

# EDITOR'S DRAWER

## In the Country

BY HAYDEN CARRUTH

WHEN, after ten years' exhortation, I induced my friend, Chester Kent, to decide to move to the country. I felt much gratified. We are old school-mates, and our wives are devoted to each other. I had hoped the Kents would come to Jersey, where we live, but they decided, so Chet informed me as we chanced to meet one day in an elevated train, on Westchester County. I told him if he needed any advice about rural matters that he must not hesitate to ask questions. My last charge to him as we parted was to write often. He said he would. He did.

I

*Wednesday.*

MY DEAR WILL.—We're here at last, and though we're not much settled yet, I'm going to keep my promise to write. In fact, it is no more than your due, old fellow. We're delighted with the place and feel that we're going to be very happy here, and to you we owe all the thanks for getting out of that horrible flat and into the beautiful country. The house, we think, we shall like very much after we get a little acquainted with it. True, it seems to me I could have made it a bit more convenient if I had had the planning of it, but this may be only professional jealousy. But I must believe that you'll agree with me that the architect's reason for placing the parlor between the kitchen and the dining-room is somewhat mysterious. There is a beautiful fireplace in the room which we shall use for a library, which is just the other side of the kitchen, and convenient to the well, clothes-lines, grindstone, leach, and smoke-house. We think a great deal of this last named—that is, Laura does. You know she always rather objected to my smoking all over the house, and she says I'm to put a window in the smoke-house and use it for a smoking-room, since we sha'n't have any hams to smoke till next fall. Perhaps even then, by using mild tobacco and a cob pipe, I can still use it, and smoke the hams and bacon beautifully at the same time I do myself. Of course I shall get a flock of pigs.

The view from the veranda is delightful. Woods and hills and a valley stretching away to the south. There is a quiet country road winding away down to the village, and a rather large open field in front of the house. I've not yet been able to explore the

neighborhood much, owing to an awkward little accident when we first arrived, by which I hurt my ankle. You see, it's a Colonial house, and quite unspoiled by modern repairs, though it *was* touched up slightly during Washington's first term. But you scarcely notice this, so it remains a splendid example of the pure Colonial. As I walked into the parlor the first morning the end of one of the floor boards went down with me and I sank half-way into the cellar. You know what an efficient woman Laura is. Well, she seized the other end of the board, which had gone *up*, and pulled it down and stepped on it. Unfortunately, she had the long end, and *she* now went down and *I* up. We both kept our balance admirably, and had a pretty little game of seesaw. Finally we both jumped off, and she escaped unhurt, while the board went down endwise into the eighteenth-century depths below. I expect to be well in a day or two.

We've already got a flock of chickens—quite a large flock for an amateur, I fear. You see, three farmers came, each with a wagon-load of fowls, and I told one of them that I would take his, they being white, and would therefore be decorative on the green grass; but there was a misunderstanding somehow, and the men all dumped their birds out by the barn, and they got hopelessly mixed up, so I had to take them all. I think there's about one hundred and ten of them, though they ran about a good deal when I counted them, and some of them had their heads down fighting rather ferociously. We expect quantities of eggs, as the hens are all said to lay like herrings.

I forgot to tell you the other day that I have a commission to plan twenty cottages at Hillkill-on-Hudson, and that I shall do most of the work at home, so as to get all the country possible. I can't hope to see you in the city much this summer, but you and Henrietta must come up when we get settled. I have sent out a general alarm that I want to buy a cow. I hear that cows are very scarce, and I may not be able to get one, but shall do my best. Have also ordered some wood, and shall try the splendid old fireplace to-morrow if it's chilly, as it bids fair to be. Got three eggs to-day.

Write to me and give me any advice which you think I may need. I realize that I don't know everything about country life. Laura sends love to Henrietta, and joins me in

hoping that you will both come up to see us after we get things running smoothly.

Ever yours,  
CHESTER.

## II

*Friday.*

MY DEAR BOY.—That old Colonial fireplace worked charmingly, only we in our benighted twentieth-century ignorance didn't know how to dispose ourselves. You see, the chimney is extraordinarily large, and Laura and I could easily have got up in it and sat in a hammock or something, where I am sure we should have been warm and comfortable, and quite free from smoke. But we were so inexperienced as to stay in the room, where the smoke naturally came on its way to the windows. It was quite absurd of us, and we shall try the fireplace again when we get over coughing.

