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CHRISTMAS IN THE PINK BOARDING-HOUSE.

A Story of two Mining Camps.

By H. H.

WHEN Elsie McFarland's father said, one morning at breakfast, that he believed he would go up to Tin Cup and see if he could get work, Elsie burst out laughing, and thought he was making fun.

"What is there so funny in that, Elsie?" said her father. "I thought you would be very sorry to have me go away."

Elsie had been laughing so hard, she could not stop for a moment or two, although her father's tone sobered her, and his face looked so grave that she knew he was very far from jesting.

"Why, Papa," she said, as soon as she could speak, "I was laughing at the name 'Tin Cup.' I thought you were joking. Is there really a place called Tin Cup? The name of this town is funny enough, but Tin Cup is funnier."

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. McFarland. "Did you never hear anybody speak of it before? It is only four miles from here. The man who brought those beautiful elk horns that are over the store door lives in Tin Cup. It used to be a lively camp, but there is n't much doing there now. Still it is n't so dead as this place," and Mr. McFarland sighed heavily, and leaning forward, rested his elbows on the table and buried his face in his hands.

Elsie was fairly sobered by this time. Springing out of her chair, she ran to her father's side and, putting both her arms around his neck, exclaimed:

"Dear Papa! don't cover up your face that

way. What is the matter?" and the tears came into Elsie's eyes so fast and so big, she had hard work to keep from crying outright. She knew only too well what was the matter. It was many months now since she had known that her father was getting poorer and poorer; that the whole town was getting poorer and poorer, and all the people who had money enough to take them away were leaving. Every day she noticed one or two more houses shut up, boards nailed across the doors and windows, and the people gone. It was very dismal; but Elsie would not have minded the dismalness of it, nor the loneliness, if that had been all. But it was not. Her father was a store-keeper, and they had nothing to live on except the profits he could make on selling goods; so, as the people in the town grew fewer and fewer, and those who were left behind grew poorer and poorer, the business at the store fell off, until sometimes many days would pass without a person coming in to buy anything, and Mr. McFarland did not know what to do.

In a few moments he lifted up his head, and said: "Never mind, Elsie. You are a brave little girl, and a great comfort to Papa. We shall pull through, somehow; but it looks as if I'd have to go and leave you alone here for awhile, and I hate to do that."

"Oh, I sha'n't mind it, Papa," answered Elsie. "So long as Mrs. Christy stays, I would n't be a bit afraid. I can call right through into her room

from mine, the house is so near. And if you 're only going to be four miles away, that is n't far. Shall you keep a store in Tin Cup?" and Elsie laughed again, in spite of her sorrowful heart, at the idea of keeping store in a "Tin Cup."

Mr. McFarland shook his head.

"No, Elsie," he said, "there is n't anything more to be made out of store-keeping in Tin Cup than here. I was thinking about working in the Silver Queen mine. They want more hands there."

Elsie turned pale, and made no reply. Her face was full of woe. At last, she gasped, rather than said:

"Oh, Papa! In a mine?"

"Yes, dear," her father replied. "I am afraid I must, unless I can find somebody to buy this cabin and store, and that is n't any way likely. But I sha'n't go for a month yet, and perhaps something else may turn up. So don't you worry about it, child. Mining is n't any worse than lots of other things," and he pushed back his chair and, kissing Elsie, went out of the room.

Elsie did not stir. She folded her arms and stood leaning on the back of her father's chair, with her eyes fixed on the floor.

"In a mine!" she kept saying to herself. "My papa work in a mine!" And she recalled the miners she had seen in the store, rough, dirty, ill-clad men, who drank whisky, smoked pipes, and talked in loud, coarse voices. "My papa be a miner! I'd almost rather he'd die!" and Elsie broke into a paroxysm of loud crying, and sank into the chair.

