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Poetry.

(From the Boston Traveller.)

Mary O'Conner, the Volunteer's Wife.

BY MARY A. DENISON.

An' shure I was tould to come here to yer honor.

To see if you'd write a few words to me Pat;

It's gone for a sojer is mister O'Conner,

Wild a stripe on his arm and a band to his hat.

An' what'll you tell him? It ought to be easy

For say yer honor to spake wid the pen,

And say I'm all right, and that mavourneen

Daisy

(The baby yer honor) is better agen.

For whin he went off, it's so sick was the childer,

She never held up her blue eyes to his face,

And when I'd be crying, he'd look but the wilder,

And say would I wish for the country's disgrace?

So he left her in danger, and me sorely greeting,

And followed the flag wid an Irishman's joy,

O! it's often I drame of the great drums a

beating.

And a bullet gone straight to the heart of me

childer.

And say will he send me a bit of his money,

O! for the rint and the doctor's bill due in a

week;

Well surely there's tears on your eyelashes,

honey.

Ah! faith I've no right wid such freedom to

spake.

You're ov' much triling; I'll not give you

trouble.

I'll find some one willing; o! what can

it be?

What's that in the newspaper fold'd up double?

Yer honor—don't hide it—but read it to me.

What! Patrick O'Conner? no, no, it's some

other.

Dead! dead! no not him, it's a week scarce

gone by.

Dead! dead! why the kist on the check of his

mother.

It has't had time yet your honor, to dry.

Don't tell me it's not him, O God! am I

cray?

Shot dead?—oh! for love of sac'd heaven

say no.

An' what'll I do in the world wid poor Daisy?

O! how will I live, and O! where will I go?

Theorem is sodak. I must see in your honor,

I think, I'll go home, and a sh-pick

and dry.

Come sharp from the bosom of Mary O'Conner,

But never a tear drop will shed up to yer eye.

Agricultural.

About Eggs.

An egg of the average size weighs 1000 grains, or one-seventh of a pound. Three-fourths of its weight is water. One-seventh is albumen, a highly nutritious substance, resembling lean meat in its composition, and therefore adapted to produce strength of muscles when consumed as food. One-tenth of the weight of the egg is fat or oil, which is useful to supply carbon for respiration, and heating the body, and therefore especially valuable for eating in cold weather. The yolk contains some sulphur and phosphorus compounds, the latter affording materials for the structure of the bones. The shell is chiefly carbonate of lime—similar in composition to marble or limestone. The shell is porous, and admits air for the chicken before it breaks out. Of the entire egg the shell weighs about one-tenth; the yolk, three-tenths; the white or transparent portion, six tenths. The composition of an egg is quite similar to that of a piece of good fat beef steak with the bulk of the loose fat, or tallow, trimmed off; eggs are therefore nutritious food. Seven eggs, weighing a pound, are nearly as valuable for food as a pound of good meat, and they generally cost much less. During the past few months seven eggs have cost only 1 cent at retail, in our market, while a pound of sirloin beef has cost 14 to 16 cents, and a good steak from the round, 12 to 14 cents per pound—being two to one in favor of eggs.

In cooking eggs, most families boil or fry them hard. This renders them bad to digest, unless they are masticated very fine, and this is seldom done in rapid eating. They are every way better if soft-boiled, and after a little practice in eating them thus, a hard-boiled egg is comparatively dry and tasteless. An egg placed in boiling water just three minutes, or if a large one 3 1/4 to 3 1/2 minutes, is abundantly cooked. After removing from the water, the eggs need to stand a few minutes to heat through to the center. After becoming a little accustomed to them, eaten with the addition of a little salt and pepper, or other condiment, eggs thus cooked are palatable as butter, instead of requiring to be covered with butter.

PRESERVING EGGS.—As above stated, the shells are porous, and the water of the egg is constantly evaporating, and entering to take its place. After a time, decay commences. It will readily be seen that, stopping the pores of the shell will tend to preserve the contents in their natural state. This may be done by dipping them quickly in melted tallow, or coating them with sweet oil, or a solution of gum, or varnish. Thus coated, they only need to be placed in a cool place, of somewhat uniform temperature.—Agriculturist.

Miscellaneous.

