

MICHIGAN FARMER

AND STATE JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE.

DETROIT, JUNE 1, 1886.

THE HOUSEHOLD---Supplement.

OH, THE WOMEN!

You are always abusing the women
As a terrible plague to men,
You say we're the root of all evils,
You repeat it again and again,
Of wars and of quarrels and bloodshed,
And of mischief, be what it may—
But pray, then, why do you marry us
If we're all the plagues you say?
And why do you take such care of us
And keep us so safe at home,
And are never easy a moment
If ever we chance to roam?
When you ought to be thanking heaven
That your plague is of the way
You all keep fretting and fuming:
"Where is my plague to-day?"
If a Plague peeps out of a window
Up goes the eyes of men;
If she hides they all keep staring
Until she looks out again.

How did they feel, I wonder?
Fairy princesses—
Sending their lovers through
Dangers as strange as new;
Caves full of flames and thunder,
Pierce wildernesses?
I, of a simpler mind,
Own them above me,
Dear, I could never ask
You for the lightest task—
So do I dread to find
You may not love me.

OUR CONFIDENCES.

That is a strange characteristic of the human heart which compels it, through some feeling which seems irresistible, to confide its secrets to the keeping of others. The burdened spirit finds relief in speaking of its griefs; we may keep our happiness in our hearts, letting it sparkle in the eyes and irradiate the face, but we take our sorrows to another. Joys are doubled, griefs lightened, by sympathy, which is won only by confidence. Sympathy, in its true interpretation, is helpful, calm, believing, not mere emotional regrets and demonstrations. Mere emotion is often mistaken for sympathy; emotion is transient and unproductive, sympathy is helpful. It is through the breadth of our sympathies that we make place for ourselves in the lives of others, and are able to help and truly comfort the sorrowing. But aside from this common and inherent disposition to share our sensations with others, there is an impulse which in emotional natures impels them to speak of their deepest feelings, their holiest emotions, even to part with their most treasured and carefully guarded secret in some confidential moment. It is this which leads the criminal to tell

the story of his crime to another, or to indulge in mysterious allusions to it, though he knows his confidence may pave the way to prison. Hence we have the proverb "Murder will out," recognizing humanity's disposition to share its secrets, its inability to carry alone the burden of its sorrows, its misfortunes, or its crimes.

Circumstances are often responsible for our confidences. Men grow confidential over a good cigar, it is said; while girls discuss their heart secrets during the mysterious process of doing up their bangs. Most of us can recall confidence given simply through favoring conditions of time and place, as the sequel to some event which has disturbed our mental calm, or when touched by sympathy for another, and most of us, too, have lived to regret our ill-advised disclosures.

There is a great difference in people in respect to the confidence they repose in their friends. Some are like a glass of soda-water, they effervesce with great gush on first acquaintance, but grow dreadfully flat as soon as the froth subsides. Others have always some new grievance to confide, and are eternally demanding sympathy and advice—one soon tires of the constant drain. Others again, confide in you as their "very dearest and best friend," and exact repeated pledges "never to breathe a word to any living creature," and then make like confidences to a score or more of the "dear five hundred;" another class have no secrets because they tell all they know anyhow; they are human sieves. And then there are the grand, quiet, self-controlled natures, who bear their sorrows with outward calm, whose griefs are unguessed by all except the one or two who may be privileged to enter the innermost chambers of the heart; whose confidences are given not with voluble and exclamatory phrases, but in brief, broken words which speak so eloquently all that is left unsaid. These we may trust with our own heart-aches, finding them ever "faithful and true." That is the ideal friendship in which each can confide in the other in such perfect faith and trust that no pledge of silence or secrecy is exacted or volunteered, but each rests secure on the love, the honor, the discretion of the other without the slightest fear of betrayal.

"He who confides much, puts his lemons in another man's squeezer," says Bo-vee, and he expresses in quaint fashion how completely one person may put himself in the power of another by injudici-

ous or over-confidence. "Thy friend hath a friend, and thy friend's friend hath a friend," is an Arabic proverb I have quoted in these columns before. If you wish to make certain that your secret hopes and fears, your disappointments, your wounds, are not discussed as common property among those who know you, keep them to yourself, or trust them only with the dearest and best in all the world to you, whose sympathy is true because it is helpful, who can lighten the heavy load by the might of love. These only are safe confidents.

