

THE ODELET OF THE BIRD-LET.

The cloudlet o'er the summer sky
Is scattered by the sunlet,
E'en as the debilitated doth fly
Empathic from the dumlet.
The birdlet doth his tootlet twit
Upon the little treetlet,
And doglets all their tootlets fit
At vitals of the fleatlet.

At mornlet now the wormlet droops
And dangles from the boughlet,
And for the cudlet browses in troops
The sheeplet and the cowlet.
The fishlet with his mouthlet woos
The jeopardizing baitlet,
And of the fickle lasslet coos
With ladlet at the gatelet.
—Yonkers Gazette.

THE ARTIFICIAL MOTHER.

"No," I said, "I can't stand this any longer. I might as well have no wife at all as to have one who, instead of belonging to me, her lawful lord and master, is at the beck and call of sundry small specimens of humanity, to whose remorseless tyranny she yields an obedience as implicit and uncompensated as that of the most abject slave."

Nos. 8 and 9 of our little family had arrived together, and, sturdy little fellows that they were, had recognized the situation at a glance, had deposed No. 7 from her position of supremacy, and had set up a despotism over their mother and the household perhaps the most unmerciful that had as yet been experienced.

It will be apparent from this preliminary word that I am a married man, sufficiently so the superficial reader may imagine. But it is precisely my complaint that, while my opportunities for the development of my parental qualities are unsurpassed, my married life, so far as the society of my wife is concerned, don't amount to—well, to the value of a Confederate dollar.

If, going "fair shares" with my progeny, I had been permitted to put in claim for, say an even tenth of her attention, I should have nothing to say. But these ogres of children pull her to pieces in small mouthfuls through the twenty-four hours between their nine voracious selves, without giving me a chance for even a thirty-second nibble.

In giving them their classification in the animal kingdom, I should, I think, place them under the head of "Polypophagi," or "mother devourers."

I was just beginning to console myself with the thought that before No. 1 became old enough to sit up evenings No. 7 would learn to go to sleep before midnight, when Nos. 8 and 9 arrived as I said "all in a heap," and deranged my calculations. "No," I said, for perhaps the 996th time, as the maternal slave, after eliminating Nos. 1 and 2 in a flood of disgrace and tears (that gave them the appearance of a compound waterspout), tucking up 3, 4 and 5, who were accidentally good, and turning over to me the cradles containing 6 and 7, with injunctions to keep them stirring, rushed to obey the vociferous calls of the despots in chief, the two latest arrivals—"it won't do."

"Polly," I asked, as she returned, a little out of breath, with a red-faced tyrant on each arm, "what do those wretches, I was about to say, but fortunately checked myself in time] young gentlemen want?"

"Why, a little motherly affection, to be sure," she answered, commencing to "croon" to them in the language peculiar to mothers and babyhood. "They want me."

"Bosh!" I rejoined. "They want merely something soft to touch, a swinging motion to addle their brains (if they have any) and a monotonous din in their ears, and they would be just as well satisfied if these were supplied by a steam engine as by their mother. It is all nonsense to talk of babes having affection. You might as well believe in their Calvinism or transcendentalism or any other product of later life."

Polly, however, was too much absorbed in the "crooning" process to listen to my insinuations, and the beginning of a growl in one of the cradles at my feet recalled me to my own duty. But while I worked I pondered. The word uttered in jest remained in my mind. "A steam engine?" Yes. Why not? Or an engine of some kind to perform at least this routine labor of keeping the young savages at rest by keeping them in motion. Something steady, and soft, and swinging, and "crooning." Pshaw! science has solved worse problems than this. It is simply the construction of an "artificial mother." The thing is possible, and it shall be done! I gave the cradle a kick of malicious satisfaction that evoked from No. 7 a roar of protest.

On my way to business next morning I called at the studio of an artist friend to see a new picture, and my eye rested on a lay figure standing gracefully draped in one corner. It flashed across me that this was just what I wanted, and I persuaded my friend to spare it to me for a time for some work I myself had in hand.

I did not want to startle Polly or

to arouse the suspicions of the twins prematurely, so I carried the figure up to a disused garret and devoted all the spare hours of the ensuing week to experimenting upon her. She was, fortunately for my purpose, of the finest Paris make, steel springs, and double extra jointed, and there was a question merely of applying the inward power ("true inwardness") and the outward appurtenances.

