bridges. The United States capitalists who have taken from the Ecuador Government the contract for building a railroad from Guayaquil to Quito worth according to the New York Commercial Advertiser, for the work \$17,532,000. At the starting point, Quito, the workmen will be 9350 feet above the sea level; at Santa Rosa, 9386 feet; at Tambillo, 8250 feet; San Miguel, 8304 feet; Ambato, 8190 feet. The height of Chimborazo will be crossed at an altitude of 12,300 feet, and there are other points where 10,460, 11,800 feet are reached. The grades between these points are very steep and abrupt, and 830 bridges, varying from those of 500 feet span downward, will have to be constructed. The road will be about 404 miles in length at an average cost per mile of \$43,396 in gold. No other railroad in the world so often approaches such great heights, over ground so difficult or crosses so many streams and rivers.

OUR BUDGET OF HUMOR.

LAUGHTER-PROVOKING STORIES FOR LOVERS OF FUN.

Typographical—Penetration—Bad Case—Accounted For—Cool—Equally Damp—Faith Cure—Arctic Accuracy—Progress in Domesticity—Too Much Snake, Etc.

Penetration. "Bindley is a great hustler." "Yes, but he never has time to get started right."—Chicago Journal.

Bad Case. "What are you treating me for, doctor?" "Loss of memory. You have owed me a bill of \$80 for two years."—Detroit Free Press.

Accounted For. Algernon—"I've such a deuced cold in me head, you know." William—"You must still have that Boston girl on your mind, old chap."—Pittsburg Press.

Equally Damp. "You throw cold water on everything I undertake." "Well—you wouldn't like it any better if I threw hot water, would you?"—Detroit Free Press.

Cool. He (theatrically)—"You have refused me! To-morrow I go to seek my fortune in the Klondike." She—"May I have the refusal of you when you return?"—Puck.

Faith Cure. "You took the doctor's advice?" "Yes." "And you are—?" "Much better. I took it instead of the medicine."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

A Setter. "Darling, please answer me," he fairly moaned as he stood in the centre of the parlor. "I am on the rack." "So is your hat," shouted the old gentleman, who had a gallery seat on the stairway.—Detroit Free Press.

Not to be Evaded. "Foiled!" hissed the burglar, and turned and fled away into the night. For he had evaded the improved burglar alarm only to discover that there was an old-fashioned rocking-chair in the front parlor.—Puck.

Arctic Accuracy. "Spitzbergen is just about seventeen miles from Washington as the crow flies," said Morgan. "Excuse me," remarked the arctic explorer, "you mean as the carrier pigeon flies."—Philadelphia North American.

Made the Allowance. "Oratory is a gift, not an acquirement," said the proud politician as he sat down after an hour's harangue. "I understand," said the matter-of-fact chairman. "We're not blaming you. You done the best you could."—Detroit Free Press.

Unscientific. "First Arctic Explorer—"I have always considered Columbus a somewhat over-estimated man." "Second Arctic Explorer—"Why?" "First Arctic Explorer—"He discovered America the first time he went to look for it."—Puck.

Too Much Snake. Kisdig—"Form three snakes in a circle, and let each begin swallowing the other, and what will the result be?" Slimbig—"The result! My dear boy, simply this. That if you don't stop drinking you'll land in a lunatic asylum."—Philadelphia Call.

Inconsistent. "I'm afraid of you," said Miss Kittish to Mr. Callow, sardonically. "That's strange," replied Mr. Callow. "A few minutes ago you—aw—said that you were afraid of nothing, doncher know." "Well, what of that?"—Detroit Free Press.

An Awful Ordinal. "Now just as soon as you are married," said the experienced husband, "the life insurance solicitors will be after you in droves." "Is matrimony so dangerous as that?" asked the candidate for nuptial honors, with apprehension in his voice. —Detroit Free Press.