I find I am misinformed concerning the scarcity of cows. Yesterday morning I was awakened by hollow sounds, and on rising and looking out found no less than twelve men in the square in front, each holding a cow by a bit of rope. Up the road I saw a cloud of dust approaching, which later revealed a man on horseback driving a bevy of eight cows, three of them accompanied by small calves. This man's idea was to bring all he had and let me take my choice. I went out, but each man spoke so highly of his animal that I found it difficult to make a selection. The arrival of others only added to my perplexity. Finally Laura came out and settled the matter very cleverly, I thought. You know how artistic she is (she studied at the League, you remember), and she instantly said that she wouldn't tolerate a cow about the place which didn't have a crumpled horn. So I sent them all off, and waved back those that were looming up in the distance, though the man with the regiment grumbled a good deal, saying that he had come ten miles, and that it was too far for a calf in arms to walk, anyhow, and that he'd come mainly as an accommodation to me, hearing as how I wanted to get hold of a good cow, and cows being so tarnal skeerce. I finally gave him a dollar for his time. The men all said they would look up crumpled-horn cows, though they agreed in doubting if there was one in the county.

I'm glad you told me that I ought to get more than three eggs a day from a hundred hens. I knew we needed more eggs, but I thought probably I ought to get more hens. I've no doubt they'll do better when they are settled. They cackle a great deal, which shows that their minds at least are on egg production. Your suggestion of china nest-eggs seems good, and I have ordered three dozen. One nest is undeveloped property, as a large terra-cotta-colored hen stays on it all the time and growls if I approach her. She may be a regular trust, and have any number of eggs under her. If you know any legal way to oust her I wish you'd tell me of it.

We rather looked for a crumpled-horn cow this morning, but none came. I'm half

afraid we made a mistake in not taking a plain animal. Do you know any humane way to crumple a cow's horn? The only man who came this morning was one with a dog. Said he heard I wanted to buy a dog. I said, No, it was a cow I wanted. Yes, yes, he said, so he heard—good dog—glad I liked it. It finally developed that he was deaf as a post, seventy-six years old, and that he'd walked all the way from Stamford, Connecticut, chiefly as an act of kindness to a new-comer; so I took the beast. Not pure bred, I fear, but decorative. We expected to have to advertise in the village paper for a cat, but somebody left a bagful of kittens on our veranda night before last, and two bagfuls last night, so we'll have plenty when they grow up. Perhaps the owners lost them, and Laura thinks I ought to advertise them as estrays. Are kittens considered valuable chattels in the country? I hope that they are not taxed if these all stay.

Your suggestion that there was probably a board over the top of the chimney was good. There was. Poked it off with a fish-pole, and shall try another fire to-morrow. Three eggs yesterday, two to-day. One of the men I got the chickens from tells me they are moulting. Says that after a while they will "lay like fury." Laura boiled nest-eggs this morning by mistake. I'm afraid those nest-eggs do more harm than good. The hens go and look in the nests and then turn around and cackle. They think it fools me, but it doesn't. When are you coming up? Ever yours, CHESTER.

## III

*Tuesday.*

DEAR WILL.—I'm glad for the sake of appearances that that board is off the chimney, but it doesn't draw any better. This time the smoke wouldn't even go out the windows, but just wandered about the house and settled on things. Some of it actually went down cellar. The kittens all set up a terrible sneezing, and the dog (we have named him Rip Van Winkle) jumped through a window-pane. The smoke was so thick that I couldn't see how Laura got out, but I think she followed Rip's example. There were two panes broken, anyhow. But it's had one good effect—Laura doesn't say anything more about *my* smoking in the house.

I wasn't going to tell you the sequel of this, not wanting to worry you and Henrietta, but I might as well, because you'll have to know it some time. The smoke was so bad, and my efforts to smother the fire with an armful of rhubarb leaves were so unsuccessful, that Laura and I struck out for the woods and went flower-hunting and bird's-nesting for a couple of hours. A passerby thought the house was on fire, and ran to the village and gave the alarm.

