ROANOKE BEACON.

Roanoke Publishing Co. "FOR GOD. FOR COUNTRY AND FOR TRUTH." $1.00 a yearin advance.

VOL. VI. PLYMOUTH, N. C., FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 1895. NO. 28.

THE LITTLE MEETING LASS.

When meeting bells began to toll,
And pious folks began to pass,
She deftly tied her bonnet on,
The little sober meeting lass,
All in her neat, white-curtained room, before her tiny looking glass.

So nicely round her lady cheeks
She smoothed her bands of glossy hair,
And innocently wondered if
Her bonnet did not make her fair—
Then sternly chid her foolish heart for harboring such fancies there.

So square she tied the satin strings,
And set the bows beneath her chin;
Then smiled to see how sweet she looked;
Then thought her vanity a sin,
And she must put her thoughts away before the sermon should begin.

But, sitting 'neath the preached Word,
Demurely in her father's pew,
She thought about her bonnet still—
Yes, all the parson's sermon through,
About its pretty bows and buds, which better than the text she knew.

Yet sitting there, with peaceful face,
The reflex of her simple soul,
She looked to be a saint—
And maybe was one on the whole—
Only that her pretty bonnet kept away the aureole.

—Mary E. Wilkins.

Widow Muggins's Revolt.

MRS. MUGGINS stood at the door of the little two-story house in which she and her two brothers had lived since Muggins had been removed from the responsibilities of life through the convenient agency of a railroad smash-up. His widow, capable soul that she was, felt more keenly the financial smash-up than the other one, that had forced her into unbecoming mourning attire, and when, after a sifting out of assets and liabilities, she found herself with less than $1000 to call her own, she determined to put pride in her pocket and go back to the little home on the edge of the prairie, from which she had walked proudly forth a bride twenty years before.

When the letter announcing Mrs. Muggins's intention of taking up her abode with them reached the two brothers it created a distinctly disagreeable sensation. Henry and James were "sot in their ways," as the neighbors would have told you, and the thought of breaking up the regular routine of their existence, even for the sake of their only sister, was a bitter pill for the two old bachelors to swallow.

"Thank goodness, she ain't got no children," exploded Henry, as he tipped his chair still farther back after having refilled his pipe for its final duty, just so many pipes being a part of the regulation evening formula.

"Yes, we couldn't abide children, no how," echoed James, pulling off his great boots and tossing before the blaze a pair of decidedly ample feet in woefully holey gray socks.

The light of these foot coverings evidently furnished Henry with food for reflection, for after a few minutes' silent puffing he remarked: "P'raps it wouldn't be such a bad idee after all. Seems if we kinder need a woman to look after us. Phœbe Jones is all very well as long as the cookin' goes, but there's other things—look at yer socks fer instance. Looks as if they'd been chawed, an' mine's jest ez bad. I kin remember we didn't hev no sich lookin' rags when ma wuz alive to look arter 'em."

"No more we didn't. P'raps now, come to think on it, Mary's comin' might prove a savin'. We kin do away with Phœbe Jones's help, and she writes she's got some little money of her own, so she won't expect us to give her no clothes. We'll let her come, though I s'pose it'll sorter upset our evenin's.'

"I'm 'fraid it will," responded Henry, "but then she's our blood relation, an' there may be a savin' in it."

Thus it was that the Widow Muggins received a terse, cold letter announcing that she could once again take up her abode in the house of her youth, the selfish sentences winding up with: "Ef yer had had children we couldn't have stood it nohow."

Ten years had passed since the day the little pale faced widow arrived at the old farm, and as she stood at the open front door, shading her eyes with her hands, one could see the change that the years had brought to her. The soft brown eyes had in them the look that comes to those accustomed to viewing great plains, to gazing out and beyond, away off into another world from which the gazer is shut by the unvarying tedium of daily toil. There was a wistful hopelessness in their depths that crept there only in those brief intervals such as now, when she waited for the men folks to come to meals or could dream by the window of her little room.

