

SWINGING ON THE GATE

I can see a picture painted. I can smell the drying hay
Where the busy mowers rattle through the lazy summer's day;
I can see the hungry plowboy wading through the billowed corn,
With expectant ear to windward, listening to the dinner horn;
While unconscious of necessity, the future or of fate,
I make wondrous childish journeys as I swing upon the gate.

Strange how back among the many recollections of the past
Memory will grope and wander till it brings to us at last
Some poor, foolish, fond remembrance, seeming hardly worth the while
Yet somehow made wondrous potent, like a tender passing smile,
Fleeting, gone, and soon forgotten—yet remembered by and by
With a swelling in the bosom and a dimming of the eye.

Now my temples fast are graying and my eyes have sober grown
With the years of varied happiness and sorrow I have known;
Still I sometimes hear the echo, when the evening lights are low
And without my darkened casement ghostly breezes eerie blow,
Of the friendly, rusty rattle of the latchet as when late
In the hazy, lazy summertime we swung upon the gate.

—Lowell Otus Reese, in Leslie's Weekly.

The Captain of the Fire-Brigade.

By WINIFRED KIRKLAND.

I am hard to tell why we disliked the self-government idea so much at first. I suppose it was because we thought it was Esther Horneck's idea. And we disliked Esther Horneck. It is a little hard after you have been three years in a school, and you and your "crowd" have had things pretty much your own way, to have a new girl come in and turn everything topsy-turvy.

Esther started a dramatic society and a debating society and a literary society the first month. Imagine the work! And also she talked self-government. She had two sisters in college, and did not see why boarding-schools should not have self-government like colleges. Now self-government is not any fun, at least, that is what we thought then. So long as you have a teacher to watch and see that you do not break the rules all you have to do is just to see that you do not get caught. But if you are on your honor, then you have to keep every rule all the time.

Now Esther is attractive and enthusiastic, and she was very popular with all the new girls, and with the faculty, too. And she talked and talked, until at last Mrs. Sinclair herself said we might try self-government, that is, try it in some particular first.

Our crowd did not want it, but Esther's crowd got the majority. All of us old girls were angry enough to find that the school was going to be run by a majority. We did not think it was fair. At the school meeting, when it was all decided, Esther's crowd was beaming. They had heard that Mrs. Sinclair was going to let us have self-government, and the question was, What should be the thing in which we were to make the experiment first?

Should it be promptness at meals, or going to bed at ten, or order at opening exercises, or what? Some people said that Esther had a grand, new idea about this, too. In a racket of clapping, Esther got up to speak.

She does speak well. Her eyes get shiny and her cheeks get red, and she certainly can talk. Sometimes you almost forget that it is Esther.

She said a lot first about what a grand thing self-government is, how much more womanly it is to watch ourselves than to allow ourselves just to be watched. She said that the colleges had shown how well girls could govern themselves, and why could not boarding-schools follow their example?

Of course, she said, we were not to have the entire discipline of the school at first. But if we showed that we could manage some one department of school government, then we could go and take up others.

Pretty soon she came to her proposal as to what this department should be, and what do you think she proposed? A fire-drill, of all nuisances!

She said we ought to have a systematic fire-drill. It was dangerous not to have an organized fire-brigade in such a large school. Of course, as this was Esther's idea, it was cheered by Esther's crowd, made into a motion, voted on and carried before we had a chance to turn round.

Then Esther rose and talked some more. There was a good deal of talk in the school, she said, about the different cliques, and how unfortunate it was that they should pull apart as they did. She said that in history they called cliques parties and factions, and we all knew how injurious these were to good government. It was just the same with a school. She wished that when it came to school questions we could put aside our personal opinions, and care more for the school than for ourselves.

Esther sat down in a perfect storm of cheers, but everybody was not cheering and glapping, although it sounded like it. I saw Natalie Jewett getting ready to clap, but I frowned at her, and she did not dare.

So we were in for fire-drills. And Esther herself was in for chief fire captain.

Perhaps you think you would have liked it! To be sitting peacefully studying in study hour, with three "quizzes" ahead for the next day, and one of

Carol Turner's 2 a. m. spreads behind you, and then to hear whiz, bang, clang! All the corridor bells breaking loose together! You dropped your books, rushed to your room, clapped down the windows, banged the transom, snatched up a towel, slammed the door and flew into the hall. There, every twenty feet, a girl would be standing, repeating like a cuckoo-clock: "Rally on third corridor north!" or "Rally in the dining-room!" or "Rally in main hall, first floor!"

