DAWN IN THE COUNTRY.

The sun is lifting up its head
And nodding to the world;
The morning-glory's left its bed
Its petals pink unfurled.

Dawn chased away the will-o'-wisp;
The owls no longer see;
The bird-notes float out clear and crisp
From yonder willow tree.

The brook is rippling fresh and bright
Along the deep ravine,
Past violets blue and violets white,
Past ferns and grasses green.

The dew has left the clover swee
Where bees begin to hum:
And to the poppies in the wheat
The butterflies have come.

So waken, ere the scene is gone;
Refresh your weary eyes
Upon the beauties of the dawn
'Neath summer's country skies.
—E. F. Andreas, in Ladies' Home Journal.

AN OLD, OLD STORY.

“NO use!” said Mary desperately. “I can't think of a single thing to say.”

She sat and frowned gloomily, biting the end of her penholder. Now and then she ran her hand distractedly through her hair. This was a trick of hers when thinking hard, and, as a rule, the result was more startling than pleasing.

“It is of no use!” she said again; but this time with a different inflection. “I mustn't sit here and give way to laziness like this. If I don't write a tale, we can't pay the grocer's bill! I must and will begin, only—what on earth am I to say?”

Mary's brain was fertile enough, and her busy fancy generally delighted in spinning love stories and the like. In the early days of her scribbling she had been greatly laughed at by her mother and sisters, but when welcome little checks began to come in return for bulky envelopes sent through the post, the tone of the family altered, and Mary had for some time been regarded as a person of importance.

“Oh, Mary must write a tale,” her mother would say easily, when an additional expense was suggested. So the fancy of the moment would be indulged in, and Mary would shut herself up in the little room she called her own, from whence in due time she would emerge tired but triumphant.

On this particular morning, however, she racked her brains in vain. She tried her hardest to think of some slender framework upon which to hang the usual mild lovemaking, but the more she tried to woo “the muse,” the more obstinately did the said muse refuse to respond to her advances.

“I feel exactly as if a wet sponge had been passed over my brain,” she thought despairingly. “There doesn't seem a single idea left.”

Just then a gentle rap came at the door.

“Come in,” said Mary impatiently.

She never liked being interrupted when she was trying to work, and just now she felt more than usually cross.

Her face relaxed a little, however, when she saw her visitor.

“You, John! I thought it was Jennie. I wondered whatever she wanted now.”

“Poor Jennie,” said the newcomer, laughing.

“Poor Mary, I think,” rejoined Mary dolefully.

“Why, whatever is the matter?” asked John Redmond, taking a seat, and evidently preparing to make himself as comfortable as circumstances permitted. He looked very strong and capable as he smiled down upon Mary, and the girl was conscious of a distinct feeling of relief, though she hardly knew its source.

“Well,” said Mary, “I feel worried and bothered. You know, John, how much all our folks have got into the way of looking to me for help in money matters?”

“Yes, I know,” replied John, with a rather curious inflection.

“I like to do it,” said Mary quickly. “It makes me very glad and happy to do it. I should not say a word about it to anybody but you, but you already know these details. You are such an intimate friend of the family, aren't you?”

“A very intimate friend of the family,” echoed the young man gravely.

“And mother has often told you how easy it was for me to earn a few pounds, hasn't she?”

“Very often,” answered the young man again, with the same gravity.

“Well, John,” said Mary, lifting a pair of very earnest eyes to his, her accents full of sorrow and dismay, “I am sometimes afraid I can't keep on doing it.”

“What makes you think so?” asked John gently.

“I can't think of anything,” said Mary, the tears brimming up into her eyes. “I have sat here this morning for nearly an hour, and not a single idea has come to me. And—I didn't dare to tell mother and the girls!—my last story was rejected. It was such a blow, for I had been counting on the money to buy Jennie's summer dress. She was rather cross when I told her she must wait a while longer.”

“My dear little soul!” said the young man, “you are overworked. That is the simple explanation of the whole matter.”

The kindness of his tone seemed to altogether break down Mary's composure, for—after a momentary struggle for calmness—she dropped her head into her hands and cried heartily.

John Redmond's face presented a curious study, so many were the emotions that passed rapidly over it. He made an involuntary movement toward the little weeping figure, but the next moment checked himself, and waited quietly until Mary herself spoke.

“I don't know whatever you will think of me!” she said, rather shamefacedly, as she wiped her eyes. “I don't know what made me do it! But I'm so much obliged to you for letting me ‘have it out.’ I feel better now.”

