

MICHIGAN FARMER AND STATE JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE.

DETROIT, JAN. 14, 1893.

THE HOUSEHOLD---Supplement.

PATIENCE.

Like a blind spinner in the sun,
I tread my days;
I know that all the threads will run
Appointed ways:
I know each day will bring its task,
And being blind, no more I ask.

I know not why, but I am sure
That tint and place,
In some great fabric to endure
Past time and race
My threads will have: so from the first,
Though blind, I never felt accurst.

—Helen Hunt.

Art thou alone, and does thy soul complain
It lives in vain?
Not vainly does he live who can endure.
O be thou sure,
That he who hopes and suffers here, can earn
A sure return.

STORIES AS A MODE OF THINKING.

It was my good fortune to listen to a series of lectures delivered by Prof. R. G. Moulton, professor of English Literature at the University of Chicago, before the University Extension class in this city just prior to the holidays, on "Stories as a Mode of Thinking." While it is impossible to synopsise such a series (though the lectures were in themselves outlines of themes opening new worlds of thought and study for the reader, as the artist's sketches afield are but the beginnings of pictures to be elaborated into finished work later on) there were some thoughts so excellent that I am sure many HOUSEHOLD readers will enjoy them, even in the second telling. I have therefore written out what I remember of the lecture which treated more particularly of the uses and abuses of fiction, and will append a *resume* of the second lecture on "Speculation about Fairies," in which the lecturer took the White Lady of Scott's Monastery as illustration.

A great many people, said Professor Moulton, deprecate fiction. Many who deprecate it in this age would have tabooed it in the last. But if we deprecate or taboo it, we deprive ourselves of the efforts of some of the finest minds of the world. The three greatest poets of our age, Browning, Tennyson and William Morris, have chosen fiction as a mode of expression; so also those other three great minds, George Eliot, Thackeray and Dickens. And I confess myself pleased that in the order of naming this illustrious trio, Prof.

Moulton named my own favorite Thackeray, before Dickens, who always has seemed the most popular, though I think Thackeray (whose delicate humor, he said, is akin to that of Plato) is becoming better known and appreciated more highly in consequence, Plato, whom we have always regarded as the great philosopher, wrote entirely in fiction; his dialogues, in which he puts words and arguments upon the lips of the great men of his own and the previous age, are purely fictitious. One of the oldest books extant, which has come down to us through centuries, *Æsop's fables*, is a collection of incidents whose very fictitiousness made them survive the ages. And our Lord chose also a form of fiction in which to instruct his disciples—"And without a parable spake he not unto them." And what is a parable but a fiction?

Professor Moulton said the usual advice to young people runs something like this: "You have not much time for reading and should make the best use of what you have. Let me advise you to let fiction alone and confine yourself to that class of reading which, dealing with facts, is of an improving character." He would give a diametrically opposite impulse, and would say: "You have not much time; improve it by becoming acquainted with the broad world of fiction, and leave to those who have leisure for its study, the narrower circle of facts."

Just here it occurs to me that this advice applies with equal force to the reading of history, which is always advised as highly instructive. Certainly a general knowledge of historical facts is valuable; and a thorough knowledge of the conditions and circumstances that make history is a life study. But does not the mere reading of ordinary historical details laden the memory with barren facts of no particular moment? I find even so popular and oft commended record as Guizot's *History of France* a chronicle of wars, insurrections, murders, plots and counter-plots, which I would not place in the hands of a young person half as quickly as I would a good story.

The lecturer went on to say that fiction contains more truth than facts, a seeming paradox he proved in this way: Biography is conceded to be a very instructive form of fact. The biography of any noted man gives us not only the

vital facts of his career, the sources of inspiration of his genius, the incidents which guided his life and which are interesting and valuable, but also a host of irrelevant facts which make up nine-tenths of the individual's history. To get this one-tenth that is profitable, we must read the nine-tenths of irrelevancy with which it is diluted. In fiction, all these extraneous matters, all that is foreign to the purpose of the story, is left out, and only those things told us which go to work out the design.