And you must instantly fall into orderly line, and march to the aforementioned destination, wherever it might happen to be, and you must be perfectly quiet in the line, and obey your corridor captain just as if she had been a teacher, or Esther would be after her—and after you!

And Esther allowed just one hundred and twenty-five seconds between the first clanging of the corridor bell and the assembling of the entire school at the rally, and if you were late! We did not much enjoy being scolded and ordered about by Esther and Esther's corridor captains, just girls like ourselves!

Sometimes the drill would come at night, perhaps just after we were all in bed, and out we would all have to scramble, and rush to the rally, kimonos and towels and hair all flying.

As likely as not, this evening parade would end on the fire-wall staircase. There was one at each end of the building, where the wings join the main corridor. The staircase is a little narrow, winding affair of iron, and it is shut in by iron walls, and has sliding doors of sheet iron on every floor. The fire-wall stairs are chilly and narrow—there's just room to go down in single file. Sometimes, no matter how sleepy and cross we were, Esther would keep us marching up and down those stairs, and actually out-of-doors when we got to the bottom, until I really believe we could have come in our sleep.

It grew to be awful tiresome. I believe even some of the teachers thought Esther was too energetic, and went to Mrs. Sinclair about it; but she would not interfere, and she would not let any of the teachers be present at a fire-drill. We were to have it all our own way, or rather Esther was to have it all her own way.

You may imagine our crowd was not very nice to Esther at this time. But no matter what you did or said to Esther, she never seemed to notice; she was so full of her old notions about self-government and school spirit and the fire-brigade that she did not seem to feel anything for herself at all.

One night a lot of our girls were in my room, and we just decided then and there that we would not put up with it any longer. The next time those old bells rang for fire-drill, we would not go. Who in the world could make us?

We did not have long to wait. That very night, just as I had fallen to sleep, all those bells suddenly went off like mad. Sheer force of habit pulled me out of bed and into my kimono, still too sleepy to know what I was doing.

I was taking up my towel when I remembered our resolution, and sat down on the edge of the bed wide awake and determined not to budge. I found afterward that exactly twenty girls were acting in just the same way, all our third centre corridor, in fact.

I could hear the girls scurrying out over our heads. Out in our corridor I could hear the hall guards repeating, "Rally on the third north, fire-wall stairs!" Fire-wall stairs, and it was as cold as Christmas!

Pretty soon came a pounding at the doors. Nancy Voorhees, our corridor captain shouted:

"Girls, girls, wake up! Didn't you hear the bells? Where are you?" Then the doors began to open. "Oh, you are awake!" cried Nancy. "Do hurry!"

Nobody stirred. Nancy's face looked queer. "What is the matter, girls?" We began to come out of our rooms and gathered together. "We aren't coming!" I said.

Nancy looked at us, then turned and flew. An instant afterward we saw

Esther's red bath-robe come scudding down the corridor toward us. She stopped a second because Miss Edgerton had appeared, and had said in her usual fussy way:

"Can I help you, Esther?" Esther laughed back at her. "No, indeed, Miss Edgerton. We are not used to having you at fire-drills. The poor little dears might think it was a real fire if you came."

Then Esther stood before us, her red bath-robe tied in tight about her waist, her long braids falling over her shoulders. I shall never forget her face. It was all ablaze with color, and her eyes were like steel, and her lips had a regular Napoleonic set. At first she was going to make us go!

If she had ordered us to go then, I do not know what would have happened—for we would not have moved. Then her face changed. I never saw any face look quite so sweet; it was as if all the self in it just went out.

"Girls," she said, "won't you please come? I'm not ordering, I'm just asking, just as a favor, this once, please." And we went, but we were pretty sulky.

We marched to the third-floor fire-wall staircase. The fire-wall doors on the third had been drawn; one of them was left open just enough for us to squeeze through to the little dark, cold staircase. The door down on the first floor, leading right out-of-doors, was open, and the wind whistled up.

Half the girls were already down and out when we started from the top. Esther was at the very end, as usual. As we went down, she called in that ringing voice of hers:

"When you get down, shut the fire-wall doors into the first-floor corridor!" She was ordering us again! "Let's not!" I said to the girls behind me, and we did not. Esther was still on the third floor. We were all shivering in the night air outside at the bottom.