“To be sure you do,” said John, with a friendly and rather tender laugh. “I have always understood that a ‘good cry’ was a great luxury to young ladies.”

“For pity's sake, don't call me a ‘young lady!’” cried Mary with an assumption of her usually energetic manner. “I do hate that phrase.”

“Just as you please,” returned John easily. “What shall I call you? Novelist? Journalist?”

“Neither one nor the other,” said Mary, flushing a little, a shade of her late despondency again falling upon her. “I am nothing in the world but a writer of penny love stories, and losing even the small amount of capability required for that.”

“That is nonsense,” exclaimed John, now speaking earnestly. “As I said before, you are overworked. You have been doing too much. Your brain needs a rest, and it ought to have one, Mary.”

“Well, it can't just at present,” said Mary, shaking her head very decidedly. “There is Jennie's new dress, and the grocer's bill. I shall know no peace until those two things are off my mind.”

John was silent for a moment, but he looked troubled.

“If I could just get an idea,” said Mary, more hopefully, “I think I could work it out. I seem to have used up everything! I have written about lost heirs, and lost wills—about the heiress who pretended to be poor, and the adventuress who pretended to be rich. I have told about the man who expressed the utmost detestation of “the new woman,” and ended by falling madly in love with one. I have related the history of the girl who determined to have a ‘career’ and finally gave up all for love. These things are all worn out, John! They have become so feeble that I am ashamed to press the poor things into further service.”

John smiled.

“They are far from dying, Mary! They are full of vitality yet.”

“Well, somebody else may have them,” said Mary, returning the smile. “At least, for a while; I may be glad to fall back on them some day, but just now I should like something fresh. All sorts of queer things are constantly happening in real life, if I could only get to hear of them. John, haven't you an idea of any kind? Or some little thing that has come within your own experience? Anything that holds a tiny spice of romance, you know.”

John looked at her for a moment, and seemed inclined to speak. Then his mind apparently faltered, and he shook his head.

“Oh!” cried Mary, disappointedly, “that is too bad. You looked exactly as if you had an idea.”

“Well,” said John, slowly, “a faint glimmering did seem to come to me, but I'm afraid you would think it silly.”

“Do tell me!” exclaimed Mary. “I shall be so grateful.”

“And I don't know that it is particularly new,” went on John in the same doubtful way.

“Well, never mind,” said Mary, in a business-like way. “A great deal depends on the treatment of the subject. Sometimes a very hackneyed theme can be made to sound quite fresh. I have noticed it in several instances. Go on, John.”

She fixed her eyes on him expectantly, and a smile dawned in the young man's eyes as he looked at her.

“Is it humorous?” asked Mary innocently, as she saw the smile.

“I don't know,” answered John, relapsing into gravity. “That entirely depends upon how you regard it. Things appeal so differently to different minds, don't they?”

“They do,” rejoined Mary promptly. “Sometimes I have written things which I thought were funny, but other people entirely failed to see the joke; and, on the other hand, I have been laughed at for sentences which were penned in perfect seriousness. But let us proceed with the subject in hand. I wish you would begin, John, for the time is getting on, and I shall be miserable unless I succeed in making a good start this morning.”

“There's a lot in making a good start, isn't there?” asked John, with evident anxiety.

“Oh! a great deal,” said Mary. “It is often the most difficult thing possible to start. Once fairly begun the work is comparatively easy, because one thing seems to lead to another.”

“I see!” replied John reflectively. Then a long silence fell between them.

“Do go on!” said Mary impatiently, at last.

“Well, the fact is, Mary, I”—with considerable emphasis on the pronoun—“find a difficulty in starting. I think I could go on, if the subject were only begun.”

“Let me help you out,” said Mary, with an air of resignation. “There is a girl in it, I suppose?”

“Oh, yes!” returned John very decidedly. “There is a girl in it; and an uncommonly nice girl, too.”

“Good gracious!” said Mary. “It is all easy enough. Describe to me her appearance, character and surroundings. Tell me what she did, and how she did it. Then explain where the man comes in—for there is a man in it, I supppose?”

“Oh, yes,” said John, as decidedly as before. “There is a man in it.”

“Well, what about him,” asked Mary. “Dear me, John! I might as well invent a thing myself, and have done with it, if you can't tell me straight off.”

“I'll tell you!” said John, with the air of a man determined to make the plunge. “Only—Mary—promise me one thing. Don't laugh at my story.”

“Can't I laugh if it is funny?” rejoined Mary.