IDLE HANDS.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

Mr. Thornton came home at his usual mid-day hour, and as he went in by the parlor door he saw his daughter, a young lady of nineteen, lounging on the sofa with a book in her hands. The whirl of his wife's sewing machine struck on his ear at the same moment. Without pausing at the parlor, he kept on to the room from whence came the sound of industry.

Mrs. Thornton did not observe the entrance of her husband. She was bending close down over her work, and the noise of the machine was louder than his footsteps on the floor. Mr. Thornton stood looking at her some moments without speaking.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed the tired woman, letting her foot rest on the treadle and straightening herself, "this pain in my side is almost beyond endurance."

"Then why do you sit killing yourself?" said Mr. Thornton.

Mr. Thornton's aspect was unusually sober.

"What's the matter! Why do you look so serious?" asked his wife.

"Because I feel serious," he answered.

"Has anything gone wrong?" Mrs. Thornton's countenance grew slightly troubled. Things had gone wrong in her husband's business more than once, and she had learned to dread the occurrence of disaster.

"Things are wrong all the time," he replied with some impatience of manner.

"In your business?" Mrs. Thornton spoke a little faintly.

"No, nothing especially out of the way there, but it's all wrong at home."

"I don't understand you, Harvey. What is wrong at home, pray?"

"Wrong for you to sit in pain and exhaustion over that sewing machine, whilst an idle daughter lounges over a novel in the parlor. That's what I wish to say."

"It isn't Effie's fault. She often asks to help me, but I can't see the child put down to household drudgery. Her time will come soon enough. Let her have a little ease and comfort while she may."

"If we said that of our sons," replied Mr. Thornton, "and acted on the word, what efficient men they would make for the world's work! How admirably furnished they would be for life's trials and duties. It is a poor compliment to Effie's moral sense to suppose that she can be content to sit with idle hands, or to employ them in light frivolities, while her mother is worn down with toil beyond her strength. Hester, it must not be."

"And it shall not be," said a quick and firm voice.

Mr. Thornton and his wife started, and turned to the speaker, who had entered the room unperceived, and been a listener to all the conversation we have recorded.

"It shall not be, father!" And Effie came and stood by Mr. Thornton. Her face was crimson, her eyes flooded with tears, through which light was flashing, her form drawn up erectly, her manner resolute. "It wasn't all my fault," she said, and she laid her hand on her father's arm. "I've asked mother a great many times to let me help her, but she always puts me off, and says it is easier to do a thing herself than to show another. May be I am a little dull, but every one has to learn, you know. Mother did not get her hand in fairly with that sewing machine for two or three weeks, and I'm certain it wouldn't take me any longer. If she'd only teach me how to use it, I could help her a great deal. And, indeed, father, I'm willing!"

"Spoken in the right spirit, my daughter," said Mr. Thornton, approvingly. "Girls should be usefully employed as well as boys, and in the very things most likely to be required of them when they become women of the most responsible position of wives and mothers. Depend upon it, Effie, an idle girlhood is not the way to a cheerful womanhood. Learn and do now the very things that will be required of you in after years, and then you will have acquired facility. Habit and skill make easy what might come hard, and be felt as very burdensome."

"And you would have her abandon all self-improvement," said Mrs. Thornton. "Give up music, reading, and society."

"There are," replied Mr. Thornton, as his wife paused for another word, "some fifteen or sixteen hours in each day in which mind or hands should be rightly employed. Now let us see how Effie is spending these long and ever recurring periods of time. Come, my daughter sit down. We have this subject fairly before us. It is one of life-long importance to you, and should be well considered. How is it in regard to the employment of your time? Take yesterday, for instance. The records of a day will help to get towards the right step? Not so. The languidness engendered by idleness, which had begun to show itself, disappeared in a few weeks; the color came warmer in her cheeks, her eyes gained in brightness. She was growing, in fact, more beautiful for a mind cheerfully conscious of duty was moulding every lineament of her countenance into a new expression. Did self-improvement stop? Oh, no. From one to two hours were given to close practice every day. Her mind becoming more vigorous in tone, instead of enervated by idleness, chose a better order of reading than had been indulg-

ed in before, and she was growing towards a thoughtful, cultivated, intelligent womanhood. She also found time, amid her home duties, for an hour twice a week with a German teacher, and she began also to cultivate a taste for drawing. Now that she was employing the time she found at her disposal, how cheerful and companionable she grew! She did not seem like Effie Thornton of a month before. In fact, the sphere of the whole household was changed. As an idler, Effie Thornton had been to the rest, and the weight of that burden had been sufficient to depress, thro' weariness, the spirits of all. But now that she was standing up, self-abstained, and a sharer in the burden of each, all hearts came back to a lighter measure, beating rhythmically and in conscious enjoyment.