The great objection to fiction in most minds is that it is "made up." We are excited about imaginary wrongs and griefs. Why allow our emotions to be played upon by a "made up" tale? But the "made up" may be an epitome of human life gathered from many sources and harmonized into the portrayal of a great principle or a great truth. The experiments of scientists are "made up" in that they do not represent the elements, the acids and the gases, in the form in which they occur in nature. Yet we do not discredit them on that account; in fact science has secured its greatest impetus from experimentation; it is thus facts are established. And fiction is experiments with human lives. Literature has been defined as the science of life; and fiction is the experimental side of that science. In fact, fiction is the type of humanity, while biography is the fact of the individual.

Professor Moulton made a wide distinction between novel-reading and the study of fiction. Of the former, he had no good word to say; of the latter, it was in effect the placing ourselves in sympathy and harmony with the best minds of the literary world. And what do you think he made the test between the novel-reader and the student of fiction? The number of times you can read a book. The novel-reader reads once and is done. If the book is mentioned he says, "Oh, I've read that!" The student of fiction reads twice, thrice, six, eight times or more. One reads for passing amusement, the other for the art of the story. And the art divides itself into three lines, the background, dramatic or otherwise; the character, and the action. The plot is the application of artistic handling to the sequence of events; the personages and the action may be embodiments of ideas and speculations; it is the student's business to

discover these; thus we see how story embodies and provokes thought on important subjects. He alluded very amusingly to those who read only for the plot, consulting the last chapter in advance to find out "how it ends;" and spoke of our idea of the word plot as meaning a mystery, instancing Collins as an example of the plot-novel writer, where the mystery is well maintained through three volumes; and defined plot as the bringing design out of the chaos of incident.

The lecturer called attention to the decay of reading in the present age. People read the newspapers, the magazines, the reviews; they scan the columns of the papers up and down, reading the head-lines and liking best the papers that give the most news in such form, skimming through them and looking for the next new event. Even an editor would be surprised to know that his paper was read seriously—and remembered. And this habit of skimming is destructive of the reading habit, that is, reading for the beauty and style—the art—of the author and for the true significance of what he has written, so that the real charm of books is lost upon us and we read only for the narrative.

And no teacher ever spoke more truly. The very abundance of reading matter in this age is destroying the habit of reading and making our heads like sieves, into which a vast amount is poured, only to run out or be crowded out by more, and still more.

BEATRIX.

A WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE.

I want to tell the discouraged ones like A. G. S. some of my experience. At the age of seventeen I went to live not only with my mother-in-law but all the sisters, brothers, cousins, neighbors and all that pertained unto my mother-in-law. I felt like Mr. Macawber, "the 'eye of the world was upon me.'" I had not learned that excellent practice of keeping my lips shut close, so I used to have lots of sympathy and many confidential friends. I know now that many were lying to me and the rest were awfully tired of me, but my heart ached just as A. G. S.'s does and I am so sorry for her. But the weak are always with us just like the poor, and just think what a deprivation it is never to be able to listen to the charming chat when the family gather round the fireside and the new magazine is cut, and never speak to any one except with so much trouble! Perhaps that brother-in-law would like to talk over his troubles just as we do, and how long the nights are to one all drawn out of shape and suffering with that dreadful paralysis. Suppose it had been one of those bright children who are in school how you would shrink if you felt the chill drawing near your heart and had to leave one of them to the mercy of the world. Would 't a mother like to know that her stalwart son would keep

his vow when he says, "Do not fear, mother, I will care for him?" Perhaps it was so with A. G. S.'s husband, and he feels terribly to think she has so great a care, and yet does not say anything about it because he is sensitive. There are some things we do not like to talk about even to our best friends. A. G. S. says this cripple cares so much about eating. Doesn't she know that about three-fourths of this world care for but little else, and the others are almost killing themselves to outdo each other in cookery? I would like to be able to make a feast once a year for just such lame, halt and blind, for you see the strong ones are just eating every day.

The Spartans used to take all their boys who were not likely to make good feeders and fighters and expose them on Mount Taygetus. When they did not die of exposure they were devoured by wolves. The girls were served in the same manner if they were not strong enough for mothers, but that practice is not consistent with our religion and we must take care of the weak.

