THE DECAYING YEAR.

The farmer is busy thrashing,
I hear the muffled blows,
And also the yellow yelling
Who gets the flail on the toes.

I hear the partridge drumming
Among the beeches dense,
And I see the chipmunk running
Along the old rail-fence.

And out in the russet stubble
The quail doth sweetly pipe,
And upon the breakfast-table
The old slapjack is ripe.

—*Puck.*

A FOUR-LEAVED SHAMROCK.

"I'll seek the four-leaved shamrock
Through all the fairy dells,
And if I find the charmed leaves,
Oh, how I'll weave my spells!"

"If I could but find one!" said Grace, pausing suddenly in the midst of her song, and letting her hands fall from the keys of the piano into her lap.

"What is the special virtue supposed to reside in the fourth leaflet of a shamrock?"

"Do you not know that a four-leaved shamrock is a supposed fairy talisman, giving its possessor an influence for good over all with whom he comes in contact? He can heal feuds, reunite parted friends—in fact, be every one's good genius. I think I shall look for one, Laurence."

"To what use would you apply your magic powers?"

"I would make your uncle relent, of course."

"I am afraid that nothing short of a fairy spell will accomplish that, Grace; reason has no effect whatsoever upon him."

"Have you been administering much of that article lately?"

"I spent more than an hour this morning in trying to make him see that after five years of hard work I have a right to a fixed salary, be it much or little. (We would be content with a little, would we not, Grace?) He will not admit my right to anything, but says that if I marry to please him, he will take me into partnership at once. As I do not, however, intend to gratify him in this respect, his liberal offers are not of much use."

"Did he name any particular person whom he wished you to marry?"

"Yes; Miss Blake, of Killora. It seems that he and old Blake have been talking the matter over after the manner of the farmers, and have come to an understanding concerning the number of cows and pigs, or their equivalents, to be contributed on each side. My uncle arranged a marriage the other day on strictly commercial principles, between the foreman's son and old Tom Byrne's daughter, and he is so proud of his performance that he is burning to try his hand on my affairs next.

"Alice Blake is a pretty girl and a nice girl, Laurence."

"She is about the prettiest girl I know, but for all that I don't mean to marry her. Nor do I think the arrangement would suit her much better than it does me. If I am not much mistaken, she, too, has plans of her own. But while my uncle has the notion in his head, we sha'n't be able to make him look at things from our point of view. Try to find the four-leaved Shamrock, Grace, and conjure up a little common sense for my uncle. A very little would do. I must go now; will you come as far as the gate with me."

And the two lovers sauntered out into the twilight and reiterated their last words at the garden gate, leaving the pretty little drawing-room to its sole other occupant, Grace's cousin Gerald, a slender, fair haired lad of about fourteen, who was lying listlessly on a low couch in the bow window.

Grace and Laurence had been playfellows for so many years, that no one but the uncle of the latter felt any surprise when they appeared in the character of lovers.

Mr. Latouche, however, was thunderstruck at the announcement of his nephew's attachment to Grace Neville, and declared, in language of which he afterward felt somehow ashamed, that should Laurence persist in his determination to marry the daughter of a beggarly half-pay captain, he might bid farewell to his present home and future prospects at Glenallan Mills.

Laurence was quite dependent on his uncle, with whom he had lived from childhood; he had always been treated as a son of the house, and on his return from school, had begun to assist his uncle in the management of his extensive flax mills.

Looked on by every one as the future master, and liberally supplied with pocket money, he was nevertheless without any fixed salary, and sometimes felt tempted to envy the mill-hands, who received their weekly pittance, not as a gift, but as a right.

He resolved, however, that come what might he would marry Grace, and he had already begun to make inquiries as to the probability of his being able to utilize the experience gained at Glenallan Mills in obtaining a salaried post in some similar concern.

While Grace and Laurence were loitering in the garden Gerald was pondering over the only portion of the foregoing conversation intelligible to himself—Grace's jesting wish for the four-leaved shamrock.

Poor Gerald was but half-witted; his brain had been injured by a fall in babyhood, and had never properly developed. He was still a child in mind, with all a child's belief in the marvelous—a belief which Grace was chary of discouraging, from an instinctive feeling that his imagination was his highest gift, which, once weakened or destroyed, would never be replaced by reasoning powers.

