THE BLUE HEN'S CHICKENS.

An Old Fellow Who Was Much Taken With Something New in the Chicken Line.

"Well, fur mercy's sake, look that, pap," Said a woman, dressed in faded calico and dim gingham. The old fellow stopped and the woman pointed at a lot of colored eggs which had been left over from Easter, and which the grocer had temptingly arranged in front of his store. "Look thar," the woman repeated, pointidg at the eggs.

"They air a new wrinkle on my ho'n," said the old fellow, faking up one of the eggs and examining it. "These here," he added, addressing the grocer who approached, "muster been laid by one uv the ole blue hen's chickens."

"They are descendants from the old blue hen, sure enough," the grocer replied, who showed an accomodating quickness to tell a lie, either through courtesy or with an eye to business.

"You don't say so."

"Yes, sir, and I bought them for Mr. Garland, who sent me word some time ago to get him a few if I possibly could."

"Wall. Gus ought to know what nice eggs is."

"Well, I've heard about the old blue hen's chickens all my life, but this is the first time I ever seed any uv the aigs."

"They are not very plentiful now," said the grocer. "In fact, they are bought up by the agents of monopolies and sent north for the use of rich raisers."

"The chickens, I reckon, lay over the common run of fowls."

"As much, sir, as day lays over night."

"What special advantage have they got?"

"Well, they lay three times a day, for one thing."

"Now, look here, you don't mean that."

"I reckon he do, pap," the woman declared. "I know in reason that he do, for Aunt Caroline Welsh that had some in No'th Kliny, told me jest befo' she died that they wuz the outlayenist things she ever seed' an' says she, 'Everline, I do believe that the aigs is fresher than the aigs uv these here common chickens.'"

"She was right," said the grocer. "Mr. Garland tells me that the eggs will keep for years without spoiling, but," he added, laughingly, "if he don't mind he will find that they don't keep so well after all, for if he doesn't come after them pretty soon I'll sell them. He is a mean man and can't afford to let his money lie idle, you know."

"That's a fact," the farmer replied. "Now what mout they be worth?"

"Well, I hardly know. Where do you live?"

"In Saline river, about two days ride from here."

"Do you come to town very often?"

"Fust t me I wuz ever here."

"I thought that if you came to town very often I might engage you to bring me a lot of the chickens when they hatch, but I guess it won't do. I'll let you have all six of them for sixty cents."

"Ain't that a putty heavy price?"

"Oh, no, pap," said the woman. "Jest think pv chickens that lay aigs—fresh aigs—that—three times a day."

"All right" said the old fellow, hauling out the toe of an old sock and shaking a few dimes from it; "I'll take 'em. Shore they'll hatch?"

"Hatch! Why you can cover them up with an old straw hat and they'll hatch. Shore they will. You call again."

When the grocer went back into the store, he slapped himself, laughed uproariously and then said:

"It may be wrong to cheat th s way, but I don't believe we are called upon to have sympathy for such ignorant people; and, besides, honest old farmer as he looks, he'd cheat me in a minute if he could."

Several weeks later an old fellow drove up to the grocery store and asked a man who came out to the curbstone if he wanted to buy any guineas or hens.

"Fresh as they ken be an' already cleaned," said the old fellow.

"What do you ask for them?"

"Wall, I don't know what they air wuth. You see they air mighty big ones."

"Yes, I see. How many have you got?"

"Fifteen."

"There is not much sale for guineas."

"They ought to be worth ten cents a piece, oughtent they?"

The grocer, with shrewd hesitancy, replied: "I don't know. Well drive round to the back door and put them out."

Immediately after receiving his money the old fellow drove down town, and, with a woman who seemed to be his wife, was standing on a street corner, when the grocer who had bought the guineas rushed up and exclaimed:

"Your are a lying wolf, that's what you are!"

"What's the matter?"

"You sold me a lot of buzzards, you old wretch, and I am going to have you arrested if you don't give me back my money. One of my best customers bought one and then, discovering what it was, struck me over the head with it and then left the place."

"W'y, pap, that was too bad, wan't it?" said the woman.

