

THE CHRONICLE.

WILKESBORO, N. C.

The late Professor Boyesen, of Columbia, noted that "jocularity" is the "leading American mental trait" of the college student.

They phrase matrimonial advertisements very delicately in Maine. One recently printed in Hallowell voiced a want for a "housekeeper in a family of one."

Is Scotland getting steadily madder? To judge by the report of the Commissioners of Lunacy it is. Since 1858 there has been an increase of 142 per cent. in number of lunatics, while the population has increased only 38 per cent.

A proof of the fact that Sedan Day is dying out in Germany, writes Wolf von Schrierband, is furnished by a recent circular issued by the firm of Fred Krupp in Essen. They announce that hereafter the day will not be celebrated and no leave will be granted to their 20,000 employes.

Mr. Freemantle says in his 'Notes on the Rifle' that an ideal smokeless powder has yet to be discovered, and that the heat developed by powders containing nitro-glycerine is so great as positively to melt the surface of the steel, and to vaporize a minute portion of it at every shot, which defect, as regards small-calibre rifles, is fatal to its use by soldiers.

The quota of enlisted men allowed the Army and Navy of the United States is now nearer filled than it has been at any period in recent years, and the officials are assuming that no further trouble will hereafter be encountered in securing all the excellent material either service requires. At present the total strength of the regular army is between 24,600 and the limit of 25,000, and the few men lacking to complete it could, the authorities say, be enlisted in ten days. The strength of the navy's enlisted force is now 11,000 men, with the additional 1000 men added by the last Congress, and of this number there are now enrolled all but 400. This number applies almost monthly at the various recruiting stations, and the entire quota could be maintained without difficulty but for the discharges which follow every week or so.

Ex-President Harrison in writing of the "Interior Department," and the distribution of public land in the Ladies' Home Journal says: "In 1862 the policy of giving to actual settlers thereon a quarter section (160 acres) of the public land, where the lands were rated at \$1.25 per acre, or eighty acres, where the lands were rated at \$2.50 per acre, was adopted by Congress. The settler is required to make affidavit that the land is entered for his own use as a homestead, and the patent does not issue to him until he has resided upon and cultivated the land for five years. In the case of soldiers and sailors the time served in the army and navy, and in the case of those discharged for wounds or disability the whole term of enlistment, may be deducted from the five years' residence required, but at least one year's residence is required in such cases. It was a wise and beneficent law, and if it had come twenty years before would probably have settled the question of the extension of slavery without any further help from our statesmen."

Bad roads cost in reality more than good ones, according to Colonel Albert A. Pope, the bicycle manufacturer. He says the census returns show that there are in the United States about 15,000,000 horses, over 2,000,000 mules, and 49,000 asses. The annual cost of feed for these animals is about \$1,575,000,000. On fine stone roads one horse can haul as much as three horses can haul over the average dirt road of this country. It is estimated that it would be necessary to build about 1,000,000 miles of macadamized road in the United States, in order to have as good a system of public highways as is found in several European States. At \$4000 per mile, this would involve an outlay of \$4,000,000,000. But if one-half of the draft animals could be dispensed with by the building of such roads there would be an annual saving of \$788,000,000 in the feed bill. The people, Colonel Pope shows, are actually paying three per cent. on \$56,000,000,000 in order to keep up the present bad roads, while it would not cost one-sixth of that annually to build the 1,000,000 miles needed in order to put this country on a par with France in the matter of good roads.

SWEETEST THINGS OF EARTH.

What are the sweetest things of earth? Lips that can praise a rival's worth; A fragrant rose that hides no thorn; Riches of gold untouched by scorn.

A happy little child asleep; Eyes that can smile though they may weep; A brother's cheer, a father's praise; The minstrelsy of summer days.

A heart where anger never burns; A gift that looks for no returns; Wrong's overthrow; pain's swift release; Dark footsteps guided into peace.

The light of love in lover's eyes. Age that is young as well as wise, A mother's kiss; a baby's mirth— These are the sweetest things of earth.

MUNGER'S CAT.

BY BERTHA LEE WALTON.

NAN HAWTHORNE was swinging gently to and fro in the hammock, nestled among the pillows, and idly wondering why other people did not make their summer cottages as attractive as her mother had made this one. The sight

of a young man coming across the tennis court caused her to sit up suddenly. By the time he had vaulted over the net, and crossed the lawn, the quick color had faded from her cheeks, and she nodded gaily to him as he waved his hat.

"Where on earth did you hail from?" she asked, astonished, as he came within hailing distance.

"From the Etruria, in New York, Monday," he answered eagerly. "How are you, and what are you doing with yourself just now?"