She was very fond of him, and devoted much time and trouble to the work of training him, and drawing out what little intellect he possessed; while he, on his part, repaid her care with a passionate devotion, obeying her slightest wish, and following her about like a shadow.

He was also fond of Laurence, a ride on whose horse constituted his greatest pleasure; and, though quite unconscious of the reason, he understood, in his own dim way, that Laurence's uncle was angry, and that Grace was grieved.

Anger was a terrible thing to poor Gerald, who dreaded stern looks and harsh words as other lads dread blows.

Why, he wondered, did Grace want the four-leaved shamrock. An unwonted fit of shy reserve prevented his asking for an explanation when Grace returned, but he puzzled over the question at intervals during the night, and the wish for a solution of the difficulty guided his wandering steps the next morning to his old nurse's cabin, which stood on a green hillside, some three miles from his home.

The old woman was sitting on her doorstep, knitting, and basking in the sunshine. She looked up joyfully as Gerald approached.

"Master Gerald, alanna, I thought I was never going to set eyes on you again. What became of you all this long while, honey?"

"I don't know nurse," answered Gerald. "I must have been busy, I think."

"Busy," said old Joan; "poor lamb, sure it's you that'll never know what being busy means; all the better for you, maybe. Sit down there, alanna, an' I'll get you a drink of milk."

Gerald stretched himself at full length upon the grass, and began to drink the milk which Joan brought him in a China mug sacred to his own use.

"How is Miss Grace?" asked Joan.

"I don't know," answered Gerald; "she is unhappy, I think. Her eyes were full of tears when she came in from the garden last night. She thought I did not see them, but I did. Nurse, what is a four-leaved shamrock?"

"A four-leaved shamrock, alanna? Why, a shamrock that has four little leaves instead of three."

"I know that. I mean, what is the use of it?"

"Well, people say that 'tis a fairy charm that brings luck to them that owns it. I never saw one myself, but my mother knew a woman that found one when she was milking her cow in the meadow, an' grew rich an' prosperous from that day out. Who was talking to you about it, Master Fitzgerald?"

"Grace was singing about it last night, and she said that she wished she could find one. It had something to do with Laurence's uncle, I think."

"Ah, yes," said Joan. "I suppose Miss Grace thinks that if she had one she could make things up between Master Laurence an' his uncle."

"And could she?"

"Who knows but she might? By all accounts there's wonderful power in a four-leaved shamrock."

"I wonder if I could find one," said Gerald.

"Perhaps you might. Sure it's to the likes of you that the good people often send their gifts. Look for it any way, Alanna. 'Tis a pity to have Miss Grace fretting.

Henceforth poor Gerald's one dream was to find the four-leaved shamrock, which was to avert the anger of Laurence's terrible uncle and make Grace happy.

Accordingly he wandered about, day after day, telling no one of his purpose, haunting every meadow and every copse where shamrocks grew, seeking the magic quatrefoil destined to work such spells.

Such freaks of nature, however, though they do occur, are very rare, and Gerald's quest was a fruitless one. He had at first avoided the neighborhood of Glenallan Mills from an unconquerable dread of meeting the terrible Mr. Latouche, whose stern face and iron-grey hair appeared to poor Gerald the embodiment of all that was awful.

At length, after days and weeks of patient search in other places, he so far overcame his repugnance as to go—in the early morning—to a large meadow through which the mill-stream flowed, and where the most luxuriant tufts of shamrock in all the country round were said to grow.

It was too early yet for the mill to be at work. The immense wheel was at rest, and a slender thread of rippling water flowed quietly on, giving no token of the force pent in by the sluices, and only awaiting a liberating hand to come rushing down and give life and motion to the slumbering mill.

As he neared the stream, which had steep, grassy banks, gay with many flowers, the great bell commenced ringing, and the workmen were trooping into the courtyard. He should abandon his search for that morning, since he would not risk a meeting with Mr. Latouche.

He was turning reluctantly away, when he perceived a particularly large tuft of shamrock on the steep bank. Some sudden impulse determined him to examine it closely, and he stretched himself on the grass above so as to look down upon it.

His sight was wonderfully long and clear, so that he could distinguish every leaflet in what to another person would have seemed but a confused mass of green. At length, to his unspeakable delight, he perceived the object of his search—a leaf actually composed of four divisions, at the end of a long, trailing stem.