To read sometimes about the mothers-in-law we might anticipate a humane law sometime that would work like this: After a woman had got the last child cared for (first think of doing the clothing, cooking and spanking for a family of ten!) there would be an examiner appointed to see if she was old enough to give place to the daughter-in-law. If so she must be humanely and quietly put to death! We hear but little said about the father-in-law, so we are to suppose he survives. What this world needs to-day is evening up, so that if one cannot do fancy work and have things so refined, her home can be filled with choicest guests, such as the charming Dickens, the tender Whittier, and scores of great historians I could name. It is coming, in the great eagerness you see in people to learn something to-day which will make them better, so that if a man lose his life in this world he is only finding his true life after all.

I expected to finish my education even if I was married. I had just begun teaching and to excel in music, which I loved. I was the mother of three children before I was twenty-one; five more have been added. I live on a large farm where almost everything is done, have had almost all kinds of help, and used to think I should die under so much care, but I am alive. So is my mother-in-law, hale and hearty at eighty-four. I have been disappointed too. You see Mary was younger than I, yet so much comfort for she was all I had ever hoped to be; and she used to read to me when I was tired, play and sing for me; a poem was so much sweeter when shared with her, and I pray that A. G. S. will never feel as I did when I knew that my darling was dead. How small all the petty things looked when I

knew my child could never speak to me again! But I go often to a sacred spot, and take a long curl of soft brown hair from among my treasures, and then it seems even death is a good; it weeds from our hearts selfishness and sin; it makes us love nature better; everything beautiful seems connected with even our loss, and you know the greatest thing in the world is love.

CECIL.

CLUBS.

It is a long time since I have written to the HOUSEHOLD, not from any lack of interest, but perhaps the matter of clubs has as much to do with it as anything. Counting up on my fingers I find that I must plead guilty to a membership in nine organizations. There is not one to spare, but the one known as the Monday Club stands among those in which I am most interested. The studies for this year are Egyptian history—the beginning of all history—and one must indeed study it to understand the all-absorbing interest that may be awakened.

The Monday Club is not a youthful organization. Ten or twelve years ago it was formed as a Chautauqua Circle. After completing the course the members studied Shakespeare for a few years; then they were known as Tourists, spending one whole winter in London. Last year it was the Emerson Club, but now a name has been selected that signifies nothing but the time of meeting and that will abide whatever studies are pursued. The programmes are prepared and topics divided for twenty-five meetings, and as one custom of former years remains, that is to use the last meeting of each month for "current events," the programmes will last the eight months of the club year.

These current event evenings prove very instructive, for then every member has a part and they bring the latest discoveries and appliances of science and the choicest literature as their themes, and these are interspersed with choice music.

For the regular work there are no text books and when a subject is assigned the members may search where they choose, but no one ever fails, and the information gained on some subjects is surprising. Rawlinson's Ancient Egypt is good authority, then we search the Encyclopædia Britannica, Berkley's "Pharaohs," the "Egyptian Princess;" we sail with Miss Edwards in the Philæ "One Thousand Miles up the Nile," we study "Court Life" with Butler and even read the "Pillar of Fire" and every book we may find that gives us knowledge of Egyptian history, literature and art. [Of course the Monday Club has not overlooked Georg Ebers "Uarda" and the "Bride of the Nile." —ED.]

The President appoints a leader for each evening who gives out the topic, and as there are from

twenty-five to thirty ladies and but five or six topics for an evening, the work is not heavy. Each takes her choice in the matter of delivery. Some prefer carefully written papers, but many familiarize the subject and relate the substance in their own language. We meet at the homes of the members and each reader or speaker in turn takes her place in the space between the double parlors so that all hear and see. We are arranging to have some public lectures on the subject by foreign talent, and altogether the course is proving most delightful. In glancing over the programme the "hard names" seemed appalling, but after a few evenings our tongues seemed to adapt themselves to the pronunciations so easily that we have no farther trouble.