“It isn't,” said John. “Well, not exactly. Er—in fact, I don't know how it will strike you. I meant, don't laugh at my clumsy way of telling it.”

“Of course not,” replied Mary kindly. “And I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you, John, for taking all this trouble.”

“Well,” began John, “this girl—the girl I am thinking of you know—lived at home with her mother and sister. The father had died some years before, leaving just enough money to supply their bare wants, but no more.”

“I quite understand,” said Mary, in a tone which had a good deal of “fellow feeling” in it.

“So, of course,” went on John, “life was more or less of a struggle with them. But, happily, one of the girls—this special girl I began to talk about—developed quite a talent for—for—”

“For what?” said Mary rather sharply.

“For painting,” returned John quickly. “She used to paint quite lovely little things, and sell them to the shops.”

“Yes” said Mary. “But when does the romance begin, John?”

“I am coming to that,” replied John. “Give me time, Mary.”

“Oh, of course,” said Mary amiably. So after a brief pause, John went on again:

“Years before, when these girls were quite little, their father had shown a great kindness to an almost friendless boy.”

Mary started, and a faint color crept into her cheeks; but John took no heed and his voice became firmer and clearer.

“To the action of that good man the boy owed whatever success came to him in after life. He never forgot this, and he often wondered how he could best repay the debt he owed.”

John paused, but Mary did not speak.

“And as time went on he found the debt increased rather than diminished. For though his first benefactor had passed away, he had left kindly hearts behind him. And as the boy grew into manhood he prized more the welcome he ever received from those good women, and felt that in the whole world there was no spot so dear to him as the one they called home.”

Again John paused, but Mary made no effort to break the silence.

“He loved them all, said John, “but”—here a new tenderness crept into his voice—“he learned at last that for one of them he had the love which a man only gives to one woman in the world. She was not, I think, quite understood by her mother and sisters, much as they cared for her. She had a talent which she was glad to turn to useful account, but the others hardly realized that the task which was generally a pleasure, might at times become very hard and wearisome. They thought it was play for her to sit down and—paint. So sometimes her heart failed her a little.”

Mary's face was very white now, but the color rushed suddenly back into it as John gently took her hand into his own.

“This young man loved her, Mary—loved her more dearly than I can quite tell you. But he waited a long time before he dared to speak to her. He knew how much depended upon her in the home, and he felt he had no right to take her away until his position would enable him to offer comfort to her and to those dear to her. It often seemed a weary while, and his heart often ached. But the time came at last. The time when he felt he was free to speak.”

He paused, and for a few minutes there was between them a deep silence. Then his hand clasped hers more fervently, and he said, “Mary!”

As if irresistibly compelled, she looked into his eyes. And in that moment a full knowledge of what she had never before even guessed swept over her. She knew the sweetest of all earthly things—that she loved and was beloved.

“You were quite right, dearest,” said John a while later. “The difficulty lies in making a start. Everything comes quite easily afterward.”

“The story is very hackneyed,” whispered Mary. “But, oh, John!”—with a half mischievous, wholly tender look—“isn't it wonderful how anything so old can be so interesting?”—Household Words.

A Miniature Japanese Garden.

A miniature garden, fifteen by thirteen feet, representing a district in Arashi-Yama, west of Saikyo, the ancient capital of Japan, is being laid out upon the lawn of John H. A. Klauder's residence, 1513 Allegheny avenue. The garden, which is being arranged under the supervision of the Japanese artist, Teitoku Morimoto, is filled with miniature Japanese buildings, which represent a Buddhist temple, with its group of eight structures and its arch, or torii, and its toro lanterns. On the southwest corner of the garden is a representative of a Shinto temple, with its group of buildings, torii and toros. From the summit of Arashi-Yama is a waterfall and cascade, which is supplied from an inch pipe. The water tumbles down the rocky mountain side, and in one place represents a celebrated falls, known as Shira-eto-no Taki, or white thread, and flows into the Katsura River, in which there are a number of islands, and a representative of what is known as the shifting island. The river itself is a series of rapids.—Philadelphia Record.