"Whisht now, honey, what's afther makin' yees cry? It's killin' yerself ye'll be if yer cries loike that. Whisht now a bit, an' tell me what's 'apened," cried Mrs. Christy, the good-natured Irish woman, whose cabin stood only a few feet from the McFarland's house, and who had been Elsie's stanch friend ever since they had moved into the town. But Elsie turned away from her now with an instinctive feeling that this was a grief she could not confide to any one, least of all to Mrs. Christy. Mrs. Christy would not understand why the being a miner should seem to any one a terrible thing. Her husband had been a miner, and her two eldest boys were working in a mine now. In fact, they were the very men whose faces, clothes, and general behavior had given poor Elsie a great part of her unspeakable dread of a miner's life.

"It's nothing I can tell, Mrs. Christy. I could n't tell anybody. And I'm silly to cry; but it came on me all of a sudden," said Elsie, jumping up, wiping away her tears, and beginning to clear off the breakfast-table. "You wont praise me for a housekeeper any more, if you come in

and find me sitting down to cry, and leaving my work undone at this time in the morning."

"An' it's meself that's always a-praisin' ye for a housekeeper," retorted Mrs. Christy, "an' always will be; ye 've got the stiddest head I ever see on young shoulders, ez I've said a hunderd times ef I've said it onc't; an' if ye 'd ease yer thrubble by tellin', it's more 'n loikely I cud help ye."

"No, thank you, Mrs. Christy, not this time," said Elsie, now quite herself again. "But if I did need help, you may be sure that there is nobody in the town I'd ask it of so soon as of you. I was telling my father only this morning that I'd never feel afraid, even if I were alone in the house, so long as you lived next door."

"An' wull ye may!" Mrs. Christy replied, much flattered. "I'm yer woman, whin ye want me, that's sure; but I'd hate to see ye a-atin' yer heart out with a sorer ye'd not shpake about. Shpache is a grate easemint to the feelin's, my dear, ez ye 'll learn whin yer older. An' don't ye ever misremember that I'm here whin ye want me," and the good soul whisked back to her tubs.

Elsie McFarland was indeed, as her father had said, a brave little girl, and, as Mrs. Christy had said, a housekeeper with a "stiddy" head on her shoulders. She was only fourteen years old, and so small that she did not look more than twelve, but for a year she had taken all the care of her father's house, and had done all the work except the washing and ironing.

When Elsie's mother died, Mr. McFarland expected to go into a boarding-house to live; but, to his great surprise, Elsie implored him to continue to live in their own little house, just as they had been living.

"I know I can do all the work, just as Mamma did," she said. "I always helped her do it. I know just how she did everything. Oh, try me, Papa, just try me. Try me one week. Don't let us give up our house. It will be dreadful not to have a house of our own."

Finally, Mr. McFarland consented to make the experiment. He felt as Elsie did, that it would be a dreadful thing not to have any house of their own; and he knew, even better than Elsie, how uncomfortable would be the very best boarding-place that could be found. But he did not believe the child realized what she was undertaking, or would be strong enough to do the work. He did not know how much she had helped her mother for the last two years. In fact, Mr. McFarland never knew as much as he ought to have known about what was going on in his own house. Mr. McFarland was a dreamer. He had come to Colorado thirteen years before, when Elsie was a baby.

He had brought with him from the East thirty thousand dollars, and had been sure that in a very few years he would make a large fortune and go home to live. Mrs. McFarland had from the outset opposed the plan of coming to Colorado. She had much more common sense than her husband, and believed most firmly in the good old proverb of "letting well enough alone."

"You have a good business where you are, husband," she said; "and a good home. Everybody knows and trusts you. It is wiser to stay."

"But it takes a life-time to make a fortune here," Mr. McFarland would reply. "And out in Colorado it is sometimes made in a day! Once there, I can put my money into mines, and let it be turning over and over, while I make our living by a store."

And now the thirty thousand dollars was all gone. In one unlucky speculation after another, in mine after mine, smelter after smelter, a few hundreds here and a few thousands there, it had melted away, and nothing was left "to show for it," except a "claim" or two in the Elk mountain range.

