

twelve or fifteen pages, if, when one gets his characters in a tight place, he can adopt Mark Twain's plan and let some one else get them out! It is rather trying, however, when one has formed a certain estimate of a character, or has expected a certain outcome of his plot, to have the subsequent authors change these expectations entirely—prove his good characters to be worthless and give his plot a turn which he never dreamt of! In conducting a Novel Club successfully a great deal of work falls on the Trustee, and he (or she) must be a person of good judgment in selecting the succession of authors, so as to have a dull chapter followed by a brilliant one, if possible. Of course each writer should endeavor to end his chapter in as exciting or interesting a place as possible, like the stories "to be continued in our next." As the Trustee is not allowed, of course, to vote as to authorship, though he is expected to write a chapter, it may be thought his position is a thankless one; but he is more than repaid by the secret laughs he has and by the continued private fun he obtains in hearing, during the writing of the novel, the wild guesses and curious comments which are made as to the authorship.



From the Day's Mail

We have received very frequently at this office applications from our readers living out of town asking us to put them in communication with some organization or society that would secure for them servants. That we have been unable to put these inquirers in communication with the right parties has been to us a source of regret; knowing well, on the one hand, the very great need in hundreds of homes in the country for just the help that the overcrowded cities could give, and, on the other hand, the great need of the homes offered, has only increased the regret at failure on our part. The State Charities Aid Association has now established an agency for placing destitute mothers with babies or very young children in country homes.

Every student of sociology knows that it is almost fatal to separate a mother and child; it deprives the one of the love and protection and care that it ought to have, and it deprives the other of the incentive of self-sacrifice, of the discipline and joy that come from caring for one's own child, of the development that comes from meeting life and bearing all one's own personal responsibilities. The persons for whom the State Charities Aid Association wish to secure homes are mothers and children so situated that, if they cannot be placed in the same home, then the child must be placed in an institution, and the mother, who is homeless, must find a place. This new enterprise of the State Charities Aid Association is six months old. Fifty-seven women have been provided with situations in the country. That there must be a degree of satisfaction with the women so placed is proved by the fact that every week more applicants come eagerly seeking situations through this new department.

People living in the country districts know that the greatest enemy they have to deal with in the kitchen is the loneliness of its occupant. Certainly those who work among the poor in the city know that the excuse given for not being willing to leave the city is always: "I know I shall be so lonely." But a mother with a little child takes her company with her. Often letters come to this office saying: "We should be so glad to help you in bearing the burden of the misery that comes from poverty in the city. We haven't money, but we could give homes if only the people would come to us." Here is the opportunity, not only to give a home, but to give training, to a mother and child. Full information can be had by applying to the Agent of the State Charities Aid Association. The following advertisement may meet some need of our readers at the present time:

Wanted, by fairly competent women (each with infant or young child), situations to do general housework in the country for small wages. Those wishing such service please apply to

Agent, State Charities Aid Association, Room 503, United Charities Building, New York.

There have recently come to this department several inquiries for a list of books for reading circles. It is almost impossible to prepare a list of books that will suit every circle of readers. Certainly people of education would require an entirely different list of books from working girls and boys, whose educational opportunities are naturally limited. Workingmen would certainly want an entirely different line of reading from clerks and business men. The Round Robin Reading Club, No. 4213 Chestnut Avenue, Philadelphia, Pa., has prepared courses of reading adapted to all classes of readers. The special aim of the reading club is to arrange courses of reading for literary clubs; and for those who wish it there is an opportunity of corresponding with the Director, Miss Louise Stockton.

If "M. C. L.," of Englewood, N. J., will send her address to this department, the addresses of organizations that furnish work to the deserving poor will be sent to her. The list is too long to be published in these columns.

I have had several discussions with a very intelligent and original Quakeress, a great reader of radical literature, and a person of the highest independence and rectitude, regarding the characters in George Eliot's masterpiece, "Middlemarch." I have always regarded Dorothea as the noblest and most living, flesh-and-blood creation of modern fiction. But my Philadelphia friend thinks she was too much of an idealist, and decidedly prefers Mary Garth as a "simple creature not too good for human nature's daily food." I inclose her summary of some parts of our discussions, and, if you think it worth the space, would ask the verdict of your readers on the points at issue. Here is the extract from my Quaker correspondent.