Esther opened the window, just as she was about to start down, and called, "Is everybody down safe?" "Yes," somebody answered.

We could see Esther just as she put her hand on the door to squeeze through to the stairway. Then there was a sudden report and roar, and a great sheet of flame went sucking up the fire-wall stairs as if through a great funnel!

It was a real fire! It had spread from the cellar to the first floor, and there, fanned by the wind from the open door, it had licked its way through the corridor doors we had left open!

And where was Esther? We looked. We did not make a sound. Only Natalie turned, covered her eyes, and laid her head on my shoulder. I could feel her shiver all over. It seemed as if in an instant all the wing was ablaze.

Then we saw Esther! We saw her running, running, past window after window. But flames ran, too, over her and under her. It all depended on whether she could reach the main staircase before they did! The main staircase is only of wood. She reached it. She got down. She was not hurt a bit. Only when she saw her, Natalie and I both sank down on the ground. I felt as if I was going to faint.

Esther came right over to us. "Why didn't you shut those doors?" she asked.

We did not answer, but Esther knew why. Suddenly her face began to work so queerly, there in the red light of the fire.

"If the fire had come a minute sooner when you were all on the stairs!" she said, and she put out her hands as if she could not see, and were feeling for something. Then Mrs. Sinclair stepped out from somewhere, and put her arms round her.

The fire was not so bad as it looked at first, and the slow old Mayside Hose Company did arrive, and put it out after a while. About thirty of us had to board in the village for the rest of the year, but now we are all under one roof again.

We have self-government this year, and Esther is president. The vote for self-government was unanimous, and so was the vote for president. It was the first time anything unanimous ever happened in this school.—Youth's Companion.

Strangel

Call a girl a chick and she smiles; call a woman a hen and she howls. Call a young woman a witch and she is pleased; call an old woman a witch and she is indignant. Call a girl a kitten and she rather likes it; call a woman a cat and she hates you. Women are queer.

If you call a man a gay dog, it will flatter him; call him a pup, a hound, or a cur, and he will try to alter the map of your face. He doesn't mind being called a bull or a bear, yet he will object to being mentioned as a calf or a cub. Men are queer, too.—London Tit-Bits.

Feminine Veracity.

"Women are as a whole less truthful than men." So says a woman, and since she is a woman, of course, her statement may not be true. But she does not mean to be unkind. If women are "less truthful" it is, as you have no doubt already divined, men's fault. "An ordinary woman," she explains, "trained to keep some one or other in authority in a good temper, cannot be expected to be as frank or as reliable as a man."—London Telegraph.

SOUTHERN FARM NOTES.

TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE PLANTER, STOCKMAN AND TRUCK GROWER.

What is Rich Soil?

A soil which is able to produce good crops is considered to be a rich soil. In order to produce good crops, a soil must supply a sufficient quantity of the food required by the plants. That is to say, the plant must be able to obtain enough potash, lime, magnesia, phosphoric acid, iron, sulphur and water from the soil to supply its needs, and if any one of these substances is absent, or not furnished by the soil in sufficient quantity, the soil will not produce good crops.

Few farmers realize that their soils contain very large quantities of these substances. The trouble with a poor soil is, not that it does not contain plant food, but that the plant food in it cannot be taken up by plants. The food is locked up and the plants cannot get it, and suffer accordingly. By far the greater part of the plant food in every soil is in such a form that it cannot be taken up by plants. But every soil is undergoing a continual change, by which small portions of the locked-up plant food is daily made soluble, and in such a form that plants can use it. It is within the power of the farmer to cultivate and manage his farm in such a way that the quantity of plant food released each year will become more and more each year. In such a case his farm is growing "richer." It is also possible (and very often the case) that a farm will be managed in such a way that the agencies which release the locked-up plant food will decrease in power from year to year. In such a case his farm will grow poorer; not because the plant food in the soil is exhausted, but because, by bad management, the farmer no longer has a sufficient supply of plant food in his soil in a form available to plants. The most important agency in releasing the locked-up food in a soil, is a supply of decaying vegetable matter. Decaying vegetable matter forms various acids, which act upon the soil and decompose it. Decaying vegetable matter allows the growth of minute plants, which also act upon the soil and release inert plant food. Humus, as the decayed vegetable matter in soil is called, is very important in a soil for other reasons, but it is certainly very important in aiding to provide plants with a supply of plant food from the soil. A soil containing much humus is always more fertile than the same soil with little humus, and one reason for this fact is that already stated, namely, that the humus aids in bringing the plant food to such a form that plants can use it.