"I wouldn't care," murmured Mrs. Muggins as she entered the kitchen to place the last dish on the neatly spread board, "if they would only say a kind word once in a while just to show that they appreciated what I do for them. The only way to make them appreciate me would just be to go off and leave them in the lurch, but that would be so mean," she added as an afterthought, seeing through her mind's eye the two helpless old men stranded in the old farm house without a soul to perform the hundred little offices that she was accustomed to shouldering.

"Pa'son High druv by the lower medder this mornin' an' he says as how Phœbe Jones is terrible bad with fever," said Henry as the two sat down to the bountifully spread table, for though the brothers were economical to the verge of miserliness in other matters they never stinted their stomachs, though they never would have forgiven Mary if she had ever ventured to give so much as a stale biscuit to a tramp or any of the poor families living in the vicinity.

"How long has she been sick?" queried Mrs. Muggins, as she passed the speaker a fragrant cup of tea, which he at once proceeded to turn into his saucer before appearing to notice the question.

"Nigh onto ten days," he replied, after the first gulp.

"I heard she was sick at meetin'," put in James, who was a regular attendant at all religious services, but a most reluctant giver when the plate was passed.

"You knew she was sick last Sunday and never told me," here put in Mrs. Muggins, with more spirit than she had ever shown in the whole ten years of her service in the old house on the edge of the prairie.

"What was the use? When folks is sick they ain't no account, and there's no sense of well folks bein' worried about 'em. I thought as how ef you'd known'd Phœbe wuz took down you might er had some notion of goin' over to see her, and knowin' it wuz soap-makin' time I thought I'd better not."

Mrs. Muggins only bit her lip at this typical selfish explanation, but her hand trembled as she refilled Henry's cup, and into her eyes crept a look of determination such as they had seldom worn since Muggins died.

"I s'pose the pa'son wanted somethin 'Pears as if that man ain't content with a decent house and $150 a year for preachin' only twice on Sunday. Some folks never know when they're well off.'

"A hundred and fifty dollars a year ain't much when there's five mouths to feed, and besides, you know he don't get that regular," put in Mrs. Muggins, the new spirit of resistance making her feel inclined to argue every question that was raised. The brothers looked at each other in alarm. They did not know what to make of this outbreak from the usually passive third member of the household. James, who recovered first, evidently thought it best to nip any such argumentative tendency in the bud, so, with an impressive cough and a look indicative of the pride he felt in thus suppressing the offender, he said:

"Mary, wimmen folks wasn't made to think. What Pa'son High's salary is, or how it is paid, is no consarn of yourn. I think your kittle has biled over."

When Mary went to look after the imaginary trouble on the stove he turned to his brother and as nearly winked as he had ever been guilty of doing, and then took up the thread of the interrupted discourse.

"What did the pa'son say wuz ailin' Phœbe?"

"Fever," laconically answered Henry; "it's some kind of catchin' thing, an' no one'll go near her. She ain't go no doctor, nuther, but pa'son knows a good bit about medicine, an' he says she'll die ef some one don't go an' nuss her pretty quick."

"Why don't his wife go ef it's so bad as all that?" put in James.

"'Nother baby," gruffly replied Henry.

"Goodness me," said his brother, jumping up; "here we've set a talkin' and it's ten minits past our usual time fer goin' ter bed. Good night, Mary. Henry, don't set there starin' like an owl," at which the other arose and the two went above and were lost in dreams long before poor, tired, little Mrs. Muggins had finished tidying up the kitchen.

The brothers would not have slept so peacefully if they had known that up in Mrs. Muggins's room the single candle was spluttering along until close on to midnight and the former meek little sister in its feeble light was busily engaged in putting some of her belongings into the capacious carpet-bag that she had brought out West ten years before. "It's downright heathenish, that's what it is," she said to herself as she patted down an extra nightcap. "If they want to go before their Maker with that girl's death on their conscience it is more than I do, and even though they turn me out of doors, I'm going to go and do my duty by Phœbe—poor girl; many a time she's given me a helping hand when I was ready to drop, and she knew right well, too, she couldn't expect any pay for it. I've got my $1000 and its accumulated interest, and if the worst comes to the worst I'll just pack up, and when Phœbe gets well she and I'll go East and see if we can't make a living somehow. Land knows I couldn't work any harder than I have in the last ten years if I had to go into a factory."