"I'm pretty well. Sit down on that camp stool and let me look at you, Tom Bradley," she said, as she shook hands. "I suppose you are more conceited than ever after a year abroad."

"Couldn't be possibly," the young man replied calmly. "If this camp stool goes down with me, and I get stains on these duck trousers, I'll sue you for damages."

"Your mother must be glad to have you back again," said Nan. "I should be if I were she."

"Thanks, so kind of you," murmured Tom. "Mother and father have taken the Bartlett cottage for the summer, so I came right out here to join them. I thought mother'd eat me up the day I got here."

"I suppose you've come back with a trunk full of photographs to enlighten us poor benighted heathen with," sighed Nan, who had ascribed another reason to his sudden appearance on the scene; "such as Westminster Abbey, the Poets' Corner, Parliament buildings, and all the cathedrals. I've had friends traveling in Europe, before. Did you climb the Matterhorn? Or slide down Mount Blanc? Or ride in a house boat?"

"Please be sensible, Nan," said Tom, flushing. "I won't tell you a word about Europe if you don't want me to. I thought you'd like to hear all about my trip."

"Perhaps I might, Tom, if Europe hadn't been done brown by all my friends, long ago; and each one thinks he has done such a wonderful thing that he must exhibit his knowledge and his photographs to his ignorant acquaintances. I am so tired of it I never want to go, myself."

"You were very good to write to me, if you felt that way about it, Nan," said Tom humbly; "though, to be sure, you didn't write very often."

"Oh, I wrote to you because you were such an old friend of the family, and mother enjoyed your descriptions of scenery so—and all that you know."

"Why, if I had known that," Tom replied, "I would have written to her instead. Of all sad words of tongue or pen the saddest are these—"

"Please, ma'am," piped up a shrill voice behind Tom, "will you look at here for a minute?"

Tom turned around suddenly and spied a very tiny girl standing in the tall grass, holding a very big yellow cat in her arms. She was thin and bony, and the cat was fat and heavy, so her task was by no means an easy one.

"Sense me, Miss Nan," the child said, noticing Tom for the first time, "I didn't know you was engaged."

"We aren't yet, but hope to be soon," observed Tom calmly. "Who is this fair damsel, Nan?"

"She's a little girl in my Sunday-school class," said Nan, frowning at him. "What is it, Milly, my dear?"

"Please, Miss Nan, you was a tellin' your class on Sunday of how fond you was of pets," began the girl, "and ma said for me to bring you over our cat to see if you wouldn't keep it for us while we goes to the city for a week."

"To be sure I will," cried Nan, gathering the cat into the hammock with her. "Isn't he a big one, though?"

"He's got a collar on, too," said the girl, pointing proudly to the leathern band about the animal's neck. "It says 'Munger's Cat' on it—that's ours, you know. He's got two names, himself. Jim calls him 'Tom,' which I don't think is very pretty, so I call him 'Jenny.'"

"He's nice and fat," said Tom soberly. "He must get lots to eat."

"Sure he does," cried Milly enthusiastically. "He eats like a house afire, he does."

"I've heard fire called a 'devouring element' somewhere before," said Tom meditatively. "What does he eat?"

"Oh, everything," said Milly proudly, "and lots of it. He has fits sometimes."

"Dear me!" cried Nan, "I hope not."

"If you're real good to him he'll out-

grow them, I guess," vouchsafed Milly.

"He don't have 'em often."

"For all small favors let us be duly thankful. We'll hope he'll postpone his fit until after he's returned," said Tom.

"We'll be good to him. Good by, Milly," he added as a gentle hint.

"I might as well take care of it regularly," said Nan with a laugh, as the little girl ran off over the lawn.

"Munger's cat spends most of its time over here as it is, catching birds."

"It's not very pretty, is it?" said Tom, regarding the animal dubiously.

"But there's a great deal of him."

"I think he's splendid," said Nan indignantly; "and I'm going to take him in and show him to mother. Don't you want to come, too?" she asked, as Tom rose.

"No, thank you. I've got to go home, as mother doesn't know I'm out. So long, see you later."

Nan stood looking after him for a minute or two, and then went in at the little side door, with Munger's cat in her arms. She expected to see Tom again in the evening, but he did not come, and she went to bed feeling oddly provoked with him. He ought to know how nice it seemed to have him back after so long an absence, even if she had been too excited to tell him him of it. She wouldn't add to his conceit by telling him anything of the sort, she reasoned; he thought too much of himself as it was. But argue as she might, Nan could not feel satisfied.