I will not weary my readers with all the details of my labors, I became so absorbed in my task that I could hardly give thought to anything else. My business suffered, and my wife complained that my face was getting a vacant stare upon it, and she thought I was spending too many hours at the horrid club. It is sufficient to say that after various ineffectual experiments with steam, compressed air, and electricity I at length succeeded in placing in the body of my lay woman a clock-work combination which, by a series of spiral connections with the head, arms, and shoulders, moved these in a uniform swing, timed to coincide with that of the rocking-chair in which I had placed her. The periodicity and harmony of the movements were perfect, and I even flattered myself that there was some special grace in the upward sweep of the arms and quiet a motherly effect to the downward bend of the head.

But the crowning triumph of my labors was the duplex "crooning attachment," by means of which was generated the necessary "rumble-jumble," (with whose monotonous sounds I was only too familiar) which came streaming out of the mouth in an unbroken succession that nothing but the action of the "safety-stop valve" could break off.

This part of my "mother" cost me much care and anxiety, for I knew that unless this could be a success all other excellent qualities would go for nothing. My mechanical readers will easily guess the principle of the "attachment." A series of diminutive organ-tubes were arranged in the chest, the valves of which worked by clock-springs, while the sounds were conducted through a larynx delicately constructed from a turkey's gizzard to the mouth. The first attempt with the combination produced only a series of unearthly gasps, at the bottom of which I thought I detected the ghost of a gobble; but a little modification of the valves, the treatment of the gizzard with a weak solution of aqua regia, which softened away all its harsh reminiscences, and the interposition between this and the tube of a pair of miniature drum heads (made of mouse-skin) as reverberators of the sound, gave me the happy result of a complete series of "croon waves." I was able also finally to arrange these in three sets of chords, so that the crooning could be made piano, andante, or furiosissimo, according to the age, condition, or degree of obstreperousness of the infant being operated upon. Of course the clockwork upon which the crooning depended was entirely distinct from the system controlling the movements of the body, being of necessity much more complex and delicate, as supplying what might be termed the brain power of the creature.

A carefully prepared rag baby was laid in the arms of the expectant mother, the two sets of works were wound up, the starting springs touched, and the rocking, and fondling, and crooning commenced with such perfect naturalness, grace, and harmony, that I was carried away by my delight and caught myself saying, "My dear, you are a grand success and reflect credit on your maker."

I put on the stops and the baby dropped with an easy motion of the arms into the "mother's" lap, the crooning softened down into the gentle murmur of the "piano," then ceased altogether, and the mother sat looking at her sleeping child with an aspect of such calm dignity and sweet motherliness that I was irresistibly impelled to give her a kiss of husbandly approval.

"What would Polly say?" I thought, as I wiped from my lips the slight touch left on them by the damp paint. Removing the rag baby, I lifted with some effort the chair containing my handiwork down to the door of my parlor, which, since the advent of the twins, had been appropriated by them as a special private nursery, where my occasional presence was permitted only on sufferance. The moment seemed propitious for my experiment.

I could hear the twins yelling with vociferous indignation for their slave Polly, who evidently had called into the farther nursery by some outbreak among their predecessors. I opened the door, placed the rocking-chair cozily in front of the fire, smoothed down the drapery and loosened out the hair of its occupant, and gently laid a twin in each arm. A touch on the springs and the arms moved up clasping the still clamorous infants to her breast, the head bent over, the feet touched the floor, impelling the chair with a uniform swing, and with an equally uniform monotony the steady waves of the "crooning" poured forth from her lips.

The twins hushed their angry complaining and looked up inquiringly at the being to whom their destiny (in the shape of their father) had confided them. It was a moment of terrible suspense if their keen perceptions discovered the fraud; if they decided that in addition, to the creature comforts of warmth and motion, and noise, it was essential

to their happiness to have also the "je ne sais quoi" of motherliness that my substitute could not bestow upon them if (in the language of the day) their unarticulated yearnings revealed to them that their souls were not fed and their sensibilities not ministered, to their beautiful theories would fall baseless to the ground, and my labor and hopes would, indeed, have been in vain.