One wise arrangement seems to prevail by common consent and that is that not even "a cup of cold water" is offered to a guest. One club of which I was a member committed suicide by serving refreshments. At first it was only bonbons, then one or two kinds of fruit, but the spirit of rivalry was kindled and every evening found the refreshments more elaborately served until it became too burdensome, and the society died of gastronomy.

As a finale for the season we shall probably go away to Nettleton's Island or some other romantic spot, as heretofore, for a picnic; or invite our husbands to a grand banquet, but for the present we will attend strictly to business and try to fill our heads instead of our stomachs.

A few days ago a neighbor said: "Romeo is so quiet I really get lonesome here," and I thought—with good reason—but replied that I had not found it so; in fact I lived "in a perfect whirl." There are five good, well-equipped churches here, but I never saw her go to one of them for service, and she does not know how a Sunday school is managed. She has no ticket for the lecture course and belongs to no society that helps others or helps herself; she does not care to read anything more than the daily papers and has not a child, a bird, a cat or even a plant because they might "make dirt." Her husband spends most of his time down town, and she spends her's brushing imaginary dust from her fine furniture. Who wouldn't be lonely?

ROMEO.

EL. SEE.

A SADDENED LIFE.

I suppose Theopolus thinks Little Nan a model wife because she builds the fires these cold mornings. No doubt she is, but it seems to me that any husband who loves his wife would himself attend to that duty. Mine always does, but I have a sick baby who often keeps me awake in the night. My baby was taken sick when but three months old; he was two and a half years old before he sat alone, over three years before he

could creep; and is now four years and three months old and does not walk; his teeth are decayed and gone, and he is all the care a baby would be and more, for he is so heavy I can hardly lift him.

We were invited to a Christmas dinner, and though it was quite an effort to go so far—twelve miles—we finally decided we would go. I thought I would try to leave care and trouble behind; but on entering the dining-room I saw a table set for the children. When they were all seated I saw a vacant chair; I looked round for my little boy and saw he was still in the sitting-room. I went for him, and when I saw those a year or more younger than he who were able to feed themselves, I felt hard and bitter for a moment. I rose from that Christmas dinner and resolutely put my trouble under my feet. I was as gay as any of the guests; I played and sang and we all sang together, but the reaction came the next day, and I was glad to go home. I do not notice how different my boy is from other children till I see him among them, and then I see all my pleasure has been mixed with pain, and I feel I have been sorely afflicted. Sometimes I resent it, try to be firm and bear it with cold, calm indifference; sometimes I am hard and cynical; then again with God's help I try to endure it patiently, and feel that He knows best. And there is always hope. What an inspiring word! It holds more encouragement than any other word in our language, and I often think that were it not for hope, many overburdened hearts would break.

A. G. S. and Honey Bee have my deepest sympathy, as do all who are in trouble. I fear I should not be willing to take A. G. S.'s burden, but she may be glad that it is not one of her own dear ones who is thus afflicted. I too have more than once had my heart set on a new dress and had to do without it; though I should not care to be a gay butterfly of fashion, I should like to have plenty of calico dresses that I might always present a neat and respectable appearance and not be ashamed if a neighbor calls unexpectedly. There is one bright spot ahead—the hope of a new house in the spring, and I am enjoying the anticipation.

MRS. A. DO.

THE FASHIONS.

"Coming events cast their shadows before." Hence I make no apology for introducing the subject of fashions in mid-winter, when we are glad to feel "our warfare is accomplished" for three months to come so far as dressmakers and milliners are concerned. But the subject of fashions is always interesting; there is always a dress for some special occasion on one's mind, or the making over of an old one is a rock ahead; and too, mid-winter models are in a way "feelers" put out by the modistes to test the preferences of their patrons and get an inkling of what it will be safe to offer for spring styles.