The most natural method of farming is to utilize as much as possible the plant food already in the soil, and resort to fertilizers only to supply the deficiencies of the soil.—Dr. G. S. Fraps, Ph.D., of Raleigh, in Philadelphia Farmer.

How to Get Eggs.

The following from the Baltimore Sun is just as good as it would be if taken from the columns of the best poultry journal in the country:

If it costs in actual money one dollar a year to keep a hen and the hen lays 200 eggs, there is a net profit of 100 per cent., even though the average price of eggs is only twelve cents a dozen.

As no other farm stock will pay this average profit, this subject is one that should be studied. On this subject a poultryman gives the following general facts:

The pullet that begins laying at the earliest age and continues to lay the longest is the ideal mother for a strain of layers.

But there is something beyond this, for a laying strain must be started ahead of the eggs from which its members are hatched. The hens must be in the best possible condition before the eggs are laid. The eggs they lay will hatch out strong, vigorous chicks, and these should be forced to the limit. Vigorous constitution means a capacity to produce a large number of eggs. Good feed and care induce continued vigor. The artificial stimulus grows into a characteristic that becomes fixed and descends to the progeny generation after generation, and in the end a laying strain is established, and the value of such a strain is undisputed. Any one who breeds poultry may do something toward increasing the general average by attending to the details of care and feeding. Upon productiveness depends the profit that may be made from commercial poultry, to a large extent. These are not idle theories; they are facts that have been established by years of experience and observation. The study of them is a material factor in making improvements in our flocks.

To this we add that eggs being most profitable in winter, every effort should be made for winter eggs. So it is best to have a field of cow peas near the house for the chickens to forage on and a pasture of rye.

Large or Small Cows.

A reader wishes to know whether we

would prefer large or small cows for dairy or milk-giving purposes. To make a short answer, we would prefer the cow that would give the most and best milk and would keep at it longest. The object in view should always be kept foremost. If you have a cow that is just such a milker as you wish, she is the best cow without reference to her size.

If the purpose is to buy a dairy herd, the fact that there are special dairy breeds must not be ignored, and these are mostly small, though the Holsteins come in of fair size. But if the idea is to get cows for the farm, where it is desirable to raise calves as well as to get milk, size should be considered. In that case we advise getting a medium to large cow of a well-known milking strain.

Our fathers would have thought it strange had we talked of feeding hay to hogs, or laying in a supply of hay as a winter feed for hogs. But this is done now in many places as regularly as laying in hay for feeding the horses and cattle. Cow pea and alfalfa have been proven good feed for hogs, not only as pasture feed in the fields, but as dry feed in winter.

If you have a mule colt to put on pasture this spring, don't try to make him stay in the pasture by himself. He just won't do it. He'll find some way to get out, and after that no fence will bother him much. Give the mule colt or colts company. A good dispositioned old horse is good, but a gentle old gray mare is the very best company for mules.

Corn Husks and Wheat Chaff.

H. L. D. Scottville, writes: Please give me the feeding value of corn husks and wheat chaff as a feed for cows.

The following table gives the composition of corn husks and wheat chaff:

	Protein	Fiber	Extract	Fat
	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.	Pct.
Corn husks	2.5	15.8	28.3	7
Wheat chaff	4.5	36	34.6	1.4

Wheat chaff contains about twice as much protein, crude fiber and fat as the corn husks. These foods are low in digestible protein and fat and only constitute cheap forms of roughness, more valuable as a filler for ruminating animals than for their entire plant, and they are also considerably lower in nutrients than corn leaves. Wheat chaff contains about as much digestible matter as wheat straw, but it is much lower in digestible nutrients than oat straw, containing only about one-fourth as much digestible protein. Neither form of roughness thus compares well with hay from any of the legumes or tame grasses. At the same time corn husks and wheat chaff can certainly be utilized to advantage on the farm if fed in proper amounts.—Prof. Soule.

Watering Poultry.