Why He Is a Bachelor. "No," said the rich old bachelor, "I never could find time to marry." "Well," replied the young woman with the sharp tongue, "I am not surprised to hear you say so. It certainly would have taken a good while to persuade any girl to have you."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Modern Improvements. Perry Pattie—"What is these here bath-robes they advertise in the papers?" Wayworn Watson—"I give it up, unless it's some sort of rubber coat to keep water from gittin' on a guy when he takes a bath because it is the style."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

In the Rhetoric Class. "Miss Kerbill, in the sentence, 'Daniel Webster stood there like a great oak tree,' point out the idea the author was trying to convey. In what respect could Daniel Webster be said to resemble a great oak tree?" "Well, he might have been rooted to the spot."—Chicago Tribune.

The Boy the Father of the Man. Binson—"How do you like married life?" Hoblow—"Oh, it makes me feel like a boy again."

Binson—"How so?" Hoblow—"Because I have to saw wood, lug up coal, run errands, and listen to a course of daily lectures on my shortcomings."—Roxbury Gazette.

Progress in Domesticity. "Did you ever," asked the young husband, "have your wife look you in the eye when you came home and ask you if you had not forgotten something?"

"Many a time, me boy," answered the old married man. "She does yet. In the early days it used to mean a kiss; [now it is usually a reference to wiping my shoes."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Faulty Judgment. "Here's an account of a man who has been arrested for stealing plays," said the man with the paper. "For stealing plays!" exclaimed the man who was smoking, in astonishment. "That's what the paper says."

"Oh, well, the trouble with him must have been that he didn't use any judgment. If he had stolen some of the plays I've seen they wouldn't arrest him; they'd give him a vote of thanks."—Chicago Times.

WORDS OF WISDOM.

Any one may do a casual act of good nature, but a continuation of them shows it is a part of the temperament. The man who is ever lamenting, never rejoicing, is playing a part, for life is neither constantly painful nor constantly gay.

True nobility is shown by gentle consideration and courtesy to all, and brings its own reward in the extra fineness of perception its practice bestows.

Good resolutions are like vines, a mass of beauty when supported on a frame, of good deeds, but very poor things when allowed to lie unheeded and untrained on the ground.

My experience leads me to believe that the supply of poetry, or verse assumed to be poetry, is more egregiously in excess of the demand than any other description of literature.

To-morrow you have no business with. You steal if you touch to-morrow. It is God's. Every day has enough to keep every man occupied, without concerning himself with the things that lie beyond.

It may be truly said that no man does any work perfectly, who does not enjoy his work. Joy in one's work is the consummate tool without which the work may be done indeed but without its finest perfection.

Man is Condensed Air. Liebig, the greatest chemist of the century, writes: "Science has demonstrated the fact that man, the being which performs the great wonders, is formed of condensed air and solidified and liquid gases, that he lives upon condensed as well as uncondensed air, and that by means of the same mysterious agent he moves or causes to be moved, the heaviest weights with the velocity of the wind. But the strangest part of the matter is that thousands of millions of these tabernacles of condensed air are going on two legs, destroying other forms of condensed air which they may need to build up their own wasted tissues or for shelter or clothing, or on account of their egotism and fancied power, destroying each other in pitched battles, using implements which are but other forms of condensed air, the material of which they themselves are formed or composed. Chemistry supplies the clearest proof that, so far as concerns this, the ultimate and most minute composition and structure, some of which are so infinitesimal as to be beyond the comprehension of our senses, man is, to all appearances, at least, composed of materials identical with those which compose the structural being of the ox or the dog, or even the lowest animal in the scale of creation."

Solomon seems to have entertained the same idea. See Ecclesiastes iii., 19: "For that which befalleth the sons of men, doeth the beasts; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast." Pittsburg Dispatch.

Breeding Snakes for a Living. The bounty given by the Indian Government for snakes' heads in order to exterminate these reptiles, has led to a few of the dishonest natives breeding them for a living.