You have all, I dare say, read about the Empire dresses, seen the pictures of the short-waisted, puff-sleeved, low-throated gowns and despairingly sighed, saying, "Must we come to this!" Well, no; at least not yet. Young ladies and young matrons adopt the Empire styles for evening and party wear in town, having them made in crepe, China silk, and rich brocade and velvet, so that a swell ball-room looks a little as we fancy Josephine's court at the Tuilleries may have appeared, but for ordinary wear for every day people, waists are of their usual length, the bell skirt stays by us, and so does the military collar. A concession to Empire styles is often seen, however, in the very wide Empire belt which gives—not a short-waisted effect but a short-waisted idea, which is better. A breadth of soft silk or wide peau de soie ribbon is allowed to assume soft, irregular folds, around the waist, coming up almost to the bust, ending in a sash bow and ends at the back or fastening under a square bow without ends at the left in the front. Surplice folds, bretelles or soft puffs compose the upper part of the corsage, carrying out the Empire idea. On young, trim figures the result is quaintly pretty. The elbow puff has been shortened till it now comes midway the upper arm; or the *gigot* or mutton-leg sleeves are made very, very full at the top and close-fitting from wrist above the elbow.

To remodel an old dress is not now a difficult task. Either velvet and silk are stylishly used in combination with wool goods. You have, say, a blue camel's hair gown you wish to renew. You will buy plaid silk in which blue of the tint of your material predominates. Of this you will make the puffs on the sleeves, the wide wrinkled belt, the stock collar described in the HOUSEHOLD last fall—which is a bias six inch wide piece of silk laid softly on the usual high collar—and if you choose, a very narrow ruffle of the plaid silk to head a ruffle of the goods on the skirt. Or you may have a loose vest of the silk under jacket fronts, using it also for sleeve puffs and collar. Velvet may be employed, if you prefer, making collar, puffs, and wide belt of it, and putting three or five narrow bands around the skirt. The lower part of the sleeves may be velvet and the puffs of the wool goods.

As if our woes were to be multiplied, we are threatened with a revival of 1830 styles. Does any body remember what women wore then? Who has an old fashion book that we may know what we are coming to? Poke bonnets, for one thing, caverns of straw lined with tinted silks and adorned with great ostrich feathers and immense bows.

The new skirts have gored front and sides and very full backs pleated to spread like a half opened fan, so hung that it projects out from the heels instead of falling in a horizontal line.

To get this effect, the back breadths are usually half-lined with crinoline. I am afraid the narrow foot trimmings which were such artistic borders are to be abandoned in favor of very much wider ruffles or ruches, some of which are half a yard or more deep. But these are only "indications," it's to be hoped they will not be received with favor.

Newcomb & Endicott put a consignment of new challis on sale the second day of the new year. Rather "rushing the season," to be sure, but they were so pretty it was pleasant to look at them. Challis lend themselves admirably to flower patterns, they are so soft and pliable, so the patterns are nearly all in flower designs, bouquets of two or three sprays, Dresden designs of scattered sprigs; and many have the satin stripes introduced last year as a novelty. These sell at 85 cents; the plain at 60 and 55 cents. One especially pretty piece had a ground of apple green, sprinkled with little bouquets in which appeared the palest tint of pink, with a lighter green and some white. It was very pretty. Made one think of spring.

BEATRIX.

KEEP OUT OF DEBT.

Josh Billings says: "Never run into debt, not if you can find anything else to run into."

I think this would be a good motto to frame and hang in a conspicuous place in the kitchen (for those who are inclined to fall into debt), and see if we cannot, in the year just opening, economize in household expenses.

There is plenty for one to come in contact with without running into debt. It is, however, in some cases, an unpleasant necessity, but very unwise to make a regular practice of "charging it," without thinking of "pay-day," which, when it comes, brings bills always surprisingly large.

On every hand we see people living on credit, putting off the day of reckoning, and when that day draws near they have to make a desperate effort either by borrowing or begging to scrape the money together; and then struggle on in the same routine; "with the canker of care eating at their hearts, to the inevitable goal of bankruptcy."

If people would only get a "move on" at the beginning instead of the end, how much misery they would save themselves!

I have a perfect horror of debt, and shun it as I would a pestilence.

When you are free from debt there is a nourishing sweetness in cold water; a toothsome in a bread crust; "Be sure of it, he who dines out of debt, though his meal be a biscuit and an onion, dines in 'the Apollo.'"