Confidence should be a plant of slow growth; but what shall we say of those people who seem to take the whole world into their confidence? A casual introduction paves the way to a gossip about themselves, in which they will tell you the most minute details of their personal history; utterly regardless of the fact that the greatest bore on earth is he who insists upon being the hero of his own story. I know of a respectable woman, who, having just moved into a new neighborhood where she was unacquainted, met a neighbor who lived in the same block and without the formality of an introduction waylaid him on the street and kept him standing while she narrated the events of her life for a period of forty years, including the causes which led to a divorce from her husband, and the "true inwardness" of a good-sized family scandal.

A young woman you meet in the cars will not scruple to confide to you all the particulars of her engagement to "Jim;" you flatter yourself that it is your "winning way and honest face" which prompted her trust, till you hear her telling the same story to a vinegar-visaged woman across the aisle. She will reveal to a casual acquaintance made in traveling what it would seem a due womanly reticence should keep for a mother's ear only; one cannot help feeling there is a lack of refinement and delicacy in such a nature, as well as a decided want of prudence and good sound common sense.

If I were to give advice to young people about leaving home to attend school or engage in business, I should counsel great care in the matter of confidences. In the first place, it is not "good form" to talk of one's self. We are of a vast deal of importance to ourselves, but, after all, of not absorbing interest to those whom we meet in our every-day encounters with our kind. They will measure you by your work if they have knowledge of it,

WRITING FOR THE PAPERS.

I do not think there ever was any one more scared than I the first time I saw one of my own compositions in print. O, dear, I thought, what will the people who read it think; whatever made the editor think it was good enough to print, and how I wish I had not sent it! But there it was in black and white, and I have tried frequently since, with about the same result and feelings.

But I set out to try to tell some one who does not exactly know how to go about it, the best way I know to write for the paper, so that the communication will not get into the waste basket. And right here let me state that I think that many a good article is thrown into the waste-basket because the writer has written on both sides of the paper, or abbreviated, or run the letters together so that the manuscript cannot be read, while another letter of less merit is printed just because it can be read with ease. Write only on one side of the paper; if it is note paper spread the sheet open and write clear across. Number your pages; be careful to punctuate clearly; and put the capitals where they ought to be.

The subjects and language to use I can give no advice about; the topics come to me at odd times, sometimes when my hands are in the dough, or as early in the spring, when I was frying and putting the hams down in lard; but with me when the idea comes, it must be written down, or lost, and I suppose it is the same with others.

I hope many will write for our little HOUSEHOLD, for they surely can do better than the writer, and there are many farmers' wives with good educations, much experience in housework, and bright ideas, who could write if they would only let their light shine.

Remember to dot your i's and cross your t's. My *nom de plume* I write at the end of the article to be printed; my real name I write on a slip of paper and put it inside the envelope. I first prepare a rough draft of what I am going to write on a bit of wrapping paper, or anything I can lay my hands on, then I copy it off.

LEONE.

BIG BEAVER.

[Leone's directions are approved by the Editor with but one exception. Use commercial note paper as the most convenient size, but do not write across both pages. It is easier for the printers to "follow copy" across the shorter lines of a single page. Just here the HOUSEHOLD Editor would say to those who are conscious of having good ideas, and would like to express their opinions in the little paper, but are deterred by fear of seeming awkward in composition, never mind such fears, but write, and trust the Editor to make any emendations or corrections that are needed. We care more for helpful ideas than for elegant diction. One point Leone omitted is to use italics and quotation marks as sparingly as possible. Those who read attentively do not need italics to enable them to see where stress should be placed. There is not an italicized word in any of the elder Haw-

thorne's books; his language is so appropriate, so nicely calculated to convey his exact meaning, that italics are superfluous; they have been termed an insult to the intelligence of the reader.—Ed.]

RECIPE FOR HARD SOAP.