C. F. W.

"I do not run down Dorothea. To me she is the most natural, the most understandable of George Eliot's women. I was only trying to make you see that in real life she would not be appreciated. It took an artist, not of her locality, to discover her beauty; even Lydgate passed her by almost unnoticed until they were brought together under peculiar circumstances. If she had lived unmarried, she would have been to those around her one of the disagreeable women with quixotic notions. I think neither she nor others would like her if thrown with her in daily contact. She was critical, and her mental criticisms were felt when not expressed. Farebrother is undoubtedly the strong man of the book—the man who conquered self for the sake of others, and went on uncomplainingly, unflinchingly; but he had blessedness, if not happiness, for his compensation; while Lydgate's lifelong struggle to make the best of life as he found it, to go on trying to love more and more what was admirable in Rosamond, without expecting love in return, required the hardest kind of heroism—that of endurance. But what I cannot understand is why Lydgate should have fallen in love with the type of woman he did; and it always seemed to me a pity that, as they both saw their mistake so soon, they could not have separated without scandal or fuss of any kind. That is a totally different thing from separating because either wants to marry some one else."

This gives an opportunity for discussion.

I have a dear little neighbor not yet quite three years old. He is a fortunate little neighbor in many respects, but especially because his mother is helping him to learn the important lesson that the attitude of the world toward him is much what he himself makes it; that it is dark or bright according as shadow or sunshine reigns in his own little heart. Now, it happened the other day that Little Neighbor was angry with Anna, the young nurse. He even stamped his tiny foot to emphasize matters, and altogether made quite a disturbance. When his mother reached the scene, Little Neighbor had persuaded himself that Anna was in every way to blame, and that he was a much-abused little boy. "Naughty Anna!" he said; "I don't love Anna." When his mother tried to show him that Anna was kind and patient, he only repeated, "I don't love Anna," and for the time the heart of Little Neighbor was filled with bitterness. "Very well," said his mother, and sat down before the fireplace, leaving him to think over the condition of things. There he was, all by himself. His mother was in her favorite chair, but her face was sad. Anna was dusting, and she, too, looked sad, and the child began to feel forlorn. Presently he said, in a tearful voice, "I want to wock." His mother took him up, and he cuddled down,

trying to resign himself to forgetfulness. But the little heart, which has always been helped to keep itself sensitive, and also to think out things for itself, felt the difference. So, as he lay and thought, he presently realized that the trouble was in himself. Then he looked up and softly said, "Too bad I aren't a pleasant boy." "Yes," said his mother; "we are none of us as happy when you are not pleasant." But the heart of Little Neighbor will not readily give up; so the minutes passed, and still they rocked. By and by he said, "I are *most* pleasant now," to which mother responded that she was glad, and the rocking went on. And when he said, "I love Anna, but I aren't *kite* pleasant," it was plainly to be seen that the clouds were breaking. At last he sat up, and, clapping his hands, exclaimed: "Now I are kite pleasant!" Then mother smiled. Anna ran for the cap and cloak, that they might go out. Do you not think that the next struggle Little Neighbor's heart has with the naughty spirit will be shorter, and may he not even now be earning the rewards which are promised to him that overcometh?

S. S. M.

Picked Up

A Japanese gentleman has succeeded in making a thread from a nettle that grows abundantly in Japan. It is said that this thread rivals silk in its fineness and strength. This result is obtained after years of experimenting.

According to newspaper reports, five hundred of the students at Wellesley are in favor of woman's suffrage. One of the professors is quoted as saying: "If Massachusetts wishes her women to cease to want what belongs to them as intelligent citizens, she should legislate that college girls shall not study past politics or present history."

A prominent physician of New York argues earnestly against the visiting of the monkey-houses in the parks in winter. He says that consumption is a prevalent disease in the monkey species, and the degree of temperature and the poor ventilation make the houses places of danger. The fact that consumption is contagious is now accepted, and intelligent people protect themselves and others against the possibility of breathing a contaminated atmosphere.

The "Louisiana Rice Exhibit" gives the following recipe for boiling rice: "Pick your rice clean and wash it in two cold waters, not draining off the last water until you are ready to put the rice on the fire. Prepare a saucepan with water and a little salt. When it boils, sprinkle in the rice gradually, so as not to stop the boiling. Boil hard for twenty minutes, keeping the pot covered. Then take it from the back of the fire and pour off the water, after which set the pot on the back of the stove to allow the rice to dry and the grains to separate. Remember to boil rapidly from the time you cover the pot until you take it off; this allows each grain to swell to three times its normal size, and the motion prevents the grains from sticking together. Don't stir it, as this will cause it to fall to the bottom and burn. When properly boiled, rice should be snowy-white, perfectly dry, soft, and every grain separate."