Unfortunately there's a fire company with a new engine (or, rather, an old one which they have just got, with brakes which go up and down—genuine old Harry Howard machine), and they came out pell-mell and dropped their hose down the well and

squirted absolute tons of water into the upper windows, while volunteers lugged out the furniture. You can imagine how gently they handled it, and how good it was for the things, especially the books and pictures, and my papers and plans. There was one ray of light, however—Rip stood by the family, and bit the foreman of the engine company and two of the volunteers. Good doggie. I had to pay damages, of course, but I didn't think them excessive. You see it will take us some days to get settled again, so don't come this week.

I must tell you about the cow. We've got one! When we awoke yesterday morning we saw three men outside the gate with a cow. She had a beautifully crumpled horn, and Laura peeped through the shutter and said she would do. I went right down and told them that I would take her. Then I asked the price, and they said \$75. I thought it pretty high, as none of the others had been above \$40, but the men said—well, I won't inflict what they *said* on you, as it took an hour and a quarter, but it amounted to this, that she was the only crumpled-horn cow in Westchester County, and a great prize; that there were plenty of rich nabobs down around White Plains who would jump at the chance to give a hundred, only they (the present trio) hadn't time to take her down, being so busy with spring planting, and this such fine growin' weather. So I paid the money, and they walked away quick and rather nervously, and I saw eight or ten other men come from behind some trees down the road and join them. Then I realized that the whole crowd who came previously had formed a crumpled-horn cow syndicate, and were sharing in the profits. But I led her into the back yard, and Laura brought out her paints and began to sketch her. I shall put her in the front elevation of all the blue prints I make of those cottages, instead of the usual man with the garden hose.

Two eggs Saturday, and nine to-day. I was startled when I first found the nine, thinking that somebody was trying to play a joke on us; then I remembered that owing to the excitement about the fire and the cow I had forgotten to gather them for three days, so the increase need alarm no one. Have hired a man to look after the stock, which now includes a pig. He's an honest Scandinavian, with blue eyes (the man is), and is large and decorative. Laura is going to sketch him. The pig squeals considerably, which makes the hens cackle. The country is less quiet than I have always been led to believe. That hen *was* sitting. I took her off forcibly, as you advised, but she was not the magnate I suspected. She had nothing but a white door-knob, so I put her back. I can't see that she will hurt it. Besides, it isn't my knob. I think she brought it with her—under one wing, I suppose. The cow gave three pints of milk last night and two pints this morning. Do you suppose she, too, is moulting? Which do you advise that we make, butter or

cheese? Don't you think that perhaps the cow has not yet arrived at her best age? Ole looked at her teeth and said she was more than fifteen. It seems that the dental record of the cow ceases at fifteen. Come up next week. Laura sends love to Henrietta. Ever yours, CHET.

## IV

Friday.

MY DEAR WILL.—I write in great haste, and under most annoying conditions. There *were* swallows' nests in that chimney. Ole tried to swab them out from the top, and fell in, and came down head-first, bringing along the nests and much mortar, and what I fear were highly improper remarks in his native tongue. When we built a fire the chimney drew magnificently. I piled on more wood. The blaze roared up the flue, and the draught threatened to draw Laura in. The next thing we knew the whole upper part of the house was ablaze. The fire company refused to respond, having been fooled once, and the house was a total loss. Nothing left but the cellar, and that full of ashes. Saved all of our things of value, however. Now living in the barn. Kittens escaped and are with us. Rip got excited again and bit Ole, who has gone to his brother's, eight miles away, to get a gun. Laura bearing up well, and sketching cow—side view. Don't come next week. Remember us to Henrietta. Two eggs to-day. Ever yours, C.

## V

[Telegram]

Saturday.

Ole returned. Shot at dog, hit cow. Barn just burned to ground, set by gun wad. Chickens and kittens escaped. Wire course usually pursued in country under present circumstances. One egg. CHESTER.