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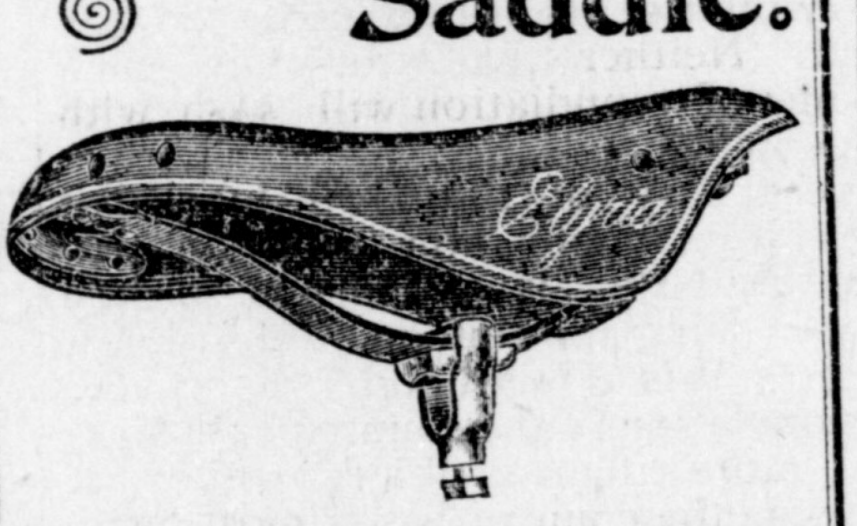

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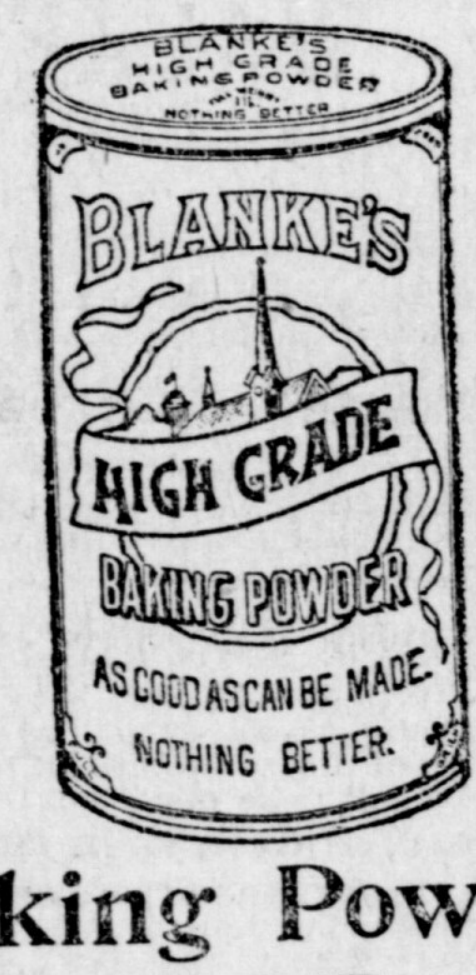

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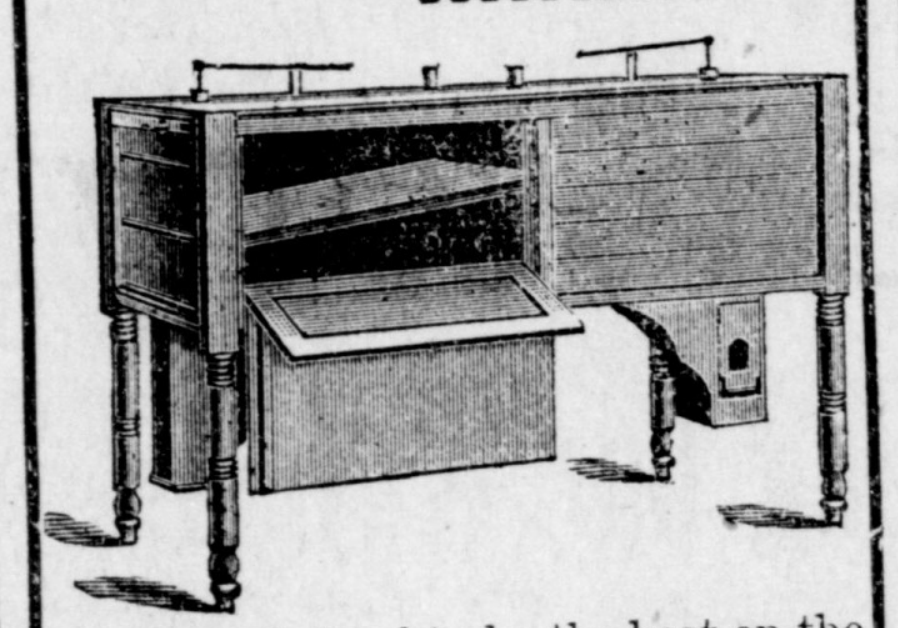