Thus it was that in the morning when the brothers came downstairs they found a note on the table explaining the absence of the household drudge, whose loss they already keenly felt, the cold stove and unprepared breakfast teaching them very conclusively that they needed a woman around.

"Strange Mary never showed no notion of kickin' over the traces afore," said Henry, as he tried to drink a cup of very muddy coffee prepared by James. "Wimmen is all queer, an' you kin never tell when they's goin' to break out. I must say, however, I'm disappointed in Mary; it ain't decent nor nateral like to go off nussin' a workhus' girl and leavin' her own kith and kin to git along as best they kin."

"It's soap makin' time, too," groaned Henry.

"Yes, and there's all them pertaters as need sortin', and the apples'll rot ef some un don't can 'em or suthin' an' the feather beds to be picked over, an' the socks, an', an'—Oh, Lor', what will we do!"

"Do without her," replied Henry, who by this time had plucked up a bit of grim courage as he saw how rapidly his brother was losing that commodity.

But as the days went on they found they could not do without her. The neighbors, who had always been in sympathy with kind-hearted little Mrs. Muggins, now absolutely refused to come to the aid of the helpless despots, who saw their pretty, tidy home assuming an uncomfortable, slovenly appearance that had not been there for years.

Mrs. Muggins, on her side, was in her element. She had found poor Phœbe far on the road to the other world when she stepped into the little cabin in the wee sma' hours of that morning when she had crept from her brothers' house like a thief. Good nursing, however, had done wonders for the girl, who was now able to sit up. The plan to go East became more and more a delightful prospect as she thought of it, until so full of it was she that she confided in the minister, who in turn told James all about it when next he passed by the field where the old man was at work. This information was the climax of the brothers' woe.

"James," said Henry, "Mary's prettier than I thought—ef she once gits East she won't come back, an' you know how bad that ud look to the neighbors. I think we'd better drive over to Phœbe Jones's and ask Mary ter come back."

"Ef it wasn't for what folks ud say I wouldn't go near her—for we're gettin' on very tolerable well without her," capitulated James, who on the eve of surrender would not acknowledge how much they missed and needed the sister who had been given so grudging a welcome.

The next day the lumbering old farm wagon drew up before Phœbe's door. Mrs. Muggins had seen it as it crawled over the dusty road, and, feeling that her one chance of emancipation was at hand, prepared to make the most of it. Phœbe was asleep in the room that answered for kitchen and bedchamber as well, so Mrs. Muggins walked out to the road as the ramshackle wagon drew up before the door.

"Pa'son says yer thinkin' uv going East," was James's salutation, as though no long weeks of separation had intervened since he saw her last.

"Yes, I'm off in a day or two, as soon as Phœbe's strong enough to travel."

Being thus admonished, James looked over the head of the little woman standing at the side of the wagon and stammered: "Yer brothers' house is the place for you, Mary."

"I know that, James, but when brothers don't know how to treat a sister as though she was a human being, it's time for them to quit partnership."

"Why, what do you mean?" came in astonished chorus from the two. "Haven't you had your board and lodgin' free for ten years?"

"And haven't I worked hard enough to pay for it? You haven't hired any kitchen help since I came. You've never had to give out any carpet rags to be sewed or feather beds to be sorted, and I've served and slaved until I'm sick. Board and lodging, indeed!" and the little woman, who now realized that she had the upper hand sniffed scornfully.

The truth of her words apparently struck home, for James, after sundry telegraphic nudges from Henry, went on: "P'haps we have been hard, Mary, but if you'll only come back home and try us once more, we'll try to do better; indeed, we will," and a ray of kindness flashed for a moment in the old man's eyes as he surveyed the small figure bristling with the same spirit of which he was so proud.

"Will you hire Phœbe to help me in the kitchen?"

"Yes."

"Will you carry out the tubs to catch the rain water at night, instead of letting me tote them when my back's nigh onto broke?"