An Englishman recently traveling through Central India made a peculiar discovery. In the heart of a dense jungle he came across a rude hut, and close at hand was a large pit, covered over with a tight-fitting wooden cover. He found the occupants of the hut, two respectable looking natives, and asked them the meaning of the peculiar pit. They informed him that they were breeders of snakes. They caught all sorts of snakes and put them in the pit, the bottom of which was covered over with dried grass and leaves. They kept the snakes here some six months, feeding them on all kinds of small animals and birds. They then filled a large earthen pot with poisonous herbs, lighted it, lowered it into the pit, and secured the tight-fitting wooden cover, and thus smothered the reptiles. The cover was allowed to remain on for a few days, it was then removed, and the snakes taken out by means of a long pole with a spike at the end of it. Their heads were then cut off and one of the rogues set out for the nearest Government agency to obtain the bounty, while the other one caught fresh snakes for the pit.

The snakes very often devoured one another, but the mothers generally managed to bring up their young, though it was a marvel they bred at all in such a place, being one would think, contrary to their nature.—Pearson's Weekly.



Meal on Cut Corn Stalks.

It is only possible to use meal on cut corn stalks with advantage after they have been steamed enough to soften them. It is best done when the feed is steamed after the meal has been applied. This partly cooks the meal and diffuses it through the stalks, so that the whole will be eaten. When dried stalks are cut and merely wet with cold water, the meal put on them will be licked off by cattle, and this will soon make the unused stalks very offensive. Cut hay and straw are much better to feed meal with than are cut stalks. It is better to have the cut hay or straw steamed as the meal is applied to them.

Buying Feed For Fertility.

The question how a farm shall be best manured is not one that can be solved in all cases of hand. There are farms where the best improvement possible was to run a few underdrains through a very rich part of the farm and use the crops grown on this to feed stock which should manure the rest of the farm. Wherever this is possible it should be done in preference to buying either feed or fertilizers. But with a farm that is naturally underdrained the question how to increase its fertility must depend much on its location. If it is where milk cows may be kept and there is a good market for milk, it may pay better to enrich the land by purchasing and feeding wheat bran, linseed meal or cotton seed meal, together with such coarse feed as can be grown on the place, than in any other way. The milk sold will more than pay for the feed, and the manure product will be therefore a free by-product in this method of manufacturing. It is often believed that milk takes so largely from the nitrogenous and mineral substances in food that little is left for the manure. But experiments with milk cows shows that when they are highly fed, fully eighty-five per cent. of the mineral substances in their food and eighty per cent. of its nitrogenous substances goes out in manure.

Regularity in Salting the Dairy.

If the cook should conclude that the trouble of salting our food is all unnecessary, or that if we require it at all, once each week is sufficiently often, she would undoubtedly meet with a vigorous protest from all concerned.

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Do Your Own Repairing.

Too many farmers are given to hiring repair work done which, with the aid of a few tools and a little ingenuity, they could do themselves at one-tenth the cost, writes E. H. Richardson, in Orange Judd Farmer. An old iron and a bolt box should be found in every barn. Having these in place, never pass a piece of old iron or a bolt, however useless it may look, but pick it up and put it into its box, and seven times out of ten you will find that apparently worthless piece will answer a useful purpose. Bolts of all sizes and descriptions, especially 2 and 3 inch are always coming handy. Every farmer should have a bench 30 inches wide by 10 to 15 feet long, with a good vise 18 inches from the end on the left-hand side as you stand facing the side of the bench. A left-handed man will have the vise on the right end instead of the left.

Grain Bins For Stables.

It is no small job and requires not a little lumber to make a grain bin for the stables, having four compartments.



The cut shows an easy way of securing the same accommodations. Four empty sugar barrels are set in a row and secured by a few narrow strips of board. A cover is hinged either to the bin or to this frame work and the wall with four compartments is complete. It may even be made by setting the four barrels in a row and hinging a cover to the wall behind them. A sugar barrel is very commodious and easy from which to dip meal.

Between Blacksmiths' Nits.