What an ideal domestic existence would be that in which the natural article could be brought to a safe stop within a tenth of a second!

It now remained only to put the finishing touches on my "mother" in completing her attire and adornment. I gave careful attention to the details of these, for I knew that those twins were very sharp fellows, and I did not propose to give them any ground for irreverence or even criticism, in the appearance of the lady who was to stand to them in loco matris. One of Polly's nursery gowns, with the color of which the twins were perfectly familiar, was skillfully abstracted from her wardrobe, and gracefully draped round the "mother," whose arms and breast had first been carefully padded.

The face was deliberately touched up by my artist friend (whom I had finally been obliged to take into my confidence) until it wore an air of maternal affection and solicitude almost surpassing that of the original, and the hair (which was one of the most expensive items of my purchased paraphernalia) was arranged as nearly as possible in the regular "disarrangement" to which the babies were accustomed.

This I found difficult to effect without impairing the safety of the fastenings, and I dreaded somewhat the chance of one of the twins in an enterprising moment giving a grab at the "light ringlet just sweeping his face," but it was a risk that had to be incurred.

And now she was complete and my heart beat high with triumph and expectation, and visions came before me of the time when, with a whole team of "artificial mothers" crooning peace and comfort through the house, Polly and I could roam away in blissful idleness and renew the days of our youth.

But no! Firmly held in the warm embrace of the untiring arms, evenly rocked in the steady swing of the chair and dinned into unconsciousness by the unbroken stream of sound, they stilled their noisy complainings, accepted the situation, and relapsed into a state of blissful contentment and repose. It was evident that babies had no souls that need administering to, and my "artificial mother" was a success. I threw myself into an easy chair, with the consciousness that I had done a great work for the world, for myself, for Polly.

Just then I heard her step approaching. The sudden cessation of the wonted cries had alarmed her keen ear, and she came flying in, looking, with the flash of haste and alarm on her face especially pretty and charming.

"Our new nurse, my dear," I said, waving my hand toward the chair.

"A friend who has come in to lend a hand," I proceeded rather incoherently, seeing that Polly stood aback with doubt, bewilderment, and vague apprehension.

"In short, my dear, my new artificial mother," I burst out in desperation, as she stood still and stared, while the rocking went on without ceasing, and the crooning started on a higher key.

"Artificial what?" cried Polly. "O, Tom, what frightful experiments are you making with my blessed boys? Let me have them at once!" she cried rushing at the figure.

But the babies were clutched the tighter, and the chair swung more swiftly, and the "crooning" burst into a louder strain with what sounded like a defiant ring.

"Give me my children!" shrieked Polly, trying to check the ceaseless swing of the chair, but the "mother" continued imperturbable, and answered her vehemence with a bland, fixed smile.

"Tom, help me! the thing is a demon!" screamed Polly in desperation, pulling frantically at the mother's arms. But, even as she spoke, the swinging redoubled in velocity until the two babies grew black in the face, and seemed merged into one. The crooning burst into a savage roar, as if, indeed, a fiend had taken possession of my innocent mother, and to my excited imagination it really seemed that her eyes flashed fire and her face assumed an expression of demoniacal malice.

Just then, with a ferocious tug, Polly succeeded in pulling the mother up from the chair. For a moment they stood facing each other, glaring at each other in rage and defiance until I could hardly tell which looked the more terrible of the two.

Then came a "whir" and a snap, and with a frightful clashing together and a last despairing "croon" the "mother" sank into fragments on the floor, shooting the two babies to the opposite side of the room, like billiard-balls from a carom.

With the whirr, and the crooning, and the clash still ringing in my ears, I woke up and found I had tripped over the cradle of No. 7 on top of No. 6, and the collision had produced a small pandemonium.

My "artificial mother" was a dream, but may I not hope also a prophecy?—William Johnson in Ohio State Journal

Wool felts, plain and with Astrakhas combinations will again be shown.

To Scare Away Snakes.