"I recognize you, now," said the grocer, stepping back.

"Yas," said the old fellow, "an'—but don't be in a hurry. Didn't know the blue hen's chickens when you seed 'em, eh? Wy, I thought you knowed all about the breed. Say, whenever you want any more, jest let me know. They lay three times a day, you know, but I'm sorry that the chickens ain't as fresh as the aigs. When you come out my way, drap in to see me."—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

Too Honorable for That.

De Garmo—"What does your sister say about me, Bertie?"

Bertie—"She said to-day that she didn't think you'd ever set the river on fire."

De Garmo—"What confidence she has in me! Of course she knows I'm too honorable to do anything of that kind."—*Tid-Bits.*

A town in Calhoun county, Alabama, has been named Lincoln in honor of the war president.

ON THE SAME ROAD.

Nature does not shed her beauties alone in those parts of our universe where tourists and sight-seers most frequently visit, the world in some of its obscurest places is filled with beauties that have escaped the eyes of the fever.

Who would have thought of traveling in a stage twenty miles from the nearest railroad station, or footing it at a necessarily slow pace over the hills and rocks of Cheshire county, to see how aptly nature had done her work in this particular place? As for the inhabitants of the little hamlet nestled up among the hills, very few of them had time to think of such matters as feasting their eyes on natural loveliness, or even giving a thought to their surroundings. Their only object in life seemed to be to get up at five, eat the required number of meals, attend to the duties of the day, and go to bed again when night came. There was very little variety in the lives of these people, yet they seemed to be well enough contented with their lot, except that now and then some ambitious spirit would overleap the bounds and make a journey out into the world, to see what people were doing there, and those who did become so ill, very frequently returned to the old way of living.

One of these discontented spirits, who refused to believe that everything the world contained was found up here among the hills of Cheshire county, was a young and rather good-looking girl. It seemed to Janet Gray as if this dull, monotonous, unvarying routine would never end, and every day she longed more and more to leave it.

It was on a bright morning early in May, that, returning from an errand, she threw herself down by a little brook, to rest and to think. Her face was flushed with fast walking, and with her dark hair and eyes showing to an advantage against the folds of new gingham dress, Janet presented quite a pretty picture to William Thomas Toy, as he observed her from the cornfield some yards away. But Thomas was a man who did not consider a wish long ere he strived to fulfill it, and it was soon at her side, and looked up with a surprised air when she heard his, "Good-morning," and said, "Oh! it's you, is it?" as she looked into her thoughtful mood. He watched her a while in silence, being too well accustomed to Janet's way to disturb her at such times, but finally he mustered up courage to make a remark—

"Janie, what makes you so thoughtful this morning?"

"Tom," she answered after a pause, "I want you to help me. I am so confused this morning that I can't tell what I see my way to do what I am determined to do. I am going away." The young man gave a start. "This place is positively unbearable longer. Some folks may be content to drag out their lives in such a place as this, but I am not one of them. I can be and will be something. It does seem to me such positive nonsence for people to be willing to live along in a hand-to-mouth sort of way up here among the hills, and I never do anything of note in the world except what every mortal does to preserve life, (namely, eat, drink and sleep. It is like being buried alive."

Having delivered herself of this unmaidenly speech, Tom sat waiting for more, but more didn't come. At last he ventured to say,—

"Janie, I am sorry you are so tired, of all of us; but if you can't be with us over yonder hills and do something honest and honorable in the world, you'll go, and I know better than to say one word of hindrance."

"Yes, Thomas Troy, that is the first right down sensible thing I ever heard you say," she answered, with a look of relief. "Of course you know better than to hinder me, if you could. I will remember you for your kind intentions. I am not so tired of you, Thomas; nor any of the rest of the folks. I don't want to go out of your lives altogether, but it is these hopelessly hilly hills, and this lonely life that tires me. Just think, Tom, if I should stay here all the days of my life, what a record I would have to look back on, and die how it would sound to read on my grave-stone,—

Here rests the body of Janet Gray,
Whereabo's unknown, to-day.

