

The Weekly Messenger

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY
ALBERT BIENVENU.

According to census reports, there are 12,500,000 families in the United States. Of these, 10,250,000, occupy farms and homes that are either owned or rented by them unincumbered. The other 2,250,000 own homes and farms incumbered by mortgages.

Japan's Emperor has decreed that every man who provokes a duel or accepts a challenge shall pay a heavy fine, and serve from six months to two years in the galleys. The taunting of a man for his refusal to fight when challenged will be regarded as slander, and will be so treated by the courts.

The success of the botanical institutions established in Jamaica, Trinidad and British Guiana, under the auspices of the authorities at Kew, England, has led to an extension of the system, and botanical stations are now in active operation in most of the minor West India islands. The object is to encourage a diversified system of cultivation.

Farmers and bank officers seem to be given length of days. From recent statistics it is estimated that the average life of men in the different callings and professions is as follows: Farmers, sixty-four years; bank officers, sixty-four; clergymen, fifty-six; lawyers, fifty-four; merchants, fifty-one; physicians, fifty-one; carpenters, forty-nine; traders, forty-six; manufacturers, bakers, painters, shoemakers and mechanics, forty-three; editors, forty; musicians, thirty-nine; teachers, thirty-four; clerks, thirty-four; operators, thirty-two.

The most interesting person in Washington at present is the Chinese Minister's little slant-eyed baby. Accompanied by her mother and nurse the infant takes an occasional outing in an American baby carriage, and on such occasions she is the cynosure of all neighboring eyes. She is not much unlike other babies, except for her attire, which looks rather odd to Occidental people. On her head she wears a little silk cap of Chinese manufacture, and tucked up under her chin in place of the usual white robe is a little spread of dark-colored material. The Minister's wife is much like other mothers in showing her pleasure when her baby is admired.

A wonderful example of patience in the Chinese is afforded by a consular report dealing with the manufacture of salt in Central China. Holes about six inches in diameter are bored in the rock by means of a primitive form of iron drill, and sometimes a period of forty years elapses before the covered brine is reached, so that the work is carried on from one generation to another. During this time the boring, as may be imagined, goes down to an immense depth. When brine is found it is drawn up in bamboo tubes by a rope working over a large drum turned by bullocks. The brine is evaporated in iron caldrons, the heat being supplied by natural gas, which is generally found in the vicinity of the salt wells.

The Kansas City Times says: "Nearly three-fourths of the men who have been chosen by the people for the great offices of the nation are men who were early familiar with wooded hills and cultivated fields. It is an old story, but a few names may be appropriately recalled here; for example, those of Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, Hamlin, Greeley, Tilden, Cleveland, Harrison, Hayes, Blaine and many others almost equally conspicuous in current events of living memory. Among journalists, Henry Watterson spent his early life in rural Kentucky and Murat Halstead was born and lived on a farm in Ohio. W. H. Vanderbilt was born in a small New Jersey town and early engaged in the business of ship chandler. Russell Sage was born in a New Jersey village. Jay Gould spent his early years on his father's farm in New York State. Talmage first saw the light in a New Jersey village, and David Swing, though born in Cincinnati, passed his boyhood on an Ohio farm. Whittier and Howells spent their youth in villages, the former dividing his time between farm employment and his studies." In the South, adds the Atlantic Constitution, this is even more conspicuous. With very few exceptions, our most successful men have all been country bred.

The chief industry of the Amazon Valley, one of the richest and largest in the world, being about 2000 miles long, is rubber gathering. This industry, which is quite remunerative, keeps the greater part of the native population at the margins and in the swamps tapping the trees, where malaria and fever sweep them off. But the work is said to pay immensely for the labor and risk.

Farmers should encourage the establishment of canning factories near at hand, even if they have to invest somewhat in the stock in order to get them started, says *Seed Time and Harvest*. There is a profit in growing fruit and vegetables when there is market near at hand. Co-operative establishments owned by the men who are to grow the products should pay well if properly managed.