"We will," came the subdued chorus.

"And will you let me go to meetin' when I want to and have company to tea, and give away cold victuals?" went on the little general, making terms once and for all.

"Anything, Mary, if you'll only come back and look arter us as you used ter."

"All right, then, I'll come."

And thus Mrs. Muggins's mutiny ended in a blaze of glory.—Philadelphia Times.

A Baby Launches a Warships.

At Chiswick, England, the Ardent, torpedo boat destroyer, was launched recently from the yard of Messrs. Thornycroft & Company. The Ardent is a sister ship to the Daring, which broke the record of speed at sea in June last, and, like her, is fitted with the Thornycroft water-tube boilers. The vessel was named by Mrs. J. C. Cornish, eldest daughter of J. I. Thornycroft, and launched by Miss Esther Phyllis Cornish, aged six months. A touch of the baby's hand on a specially-designed electrical apparatus started the vessel on the ways, whence she glided into the river with all her engines and machinery on board. The Ardent is armed with one twelve-pounder and three six-pounder quick-firing guns. Her contract speed is twenty-seven knots.—Detroit Free Press.

A New Disease.

Mamma—"What is Willie crying about?"

Bridget—"Shure, ma'am, he wanted to go across the sthreet to Tommy Brown's."

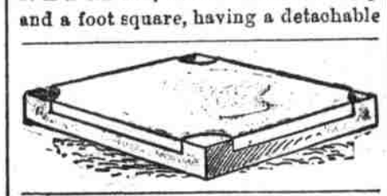
Mamma—"Well, why didn't you let him go?"

"They were having charades, he said, ma'am, and I wasn't shure as he'd had 'em yet."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

FARM AND HOUSEHOLD.

AN EXCELLENT DRINKING TANK.

The illustration of a drinking tank is from M. K. Barnum, Nebraska. It is simple, cheap and easily cleaned. It is a tin box, about two inches deep and a foot square, having a detachable



cover, with the corners of the cover cut away to permit the chicks to drink. The portions cut out may be small, so as to prevent chicks from getting in the water, but with such a shallow tank they cannot drown at all events. The cover also keeps the dirt out, and prevents evaporation of the water. Mr. Barnum states that there is no patent on it, and he sends it as a gift to our readers. A larger and deeper tank on the same design may be used for fowls. The plan may also be adapted to a tight wooden box if desired.—Farm and Fireside.

WINTER MULCHING OF STRAWBERRIES.

As plants grow until freezing weather sets in, mulching must be delayed until the ground is frozen sufficiently to hold up a loaded wagon. With a wide-tired vehicle there is less danger of injuring the crowns. Any kind of straw may be used. That most free from weed or grass seeds is best. Stable manure is good where the land needs enriching, but it must not be placed directly on the plants. Marsh hay is most desirable, but any straw or coarse litter will answer.

The object of mulching strawberries in autumn is to prevent rapid thawing. When once frozen the frost should come out very gradually. If the ground is merely shaded this object will be accomplished. To conserve moisture in the spring until after the berries are picked, apply the mulch thickly between the rows. Put a little light chaff directly on the plants. Rake off this chaff when growth begins. As freezing and thawing is not rapid or frequent in December, mulching may often be delayed even to the latter part of January.—American Agriculturist.

ENSILAGE NOT A COMPLETE FOOD.

Ensilage alone is not an economical food, as it is deficient in the starchy matter, and has so much water in it that a cow must eat 100 pounds of it to get enough nutriment to live upon. For in 100 pounds of it there are only twenty-two pounds of dry matter, of which one-fourth is not digestible. The digestible matter has about two pounds of protein, or matters that go to make flesh; six pounds of carbonaceous matters, that go to support the animal heat, and not quite half a pound of fat, while an animal of 1000 pounds must have fully two and one-half pounds of the first, twelve and one-half pounds of the second, and nearly half a pound of fat. Thus the ensilage is deficient in the heat-forming substances, and it will need some addition of starchy matter, such as middlings, to complete it. But 100 pounds of food of any one kind, except it be of the best pasture grasses, is too much, and especially of ensilage, which is by no means desirable for the sole nutrition of an animal. Thus it is better to give one-half this quantity, or fifty pounds, or even forty of it, and make up the rest of dry fodder, as clover hay, with sufficient grain food to make the even ration. With forty pounds of ensilage and ten of hay, adding four pounds of cornmeal and the same of bran, or the equivalent of any of the oil meals or the gluten meals for these, will make a full ration for a cow giving a pound of butter a day.—New York Times.