Grasping the herbage firmly with one hand, he stretched the other toward his prize. As he did so, the sudden barking of a dog, accompanied by a loud shout, startled him, and losing his hold, he slipped down the steep bank into the stream below.

At the same moment the gates of the milldam were opened, and the pent-up waters, released from their prison, came seething and foaming down, seizing on poor Gerald's helpless form, and bearing him swiftly toward the certain destruction of the pitiless wheel.

The shout which had scared him was Laurence's, and the bark that of the latter's Newfoundland dog, Carlo. As the boy disappeared from view, Laurence ran forward, urging on his dog with voice and gesture, so that when he reached the bank he found Carlo already struggling with the stream.

To take off his coat and plunge in was the work of a moment. The dog's efforts had somewhat retarded poor Gerald's fate, and Laurence was enabled to seize him just as he was being drawn under the wheel.

A few long moments of desperate struggle, and Laurence found himself once more upon the bank, beside the apparently lifeless form of the lad whom he had saved, and whom he now, for the first time, recognized.

A little crowd of men had by this time gathered around him, one of whom, under his directions, carried poor Gerald into the house, and laid him on a sofa in the dining-room.

Mr. Latouche and his sister were summoned, and every effort was made to restore the boy to consciousness. When, after a long time, he opened his eyes, his first word was, "Grace!"

"Do you want her, Gerald?" asked Laurence, bending over him.

"Yes," said Gerald. "I have found it for her at last."

"Found what?"

"The four-leaved shamrock."

And opening his hand, he showed the little leaf which he had all through managed to keep safely inclosed within his palm.

"The four-leaved shamrock?"

"Don't you remember? Grace wanted it. She said that if she had one she could make your uncle forgive you."

"I remember," said Laurence, with a pang at his heart.

"What does he mean?" asked Mr. Latouche.

"I am afraid he must have over-heard some jesting nonsense of ours about a four-leaved shamrock. You know it is said to be a talisman. May I bring Grace here, sir."

"Certainly, if the poor child wishes for her. Take the pony-carriage."

Laurence hurried away, and in a little time the doctor, who had been sent for, came. He said that Gerald had received some injury, causing internal hemorrhage, and that his life was a question of minutes rather than of hours.

After a little time he opened his eyes and asked again for Grace.

"She will be here very soon now," answered Mr. Latouche.

He was standing a little behind the sofa, and Gerald was quite unconscious that the gentle tones to which he now listened were those of Laurence's terrible uncle.

"I am so afraid of being asleep when she comes," said Gerald. "I want to give her the four-leaved shamrock. She will be so glad to get it; she need not be afraid of Laurence's cross uncle any more."

"Does Laurence say that his uncle is cross?" asked Mr. Latouche, his face changing.

"No," said Gerald: "Laurence is very fond of him and Grace says that he is good, and that it is foolish of me to be so much afraid of him; but I think she is afraid herself, for she never will walk near the mills for fear of meeting him.

The sound of wheels was now heard, and a moment later Grace entered with Laurence.

She went straight over to the sofa and knelt beside it. When Gerald saw her, his whole face lighted up with joy.

"See, Gracie!" he whispered, showing his prize. "I have found the four-leafed shamrock!"

"Oh, Gerald!" sobbed Grace, "I shall never forgive myself if my foolish talk has led to this."

"Don't cry about me," said Gerald, "I am not really hurt. Put your arm round me—so. Now I can go to sleep comfortably. You need not be afraid of Laurence's uncle any more."

"I would rather never have seen Laurence again than this should have happened," she cried, passionately.

"Right," said Mr. Latouche, in answer to Laurence's look of dismay, "she is all the better worth winning for not being ready to fling old ties to the winds for the sake of her lover. How fond of her that poor boy seems!"

When Gerald next opened his eyes Mr. Latouche, moved by a sudden impulse, bent over him.

"Gerald," he said, "I can promise you that your cousin need never again be afraid of Laurence's uncle."

"I know," said Gerald, dreamily, "she will always be happy now."

"As happy as Laurence and I can make her."

Gerald smiled and closed his eyes.

After a time Laurence, seeing how it was, took him from Grace's arms, and laid him back upon the sofa.