Seeing in the HOUSEHOLD of April 27th an inquiry for directions for making hard soap, I send mine, which have been thoroughly tested: Six pounds sal soda; three pounds stone lime; seven pounds clear grease; six gallons soft water. Put the sal soda and lime in a large kettle out of doors; pour on the water and give it a good boil up once; let it stand over night. In the morning drain off the lye in a tub, rinse out the kettle, and put back the lye, adding the grease, which must be free from bones and scraps, so as to have the full amount. Then boil until it is about as thick as strained honey. When boiled enough pour into a tub, having the tub wet; let it stand till next morning, and cut out in good sized pieces, as it dries down quite hard. This will be very white and nice if the grease is clean. S. M.

GRASS LAKE.

HOUSEHOLD HINTS.

DICKENS said once that he judged the quality of housekeeping by the condition of the casters on the table. We are not sure but it is a good test. The careless, thoughtless person is apt to let the vinegar cruets get nearly empty and full of sediment, the mustard pot "all stuck up," the little wooden spoon encrusted with dried mustard; while the catsup and sauce bottles fairly take away your inclination to test the contents by their "mussiness." Due attention should be paid to these things, which are lesser tasks, to be sure, but none the less indices of housekeeping qualities.

HOLES in plastering may be filled up with a little plaster of Paris mixed thick with water and applied with a knife. Hard-finished walls may be washed with soap and water and wiped dry. Dust and coal smoke are removed from papered walls and ceilings by rubbing them with a broom wrapped around with a soft white cloth; the cloth should be changed whenever it becomes much soiled. Ammonia and water, or whiting and water, are used to clean white paint, while cold tea is employed on grained work, the paint being wiped dry with a soft flannel cloth.

WE do not think a woman has any business fooling round a stove trying to take it down or put it up. It is a work for the men to do, and though it may cause them to indulge in swear words, that is not half as bad as the consequence of over-lifting to a fragile woman. But there are some women who must attend to such work, and we would remind them that a board, wide enough to slip under the stove between its legs, and long enough to be handled easily, can be put under the stove, upon two round sticks

of wood for rollers, and the stove put down upon it with a lever as the legs are taken out. Once on the board you can roll it from one room to another by replacing the rollers as it rolls off them.

A LITTLE common soda, on a dampened cloth, rubbed on cups and saucers, or teaspoons, will remove all the tea stains that give such a brown look to dishes that have been used a little while, and it does not cockle the enamel like sand, and is much easier and quicker done.

Nor long ago a reporter of one of our State exchanges mentioned having picked up in the room in which a teachers' examination had been conducted, a list of the questions presented to the candidates. The list was printed in the paper, and the question asked how many of the solid business men of the city, including lawyers, doctors and others, could answer these questions. I confess that in my estimation they partook more of the nature of conundrums than queries designed as an index of ability, or test of scholarship. Several were not stated with that clearness we have a right to expect from a Board of Examiners. The idea of an examination is less, I have always supposed, for the purpose of giving hard nuts to crack than to enable the examiner to arrive at a just estimate of the intelligence and acquirements, and facility in expression of the examined. The necessity of writing the answers is in itself an excellent examination in writing, spelling and diction. Usually, the person who is clear and lucid on paper is equally so at the blackboard or chart before the school, though there are exceptions to this rule. Life is far too short to learn all that books can teach us, or to pursue into its intricacies every subject of which a general outline is now required of us. BEATRIX.

Useful Recipes.

PICKLED EGGS.—Boil the eggs hard, remove the shell and drop them, whole, into hot spiced vinegar.

SPICED BEEF.—This is an excellent relish for a picnic. Remove all the bones from a piece of meat weighing about four pounds. Rub it well with cinnamon, allspice, pepper and celery salt. Roll tightly and tie. Boil in water enough to cover, to which has been added one-third of an ounce each of ginger, clover, cinnamon, allspice and mace. When cold, dust off the spice on the outside and slice thin.

ORANGE MARMALADE.—Slice a dozen large oranges very thin, removing the seeds. Use the juice of two lemons, and add water enough to make seven pints. Let the fruit stand over night in an earthen dish. Next morning put it in a preserving kettle, and boil gently till the orange rind is tender; then stir with it seven pounds of granulated sugar, and boil gently, stirring occasionally, till the rind looks clear and a little of the juice, when cooled, has a jelly-like consistency. Cool the marmalade and then transfer it to glass jars or jelly glasses. On top of each lay a round of paper cut to fit and dipped in brandy, and seal the glasses with paper brushed with white of egg. This will keep indefinitely and is very wholesome and nutritious, especially for invalids and children. Miss Corson's recipe.