FARM AND GARDEN NOTES.

Don't forget that fall plowing sometimes saves a great deal of labor in the spring, when time is precious.

Let the poultry have access to the manure pile when the ground is frozen, so that they may scratch and not become over fat.

Feed the fowls whole corn at night if you wish, but in the morning let them have wheat, oats, bran or corn meal, mixed with the scraps from the table; mix to a stiff dough with water or milk.

When the real cold weather comes, keep the horse's bridle in the kitchen by the stove. This will be appreciated by the animal, as it will overcome the necessity of having to take a cold bit in his mouth.

The Alabama State Farmers' Institute and Agricultural Society at their late meeting recommended that the farmers of that State reduce their cotton acreage twenty per cent. and grow diversified crops.

Cottonseed meal fed to excess will injure the flavor of butter just as linseed meal in excess will injure the grain and flavor. The wise way is to mix the different foods so as to secure the best flavor, grain and hardness.

Fowls are creatures of habit in the strictest sense, and when once they form a habit, such as egg-eating, feather-pulling, or eating to excess, they will continue the fault as long as they have opportunities for so doing.

It would be well to remember that during the long winter evenings you can occupy your time profitably by reflecting upon the mistakes of last season, and devising some means by which you can overcome them in the future.

An unsightly fence lessens the value of a farm by giving it a "run-down" appearance. Such a fence is not only useless, but serves as a harboring place for insects and collects seeds or weeds to be distributed over the farm next season.

The Kieffer is especially productive and liable to set much more fruit than it can bring to full size. Often they are quite small, almost too small for market. To make it a salable and profitable market pear, it will need thorough thinning.

It has been positively settled that the queen can transmit bee-paralysis and also carry from one locality, where it may do no harm, to another, where the mischief may be great. A breeder who sells queens should, therefore, never allow a case to remain in his yard a day after discovery.

The time has fully come when the dairy interests of the country can best be subserved by a united and harmonious working together of all who are in any degree connected therewith, and in no way can the best interests of each individual dairyman be better promoted than by becoming a member of his State Dairy Association.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

To prepare an egg for a sick person, beat the egg until very light; add seasoning to taste, and then steam until thoroughly warmed through. This will not take more than two minutes. The most delicate stomach will be able to digest it.

To keep irons from rusting wrap them in common brown paper and put them away in a dry place. If they have become rusty they may be made smooth and bright by putting some white sand on a smooth board and rubbing the iron over it several times.

Silver or steel thimbles are the only kinds ever to be used. Other compositions of which cheap thimbles are made are very frequently of lead or pewter, and their use is likely to result in serious inflammation and swelling if there is even a slight scratch on the finger.

To wash one's hair is a matter requiring time, or, at any rate, the drying of it requires time. To have one's hair washed is sometimes a matter of too great expense. A dry shampoo saves the time of the busy woman and the money of the poor one. It removes dust and dandruff almost as well as washing.

Lord Russell's Rose.

The Lord Chief Justice was too smart for the juryman who on Saturday sought to be excused from serving. "On what ground?" asked his lordship. The man approached with his hand to his ear and said. "I'm deaf, my lord, and cannot hear the evidence." "You can go," said Lord Russell in a whisper. "Thank you, my lord," replied the juryman, taken off his guard. But the learned judge had not finished his sentence, and he sternly added, "into the box and do your duty!" The man quailed and obeyed in some confusion at the failure of his ruse.—Westminster Budget.

The eye of the vulture is so constructed that it is a high-power telescope, enabling the bird to see objects at an almost incredulous distance.