The next day, as Nan was making cake in the kitchen, she became aware, as she raised her flushed face from an inspection of the oven, of the fact that Tom was sitting in the open window, swinging his feet against the side of the house.

"How are you?" he said affably. "I thought this was Thursday, and the cook's afternoon out."

"That's just the reason I'm doing the baking, Tom," said Nan a little crossly. "What did you come for—scraps?"

"Your mother told me to amuse myself on the porch; but I exhausted everything, even the cat, and came to look for you."

replied Tom solemnly. "I had no idea that Tom, alias Jenny, had such a fondness for salted peanuts."

"Oh, give me some," cried Nan, sliding the cake into the oven. "I just love them."

"Sorry, but I only have two or three left in my pocket," said Tom, laying some dilapidated nuts on the table. "I've fed 'most half a pound to the animal. My, but didn't he have a glorious fit afterward, though!"

"He didn't?"

"To be sure," said Tom placidly. "He went up and down and around and around as if he were wound up. I tell you, Nan, if a man—and of course it will be a man—ever invents a perpetual motion machine, he'll have an able bodied cat in a fit as the foundation of it."

"I think you're cruel! Where is the poor thing now?"

"Resting quietly on the porch in the shade," said Tom, in a condescending tone. "I re-enscinated him."

"How?" queried Nan, trying to continue to be severe.

"By Christian science. I just sat still and pretended that the cat wasn't having a fit, and if you'll believe me, Nan, he was sleeping peacefully in ten minutes."

Nan stuck a long straw into the cake and said nothing.

"Say, Nan," Tom's voice sounded a little anxious.

Nan looked hard at the cake, and closed the oven door with exaggerated care.

"Your mother says you're going to have a house party," ventured Tom. "Too bad you didn't know I was going to be in town, isn't it?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Nan, fanning herself with her handkerchief. "I'm afraid you and Harry Morford wouldn't get on very well together. However, you can come over here when you want to—they're going to be here over Sunday."

"You know I can't bear Harry Morford," said Tom, swinging his feet with renewed vigor.

"I didn't ask him for your benefit. You'll knock all the paint off the house if you keep on kicking."

"I don't see what you see in him, really, Nan," Tom went on moodily. "He makes me tired."

"I don't have to measure my friends by your tape line," said Nan coldly. "When I decide to do so I'll let you know."

"I'm a little hard o' hearing," said Tom, flushing, "but I think I hear some one calling me away;" and he dropped out of sight upon the soft grass below. Nan was surprised when she saw that he had never minded what she said to him before, and she was sorry she had not been more pleasant. Still, he had no right to dictate as to her choice of friends, nor to mistreat Munger's cat in that way, and she did not care if he never came back. She caught herself listening, nevertheless, as she went on with her work, for his step on the gravel walk, and could not help feeling disappointed that he did not return.

When her cake was done she had to dress, and then it was time to drive down to the 4.30 train in the old-fashioned carryall for her guests. She was not as glad to see them as she expected to be, but as they were all talking at once, and each one of the seven was busy admiring the scenery and raving over the woods and river, her lack of enthusiasm was not noticed. She was tired, and Harry Morford was unusually wearisome in his efforts to entertain her, telling jokes that Nan had read in the comic papers weeks before, mingled with bits of small talk and gossip in which she was not interested.

As they passed a turn in the road Nan saw Tom on horseback, waiting at one side for the noisy load to go by; and she laughed at Harry Morford's joking for the first time.

"That's young Bradley, isn't it?" he asked, removing his hat in a languid bow. "I hear he's come back from abroad to go into journalism."

"He has been foreign correspondent of the News for a year," said Nan, starting the old horse into a trot by flapping the reins, "and has come back now to take an editorship on the staff."

"Indeed?" said Morford, with a shadow of a sneer in his voice. "I should not think he'd want to work when he could have a gay time and live on his income."

"Tom is not lazy, and has too much self respect to be idle." Nan intended this as a home thrust. "There, people, what do you think of our little cottage?"

She was glad to have her mother come out to welcome them as they drove up, for it seemed as if she could not hold up her end of the conversation any longer, and Harry Morford was beginning to be provoked. She roused herself now, and entered into the fun, though her heart was not in it. They danced, boated, played cards and tennis, and she led them all in everything; but she found no pleasure in it, and in her secret heart she knew why.

Her mother invited Tom to dinner on Friday, but he declined on the score of a previous engagement, and Nan saw him on the hotel piazza with one of the girls, later. She did not care, and showed she didn't by bowing coolly, and chatting away with Harry Morford as if she enjoyed it.