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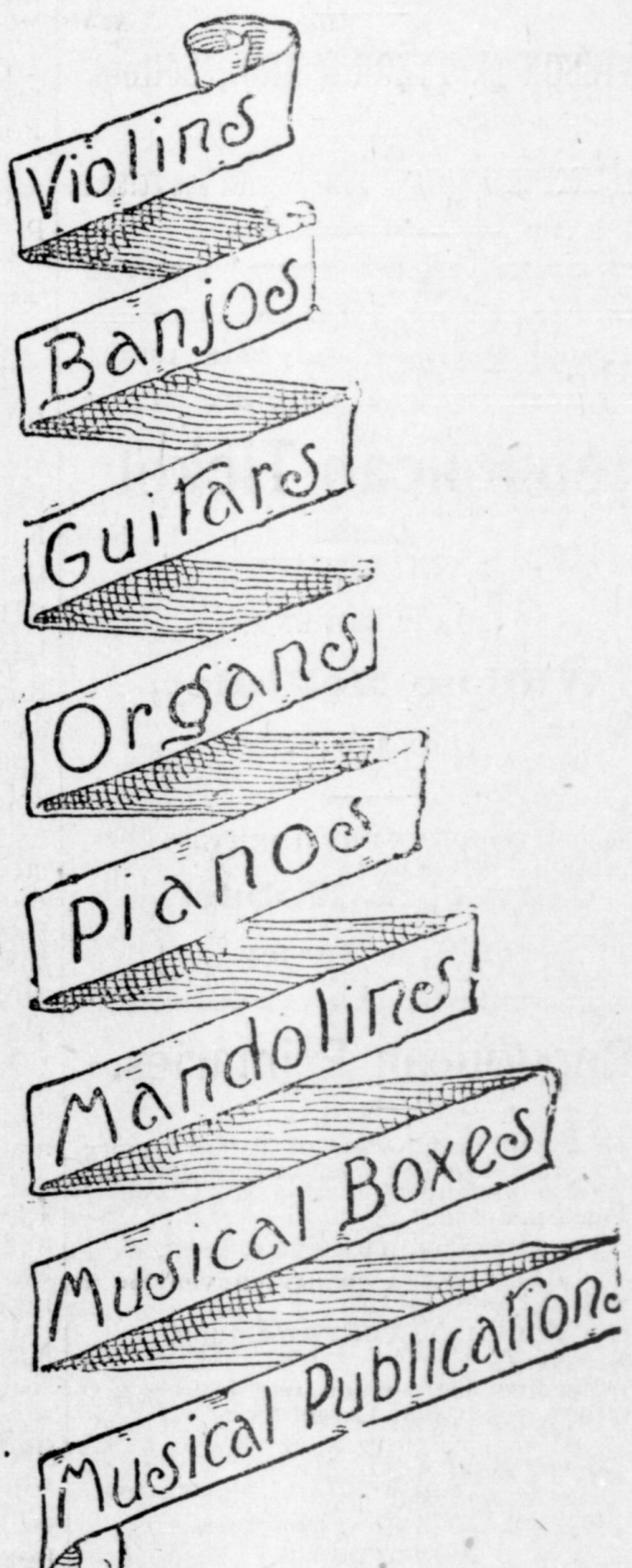

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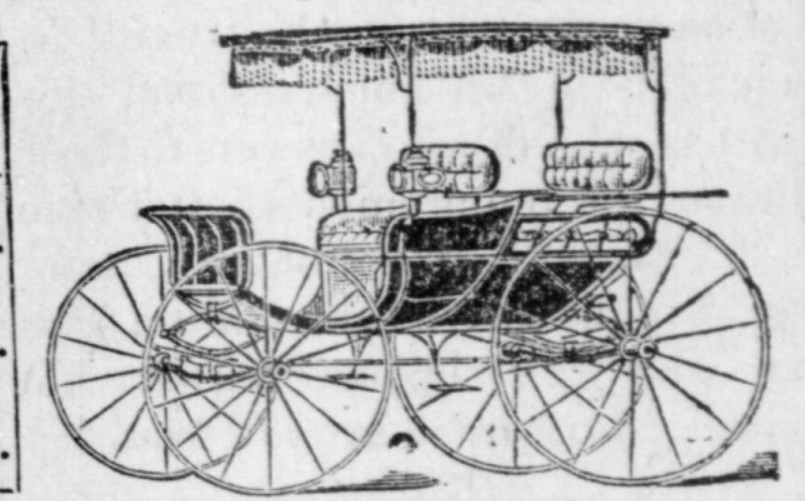

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