The Pirates of Barnegat

By Gustav Kobbé

They were pirates. Yet they were not very ferocious-looking. But, then, they had been pirates for only a very short time. In fact, but a few minutes had passed since Georgie, twelve years old, with a stocky figure and a fair round face, had exclaimed: "I know what! We'll turn pirates!" Upon which Sam, a year younger but a little taller, had made the comment: "That's something new and something bully!"

Tommy, the youngest of the trio, whose face was tattooed with freckles, had at once begun fumbling in his breast-pocket, and now drew forth, in the order named, the following articles: A handkerchief of uncertain color that had been rolled into a tight ball to economize pocket

space, a knife, sundry buttons, a paper of "traders" from his stamp collection, a peach-pit, some twine, half a fig incrusting with crumbs and lint, and, finally, a leaden toy pistol which he brandished with an air of great importance. He appeared to be the most dangerous of the pirates.

"I'll ask Beatrice," continued Georgie, "to sew a white skull and crossbones on to mamma's old black silk kerchief for an ensign for the Red Ripper. We must hoist the black flag—that means no quarter, and pirates give no quarter."

"Lucky that's the case," remarked Sam, "for I've no quarter to give—not even a dime."

They had hauled the Red Ripper up on a little beach which had formed at a break in the bulkhead along the bay side of one of the summer settlements near the head of Barnegat Bay.

Georgie had sailed the Red Ripper for three years, and he knew every nook and corner of the upper bay—Beaver Dam, Metedeconk, Kettle Creek, Goose Creek, and Mosquito Cove being as familiar to him as his own little bedroom. The Red Ripper was a twelve-foot "sneak-box," an odd kind of shark-shaped little craft, with a round bottom and a very sheer bow, that could be easily run up on the salt meadows or beaches. Small as the Red Ripper was, she was very stiff and safe, being nearly all decked over. She carried, besides a spritsail, a jib, which enabled her to sail "closer" than any other sneak on the upper bay. By lowering the jib and unstepping the mast the little craft was converted into a rowboat. For further protection in rough weather, an "apron"—a piece of canvas that could be raised on a stick—ran from the rowlocks forward to the mast-step just in front of the centerboard. The cockpit had a cover that could be locked, the sneak-box being then all decked over like a whaleback.

The trio laid its course for Georgie's house, Beatrice being his younger sister. When they reached the house they found her in the breeziest corner of the piazza sewing away energetically at a doll's dress. The doll itself, minus an eye and arm, lay upon the piazza floor. Beatrice's hair was fluttering in the wind, so was the doll's dress, and so was the thread; yet somehow she managed to make her needle fairly fly. She looked up sharply at the three boys, as much as to say: "What are you coming to me for now?"

"Beatrice," said Georgie, "we're going to be pirates, and we want you to be the Pirate Queen."

"Why don't you tell me right out what you want me to do for you?" she asked.

"We haven't an ensign," said Tommy, "and we want you to sew a white skull and crossbones on to your mamma's black silk kerchief."

Beatrice's eyes snapped with joy at the idea of making the ensign for a real piratical craft. She jumped from her chair right on to the doll's head, which was crushed beyond recognition, darted upstairs, and came out again upon the piazza waving the black silk. They made short work cutting several pieces that resembled the desired piratical device out of a handkerchief which Sam contributed; and it was not long before Beatrice had them sewed on to the black silk.

"Now," she said, "I'm going over to the store to buy a new head for sister's doll, and I'll stop on the way and sew the flag to the Red Ripper's sail."

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when Georgie ordered the Red Ripper cast off. The little sneak-box, flying the black flag, her miniature jib and mainsail swelling in the northwesterly breeze, and the water gurgling down from under the sheer of her bow, and streaking her quarters with foam, heeled over just enough to oblige the three pirates, who were seated to windward, to brace their feet against the lee side of the cockpit. Georgie laid her course for Seaweed Point, at the mouth of Kettle Creek, sailing her close-hauled, and making every inch he could to windward. He kept his eyes steadily on the course, while Tommy and Sam were looking back at Beatrice, who was waving her handkerchief after them from the little beach. With the breeze steadily freshening, and Georgie's