"I practiced on the piano an hour after breakfast."

"So fast, so good. What then?"

"I read 'The Cavalier' until 11 o'clock."

Mr. Thornton shook his head, and asked, "after eleven, how was the time spent?"

"I dressed myself and went out."

"And what time did you go out?"

"A little after twelve o'clock."

"An hour was spent in dressing?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where did you go?"

"I called on Ellen Boyd, and we took a walk down Broadway."

"And came home just in time for dinner? I think I met you at the door?"

"Yes, sir."

"How was it after dinner?"

"I slept from three until five, and then took a bath and dressed myself. From six until tea time, I sat at the parlor window."

"And after tea?"

"Read 'The Cavalier' until I went to bed."

"At what hour?"

"Eleven o'clock."

"Now we can make up the account," said Mr. Thornton.

"You arose at seven and retired at eleven. Sixteen hours, and from your own account of the day, but a single hour was spent in anything useful—that was the hour at your piano. Now, your mother was up at half past five, and went to bed from sheer inability to sit at work any longer, at half past nine. Sixteen hours for her, also. How much reading did you do in that time?"

Mr. Thornton looked at his wife.

"Reading! No! Don't talk to me of reading! I've no time to read."

Mrs. Thornton answered a little impatiently. The contrast of her daughter's idle hours with her own life of exhausting toil did not affect her very pleasantly.

"And yet," said Mr. Thornton, "you were always very fond of reading, and I can remember when no day went by without an hour or two passed with your books. Did you lie down after dinner?"

"Of course not."

"Nor take a pleasant walk on Broadway? Nor sit at the parlor window with Effie? How about that? Now, the case is a very plain one," continued Mr. Thornton. "In fact, nothing could be plainer. You spend from fourteen to sixteen hours every day in hard work, while Effie, taking yesterday as a sample, spends about the same time in what is little better than idleness. Suppose a new adjustment were to take place, and Effie were to be employed in helping you for eight hours every day, she would still have eight hours for self-improvement and recreation, and you, relieved from your present over-taxed condition, might get back a portion of the health and spirits of which these heavy household duties have robbed you."

"Father!" said Effie, speaking through tears that were falling over her face. "I never saw things in this light. Why haven't you talked to me before? I've often felt as if I'd like to help mother. But she never gives me anything to do, and if I offer to help her she says you can't do it, or 'I had rather do it myself.' Indeed, it isn't all my fault."

"It may not have been in the past, Effie," replied Mr. Thornton. "But it will certainly be in the future, unless there is a new arrangement of things. It is a false social sentiment that lets daughters become idlers, while mothers and sons take up the daily burden of work, and bear it through all the busy hours."

Mrs. Thornton did not come gracefully into the new order of things proposed by her husband and accepted by Effie. False pride in her daughter, that future lady ideal, and an inclination to do all herself, rather than take the trouble to teach another, were all so many impediments. But Effie and her father were both in earnest, and it was not long before the mother's face began to lose its look of weariness, and her languid frame to come up to an erect bearing. She could find time for the old pleasure in books now and then, for a healthy walk in the street, and a call on some valued friend.

And was Effie the worse for this change? Did the burden she was sharing with her mother depress her shoulders and take the lightness from her step? Not so. The languidness engendered by idleness, which had begun to show itself, disappeared in a few weeks; the color came warmer in her cheeks, her eyes gained in brightness. She was growing, in fact, more beautiful for a mind cheerfully conscious of duty was moulding every lineament of her countenance into a new expression. Did self-improvement stop? Oh, no. From one to two hours were given to close practice every day. Her mind becoming more vigorous in tone, instead of enervated by idleness, chose a better order of reading than had been indulg-

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Very Interesting Letters from Washington—Description of the Scene after the Battle at Bull Run.