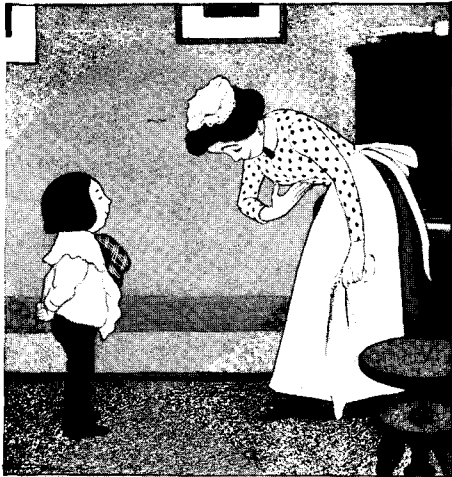
When I received this last communication I saw my duty. I must go to him. I rushed away for New York, and in an hour was at the station where I must take the train to reach Chet's place. Of course I just missed one train, and found I must wait an hour for another. I bethought me of Chet's office a few blocks away, and decided to go over and speak to his business partner. But I met not the partner, but Chet himself, in jaunty summer suit, cool and unruffled.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "when did you get back?"

"We haven't been away," he answered, calmly. "We changed our minds, and have stuck to the flat, except for one or two trips to Coney Island. Come over and have luncheon with us. I'll telephone Laura."

"You heartless scoundrel! Then you made all of those letters up, did you?"

"Certainly. One of the clerks who lives up there mailed them for me. I thought you'd enjoy thinking we were having the usual happy experiences incident to a summer country place—but you go and get mad. I see myself trying to please you again!"



### The Dustin' Tune

OUR girl she plays a dandy tune  
 On our piano. 'Long 'bout noon,  
 'Most ev'ry day, with cloth in hand,  
 Before the insterment she'll stand,  
 An' glancin' at the keys, she'll say,  
 "How dusty things git in one day!"  
 An' then she'll make a jab, maybe,  
 An' strike a note 'way up in G.  
 Then swipe the dust-cloth down the keys,  
 An' back an' forth—go as you please.  
 An' when there's no more dust to see,  
 She'll turn around an' look at me,  
 An' bowin' like an actress, say,  
 "Sure that's the dustin' tune I play."

### HARDLY ACCURATE

SHE had returned with an M. D. from a university after her name, and had been elected to the chair of English Literature in a small local college. On the day before the session opened, the president was explaining to her the duties of her place. "In addition to your work in English literature," he said, with apologetic hesitation, "I should like you to take the Junior and Senior classes in elocution, and also assume charge of the physical culture."

"Is there no teacher of elocution?" asked Miss Jones.

"Well, no; not at present."

"And who has charge of the physical training?"

"To tell the truth, we have no teacher as yet. You perhaps noticed in the catalogue that those two departments were 'to be supplied.'"

"And I was elected to the chair of English Literature—"

"Yes," the president answered, gloomily.

But he was reassured by her winning smile. "I will take the work and do what I can with it, Dr. Smith," she said, brightly; "but why didn't you write me at first that the 'chair' was a settee?" M. A. B.

### LARCENY BY MR. SCRUGGS

MR. SCRUGGS is a large gentleman possessing great dignity, partly natural, and partly gained through much experience as presiding officer in countless financial and charitable organizations.

One sweltering summer day, as he dropped into his seat in the afternoon train which was to carry him down to his country place, he noticed with much displeasure that immediately behind him was the inevitable tired mother with the usual very small children. But the youngsters were quiet, and the motion of the car soon had its effect. Mr. Scruggs's chin sank upon his breast, and he slept.

Suddenly he became acutely conscious that something warm and sticky had been violently inserted between his collar and the back of his neck. He lurched indignantly to his feet, just as a shrill voice exclaimed, with great distinctness, "Oh, ma, that man's got my gum-drop!" J. H. H.

### SLIGHTLY NEGATIVE

UNCLE EPHRAIM'S rusty hat droops humbly over his black and wrinkled forehead; his coat pockets are sagging away from his coat; one knee is covered with a blue patch, the other one with a white one sewed on with black thread; his shoes are full of holes, and it would puzzle any one to declare the original color of any article of his apparel. He pulls off the drooping hat as he looks over my garden fence, and gives me a smile that makes me feel better for an hour. "Miss Alice," he asks, cheerfully, "you don't know nobody that wantster hire nobody to do nothin' fer 'em dis mawnin', does you?"