In all this time, Mrs. McFarland had never been heard to complain; but she had grown weaker year by year. As they went slowly down in the scale of living, she accepted each change without any murmur; but when it came at last to living in a log cabin in a mining camp, and doing with her own hands all the necessary work, her strength proved unequal to it; and when the first severe winter weather set in, she took cold and, after only three days' illness, died. The doctors said it was of pneumonia; and that was, in one sense, true, for she certainly had pneumonia. But the pneumonia would not have killed her if she had not been feeble and worn-out by her twelve years of hard work and unhappiness. Her death was so sudden, that Elsie never fully realized that she would not see her mother again. She was away from home at the time, having gone to spend a few days at the Chieftain mine, twelve miles distant. The manager of this mine was an old friend of her father and mother. He had recently married, and brought his pretty young wife out from the East to live in a log cabin at the mouth of the mine. She was exceedingly lonely, and often used to implore Mrs. McFarland to "lend" Elsie to her for a week. And hard as it was for Mrs. McFarland to be without Elsie, even for a day, she never refused to let her go; for she pitied the poor young bride, who had come straight from New York City, with all its gayeties and comforts, to this bare log cabin on a mountain-top.

"If I had had to take it so sudden as that," Mrs. McFarland once said to her, "I should not have

borne it half so well as you do. I've come to it by slow degrees, and that's been hard enough, I'll confess. If I had two daughters, I'd almost let you have one all the time."

Elsie had been away only two days when her mother was taken ill. As it seemed to be nothing more than a severe cold, Mrs. McFarland would not send for the child, though her husband was anxious to go immediately. Very bitterly he afterward regretted that he had not done so; for poor little Elsie could never understand why it was, and her cries of "Oh, Papa, oh, Papa! why did n't you let me see my Mamma before she died?" almost broke his heart.

The people in the town were exceedingly kind to both Elsie and him. Several begged him to come and make his home with them. Everybody had liked patient, gentle Mrs. McFarland, and everybody loved Elsie, for her gay and cheery ways. They did not like Mr. McFarland quite so well. They thought he held himself a little aloof from them. That is never a popular course anywhere, but of all places in the world most unpopular in a mining camp. It was not really true of Mr. McFarland, at all. He had no idea of holding himself aloof; but he wore better clothes than the other men in the camp, his habitual speech was more refined, and he did not drink whisky; and these things made a barrier between him and the rest, in spite of all his kindness and good fellowship.

And so it came about that after the first outburst of sympathy for him, at the time of his wife's death, had spent itself, and it had come to be an old story in the camp about "poor McFarland, livin' there all alone with his little gal," he was left more and more alone; and this really had something to do with the falling off in his business, though Mr. McFarland did not know it. There was a sort of store over at Tin Cup, a combination of whisky saloon and store, where most of the common groceries, and a few of the cheaper dry goods, could be bought; and the Red Jacket men had gradually fallen into the habit of making their purchases there whenever they could "make it come in their way," as they said.

"I'll be goin' over to Tin Cup before long; if you can get along till then, we might as well trade at Ben Holladay's," many a man said to his wife when she asked for money to buy something; and the wife was very sorry to get the reply, for she knew it meant that her husband would lounge around in Ben Holladay's store, incur habits and associations that were not good for him, and very possibly come away, after all, without buying the thing she had asked for.

No one who has not seen a mining "camp" can have the least idea of what a strange sort of town

it is, and what a strange life the miners' families lead.

It does not take many days to build the kind of town miners are willing to live in, and they don't care what sort of a place they put it in, either, if it is only near the mines. It may be in the very midst of a pine forest, or out on the steep, bare side of a mountain, all stones and rocks. They cut down a few trees, and leave all the stumps standing; or they clear away the biggest of the stones, enough to make a sort of street; and then every man falls to and builds the cheapest house he can, in the quickest way: sometimes of logs, sometimes out of rough boards; often with only one room, very rarely with more than three. When they wish to make them very fine, they make the end fronting the street, what is called a "battlement front"; that is, a straight square wall, higher than the house, so as to convey the impression that the house is much bigger than it is. It is a miserable make-believe, and goes farther than any other one thing to give to the new towns in the West a hideous and contemptible look. These log cabins, board shanties, and battlement fronts are all crowded as near together as they can be, and are set close to the street: no front yards, no back yards, no yards at the side,—but, around the whole settlement, a stony wilderness. It is n't worth while to put anything in order, because there is no knowing how long the people will stay. Perhaps the mines will not turn out to be good ones; and then everybody will move away, and in very little more time than it took to build up the town it will be deserted. There are a great many such deserted towns in Colorado and California. They always seem to me to look like a kind of graveyard.