By the way, Tom, what kind of a poetess do you think I'd make?"

"Janie," said Tom, "your ambitions are all right. As for poetry, never try that, whatever you do. It isn't every poor rhymer that wins fame, for every author that writes a book is in time and chance with everybody. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

"Good here, Bible-reader, Thomas Toy, I am well convinced you'd discourage me if you could; but all the Scriptures you can quote and all the arguments you can use won't better your cause one iota. I do not intend to make rhyming a profession. But you, Thomas, don't you think I am rather a fair scribe?"

"Why, Janie," said Tom, who would deny the fact? I wish with all my heart I could write as fair a hand; but these clumsy laborers' hands of mine were never meant to hold a pen daintily. But, Janie, what prompted you to ask me such a question? Give us something more closely related to the subject. How is it you want me to help you? I am ready to do all I can."

"That I'll tell you. Of course I'll break this news to Lizzie first; but whenever you hear of me as the astounding revelation, no doubt it will be worse than if a cyclone had dipped down and blown these blue tops and bets to the four winds. I mean no harm to Lizzie by that remark, so don't stare so; I think my stepmother was a nice one to me, and lives well at any rate, though she can't 'for the life of her' see why folks don't like this out-landish region as well as she does. Now for your part, Tom. Lizzie will tell the boys, of course, and they will do all they can to keep me at home, and will rely on your kind influence, but I want you, as you are a friend of Janie Gray, to persuade them that my course is the right one; that I know what I am doing; for you know, Tom, they have unlimited faith in that to which you lend countenance."

"Janie if I could only feel convinced that your course is just right. I am a man of few words, little education, but some experience, and I know enough to warn even you, Janie Gray, that the path of the world's lavor is a dangerous and difficult one. There are pitfalls in cities for inexperienced girls that you know not of, and it requires a faithful and steady arm to overcome these dangers. If it were only in my power to protect you through the world! It is a strong right arm that would keep danger from your door; it is an honest loving heart that would prompt Thomas Toy to advise nothing in which he could not altogether believe."

"Tom," answered Janie. "I've told you many times that you must not talk to me of such things. Our paths lie in different directions. Your lot is cast among people with whom I have nothing in common. They look up to you for commendation and counsel. You are the Adam Bede of this little community. You rejoice in being a giant among dwarfs. I will never be content until I can mingle with a people of whom I can learn something, to my advantage. Tom, if you would only cut loose from these old associations; go to some place, see the world. Get an education; be a man; then join a woman who can appreciate the nobility within you, but so deeply laid that it isn't for Janet Gray to make it shine with brightest lustre; and, having done this, you will be a man with a man's interest's, and not the pleading, life-sick drudge you will specially become in trying to earn a subsistence by upturning those hillside sods."

"But, Tom," she continued and as she noticed the downcast look in his eyes, she rose and laid her hand upon his dark, curly locks and brushed them back from a brow broad and intellectual; "I didn't mean to hurt you by what I said. Remember always that Janet Gray has a sister's interest in you, and though you may wear away all your days in rough labor, you are on true man for all that, and no one knows it better than myself. I'll always remember you whether in poverty or comfort, sickness or health, and though it isn't for one like me to fill the place of wife to Thomas Toy, yet try to reward my sisterly interest with a brother's love."

"Janie," said he, as he drew her hand reverently to his lips, "you are as far above me in thought as you are above the earth. This hand (you are right, Janie) was never meant to do the toil of a farmer's wife. Go, my sister, for your mental and moral welfare, honesty, and a good name. Go, Janie, where the world will appreciate you into her thoughtful mood. Some new gingham dress, Janet presented quite a pretty picture to William Thomas Toy, as he observed her from the cornfield some yards away. But Thomas was a man who did not consider a wish long ere he strived to fulfill it, and it was soon at her side, and looked up with a surprised air when she heard his, "Good-morning," and said, "Oh! it's you, is it?" as she looked into her thoughtful mood. He watched her a while in silence, being too well accustomed to Janet's way to disturb her at such times, but finally he mustered up courage to make a remark—

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