### TAKEN AT HER WORD

HE came and asked me for my love,

And said that his devotion  
 Would most indubitably prove

As boundless as the ocean.  
 But I was young and fair and gay;  
 My life was like a summer's day;  
 And this was all that I would say,

"You'd better ask Pepita."

His form was fine, and oh, his face

Recalled the young Leander,  
 And for his peer in manly grace  
 Go back to Alexander.

But flattery had turned my head,  
 And when he urged that I would wed,  
 Coquettishly again I said,

"You'd better ask Pepita."

And then—I've heard of course that man

Is fickle and peculiar,  
 Ranging from Elinor to Ann,  
 From Ann to Jane or Julia.

But if I e'er had thought that he  
 Would so extremely docile be,  
 I never should have said—ah me!

He'd better ask Pepita.

C. W. THAYER.



THE BUTTERFLY—A CONTRAST



WILL THEY ALLOW THE YOUNGSTER TO PASS?

#### LIGHT ON ANTS

A GREAT many men have written more or less elaborately on what they didn't know about ants. Solomon, the first entomologist of whom we have any record, had to take his little fling at the ants, and advised the sluggard to go to them and study their ways. The sluggards have been doing it ever since, and after a cursory examination of the ants, have written volumes about what they failed to find out. Mark Twain was the first ant student who had the courage to tell the truth about them, so far as he knew it; but his labor was lost, for nobody believed what he wrote—thought it was intended to be facetious. Sir John Lubbock has made a life study of trying to find out what he doesn't know about ants, and he has written volumes to prove it.

I began studying the ants last summer in Texas. It was mutual. The ants began studying me at the same time. I observed their habits, and they went on investigating tours over my person. Then I made other observations, and I made them in plain Anglo-Saxon, too. I investigated ants' nests to discover where they stored their seeds and grain, and they investigated my larder, and found out where everything good to eat was kept. In a short time they knew ever so much more about me and my habits than I knew of theirs. Then I got mad. I said to myself that I'd get a line on those ants and discover their secrets if it took all summer. I bought, borrowed, and purloined

everything I could find in the way of ant literature. I found that the ant-studying habit was not confined to English writers—Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, Poles, Russians, and even Chinamen had acquired it. I read them all, and then I tried to get what Ananias had written about ants, but I couldn't find it. The manuscript has probably been lost.

It was about this time that I invented my formicaphone—a simple combination of the megaphone and micrographophone—for the purpose of recording the ants' language. Sir John Lubbock says that they communicate ideas to one another by means of their antennæ, but I knew that was all nonsense, and I proved it. The very first record I made with my formicaphone showed conclusively that all the ant littérateurs, from Pliny down to Eli Perkins, were wrong. Ants do talk, and they talk English, too; at least, the Texas ants do—Texas English. I spent many delightful hours listening to their conversation. One day they'd be discussing politics—they are all politicians—and the next day they'd be excited about labor troubles, and a walking delegate from Roadmenders Union No. 27 would harangue the workers and order a strike, and then the soldier ants would come out, and a lot of heads and legs would be bitten off before the thing was settled. It was beautifully human. One afternoon there was a riot because the queen gave a reception, and had a quartet of mosquitoes there who didn't belong to the Musical Union. The mosqui-

toes sang the quartet from *Rigoletto*, but they were hissed off the stage, and an awful row began. The aphid herders and all the workers were in open rebellion, and it was very exciting. The little ant newsboys were shouting extras, and the whole city was in a turmoil. Why, I learned more about ant nature and obtained a more intimate knowledge of their habits in an hour than from any amount of reading. I found out that they hated to work, that they used bad language, that their city government was corrupt, that they were nearly all thieves and magnificent liars, and that they had had to appoint a committee of fifteen of the best citizens to keep the community from going straight to the bowwows.

This puzzled me a good deal until I accidentally overheard a conversation between two learned old ants. They were talking on scientific subjects, and one of them said to the other that he'd just finished a book about men—said he'd been studying men and their habits all his life, and that they were almost as intelligent as ants. Men worked harder than ants, he said, and would slave away all their lives apparently just for the fun of working and laying up a store of things of no possible use to them.