Letter from John W. White.

Letter from D. W. TenBroeck.

[We have been favored with the following copy of a highly interesting and descriptive letter from the pen of the private Secretary of Col. Foxner, Secretary of the Senate, relative to the scenes which occurred at Washington during and after the battle at Bull Run. The letter was addressed to a personal friend of the writer, in a neighboring town, who has kindly placed it at our service. It will be read with deep interest.—Editor Am.]

"Do you see, dear friend, where I am? Bodily, here in my room, writing, near midnight, at the same little table. Mentally, trying to keep abreast of the grandest movement the world ever saw. The moral progress the Nation has made in the last six months is amazing."

Day before yesterday the Senate passed a bill setting free all slaves whom the rebels may use in any way for the furtherance of the war. (On the 1st of January last the man would have been deemed crazy who should have said the Senate would pass such a bill in six years, even.)

God is working in ways we never have dreamed of. I find no time here to read much but the papers—the new Atlantic is just out, and I must manage to edge that in somehow. My duty at the Senate commences at 9 o'clock and ends at 4. My dinner hour is 4 1/2—my breakfast hour is 8. I have but two meals daily.

What shall I tell you about the sad disaster of Sunday? You will get a history of it from the papers. The movement was unquestionably made before Gen. Scott was fully ready. Why, is one of the questions no one can answer. The day was also unquestionably ours up to about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Our force in battle was not over 20,000 men; yet though the rebels had the advantage of nearly double our number of men, added to that of an entrenched and strongly fortified position, we drove them from the field and won the day. Just in the moment of victory that strange panic sprang up and we lost all. It was utterly causeless—no one can account for it. Our loss of artillery is not over twenty pieces. We saved nearly all our army wagons and baggage. We threw away considerable ammunition, and some guns. Our loss of life is as yet impossible to tell. Each day reduces the general supposition, for men are constantly coming in. Tonight some 2,000 are unaccounted for and set down as killed, wounded and missing. I think 500 of them will yet report at camp—thus putting our killed and wounded at only 1500. I shall not be surprised if it is finally reduced to 1200. So far as we can judge, the loss of the enemy is at least double ours. We took 25 or 30 prisoners who have been brought here, and I judge the enemy did not get many of our men. Better than ours no men ever did on the field of battle.

Wednesday morning, of course Sunday was a wild day here. Probably 2800 people went out to the battle ground. I wanted very much to go, but my room-mate was sick and I did not try to get away. Sunday forenoon I went to service in the House by the chaplain of the Senate. At 6 in evening I went to vespers in the Catholic Church. By 9 in the evening couriers began to arrive from the field of battle—and they kept coming in every half hour till after midnight. The general tone of the report was good—"severe fighting, but our men were gradually driving the rebels from the field." Soon after midnight came in a rider who reported that the day was ours—the firing had almost ceased—the enemy was driven back some three miles. You may be sure there was excitement. I was up town and so cannot speak more in detail. Then everybody, generally, went home to sleep and pleasant dreams. The news of the disaster did not reach here till 2 o'clock. It was too awful, and no one placed the least credence, in the report. Half an hour more, and more messengers came in. Soon the panic-stricken civilians and officers began to arrive. A newspaper reporter tore up the avenue for the telegraph office—his horse badly wounded and gory with blood. Then soon came another who reported having a man shot from behind him on his own horse. The few people about the hotels were thunder-struck. At a quarter before 3 somebody called beneath my window. I recognized the voice as that of Col. Forney, Secretary of the Senate. Getting out of bed I went to the window when he struck me dumb with these words: "I am just in from Bull Run. We have been defeated. Our army is all retreating. We have lost nearly everything. Our killed and wounded are counted by the thousand. Some apprehensions are felt at the War Department that the city may be stormed before morning. Our men fought nobly, but it was not of use. They are awfully cut up. Col. Cameron is killed. Col. Burnside is wounded. Col. Hunter is also wounded—his lower jaw is shot