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by your appearance and manner if they have not. They will not think less of you for a quiet reticence about yourself, but will esteem you more highly, concluding you have either "been away from home before," or are not possessed of sufficient vanity to believe your history must be as interesting to others as to yourself. No friends worth having will be gained by an easily-won confidence; they will accept your lemons, but give you to understand they have no use for the squeezed rinds. The most charming people one meets in society are those who never speak of themselves. Only venture upon topics relating to your personal concerns when you are with those who are true, trusted and interested friends, whose sympathy can help you, and whose experience can advise. You will avoid many unpleasant entanglements, not a few snubs, some undesirable friendships, and find yourself gaining self-reliance and strength daily, making yourself more worthy of the confidence of others. BEATRIX.

RELATIVE EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE SEXES.

Ah! ladies, am I to infer from your silence, and Bess' very brief answer to my conundrum, that our own faults are not as interesting topics for conversation as those of our brothers or husbands? Then let me hasten to assure you that I did not mean to insinuate that the sin of extravagance might possibly lie at the door of any of the HOUSEHOLD members, but that we should be generous, even with our advice, and who knows but a little timely sympathy might help some discouraged traveler.

My object in propounding the third conundrum was to see fair play, and give both sides of the question a hearing. Are the men so much more selfish and thoughtless than the women, after all? In the course of my experience and observation, which though not extensive, has not been very limited, I have seen a few men—and only a few—who kept themselves well supplied with tools for use on the farm, and were not willing to provide new conveniences for the house, or did not stop to think that they were needed. And I have known quite as many women who would spend money—when it could hardly be afforded—not only for conveniences, but in useless extravagances; and it is my opinion that, among farmers at least, the women spend more for ribbons than the men do. Oh! I don't mean that exactly; I meant to say that as a general thing, farmers do not spend as much money unnecessarily, (that is hardly the right word, but I haven't time to study my dictionary for a better one) as their wives do. I will except those who are the unfortunate wives of tobacco. Am tempted to stop right here, and deliver a free lecture on that subject.

I do not mean to say that women, as a class, are wasteful, or extravagant, but there are so many little things that are not really needed, but we want them, and they "don't cost much." Then such a

display of "lovely things," in the shop windows! I believe their owners do their very best to tempt us beyond our powers of resistance.

I believe almost any farmer would rather wear the old overcoat, that is beginning to look almost shabby, another winter, than do without that new labor-saving and time-saving machine; but ladies, would not we be willing to work a little harder for the sake of that new, stylish cloak which we so much admire; or a dress and hat that we have not worn until we imagine every one is getting tired of the monotony, even though they may be almost as "good as new yet." I wonder why it is public opinion seems to decree that a man may wear what he pleases, but a woman must be in the fashion!

When Mollie Moonshine understands these "dear creatures" better, she will know that when a man is reading a paper is the very time she must not ask him to get a pail of water. Take my advice, wait till he is in the back yard splitting wood, and see how quickly and cheerfully he will start to do your bidding.

Beatrix was right. I found to my sorrow that my plants liked tobacco no better than the rest of the family. I am making a fresh start this spring and hope for better success with my window garden next winter. S. J. B.

WHAT "STRIKES" MEAN TO THE WOMEN.

Labor troubles, exemplified in strikes and lockouts, have shook the industrial circles of our great cities to the centre within a few weeks. Thousands of men have quit work because employers would not accede to their demands for shorter hours and increased pay. Other thousands have been forced into inactivity by the action of those of their craft who chose to "strike" to bring their masters to terms; still other thousands have been prevented by threats from continuing work, or from filling the places vacated by the strikers. It seems to me none should dispute the right of the individual to cease to work for a man who pays him inadequately, or requires too many hours of labor; it appears as if a man has an equal right to sell his labor where he chooses in any legitimate business, or take the place of another who has "struck" if he is satisfied with the wages offered. Labor, in resisting the tyranny of Capital, has resigned itself to the grasp of quite as strong a tyrant in the guise of its organizations, who compel men to "turn out" who are satisfied with their condition, because of the discontent of others, and who order "boycotts," and dictate what make of clothing, shoes, carpets, they may or may not buy, and assume to regulate the brand of cigars and the brew of beer they may consume. Where is the laboring man who would permit his employer to dictate, or even advise him, in the least of these matters!