The decrease of population of Ireland shown by the last census is universal. It has been going on as rapidly in Ulster as elsewhere. Dublin and Belfast have grown somewhat, which gives a slight increase in the counties of Dublin and Antrim, but every other county has declined, and nearly all of the other large towns. The number of inhabited houses in the whole of Ireland is 872,659, a decrease of 41,449; the number of unoccupied houses is 65,717, an increase of 7450.

It is doubtful, soliloquizes the New York Post, if the record of early expenditures of any great man begins with a more creditable disbursement than that of Webster while a pedagogue at Fryeburg, which is preserved there as a memento now. The first charge set down is "for soap, one six-pence," on January 2, 1802. The items that follow are not unworthy of this beginning. They are: "A comb, six-pence"; "quills, one-and-six-pence"; "pencil, seven-pence"; and "a book, four-and-six-pence." The items, "a ring, five shillings," and "one pair of silk hose, fourteen-and-six-pence," might have been given ground for a suspicion of extravagance, to be afterwards justified.

The French peasant is said to be changing for the worse. He is losing both his thrift and sobriety. He has taken to drink like the inhabitants of the city slums, and his thirst is for brandy. In the villages the women are pictured as obliged—like the wives of the workmen in the cities—to hang about the public houses on pay days and to fight for money to buy bread. Instead of putting his sous and silver in a long stocking, the countryman spends them in the tavern. Formerly he drank only on holidays; now he treats himself and his friend every day in the week. The wives of married peasants soon follow their husbands in this vice. Strong liquors are cheap; there is no Sunday, or even early closing, and no Blue Ribbon Army in that country.

The editor of the *Bulder and Wood Worker* believe in trade schools. It gives a young man, in a few months, he says, instruction that it would take him the same number of years to "pick up" haphazard in a shop, and accompanies this instruction with a technical and scientific teaching of the whys and wherefores of his work that his shop seldom or never furnishes. At the same time, it enables him to reach the stage at which he attains a value as a mechanic that much earlier than if he went into a shop as a boy. He can commence with the trade schools in his seventeenth or eighteenth year, and would be just as far as the shop boy on completing his trade school course, with the incalculable advantage, if he has wisely used his time, of possessing the foundation for an education that will help him.

The Boston Transcript soliloquizes: "Somebody, singing the praises of the banana, says that it has all the essentials to the sustenance of life for both man and beast. It is of the lily family, and is a developed tropical lily, from which, by ages of cultivation, the seeds have been eliminated and the fruit greatly expanded. Therefore, the aesthete who would walk down Piccadilly with a tulip or a lily can bear a banana in his medicinal hand and fill the bill. No wonder they are cheap when, as Humboldt saw, the ground that yields ninety-nine pounds of potatoes or thirty-three pounds of wheat, will bear four thousand pounds of bananas. So far, so good. To-morrow we shall hear that bananas are packed with unwholesomeness, being breeders of warts and a cause of the hair falling out, because of the arsenic and coppers which they contain."

ENVIRONMENT.

This earth, where so mysteriously we came
Girds us with kinship, in robust onks
dwell
Our fortitude; the willows and ferns too
well
Our foolish frailty or pithy proclaim;
The dawn is our pure deeds; the erratic
flame
Of lightning flares our passions; the grave
spell
Of moonlight speaks our sorrow—and
scarce we tell
Our pictured lives from their terrestrial
frame.
Wherefore the closer that we lean to look,
On those material and yet airy ties
Which bind us to this orb through fated
years.
We almost feel as if great Nature took
Our joys to weave her sunshine with, our
sighs
To make her winds, and for her rains our
tea s.
—Edgar Fawcett, in the *Cosmopolitan*.

THAT PRETTY LITTLE SIMPLETON.

BY VIRGIE F. HARRIS.