"It is best as it is, Grace," he whispered; "his life as he grew older could scarcely have been a happy one. Up to this you have made it so."

* * * * * *

The four-leaved shamrock, inclosed within a golden circlet of Gerald's hair, hangs in a locket from Grace's watch-chain. Either by means of this, or of some other talisman in her possession, she has cast such a spell over Mr. Latouche that not even Laurence himself is more devoted to her than is the stern uncle to propitiate whom poor Gerald lost his life.

What the Moon is Doing to the Earth.

The tides are caused mainly by the moon, as it were, catching hold of the water as the earth revolves around on its axis. This must cause friction on the earth as it revolves, and friction, as every one knows, causes a loss of power. Suppose a wheel, with hair round its rim, like a circular-brush, such as is used for hair-brushing by machinery; if this brush be revolving rapidly, and we hold our hand ever so lightly on the hair, so that it is slightly rubbed backward as the wheel revolves, we can understand that the speed of the wheel will be gradually diminished, until at last it will be brought to a standstill, provided there is no additional power communicated to the wheel by machinery or hand beyond what was given to set it spinning round. Now this is somewhat analogous to what is happening to the earth in its rotation. There is reason to suppose that the action of the tides is slowly but surely lessening the speed of the earth's rotation, and consequently length of the day, and that this action will continue until the earth revolves on its own axis in the same time that the moon takes to revolve round the earth. Then the day, instead of being twenty-four hours as now, will be about twenty-eight days, and the earth will be exposed to the full blaze of the sun for about fourteen days at a time. The change this will bring about on the face of the earth can hardly be exaggerated. All life, both animal and vegetable, will be destroyed; all water will be evaporated; the solid rocks will be scorched and cracked, and the whole world reduced to a dreary and barren wilderness. It is supposed by some that the moon has already passed through all this, hence its shattered and bare-looking surface. That the earth, being so much larger, has more quickly acted upon the oceans which once were upon the moon's surface, and stopped almost entirely its revolution round its own axis, thus causing it to have a day equal to twenty-eight of our days, and the heat of the sun has already done to it what in future ages it will do to the earth.

SELECT SIFTINGS.

Dr. Spitzka says the popular delusion that the human eye has an influence over insane people similar to that claimed for the same organ over wild animals, is one that is often ridiculed by the insane themselves. He adds that whoever attempts to utilize the notion will recognize its absurdity promptly.

Eighteen ravens were captured near Gridley, Cal., a short time ago in a somewhat curious way. A flock of three hundred swooped down on the backs of a number of sheep that were grazing, and in the birds' eagerness to get away eighteen of them got their talons fastened in the sheep's wool, where they were held captive until secured by lookers on.

There are in the country eleven St. Pauls, twenty Bridgeports, eighteen Buffalos and Newarks, seventeen Brooklyns, Clevelands and Rochesters, sixteen Hartfords, fifteen Louisvilles, thirteen Bostons and Pittsburghs, eight Cincinnatis, and Philadelphias, six Chicagos, seven Detroits, five Milwaukees and St. Louises, thirty-two Washingtons and four New Yorks and Baltimores. New Orleans and San Francisco are not duplicated.

The following is said to be a good substitute for matches where it would be unsafe to use them. In a vial of clear, white glass, put a piece of phosphorous about the size of a pea. Fill the vial one-third full of boiling hot olive oil, and then cork it tightly. When a light is required, remove the cork a moment and then recork the vial. The empty space in the vial will become luminous. The process can be repeated as often as desired.

The method of curing hay in Norway is peculiar. In driving along the highway one notices out in the midst of a field ten or a dozen lengths of post and rail fence in a straight line. What is the object of the fences? When the grass is cut it is laid over these rails, tier above tier, to dry. In the curing process it has the benefit of the wind as well as sun: and, in case of rain, the water runs off readily. The color of the hay is nearly as bright a green as the standing grass.

A physician who has compiled hints for travelers seriously advises every one to carry a crochet needle to relieve possible ennui at health resorts, a very distinguished Chicago merchant having been greatly benefited of his dyspepsia and insomnia by learning to crochet beautifully during a long winter at a certain New York spring. Hereafter all mothers will teach their sons the delicate use of the crochet needle, and tidies will not be spurned by masculine contempt.