Tom, too, was miserable, but it never entered his head to think Nan was really angry. He only knew that she had not given him as pleasant a welcome as the other girls had, and he did not want to see Harry Morford basking in her favor for all the world like Munger's cat basking in the sun. For that animal Tom had no sympathy. It ought to know best what was good for it, after its large experience with fits; and as for its eating capacity, he thought it might more fittingly have been named "Hunger's cat."

Meanwhile, having grown weary of seeing Nan among the gay company, after having refused, on various pleas, all invitations to join them, he became very attentive to his mother. When she was tired or busy he took long walks by himself in the woods. On one of these rambles, as he strolled by the river, he heard a plaintive "mew" from a thicket by the path. Pushing aside the bushes, he discovered Munger's cat struggling to release his forepaws from a bird trap in which they were caught. Tom lifted the stone, expecting the cat to run off as soon as it was released, but it did not move. Tom picked it up then, as gently as he could, in deference to the injured paws; and inwardly raging, though outwardly peaceful, he made his way through the underbrush to the Hawthorne cottage. Some of the party were playing croquet, and others were laughing over tennis, but Tom noted a long way off that Nan and Harry Morford were sitting in the shade on the porch, talking.

As Tom came up the path, holding the great yellow cat awkwardly under his arm, Harry spoke first.

"Oh, here comes young Bradley with your cat, Miss Nan. Hand him over to me, Bradley; I just dote on cats."

"I found Munger's cat in the woods, Nan," said Tom coolly. "He caught his feet in a trap, and I think they'd be improved by a little witch hazel."

"Come up, Bradley. So much obliged," said Morford. "Here, take my chair; I'll sit on the steps."

"For all the world," thought Tom angrily, "as if he owned the place."

"I'm over so much obliged," said Nan, somewhat icily, in her effort to be indifferent. "Come up and sit down while I go and doctor him up."

"No, thank you," replied Tom, not pleased at the prospect of a tete-a-tete with Morford. "I really can't. I promised to take mother boating this afternoon, and have taken too long a stroll, now," and he started off again. He did not walk so rapidly, however, that he failed to hear Morford's remark to Nan as she rose to go in.

"What an uppish young fellow he is, to be sure!"

It was a pity that Tom angrily quickened his steps before Nan answered. She waited a minute to steady her voice, and then said with distinctness, "If Tom is uppish, Mr. Morford it is a pity more young men are not like him;" and she slammed the screen door behind her as she went into the house.

Tuesday, the last day of his vacation, Tom spent on the water raging. He did a great deal of thinking, too, which left him in a very unsatisfied frame of mind. As far as he was concerned he felt that his week's vacation had been wasted, for he certainly had not enjoyed it. He had been boating, had played tennis and gone on a straw ride with the hotel girls, but he had felt all the time that they were not like Nan. He could not bear the sight of Morford, and yet went so far as to imagine that Nan was engaged to him, though it made him pull harder on the oars to think of it.

It was well on in the afternoon when Tom, much disturbed by his day's reflections, turned the bow of the boat towards home. As he neared the dock he was greatly startled to hear a feminine scream from among the overhanging willows on the banks. He turned about suddenly, and called out: "Hello, what's the matter up there?"

Nan's troubled face appeared at once among the leaves as she answered his hail.

"Oh, Tom, Tom, please get Munger's cat out! He fell in the water, and I can't reach him."

Tom looked around and saw the yellow animal floundering in a foot of water, under an overhanging bank which it could not climb. It was in no danger of drowning, so Tom became emboldened by circumstances, and

"Confound Munger's cat! Why

on't you call Morford?" he coolly inquired. "He just dotes on cats."

"Mr. Morford's gone back to the city with the others," said Nan impatiently. "Do, do fish the poor thing out!"

"Why didn't he stay?" queried Tom. "You seemed to enjoy his society."

"I didn't ask him to, and besides, I don't like him," said Nan, stamping her foot on the grass. "Will you get that cat for me?"

"The bath will do him good," said Tom, splashing the water with his oars. "He might have another fit if I touched him."

"Oh, Tom!" cried Nan, running down on the old wharf, "I'll love you forever if you'll get the poor thing out before he drowns."

"What?" Tom stopped plashing.

"I say, please get him out," said Nan, reddening.

"If you meant that, Nan, say it again, said Tom solemnly.

"I'll love you forever if you'll get him out," repeated Nan hastily. "There now, hurry up! I'm sure he's dead now."

"Pretty lively looking corpse," said Tom, as he lifted the wet, struggling cat into the boat. "Do you want him there?"

"No," said Nan, drawing back. "Let him dry first, please."

"Miss Nan, please, ma'am," said the familiar voice of Milly, behind her, "I've come for Jenny, please, and much obliged to you."