"In this respect," he went on, "they are a good deal like our cousins, the bees, but they have other habits I can't understand at all. They are very interesting, though, and in some matters they seem to display reasoning powers to such an extent that I have wondered at times if they haven't something

besides mere instinct. Maybe, after all, they are a kind of inferior ant, and have souls like us."

"Oh, bosh!" exclaimed the other ant. "I've studied them a little too. I grant that they occasionally show signs of intelligence, but when you come to comparing men to ants—oh! it's a little too ridiculous. I should think you'd have more pride."

"Don't lose your temper," said the first ant. "It was just a little conceit of mine. When I look up at that hulking brute of a man standing there I can see that—"

But I didn't wait to hear the rest.

N. A. JENNINGS.

### THE DANGERS OF REST

AUNT ANNE'S "before the war" mistress must have been a woman of iron constitution, to judge by the way she regards with contempt my own physical limitations.

Tuesday she held me sternly to the duty of overhauling the pantry and its appurtenances. Wednesday, stiff and sore, I sought again and again the solace of the sofa, only to be aroused by callers whom I could not refuse to see. In the afternoon I lay down once more, and, in no very amiable temper, told Aunt Anne that no matter who called, I was not to be disturbed.

A little later, through the open window, I heard her say to our clergyman: "No, sir; Miss Carryline ain't feelin' like seein' nobody this evenin'. She exerted hersef so much this mornin' restin' that it made her sick."



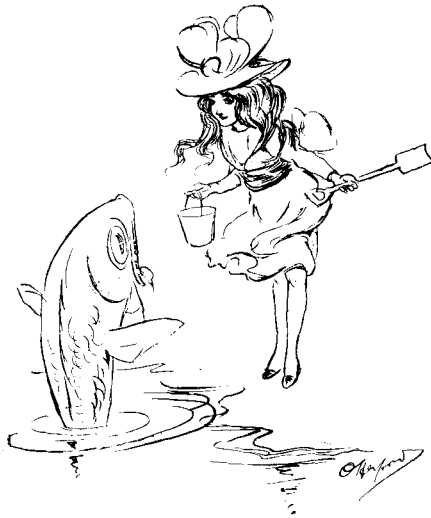
### CAREFUL GRANDMAMMA

*Said Grandmamma to Willie Brett, "Put on your rubbers, dear, Or you will get your footies wet, and have the croup, I fear."*

# The Codfish and the Maiden

BY CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS

ONE day a little maid was playing in the sand—  
She had a wooden pail; her spadè was in her hand—  
When to her great surprise a codfish came along,  
And standing on his tail he sang this pleasant song:



"Oh, raspberry jelly-fish are washed up by the sea;  
Sword-fish have no scabbards—I'm as sorry as can be;  
Razor-fish are cousins to the cuttle-fish, they say;  
Saw-fish have a heap of teeth with which to chew their prey."

"Thank you," said the maid: "what can I do for you?  
That was a lovely song—I hope you are not through."  
"Oh no," replied the cod: "'twas only verse the first,—  
But get some water fresh—I'm nearly choked with thirst."

Then said the little maid, "You're wet as you can be;  
Now how can you be thirsty, when your home is in the sea?"  
"Good gracious!" said the cod; "this water's full of brine—  
Salt water for the thirst is hardly in my line."

The codfish shook his fins, the maiden shook her head,

The codfish cleared his throat, and this the codfish said:  
"I've really got to stop, because it hurts my throat;  
Until I get a drink, I cannot sing a note."

So then the little girl—whose name was Caramel—  
Departed with her pail and filled it at a well.  
And when she had returned, the codfish made a bow,  
And drank the sparkling water as fast as he knew how.

"Oh, thank you, little girl; please jump upon my back;  
And come just as you are—you will not need a sack."  
She did not hesitate, but sitting on the fish,  
She travelled through the sea as fast as she could wish.

The sea winds tanned her cheeks, the wave-lets wet each shoe;  
She dined upon fresh fish—and said she liked them, too.  
The cod with moistened throat gave voice to his delight,  
And merry songs like this he sang both day and night:

"Bluefish get their color from the blue that's in the sea;  
Lobsters are not ever red until it's time for tea;  
Mussels never are as strong as weak-fish sometimes grow;  
Porpoises are always smart—they live in schools, you know."