But my thoughts have dwelt less on the adjustment of the relations between employer and employe than on the re-

sults of this suspension of labor and consequent cessation of wages to the families—the wives and children of these idle men. The strikers themselves seem to make a tolerably interesting picnic of it; they keep their courage literally "at the sticking point" by their frequent meetings, where the most gifted speech-makers among them recite the story of their wrongs, and exhort them to "stand firm against the tyranny of their oppressors." Some of the strikers in this city were pictured as lying on the grass in the sunshine on several vacant lots, while the smoke from their pipes formed a blue haze above them; they afterward had a lunch of bread and cheese at the same place. But what were the women and children doing, since they have not the consolation of pipes, nor the stimulus of speeches?

The laboring man is not famous for having a surplus in the bank to tide him over a period of inactivity; generally he gauges the week's expenditures by its income, and finds the fit a close one. When Saturday night comes without the accustomed earnings, the outlook is gloomy indeed. The little store on hand is soon exhausted; credit is sought of the "butcher and baker and candlestick maker." Assurances that the "employers must soon give in" and all the talk to keep the courage up, will not fill the children's empty mouths. Money is often distributed among the families of the strikers, raised by assessments on their fellows in other towns who are fortunate enough to be at work, but among so many a scanty pittance only is each one's share. And then? The husband tramps the streets for something to do, an odd job of any kind that will bring him a quarter, or nurses his wrongs at a bee-cellar, according to his disposition. The wife pockets her pride and goes out washing or scrubbing, anything by which she can fight Hunger's grey wolf from the door, and the children run in the streets, neglected. If the strike is long continued, the landlord and grocer grow importunate or refuse further credit, and one by one the luxuries of the humble home are pawned or sold, then the necessities, till often the domestic comforts accumulated in several years are parted with in this time of pressing need. Whether Labor gains the point or Capital holds its iron grip, the laborer almost invariably goes back to his work again, in debt for rent and supplies, and holding sundry green tickets from the Knights of the Golden Balls, which represent his household comforts, and which he may be able to redeem, with closest economy.

The result of a strike does not cease with the renewal of labor, its depressing, disheartening influences extend over many succeeding months in the home. The advance of wages even if gained, very, very rarely suffices to offset the losses by cessation of wages during the strike, even if counted for weeks and months. Who then can blame a woman for her bitter tears and upbraidings when her husband announces a strike? It means poverty, harder toil, fewer com-

forts, no luxuries, the surrender of the few household treasures, and actual want and privation in many cases.

Remedy? There is but one, and that comes only with the millennium. It lies in a mutual recognition of rights by employer and employe, a recognition of common humanity between high and low, a just division of profits. It is very simple, yet the very hardest of all things to do, the actual, living practice of the Golden Rule and the "new commandment." It is something we need never hope or expect to see, in a selfish, grasping world, but till we do see it, Burns' lines are bitterly and eternally true: "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn."

A LITTLE LEISURE.

To work all day and be able to forget fatigue and gain physical repose through the agency of a happily diverted and developed mental activity is a very pleasant experience, and one which I am now enjoying for the first time in many years.