"How do you do, Milly?" said Tom pleasantly. "We are drying the cat. He had a fit the other day—from over eating, and I concluded that a warm bath would be beneficial to him. I warrant the treatment to kill or cure."

"Did you have a pleasant time in the city, Milly?" asked Nan, kindly.

"Sure we did," replied the child, picking up the dripping cat, "except the baby. He swallowed a pin, and had to be 'spermented on' by the doctor. Cost five dollars and was pretty exciting."

"Must have been—for the baby," said Tom thoughtfully.

"We've all enjoyed having the cat with us," said Nan, "and we'll miss it when it's gone."

"If you ever want to give it away," Tom said, "send it to Mr. Henry Morford, in the city—I'll give you the address. No, but really, Milly, Miss Nan became very particularly engaged a few minutes ago," added Tom, holding out his hand to help Nan to the boat, into which she obediently stepped; "and besides, she's going for a row, so we'll have to excuse you. Good by!"

"We'll invite her to the wedding," he continued, fitting the oars firmly in the locks. "I think she'd make a lovely flower girl."

Then, as the boat floated rapidly away in obedience to his strong pulling, Tom took out his handkerchief and waved it to the little girl, who was still standing on the wharf, holding the damp, ugly cat she so much admired.

"Good by," he called. "Good by, Munger's cat!"—Munsey's Magazine.

Climatic Effects.

The Civil War is said to have been caused by a difference in climate, and the question is now being discussed whether a hot or a cold climate has the greatest effect on National character. It has been widely believed that a severe climate produces the greater effect, because it compels effort and self-denial, and thus promotes energy and inventiveness.

It would also seem that the influence of climate upon National character has been greatly exaggerated. Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt and Carthage, situated in hot latitudes, were among the most masterful Nations of antiquity. Mohammed and his conquering legions issued from the burning wilderness of Arabia, and at a later period his successors were able to beat back the repeated attacks of the combined crusading Nations from the North.

The greatness of a Nation depends mainly upon intellectual and moral qualities, and these have often been conspicuously developed among the inhabitants of hot climates. It is important, too, to remember that the same Nation, occupying the same region, may be great and powerful in one age and weak and contemptible in another. The difference between the ancient Greeks, Romans and Saracens, on the one hand, and their modern descendants on the other, cannot have been due to climate.—New York Journal.

Some Industrious Spiders.

A syrup bottler has improved upon the prison lesson of Bruce, says a writer in Science. He has taken the spider into partnership in the working of one of his most important departments. Flies, cockroaches and other insects, attracted by his sweets and encouraged by the genial air of his work, get into his bottles, steal his goods and "worry him to death." Some 6000 spiders now make their home on the ceiling and walls of his bottling department. Said the bottler to an interviewer:

"These creatures know more than a great many people. Spiders do not care for sweet things, and never drop into my vats or get into my bottles. I never disturb them except to feed them occasionally. They appear to know my call and will come out and feed from my hand or take a fly from my finger."

"They shut themselves up during most of the winter months in their little nests you see stuck like daubs of mud about the ceiling. When winter comes I brush away the webs. They prefer to weave new ones every spring."

"I have been running this spider farm only two years, but I find my little partners indispensable. They will not endure in the place a single fly or insect that is a plunderer of sweets and syrups."

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Russian Babies.

As described by a recent traveler, Russian babies as seen in the homes of the Russian peasants in Siberia, are very unattractive specimens of humanity. "I looked curiously at one little bundle," says the traveler, "which was laid upon a shelf. Another hung from the wall on a peg, while a third was slung over one of the supporting rafters and was being swung to and fro by the mother, who had a cord loop over her foot. 'Why,' cried I in surprise, 'that's a child!' Of course it is, replied the woman; 'what else should it be?' Having learned so much in so short a time I had an irresistible desire to inspect the contents of the swinging bundle. I looked, but turned away in disgust, for the child was as dirty as a pig. I asked why the baby was not washed. It may have been impudent. 'Washed!' shrieked the mother, apparently horrified. 'Washed! What—wash a baby? Why, you'd kill it!'

73 and 61 Join Hands.

A romantic marriage in old age is a rare thing, but such was the marriage in Chicago last week, whereby Miss Yates, of Chicago, became the bride of J. J. Kincaid, a Minneapolis mine owner. Mrs. Kincaid is 61 years old, and her husband 73. Their romance grew out of the publication, in a leading magazine, of an article by Miss Yates, entitled "A Model Husband." The standard set up by Miss Yates interested Mr. Kincaid, who began a correspondence with her, and last week they were married.—Pittsburg Leader.