A gentleman who recently returned from the Western coast of Africa tells how natives provide against the dangers of venomous snakes which abound in those regions. "The Africans on the coast," he said, "are far more intelligent than those in the interior. Just south of the Republic of Liberia there is a large swampy region which extends for hundreds of miles into the interior and for many miles along the coast. Whenever it is deemed necessary to penetrate this vast morass, which abounds in snakes, the natives simply rub the soles of their feet with garlic and oil. The scent of the garlic is too much for the delicate stomach of the reptiles, and they crawl away as fast as they are able. This insures almost absolute safety. The boa-constrictor even hesitates to attack a man smelling of this odoriferous vegetable. Another method employed by the natives when they wish to sit to rest is to swish the air with rods. The peculiar noise of the rod seems to inspire the serpents with terror; for they hasten away out of hearing of the sound."—New York Mail.

A Memory of Early Days.

Bane of childhood's tender years,
Swallowed oft with groans and tears,
How it made the flesh recoil,
Loathsome, greasy castor oil!
Search your early memory close,
Till you find another dose!
All the shuddering frame revolts
At the thought of Epsom salts!
Underneath the pill-box lid
Was a greater horror hid,
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action of Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative
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he is in the morning? Because he is let
out at night and taken in in the morning.

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The Suez Canal cost \$100,000,000.
The Panama company has already in-
curred obligations for \$575,000,000.

The Simplon Railway.

The commission appointed to investigate the project of the Simplon Railway estimate that the line from Viege to the Italian frontier, a distance of fifteen and a half miles, will cost in round figures £2,100,000 if the tunnel be for a single line only, and £2,500,000 if the tunnel be for a double line. These estimates include the approaches to the tunnel, the custom-house buildings at Viege; thirteen locomotives, estimated at £2,800 each and a special reserve fund for unforeseen difficulties which might arise in consequence of the high temperature in the tunnel during construction. But the estimates do not include the cost of raising capital and paying interest during construction. The commission recommend as a suitable section for the tunnel: For a single line—21 feet high and 18 feet wide; for a double line—27 feet wide, the cross-sectional areas being 350 square feet and 450 square feet respectively. It is estimated that six years will be required for the construction of

the tunnel if no unforeseen difficulties occur, but if the latter should be the case the commission do not think that the time would exceed eight and a half years.—Industries.

Tricks of the Italian Milkman.

I noticed for some days that my milk was very, very thin. I had stood by whilst it was milked; what, then, could be the cause? Was it that the cow-drunk too much water? I would have been compelled to adopt this solution but for a discovery that soon happened. When I came across my cowman the second or third evening he was milking for an Italian, and I was surprised when I saw this latter suddenly step up to the cowman and squeeze him by the arm. As surprising as was this action, however, the result was still more so—a stream of water was ejected from the cowman's sleeve, and I then understood how milk can be watered before one's very eyes without one's detecting it. I happened to mention this incident to the American Consul, and he assured me the trick was quite common. A bag of water is kept under the coat and let down into the cup through a rubber tube in the sleeve. When detected, a shrug of the shoulders, a "Santa Maria, what difference?" and pure milk for the sharp eye; when not detected, he laughs in his sleeve as he lets the water down through his sleeve and sells it to you at six cents a quart.—Rome Letter.

Anecdotes.

Leslie in his "reminiscences" relates that forty-nine years ago, at the date of her coronation Queen Victoria had a pet spaniel, which always was on the lookout for her return when she was away from home. On the day of her coronation her majesty had, of course, been separated from her pet longer than usual, and when the state coach drove up to the palace steps she heard him barking joyously in the hall, and exclaimed, "There's Dash," and was in a hurry to dash her crown and royal robe and give Dash his bath. "I don't know why," said Leslie, "but the first sight of her in her robes of state brought tears into my eyes, and it had this effect upon many people; she looked almost like a child." Thomas Campbell, the poet, who was present, said, in his application for a ticket to the earl marshal, that "There was a place in the abbey called Poet's corner, and perhaps room might be found in it for a poor living poet."

That Tired Feeling

The warm weather has a debilitating effect, especially upon those who are within doors most of the time. The peculiar, yet common, complaint known as "that tired feeling" is the result. This feeling can be entirely overcome by taking Hood's Sarsaparilla, which gives new life and strength to all the functions of the body. "I could not sleep; had no appetite. I took Hood's Sarsaparilla and soon began to sleep soundly; could get up without that tired and languid feeling; and my appetite improved." R. A. BARFORD, Kent, Ohio.

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