I look over the evening paper, make up my mind which place of profitable entertainment I will seek, and as the walk from our house to any of the churches or to the opera house is short and never "lonely and dark," am perfectly free to go alone if "Gentle" cannot go with me, and "True" is disinclined, for again our family proper is composed of a trio—"Gentle," "True," and I. Last Wednesday evening I went up to St. Paul's to hear Bishop Harris, of Detroit, preach a confirmation sermon, when a score or more of boys and girls were taken into full church membership. His text was "He setteth the solitary in families." And in his sermon he drew the lines so straight and kept all his ropes so "taut" as to admit no idea, sentiment or obligation to become a legalized agent in keeping the number of homes below the number of the marriageable unit—man and woman—which he denominates the basis of all law, order, government and social intelligent life. The sum total of strength, power and authority he relegated to the man; to the woman (after marriage) dignity, chastity, instinct, reverence and tenderness. The unmarried woman he passed by in silence, but not so with the bachelors. And no doubt many a one of "him" smiled grimly behind his moustache as the earnest Bishop said: "The man who remains unwed, unless compelled to do so by some insuperable obstacle, is guilty of a great crime." And no doubt the old maids in the audience drew a long breath as they mentally ejaculated: "For once the man is hit first," and as the event proved "last," also, in this case. But the next "compliment" that the Bishop paid to women, struck me as being not at all flattering to their powers of discernment, or more properly, to their instinct in regard to self-preservation. He said: "Every true, womanly woman will always find something to love and reverence in the most degraded husband." That this is more true than it ought to be, the most liberal

cannot deny. And yet, again, when we look beyond the actual, the external, and consider how deep and high is laid the foundation of the mystery of the love that can unite in an undissolvable bond the secret springs of the lives of one woman and one man, we are almost persuaded to withdraw our criticism.

I meant to have told you of three or four more "treats" that I have enjoyed within the last week, but have given so much space to this one, and have just begun what I would like to say of it, that I will only add I have listened to learned words and deep and earnest thoughts uttered by men who believe in Darwin's "evolution," and again by those who hold it in supreme contempt, by those who love "the people," and would fain see them enlightened, prosperous, peaceful and contented, and who proclaim that out of all this labor and capital warfare, Nihilism, Communism and general disjointedness of affairs is to be born "the good time coming;" by those who gravely and candidly admit that the condition that is to be if the momentum of anarchy is many times multiplied, is not one that can be foretold; and last, but not least, by those who confidently assert and statistically prove the assertion true, that the spirit of the Christian religion was never so actively alive nor its harvests so great in the world as they are to-day. Now, do not imagine that because each of these examples of eloquence of thought and of observant study has been in its turn a treat to me that I do not know my own mind, or that I say "amen" to every well conceived and earnestly advocated idea. Not at all. But what I think or believe is not perhaps of importance in such a great caravansary of ideas. But this I do see and am free to say: The great world moves majestically onward; her heart throbbing ever in unison with the steadily advancing thought of her unslumbering brain.

FLINT.

A LITTLE GIRL'S IDEAS.

I am glad Temperance has introduced the question about tobacco chewers; it is a question of importance, and one every young lady ought to think a good deal about. Is there anything so disagreeable as to have a man spitting on the floor and stove? If the young ladies do not want such a man around when they keep house, they ought to make a resolution and keep it too. A resolution something like this: "I will not go with any one who chews and smokes around the ladies or in the house." I think there would be fewer homes in which there is a cuspidor to clean. But they will not make such a resolution for fear of losing a beau. I am the same age as Temperance and feel very sorry for her. I know it must be very, very hard for her to lie or sit still all the time, for I hurt my leg once and had to keep still all one afternoon, and I thought I could not stand it. I was very much pleased when I read the article in the *HOUSEHOLD* about bedding. I think there is nothing a woman ought to think more about than bedding. Now why

will a woman persist in washing and covering and re-covering an old quilt till it is as stiff and heavy as a pancake without soda. Beatrix says they should be retired on a pension, and I say a pretty long one too. I should like to know if the red sugar commonly called sugar sand is poisonous. I have heard that it is, but would like to know for certain.

VIOLET.

OKEMOS.

[We would not recommend the use of red sugar sand unless in quite small quantities, and believe the green and yellow to be positively deleterious. The red and pink are usually colored with analine, which is not so bad, though by no means to be recommended.]

FOR THE GIRLS.

There is a great strife among society girls as to which shall give the most unique and original entertainment, and the craze for novelty extends to other circles as well. People want to be amused and entertained, and she who can find some new way of doing this is voted a genius until some one else's achievement overshadows hers. One of the very latest schemes for an evening's entertainment, which combines instruction with pleasure, is named a "fagot party." "Fagot gatherers" prepare the "fagots," each of which represents a collection of songs, recitations, readings, essays, extracts, all relating to the same topic, or having for a subject some author and his work. Each "fagot" is in charge of one person, whose duty it is to arrange for the material forming it, which he does by calling on his friends to contribute. It would not be in good taste, however, to call them the *sticks* which compose the fagot. Three, four or five of these "fagots" are arranged, according to their "size," which regulates the length of the programme, and between each is an interval devoted to sociability or music, as preferred.