The Tichborne Claimant.

After having served out a term of eleven years in prison, the Tichborne claimant has been finally released. His sentence was for fourteen years, for the crime of perjury; but in accordance with the English system of "ticket of leave," he was set free three years short of his time, on account of his good conduct during the period of his imprisonment.

The "ticket-of-leave" system, by the way, means that while the prisoner is allowed to go at large, he still remains under the eye of the police, and may be at any time arrested and returned to prison if he breaks the promise made to abide by the laws.

This release of the Tichborne claimant is the sequel of the most audacious attempt at imposition in the history of modern times. It was the subject of two of the most exciting and momentous trials which ever took place in the English courts of justice.

The man who has suffered the penalty of his crime for eleven long years claimed to be Sir Roger Tichborne, a youth who had left his home and crossed the seas, and who was supposed to be lost by the wreck of the vessel on which he was traveling. The story of the pretended Sir Roger was most skillfully and artfully made up. It imposed not only on many of the real Sir Roger's schoolmates, servants and old friends, but even upon Lady Tichborne, his own mother. Lady Tichborne swore positively that the claimant was her long-lost son. The mass of testimony which he brought to sustain his case was simply prodigious. A large number of witnesses swore that they recognized in him the real Sir Roger. When he went upon the stand he gave an account of his wanderings and escapes, and related incidents of Sir Roger's youth, which convinced many English people, among them persons of rank and influence, of the justice of his claim. Several servants of the Tichborne family, who had seen Roger grow up from infancy to early manhood, were emphatic in their assertion that they saw their young master, grown stout and middle-aged, before them. But despite all this formidable weight of testimony, the case against the pretender was doubly strong. It was proved, not only that he was not and could not possibly be the real Sir Roger Tichborne, but that he actually was one Arthur Orton, a butcher of Wapping, who had lived in Australia, and had somehow got hold of enough of Roger's story to put it into his head to personate him.

When the jury, after a thrilling trial, which extended over months, declared him to be an impostor, Orton fled from the court-room, and tried to escape out of England. But the officers of the law were too active for him; and he was arrested and thrown into jail.

The second trial found him a prisoner in the dock, on trial for perjury and forgery. This trial, too, was long and intensely interesting, and resulted in the prisoner's conviction on all the counts in the indictment.

Throughout the eleven years of his confinment at Portland and Dartmoor, the claimant has unvaryingly continued to assert his identity with Sir Roger Tichborne. In this, too, strange to say, he has been supported, in spite of his conviction, by large numbers of the English people, who still believe that what he says is true.

It is not at all unlikely, therefore, that we may see some revival of the agitation to reinstate him in the title and estates which he stoutly maintains to be his due. He may resort again to the courts, with new evidence; or he may stand as a candidate for parliament. It seems pretty certain that the world has not yet heard the last of him.—*Youth's Companion.*

VICTIMS OF SPECULATION.

HOW THEY ARE DRAWN INTO THE MAELSTROM.

Human Nature and the Stock Market—Gamblers in Stocks and Their Peculiarities—Speculators' Omens.

"There's a better opportunity to study human nature on Third street than almost anywhere else," said a member of the firm of L. H. Taylor & Co., yesterday. "The most experienced operator on the street meets with surprises in his rough estimate of different men daily. Stock speculating is utterly different from any other pursuit, and it brings to the surface the stuff men are made of. If moral courage was divorced from stock speculating more men would lose fortunes than is the case.

"It requires courage to dabble in stocks. The man who makes a venture on a hundred shares of a doubtful stock and regrets it two or three minutes afterward will never be a successful speculator. It's the man who isn't afraid that comes out ahead. Some men when they make their first venture and lose are afraid to follow it up and retire after a brief and expensive experience.

"Some men won't buy stocks on a Monday; others are afraid of Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday, and a good many will hardly go near a ticker on Friday. Others, again, can't be induced to buy on a rainy day. One of the best known newspaper men in Philadelphia used to hold his watch in his hand and buy at fourteen minutes of eleven o'clock, for instance, and sell at eleven minutes after twelve. In three days he had lost all the cash he had. Some men have certain hours in the day when they buy and certain hours for selling. There are thousands of superstitions; and yet the men who dabble in stocks are intelligent men.