What a silly little thing she was, but how pretty! All smiles and dimples, rosy cheeks and duffy brown hair, shading laughing blue eyes! I thought, as I sat opposite her that day in the street car, and heard her girlish prattle, that I had never seen such a combination of silliness and prettiness. Her silly chatter provoked me desperately, for I was intensely interested in an article in the last Medical Journal, which had direct bearing on a complicated case I was going that morning to treat. An accident that morning to one of my horses and a stupid blunder of my coachman had forced me to take the car, and I felt as cross as a bear, and looked so. I know, for when I caught her eye she tossed her silly little head and turned away with a pout. I heard enough about papa, balls, the opera, etc., to guess that she was an idolized, only child and something of a belle. As I was too old to ignore the vacuum in her head, for the sake of the pretty face, I was much relieved when Dora Copperfield—as I mentally styled her—and her friend left the car. It was strange, but after the first chance meeting, I was constantly meeting Dora. I caught glimpses of her nestling down in the cushions, as her carriage dashed with a flash and a glitter by my office. At the opera the fates threw me in her neighborhood. She was with a fat, pompous-looking middle-aged man, whom I took to be "papa." I mentally dubbed him "old money-bags," and hated him as heartily as I did his daughter—he looked so complacent and listened with such evident relish to her ceaseless, silly prattle.

One day I was summoned in great haste to the bedside of a patient whom I had attended a few times before. She and her daughter lived in a quarter of the city to which my practice seldom called me, and among people I only served for sweet charity's sake. Though these two were as poor as many I attended free I could not dare refuse the fee they promptly tendered after each visit. Of them I knew nothing further than that they were ladies. There was a proud independence, a dignified reticence that commanded my respect. I was much attracted by them both; the mother was refined and gentle, and bore with fortitude her sufferings; the daughter was beautiful, proud, dignified, and bravely independent. I was anxious to help them, but the opportunity for doing so delicately and without risk of offending had never yet presented itself, and not for my right hand would I have offended their brave, proud, reticent poverty. But on this visit the evidences of poverty were even greater. The room was very bare; evidently they had been forced to pawn many necessary articles. The daughter was pale and thin, and something like despair shone in the beautiful dark eyes. I found Mrs. Trevor very weak and low. After I had prescribed for her I sat like "Micawber," hoping "something would turn up"—that there would be some opening in the conversation where I might safely offer aid. I could not leave them in such destitution. I must help them—this was not their place and sphere, and they must be lifted out by some means. The mother was too weak to talk, and Miss Trevor was too absorbed in her own sad thoughts for conversation, so I must take the dilemma by the horns.

"Have you been taking wine as I prescribed, Mrs. Trevor? You are much weaker than when I saw you last, and I had hoped the wine would have built up your strength."

Miss Trevor seemed to struggle with herself. A burning blush suffused her face and neck. At last she raised her head proudly, and with a defiant air looked me full and steadily in the eye, as she said in a low voice, without a quiver:

"No, Dr. Heathcote. We were not able to follow your prescription fully. The wine you sent mother was of great benefit to her, and I was able to supply it, also, until last week, when she was taken much worse, requiring my unremitting attention, which forced me to stop sewing, my only means of support. But I had just finished some work for a young lady, and as she owed me \$20, I trusted to that to tide me over, until I could resume work. But I have been unable to collect the money, and we are penniless."

Bravely said, my beautiful Spartan! I thought, as I looked at the fine, pale face with its troubled eyes. The Spartan youth, with the wolf gnawing at his vitals, suffered less than you did in making this confession. Behind that marble calmness, my beautiful Galatea, what a Vesuvius must be throbbing and

seething in your heart and brain! Injuries and injustice that you can't forget—neglect and coldness from those who should have befriended!

"Yes, doctor," said Mrs. Trevor. "Helen kept her troubles from me as long as she could, and has allowed me to wait for nothing, but failing to collect the money due her has been a great hardship. The poor child has not tasted food since yesterday."

She covered her face with her hands, and the tears trickled down through the thin fingers.

I turned like one shot and stared at that beautiful girl, standing so quiet and composed. Starving! starving! She, fit to be a queen, and suffering for bread! I stalked like a caged lion up and down the narrow room.

"Oh, the heartless rich! The cold, heartless rich!"

"More thoughtless than heartless, I think, Dr. Heathcote."

I stopped short as the cool, even tones fell on my ear, and marching up to her took both her hands in mine. I was old enough to be her father.

"Helen, why didn't you come to me? Why didn't you come?"

The tears came to her eyes—the first I had seen there.