"Apron parties" are a prevalent dissipation east, and are being "engrafted on our western civilization." They are somewhat on the plan of our old "necktie socials" in some cases; the young ladies provide the aprons, which are exactly alike, and each puts one on; the young men choose theirs as boys trade jack-knives, "on sight and unseen," as each is carefully wrapped in brown paper and secured with cord. A choice made, the young man dons his and proceeds to hunt up the lady who wears its counterpart, and by virtue of the discovery constitutes himself her cavalier for the evening. Another plan is to leave the bottoms of the men's aprons unhemmed, and offer a prize to the one who can hem his apron the most quickly and in the best style. The struggles of unaccustomed fingers with needle and thimble are provocative of much mirth to all but the helpless victims. Apron parties are sometimes gotten up in aid of churches or for charitable purposes. Then aprons of all styles and fashions are made and donated by the ladies, and sold by committees appointed for the purpose. There are the serviceable kitchen aprons

which "cover you all up," the ample white mull destined for wear over the best dress at home, and the dainty creations of lace and muslin be-ribboned and pocketed; aprons for little girls, pinafores, Mother Hubbards, aprons for school-girls and check blouse aprons for the small boys, with captivating pockets calculated to hold no end of boyish treasures. These are to be sold "on their merits," and are generally readily disposed of, the men buying for wives, mothers and sweet-hearts, the ladies suiting themselves.

And then, we have the very latest Boston entertainment, a "bean bag party," which is just the thing for "lots of fun" at parties given for girls of twelve and fifteen, who are not too old to enjoy a romp. An exchange tells exactly how these parties are conducted:

"Invitations are sent on little muslin bags, with a few beans in each, the time and place are written in gold letters on the muslin. In getting up the party it is necessary to have a board about three feet long and two feet wide, with a hole about six inches square, at a distance of nine inches from the top. This board must be placed against the side wall of the room in a slanting position. Each guest on arrival is presented with a fancy colored bean bag, made of bright canton flannel or cretonne. The game consists in throwing the bags through the hole from a distance of about twenty feet. Each player tries in turn to do this, and the one who counts the highest number of times after six rounds, claims a prize bag of the same color and kind as his own. In these prize bags all sorts of gifts may be secreted, and it is against the rule to open them until the playing is over. Then the company gather together around a table, and open the bags, and those who have drawn no prizes may challenge the winners, and so in single combat win away some of the prizes.

"A very novel way of serving refreshments at these parties is to have large paper bags, made fanciful by dainty devices on pretty paper, in which a number of small bags are placed holding cakes, crackers, cheese, olives, candy, etc. Great fun may be had by making a difference in the contents of the bags, one may find candied fruit, while another looks in vain for anything of the kind. Hot chocolate may be passed to each guest after the bags have been opened. Japanese napkins and a few flowers add greatly to the looks of the paper bags; these may be fastened on the outside, and may be removed and used at pleasure."

SCRAPS.

THE Richmond, Macomb County, *Review* says that at a recent examination of would be teachers held at that place, out of sixty applicants, only twenty received certificates. Grammar, geography and orthography were the rocks on which the unsuccessful were wrecked. Can there be a better index of the manner in which the primary branches are taught in our common schools than this statement? Here are three of the educational foundation stones so neglected that two-thirds of those under examination could not answer the necessary percentage of questions proposed as a test of their acquirements. Nothing is truer than that there is no royal road to learning. When we try to rear an educational fabric without a firm foundation on the first principles—the primary branches, it is like building

a grand marble edifice upon a brick basis, which will surely crumble beneath its weight. The purpose of our country schools is to give instruction in the elementary branches. Every district school ought to fit every willing, attentive pupil so that he may be prepared to pass the examination required to obtain a third-grade certificate; if it does not do this, it fails of its intent. But the idea obtains in most neighborhoods that "anybody" can teach a country school, where the pupils are few and young, and we see the result of "anybody's" training. "A stream cannot rise higher than its source." When salaries are adequate to permit really good teachers to devote themselves to our rural schools, we shall see better results. Generally speaking, the inefficiency of such schools lies at the door of those who would reap the greatest advantage from them if conducted as they should be, the farmers themselves.