"Frequently the men who do not look overly bright are the shrewdest. Some bright looking man will get the report of a railroad and study it carefully and then begin to speculate with the stock.

Now, he's not the successful speculator. There's no system. No science in speculation. It requires knowledge to be sure. That generally has to be bought and paid for. The man who studies the crops and knows how many thousand bushels of corn and oats are produced throughout the country and studies the fluctuations of different stocks is what is called a good speculator."

"Beginners generally buy a hundred shares of some stock on margin," said Charles Wray, of the firm of Fell, Wray & Co. "If they make money on their first venture they become reckless and buy stocks promiscuously and, as a rule, come out at the little end of the horn. The novice on the street generally makes his first investment through hearing of some lucky hit a friend has made. Of course he never hears of his friend's losses. The friend never tells about them. It's only when he makes a hundred or two that he tells his friends, and that generally results in some one of them making an investment.

"About the men who are wrecked through speculation, the stories are exaggerated very greatly. There are failures in every business. The only difference between the speculator who loses and the storekeeper who fails is that the speculator loses his pile quicker. What the speculator loses eventually goes into the coffers of the big operators like Vanderbilt and Gould. The man who takes the quick profit makes the money. The man who holds on, hoping for a bigger rise, loses, as a rule, in the end. I remember a grocery clerk who was discharged from a large wholesale house in this city. He had $1,500 and went right on the street and begun selling Northern Pacific preferred short. He kept it up for six or seven months and then stopped short, worth nearly $100,000. Not long ago he went abroad to see the world.

"He'll come back again after he's spent say $15,000," went on the broker, and he'll be back on the street. Nine chances out of ten he'll lose all he's made. The great wise man is he who knows when to stop. But I know of hardly any instances where men let well enough alone.

"Gamblers who win at cards, invariably lose at stock speculating, and yet they are nervy as a rule. I know of many instances where large pots won at poker found their way a few hours later on Third street, and that was the last the gambler would see of the money. Some gamblers are successful, but not many.

"Politicians are great speculators, but taken as a whole they're not successful. Several well-known leaders have made strikes on Third street, but they didn't stop. They went ahead the next day and left it all and a little more. There are not many men on the street now who do nothing but speculate in stocks. Nearly all the speculators are merchants and business men, who want to make a little something outside.—*Philadelphia Times.*

Making Screws.

The process of making screws is a very interesting one. The rough, large wire in big coils is, by drawing through a hole of less diameter than itself, made the needed size. Then it goes into a machine that at one motion cuts it a proper length and puts a head on it. Then it is put into sawdust and "rattled," and thus brightened. Then the head is shaved down smoothly to the proper size and the nick put in at the same time. After "rattling" again in the sawdust, the thread is cut by another machine, and after another "rattling" and a thorough drying, the screws are assorted by hand (the finger of those who do this move almost like lightning), grossed by weight and packed for shipment. That which renders it possible for machines to do all this is a little contrivance that looks and opens like a goose's bill, which picks up a single screw at a time, carrying it where needed, holds it until grasped by something else, and returns for another. This is one of the most wonderful pieces of automatic machinery ever seen, and it does its distinctive work at the rate of thirty-one screws a minute, although this rate is only experimental as yet. Ninety-three gross a day, however, has been the regular work of one machine.—*Philadelphia Enquirer.*

Kentucky brags of an intelligent cow that digs potatoes with her horns and eats them.

HEALTH HINTS.

A fine drink for any time of the year is made simply by stirring a teaspoonful of oatmeal in a tumbler of water, with or without a pinch of salt.

The French method of administering castor-oil to children is to pour the oil into a pan over a moderate fire, break an egg into it, and stir up. When it is done flavor with a little salt or sugar or current jelly.

As soon as a felon makes its appearance, apply a poultice of equal parts of saltpeter and brimstone. Mix with sufficient lard to make a paste, and renew as soon as it gets dry. A few applications will effect a cure.

At a meeting of the New York Academy of Medicine, Dr. A. L. Ranney recommended the internal use of hot water in the treatment of nervous diseases. The theory of its action is that the nerves of the stomach are directly influenced by the introduction of heat into the empty organ, and that the accessory digestive organs are stimulated by it.