To keep poultry healthy plenty of fresh water must be kept within easy reach of them. Crocks, pans and such vessels have to be filled several times a day. The young chicks are apt to get drowned when enough water is kept to last any length of time; besides the water gets old and unhealthy. My plan is to take a small keg at bottom; set the keg upright on box or frame a foot from ground, put a curved tube in hole, put a vessel under lower end of tube. When water is put in keg the vessel will run full of water to the lower end of tube. The depth of water can be regulated by raising or lowering the tube. If keg is filled with fresh water every morning there will always be a fresh supply of fresh water in vessel. This is the best device for watering poultry I know of. It is a great labor-saver.—H. C. Marsch, Tusculum, Tenn.

Soy Beans and Millet For Hay.

J. S. C. Russellville, Tenn., writes: Will soy beans mature early enough to be sown with millet for hay? What proportion of each should be used when sown with drill and fertilizer?

Some of the early maturing varieties of soy beans might be sown with millet for hay, but the standard varieties would have to be sown in drills, say about thirty days before the millet was seeded. The millet might then be sown broadcast and covered with a harrow. One of the best varieties of soy beans is the mammoth yellow. A mixture of soy beans and millet will make an excellent quality of hay, and it is somewhat easier to cure than that made from cowpeas. You should sow about a half bushel to three pecks of soy beans per acre, and a gallon to a half gallon and a half of millet seed.—A. M. Soule.

Sandy Soil For Fruits.

Sandy soils are good fruit soils, when fertile enough, and are better adapted to the smaller fruits and berries needing careful cultivation. Peaches require high, dry and moderately fertile soil, and do best on tops of hills.—Southern Fruit Grower.



YOUR FATE.

If you must marry money, choose an heiress who's meek—
If you don't, you'll be down on all fours;
She'll allude to house, horses and servants as "mine,"
And the poor ugly kids will be "yours!"
—Life.

AMBITIOUS.

Dolly—"Is he very ambitious?"
Daisy—"Well, he wants me."—Judge.

EVENED UP.

"Strange; one-half the world doesn't know how the other half lives."
"Well, neither does the other half."
—Philadelphia Ledger.

TOO EARLY.

"Do you think you are going to like your new neighbors?"
"I don't know; they haven't hung out their washing yet."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

NONE MISSING.

"Do you think that mosquitoes carry malaria?"
"I dunno," answered Farmer Corn-tassel. "They never took any away from here."—Washington Star.

HIS CONCLUSION.

Knicker—"So your wife went to the country to study nature's book?"
Bocker—"Yes, and from the size of her hotel bill it must be among the best sell sellers."—New York Sun.

WOULDN'T KNOW IT.

Barber—"Razor all right; sir?"
Patient—"I wouldn't know I was being shaved."
Barber—"Thank you, sir."
Patient—"It's more like being flayed, you know."—Cleveland Leader.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

Meekerton—"Enpeck has just been made independent for life."
Mrs. Meekerton—"Indeed! Some lucky speculation, I suppose?"
Meekerton—"No; he sued for a divorce and got it."—Chicago News.

SLOW FELLOW.

"So the engagement is broken off?"
"Yes. It seems she told him one evening that she wasn't beautiful enough to be his wife, and he didn't deny her statement quick enough to suit her."—Philadelphia Ledger.

A TANTALIZING SITUATION.



No wonder those enormous ruffs went out of fashion.—London Tatler.

ANOTHER ONE.

"Do you know what you are trying to say," queried the editor, as he glanced over the copy, "when you speak of a man going to his long rest at the untimely age of eighty?"
"Sure," answered the new reporter. "He ought to have been chloroformed twenty years ago."—Columbus Dispatch.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

"But," complained the young man, "if you don't care for me, why have you been encouraging me all this time?"
"Encouraging you?" she answered. "Why, I haven't been doing that. Of course, I have let you hold my hands some, but, gracious, if you call that encouragement, you ought to see me when I'm with Jack."—Chicago Record-Herald.

A GENTLE REBUKE.

Papa Bass—"Now, my son, be sure to keep out of danger and always look before you bite."
Little Finney Bass—"But, papa, there's no danger just now. Isn't this the close season for our family?"
Papa Bass (sarcastically)—"Why, so it is! And if a fisherman is fined for having you in his possession, you get half the fine to heal your wounded feelings!"—Brooklyn Life.