There is no necessity for running "store accounts." Pay as you go. I know people who live on what they expect to earn next month, their pocket-

book is always empty, they are always in debt; there's the grocer's bill, meat bill, rent to pay and nothing to wear; isn't this enough to take the bloom from the cheek, and peace from the pillow?

One feels so free and independent when out of debt; what matter should there be a rent in your garment, a patch on your coat, or a hole in your hat, as long as there is money to invest in new. How much worse off you would be if you hadn't the receipt for these in your pocket, and as long as the latter is in your possession you can face any man, and not hear, on the contrary "that still small voice" whispering, "I owe that man," and feel like a convict guilty of—debt.

We are on the entrance of a new year, and a good time to turn over a new leaf. Do away with the account system and pay as you go. Take out your pocket-book, consider attentively the usefulness of your purchase, and in many cases articles you really thought necessary when you had things "charged," now that you pay "spot cash" you find you can very comfortably get along without.

LITTLE NAN.

Mt. CLEMENS.

RELIGIOUS APHORISMS.

Not for a long time have we come upon such pithy, to-the-point, witty and *apropos* sayings as were embodied by Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, of the Fort St. Presbyterian Church in this city, in his address on the occasion of the installation of the new minister of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, also in this city. Here are a few of them:

"Pew rents do not have summer vacations."

"Salvation is free, but the Gospel costs money."

"Your minister is not Paul, but then Westminster church is not the Sanhedrim."

"If the church is the army of the Lord the trustees run the commissary department."

"Sunday sickness is healed only by the unction from the Holy One."

"Children cry for sweets when they may need oil or the slipper—the same is a parable."

"A congregation as well as an individual may have the dyspepsia."

"The end of a sermon is only its beginning."

"Perfection is never in the pulpit, and it is seldom in the pews."

"The congregation is often tried with the pastor. The pastor is often tried with the congregation. And these two are equal."

"Harvest does not come every two months."

"There are some things which even the young people do not know."

"When the sons of God come together Satan always has a pew in the middle aisle."

"The front seat is strongly built and is not infected."

"The patron saint of church collections is St. Nickel-us."

"The benediction is not an official order for overcoats."

"The rusty lock creaks loudest, and the do-nothings make the most noise in the church."

"The croaker and the contentious one we may endure, but the whispering woman in man's clothes who can stand?"

"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but it is the reproach of His people that they wash their linen upon the house-tops."

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but that is no reason for sharpening the tongue whenever the pastor appears."

HONESTY writes: "I have been wondering whether Theopolus really sighs for 'the good old days,' as he calls them, or is simply trying to get up an argument? I, at least, am thankful that we do not have to dip candles and spin wool and flax as our grandmothers did; and in my thirty-eight years of housekeeping have found I have plenty to do with things as they are in modern times. As for building the fires—well, if the wife always wore the trowsers and carried the purse perhaps she might be persuaded to build the fires, but as it has never been my lot to wear the first or even know the contents of the latter, I shall not decide the question. One thing I do know, and that is that many a man makes his wife a beggar and a thief. You may ask how, and perhaps I may come again and tell you."

Useful Recipes.

POTATO BALL YEAST.—To one cupful of mashed potatoes add two tablespoonfuls of sugar and one of salt, one yeast cake soaked in just enough water to soften, and mix well. Set away until the day before you wish to bake, then at noon take another cupful of mashed potatoes, add the same amount of salt and sugar, but not the yeast cake, and mix well with the first cupful you made. Let it rise until night, and put one cupful in the sponge, saving the other cupful for the next time. The sponge must be quite thick; keep in a cool place in summer and warm in winter. Mix the bread rather hard.

BAKED SIFTED POTATO.—A nice way to warm over mashed potato is to press it through a "potato sifter," this leaves it very light. It is well to grease the pan or baking-dish, then sift the potato directly into it. Lay bits of butter on top and bake to a delicate brown. It makes a pretty dish for lunch or breakfast.

SPICED LAMB.—For a dainty dish of cold meat, boil a leg of lamb in water enough to cover, to which add a handful of cloves and whole allspice and a stick or two of cinnamon. Let it stand in the water in which it was boiled to become cold. Slice very thin. Beef can be cooked in the same style.