"Old Aunt Pattie" says: A certain cure for chilblains can be effected by washing the feet or other parts affected—before they are broken—in water as hot as you can bear it, then dry them thoroughly with a clean cloth, and rub them with spirits of hartshorn before the fire; keep them warm afterward by wrapping them up and going to bed. This should be done at night. I have never known it to fail.

A Newsboy's War Romance.

In the town of Bennington, in the green mountains of Vermont, in the spring of 1861, there lived a poor woman with six children, five boys and one little girl, the youngest of the former a stripling fourteen years old. When the wires flashed the news from Washington all over the land that Fort Sumter had been fired upon the four older boys responded to the country's call and hurried to the seat of war. The youngest lad, his heart fired with genuine Green Mountain patriotism, ran away from home, and eluding pursuit, made his way to the camp on the Potomac. But his ardor was somewhat dampened by the discovery of the fact that he could not, in consequence of his youth and diminutiveness, enlist as a soldier. Determined to remain at the front, and having, as the saying is, to scratch for a living, he went to selling newspapers to the soldiers. Leaving the camp between New Baltimore and Warrenton, about the 10th of November, 1862, he went to Washington for a supply of papers. Having accomplished his object, the young lad set out on horseback for the camp, having to travel a distance of thirty miles. A change of position by the army during his absence had occurred, and as a consequence he ran into the Confederate picket line and was taken to General J. E. B. Stuart's headquarters, at a hotel in Warrenton, and from there sent to Libby prison, in Richmond, arriving there November 13. Major Turner was in command of the prison, and when the young prisoner was brought into his presence, observing that he was a mere boy, the major spoke kindly to him, and after his name had been enrolled asked him the customary question, if he had any money or valuables about his person. The frightened boy had managed to conceal his money, $380, in his boots, and in answer to the question put his hand down, and while a tear drop glistened in his bright eye and his boyish lip quivered, he brought it forth and handed it to the Confederate major, and trying hard to choke down the swelling in his throat, he told of his widowed mother at home, his four brothers in the army, he having made his money selling papers, and saving it to send with his brothers' wages to his mother. The major folded the boy's passes round the money and said to him: "You shall have this again, my boy, when you are permitted to go from here. Six weeks afterward the lad was paroled, and repairing to Major Turner's office the kind officer, handing him the package of money and the passes, just as he had received them, said: "Here is your money, my boy." With trembling hand but a joyous heart the little fellow took the package. He was sent to Washington, and a few weeks afterward was going his old round selling newspapers. The boy was Doc Aubrey, the newsboy of the Iron Brigade, who now resides in Milwaukee, and he gave us these facts during the late reunion of the Iron Brigade in this city.—*Grant Co. (Wis.) Herald.*

Plants as Purifiers.

Dr. James Evans, in a paper read before the South Carolina Medical association, says that the net work of fine fibrous roots of trees and plants traversing the soil in every direction feed on the organic matter which would otherwise undergo decomposition, and pollute the soil, air, and surface water. The vegetation also absorbs any excess of moisture, and drains the soil. This is no doubt true, but it is very difficult to so manage plant culture that there should neither be too many nor too few about our dwellings. The exhalations of trees and smaller plants may aid greatly in dispersing moisture, but it is also true that shade arrests evaporation and keeps the soil moist for a much longer time than when it is exposed to light and the direct rays of the sun. Plants and trees are no doubt great purifiers, but the jungles of India and the swamps of Africa are not healthly localities, although vegetation in great variety abounds, and in the utmost profusion.—*New York Sun.*

Epitaph on Webster's Horse.

Daniel Webster once had a favorite horse, called Steamboat, remarkable for speed as a roadster. At his death Fletcher Webster had him buried on "Gotham hill," at Marshfield, and a stone erected to perpetuate his memory. The crest on the stone is a horse's head, and underneath is inscribed the following epitaph:

Hic jacet
Equus celiberrimus
DANIEL WEBSTER'S
Steamboat Vocatus,
Obiit Nov. 3, 1838.

'Siste, viator, major te viator hic siste."

This epitaph, translated, is as follows: "Here lies Daniel Webster's celebrated horse, called Steamboat, died Nov. 3, 1838. Stop, traveler; a greater traveler than you stops here."—*Ben Perley Poore.*