AT once a result of and a reason for poor schools lies in the fact that just as soon as a prosperous farmer's children get old enough to be trusted away from home over night, they are sent to the nearest village to attend the "high school." The revenues of the latter are considerably increased by the tuition of "foreign scholars," as they are termed, and they are often dragged along in classes above their standing, to increase the popularity of the school. Naturally when a man sends his children away from home to school, he wants them to gain something they could not get at home, and this is quite legitimate. The trouble is they should not be sent away until they have learned all that a good district school can teach them. But they are thus sent away, by their absence the home school dwindles to ignoble proportions, and the great aim of the board comes to be to make the public money pay the bills and avoid a school-tax. For men are like sheep; when one jumps the rest usually follow. If one man sends his children away to school, his neighbors are moved to do likewise, just to show him he is not the only man in town who can afford to educate his family. It seems to me that every reflective father might see the advantage to be derived from a good home school, and endeavor to build it up, if for no other reason than to avoid sending his children away from home influences at an age when they most need judicious care and restraint. It is only too true that in many cases the educational good gained from the village school is more than balanced by the influences of evil associates; many a parent can speak feelingly on this subject.

MANY of the old men who now call themselves pioneers, and whose names in their manhood were synonyms for strength, integrity, sound sense and good judgment, received their only education at the district school of the pioneer settlement, at the hands of the school-master of the period, who ruled by the rod and the strength of his good right arm, rather than the "moral suasion" of

a later day. The rugged life and the rough discipline developed character; moreover those old pedagogues, with all their failings compared with our present elaborate system, were students of humanity, and with keen eyes discerned the individual idiosyncrasies of their pupils, repressed or brought out as necessary, developed latent talent by their rude methods, and sent their pupils into the world, ignorant of Greek and Latin probably, but educated because disciplined by the educating process. Pupils were required to "work out their own salvation" then; there were fewer helps and consequently harder study. Nowadays, what is taught is so simplified and "diluted," if the expression is allowable, that education seems a sort of "absorption by contact without volition." In our great graded schools, made necessary perhaps by the increasing population, and the demands of the times for a more voluminous education, there can be little or no attention paid to the individual bent of the pupils. A certain amount of work is laid out for each class, and this must be accomplished by all, or they fail to "pass." But even a plant has its whims and fancies; it will grow in some places and will not in others; it has a taste in the matter of fertilizers, and pouts about its supply of water. And when we pet and coax it, and find out its notions and humor them, we get the most sweetness and bloom. And children are like plants, they need to be nipped a little here and pruned a bit there, forced forward in this line, held back in that, educationally, as well as morally. And how are you going to do this in a great school, which resembles nothing so much as a farmer's wool-box, into which he puts the fleeces from his flock, and from which they emerge all pressed and tied exactly alike, and differing only in the particulars of weight and quality? There is no place where an earnest teacher can do such good work as in our district schools, where many who will one day figure largely in life receive their first educational impulses, as witness the reverence and esteem with which the patriarch speaks of the pioneer school-masters. Then, with a bend in the direction of natural and inherited tastes, supplemented by special development in special schools, we shall have men and women who have not frittered away their time learning the *omnium gatherum* of the arts and sciences.

BEATRIX.

A YOUNG lady who occasionally "drops into literature" long enough to write a few words for the *HOUSEHOLD*, says: "I want to express my thanks for the many good suggestions I find in the *HOUSEHOLD* about the fashions; what to wear and how to wear it, as it were. I presume in the old days of rural life you have appreciated the fact that fashion books are no use in the country. What do we care for a striped velvet train over a pale blue petticoat trimmed and embroidered with seed pearls? What use can we make of the knowledge that Worth is making up dinner dresses in a certain style; or that party bags are now made of satin instead of velvet? But the information given in that blessed little paper is all that can be desired; and I dare say more than one 'dowdy country girl' appreciates the fact."