away—I have just left him. Our army is all in retreat in the most disordered manner." Three hours before, I went to sleep with news of victory. What a tale to tell a man just roused from sound sleep! There was Col. Young, who rooms next door—it was his voice, and it was him. He was not wild or incoherent—he spoke calmly, but could it be true? Was I awake? O God, was it not all a fantasy of the brain! Before I could collect my senses—Col. Forney had passed into his room. There I stood with head stretched out to the window. I remember looking to see if there was not a glare in the sky—it might be the enemy's guns were already at work. By this time we were all awake—my room-mate and the gentlemen in the other rooms. The family were also astir. I could not speak—I lay down. But spoke my chum, "Sid, are we awake?" Surely, it was terrible. Presently he said, "It is awful!" repeating the three words every moment or two for sometime. First I thought of the ten thousand homes in which there would be mourning on the morrow for the chosen one of the household. The great wail of us swept over me like a thick tempest. Then came the full voice crying, "Vengeance!" and my thoughts sprang to the long line of a hundred thousand new men ready to die for Liberty and Law. But before one of them all could get here the cannon would probably be upon us. Thousands of men must arm here to defend the city, to fight to the death if need be.

Was I ready? I am sure I did not hesitate an instant. I only considered, am I ready? Have I my business matters in such condition that a stranger could settle them? Is there any wrong I ought to repair before I go to another world—any farewell I must say? There were farewells to say, but I could say them in the moment of starting for the trenches. I lay and thought, I did not see anything that required attention. I am sure I thanked God then that the hour had come when I was really wanted in the world—all these years of my life seemed to have been nurturing me just to carry a gun and die so nobly in the trenches and die for Humanity. Not doubting the full truth of all Col. Forney had said, in an hour I had given myself away. You had no friend—my mother had no son—my sister had no brother. My use and my life were passed over to the great cause, and I had no more concern for myself. God would deal with me as he pleased—in the end all would be well. I hope I may be as true when the real emergency does come, as I was that morning lying upon my bed. Resolving to get up and go down town as soon as I could well see, I turned over and went into a doze. I woke up to find myself saying aloud, "I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith." It was quarter of 5 when I started up street—just commencing to rain. Early as it was, the avenue was full of people—as many on the sidewalk as there usually are at 10 in the forenoon. By this time a few of the runaway soldiers were arriving. Each soiled, begrimed, red-eyed man was instantly surrounded and made to tell his story. In the length of a square there were often a dozen of these grouped around some hero. I didn't care to hear details—the grand fact of a terrible defeat and of a probable attack upon the city was all I cared for. Having settled the case in my mind I was curious to see how the people felt. It stirred my blood strangely to hear a calm-faced man say, after hearing the story, "I have a wife and four little children—I am going home to put my house in order—I will be back in two hours—put my name down if men are wanted." There was a hero, though fame may never catch his name. Scores of men would not believe the report of defeat—it was impossible; these soldiers were deserters, cowards, who deserved to be shot." Here and there traitors appeared—their chuckles marked them. The stern faces of the loyal men promised harsh use of any man who spoke treason. One great man swore out roundly he was glad the government army was routed. In an instant a slight built private of the Massachusetts Sixth, stepped in front of him, and he lay sprawling on the sidewalk. It was done so quick I could hardly see it, but I know the blow was a neat one. The traitor got up and slunk away—the crowd clapped the soldier on the back and said, "Bully!" Good for you."

At the hotel, men were getting up who had heard nothing of the disaster. First came into their faces a look of incredulous amazement—then every man's face took on that look of stern determination to never yield. In some faces I saw as plainly as if the household had been open before me, all the home circle—wife and children, high hopes, desires, plans, promise of future years, and coming pride and joy. There was a look backward toward these, as it were, but in every eye was that calm decision which boded no good for an enemy who dare attack the city. One old man who appeared to be over sixty, heard the tale and said: "I have two sons in the Rhode Island First, I suppose they are both dead—I know what they were made of—I'm stout enough to handle a gun yet." A few cowards there were—men who had urgent business in Ohio or New York or somewhere else. Loyal men would not stay to hear their excuses. Every

man was restless; there was not much talking. "Did you know Jim Harris?" said a man to one of the Michigan First. "Yes," was the answer, he