"We are such strangers to you. I would not have presumed—"

"Strangers be hanged! Excuse me, Helen. But, my child, you are too proud! There comes a time in the life of most, when we must accept help—when pride must be hid aside and we must stoop! Independence is a very fine thing, my dear, but the proudly independent man is not the happy man. He who can find pleasure in receiving as well as giving is the one who gets most good out of life, because closer drawn to his fellow man. Now, my dear, I'm going to get wine for your mother and nourishing food for you."

She put out her hand protestingly, and again that blush of humbled pride mounted to her face.

"Your mother's life depends upon timely aid. You and I can have our reckoning by and by. I will look in again this afternoon."

Soon I had sent up wine, fruits and well prepared food to Helen and her mother. I could not dismiss them from my mind for a moment during my round of visits. I could understand the agony of humiliation that poor girl was suffering—as well as the fear and sorrow hanging over her from her mother's illness. Poverty had not been long with them; it was apparent that their better days had been recent. Then as I thought how that rich girl's thoughtless, heartless indifference and neglect to pay her had aggravated Helen's shame and grief, my indignation knew no bounds, and when I reached Mrs. Trevor's humble room that afternoon I had worked myself into a furor of anger against that unknown transgressor, Helen's late employer. I was boiling over with rage, which increased, if possible, when I found Mrs. Trevor worse and noted Helen's troubled, anxious face. After doing all I could for my patient, who soon fell into a doze, I called Helen out into the hall.

"Helen, give me the name and address of the person who owes you."

She looked at me inquiringly as I took out my notebook and pencil, but said:

"Miss Floy Garrison, 2010 L Avenue. I wrote it down hurriedly and without another word was on my way to find this girl. I had but one thought—to bring her to see the sorrows she had caused. It might teach her a lesson and cause her to feel a little of the shame and mortification Helen had to endure."

When I drew up before 2010 L Avenue a carriage stood before the door and a party of four stood ready to enter. A slender, middle-aged lady, a fine-looking young man, "old money bags" and Dora Copperfield! Ribbons flying, curls blowing, draperies fluttering and merry laughter.

So Miss Empty Head was the culprit. I was not surprised at all. If I had been a knight of the middle ages I would have snatched her in my arms and rushed away with her, and after showing her the trouble and sorrow she had caused, immured her in a dungeon deep and dark, but as it was the practical nineteenth century I must observe the conventionalities. So, while thirsting for vengeance, I had to smirk and bow and introduce myself.

Yes, "old moneybags" knew Dr. Heathcote quite well by reputation. Glad to meet him. "This," pointing to the middle-aged lady, "was his wife; the young lady was his daughter Floy, and this his nephew, Mr. Philip Everett, from the south."

I then politely requested Miss Garrison to accompany me to see a patient who was very low, who knew her, and in whom she would be interested. Floy looked inquiringly at papa, who said: "Yes, go."

Not a word was spoken during the drive, but when we stood in Helen's room I pointed to Mrs. Trevor's wasted form and said:

"Behold your work."

"Oh, what do you mean?"

The blue eyes were round and frightened and the roses had faded from the pretty cheeks. I turned sternly upon her and said:

"I mean that a girl as young and beautiful as yourself, as well-born and as well-bred, has been reduced to a dreadful poverty—a poverty such as you have never seen, but have cried over in novels; she has been struggling bravely to keep back want and trouble from an invalid mother, while you were going to parties and balls; but out of your plenty you couldn't spare the pitiful \$20 she had earned by hard work. It would have been a small fortune to her and saved her heartaches and humiliation terrible to her proud nature!"

"Forgive me, oh, forgive me, Miss Trevor, for my cruel, thoughtless carelessness!"

She was crying and clinging to Helen, who stood away.

"I have been so wickedly thoughtless! I did not know there was so much suffering and want in the world! Can you ever forgive me?"

But before Helen could speak, there was a loud knock at the door, and when I opened it, Col. Garrison and Mr. Philip Everett stood before me. Col. Garrison explained that after I had left them with Floy, he grew uneasy, thinking he had been too precipitate in giving his consent for her to accompany me, fearing my patient might be suffering from some contagious disease.