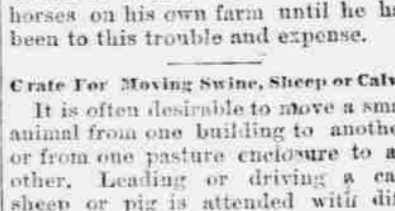
Farmers who do much team work on the road are obliged to make pretty heavy bills at the blacksmith's. This is especially true in the winter season, when ordinary smooth shoes are not enough for safety. To sharpen and reseta round of shoes every two or three weeks makes an expense that can only be afforded by farmers who have a great deal to market on good prices. So many kinds of implements are now used on the farm that every farmer ought to have some acquaintance with some blacksmithing, so that he can mend what is broken without being obliged to go off the farm to do it. A quantity of bolts and nuts of different sizes, with a full set of tools to go with them, can now be purchased for less than two or three visits at the blacksmith's would cost.

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It will be a great convenience if the farmer learns enough about his horse's feet so that at a pinch he can reset a shoe when one has been cast, and the blacksmith shop cannot be conveniently reached. We have known farmers who learned to set a shoe as well as any blacksmith could do it. As a good deal of this work was done during rainy days, it did not any more interfere with farm work than it would to drive to the nearest blacksmith's and wait while he shod perhaps a dozen horses before your turn came. At this season of the year, horses have to be reshod frequently, so as to keep the toe calks sharpened. As the setting of a shoe is a comparatively simple matter, it ought to be included in the practical education of every man who intends to make farming his life's business. And yet probably, should this be done, some interfering law maker would frame a law to require all who did any horseshoeing to pass an examination and be registered, and forbid a farmer even to shoe the horses on his own farm until he had been to this trouble and expense.

Crate For Moving Swine, Sheep or Calves.

It is often desirable to move a small animal from one building to another, or from one pasture enclosure to another. Leading or driving a calf, sheep or pig is attended with difficulties. They will go in company with others, but decidedly object to going alone. The cut shows a crate on wheels, with handles permitting it to be used as a wheelbarrow. Into this the small animal can be driven, the door closed and the crate wheeled away. It will also be found a very useful contrivance in bringing in calves that have been dropped by their dams in the pasture.



FOR BRINGING IN CALVES.

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Hanging conveniently over the bench.

Hanging conveniently over the bench on the wall should be a good rip and crosscut saw, 12 teeth to the inch, a 12-inch flat bastard file, a 6-inch three-cornered saw file, a 10 or 12-inch brace, with 1/2, 3/4, 1, 1 1/4 and 2-inch auger. Right here let me say, never file the bottom side of the cutting edges of a bit or auger, always the top side and file at quite a sharp angle. A good heavy hammer, a claw hammer and an light riveting hammer should also be found, a box of assorted 1 to 2 copper rivets, a cold chisel, punch, a square, a marking gauge, a screw driver, monkey wrench, 12-inch station pipe wrench for twisting bolts, plyers 1, 1 1/2, 1 and 1 1/2-inch chisels, mallet, harness punch, 1-inch iron drill to use in brace, an assortment of small wire nails, 1/2-inch to 1-inch, a smoother and jack plane, a pair of compasses and a key-hole saw.

These tools will, of course, cost considerable, but if you use them as much as you ought they will pay for themselves in six months, as you can do almost anything in the way of repair work. An old anvil or block of iron should be added and if you get a cheap drill press and some rainy day build a forge, your blacksmith's bill would, indeed, be light; with the above tools and a little ingenuity almost anything can be repaired. Any man who has brains enough to successfully engineer a farm should be able to use tools and do any repair work. To illustrate what I mean by using a little ingenuity: Last fall my wagon tires got loose. I removed them one rainy day, nailed some strips I had which were 1/2 inch thick by 1 inch wide half way around the wheels, heeled the tires, put them on. The result was good. A job as the blacksmith would have done. The cost was about five cents. Saved \$3.45. Time, two hours.

Wood Liquefied.

It is not generally known that sixty per cent. of wood may be converted into liquid.