Here Floy threw wide open the door, and coming into the hall, threw herself into her father's arms and sobbed out the whole sad story.

But what was the matter with Helen? Was she about to faint? She steadied herself with one hand against a chair, while the other was pressed to her heart; her face was deadly pale, and her wide-stretched eyes were riveted upon Mr. Everett, who when he caught sight of her through the open door, stepped forward with a glad cry of "Helen!" His manly, handsome face was radiant with happiness, and I heard him say:

"Found at last! I have searched everywhere for you, Helen!"

"Can you still—"

"Do I still love you? Oh, Helen, how can you ask!"

And unmindful of us all she fell into his arms and wept out her sorrows and griefs upon his heart. I closed the door, and Col. Garrison, Floy and I discreetly withdrew farther into the hall.

After a few moments Mr. Everett and Helen came out. At last my beautiful Galatea was endowed with life. A look of happiness such as I had never seen there before shone in the dark eyes. Then Mr. Everett, in a manly, straightforward way, told their story. He and Miss Trevor had been children together in a far distant Southern city, and became engaged soon after both had left school, but after the death of Helen's father, nearly a year before, an unfortunate misunderstanding arose, which separated them, and Helen and her mother quietly left the city, leaving no trace behind them, and all these months he had been searching for them. Then that pretty little simpleton, Floy, proved her head was not quite empty by saying:

"Papa, Mrs. Trevor and Helen must go home with us, where we may repair, if possible, the wrong I did them."

And it was done just as Miss Rattle-brain proposed, and she proved herself the most faithful, untiring and devoted of nurses—the most unselfish and loving of friends and cousins; and before the wedding day came around, she and Helen were as devoted as sisters, and when that day did come old Money-bags was the most generous of uncles. And when Helen kissed me good-bye that day, she said with happy tears in her pretty dark eyes:

"Dr. Heathcote, I will never cease to love and bless you! The brightest day of my life, except this, is that on which you rushed Floy in upon her avenging Nemesis!"

Before Philip left with his wife he told me, at Helen's request, what he told no one else—the story of their poverty and separation. Helen's father had been Philip's guardian, and after his death it was found that he had appropriated and squandered the whole of Philip's fine fortune. Philip tried to keep this from Helen, but in some way she learned it, and her grief, mortification and despair were terrible to see. She thought that Philip would scorn to marry the daughter of a dishonest man. So after she and her mother had settled all of that small fortune upon Philip—for both felt keenly the disgrace, and wished to make what reparation they could—they quietly left the city, giving Philip no hint of their destination.

"I knew she was a heroine!" I said, as I slapped Philip on the back.

Mrs. Trevor remained with the Garrisons until Philip and Helen returned from their brief trip, then she went with them to the cosy little home that Col. Garrison gave Philip on his wedding day. My gift to my beautiful girl was a complete silver service and a horse and phaeton; so I see the bright, happy face every day or so as she drives by and nods and smiles at me.

Well, it is always the unexpected that happens. When that boy of mine, Walter Heathcote, came home from college, ready for a partnership with his old father, what should he do but fall in love with that pretty little simpleton, Floy Garrison, and make her Mrs. Heathcote before I could say Jack Robinson!—[Detroit Free Press.]

An Interesting Relic.

Professor G. W. Turner, of Ash Grove, Mo., is said to possess a very important historical relic, which he will put on exhibition at the World's Fair. It is a silver medal about two inches in diameter, and bears dates of more than three and a half centuries ago. It is said to be a relic of the great Spanish explorer, De Soto, and in all probability was worn by him during his campaign with Cortez and Pizarro, between the years 1531 and 1545. These dates are stamped upon the medal. On one side is a representation of the Saviour's crucifixion and on the other the Last Supper. It was found by a colored man in a field, while ploughing near Ash Grove, Mo., about eighteen months ago, located near a cold spring of fresh water. It is not improbable that De Soto and his followers camped near this locality just before beginning his disastrous return to the Mississippi River. He was next heard from where Hot Springs, Ark., is now located, and in May or June, 1542, died from fever, when his body was wrapped in a mantle and sunk at midnight in the Mississippi River.—[Picayune.]