The town of Red Jacket, in which the McFarlands lived, was named for the Red Jacket mountain near which it stood; in fact, it was close to the base of the mountain. At the time Mr. McFarland moved there, a tremendous excitement had arisen about Red Jacket mountain. Silver ore had been found there, so rich that men said the whole mountain must be made of solid silver. From far and near, people rushed to Red Jacket. Whole mining camps in the neighborhood were deserted in a week; everybody "moved to Red Jacket."

A brisk, busy little town was built, and, in less than a month, two thousand people were living there. Every foot of the mountain was staked out in "claims," and hundreds of piles of rock and earth thrown out in all directions showed how many were at work. This was one year before the time at which our story begins. Very soon, people began to find out either that their claims were not good for anything or that it needed so much machinery to get

the ore out that they could not afford to work their mines. Red Jacket mountain was not made of solid silver, by any manner of means. Then the camp began to dwindle. Man after man sold out his claim for a song, if he could find somebody to take it off his hands; family after family moved away, until there were not more than two hundred souls, all told, in the town, and more than three-quarters of the houses were empty.

No wonder Mr. McFarland was discouraged. Of his own two "claims," one had proved to be worthless, the other was in a rock so difficult to work that nothing could be done with it without spending thousands of dollars on machinery; the store, which, in the time of the camp's biggest "boom," Mr. McFarland had spent nearly his last dollar in stocking, had ceased to bring in any reliable income, and was now bringing in less and less each day. It looked as if the owner would be left alone with a large quantity of unsalable goods. The winter was near at hand, and after it had once set in, there would be no going out of or coming into Red Jacket. By the first of November, the snow would be from ten to twelve feet deep, all roads closed, and no getting about except on snow-shoes. The poor man sat in his silent and deserted store, day after day, brooding over this state of things, and unable to devise any scheme for bettering himself, till he was nearly out of his wits. Then he would go home to the little log cabin, and find it clean and in order, and the simple meal well cooked and neatly set out on the table by the affectionate Elsie, always so glad to see him, and so guilelessly proud of her housekeeping, and he would feel more self-reproach than ever that by his folly and lack of judgment he had brought so sweet a child into such straits.

It was in one of these discouraged and remorseful moments that he exclaimed to Elsie, at breakfast, that he believed he would go up to Tin Cup and look for work. The more he thought of it, the more sensible the plan looked. In truth, it was the only way he could see of being sure of money enough to support Elsie and himself through the winter. In the spring, people might come back to the camp again, and he might sell his goods.

Elsie's grieved and astonished cry, "Oh, Papa! In a mine!" had cut him to the heart; but he tried to forget it, and he resolved that she should never see him in his miner's suit. The thought of leaving her alone in the cabin through the long and dreary winter was terrible to him; but he reflected that she would be safe there; he could see her every Sunday; and good Mrs. Christy, within call by day and night, would keep as close watch over her as if she were her own child. The tears came into his eyes as he thought to himself: "It has really come to this, that a poor ignorant Irish-

woman is the very best friend I have to trust my little daughter to."

Poor Mr. McFarland! It was a sore secret that lay between him and his little girl for some days after his suggestion of the Tin Cup project. Each was thinking of it, and knew the other must be, but neither would speak of it. Perhaps it was as well. Both father and daughter were being, by these sad and secret thoughts, prepared for the inevitable. And when it came they were able to meet it more calmly.

When, a week later, Mr. McFarland said to Elsie: "I have been up to Tin Cup, Elsie, and got the place I was speaking of, and I shall go the first of next month. Will you be afraid to stay here alone? I shall come down to see you every Sunday,"—Elsie replied, with only a little quiver of her lip: "No, indeed, Papa; I shall not be afraid. I only wish there was something I could do to earn money, too. I've been trying to think of something; but I can't think of anything."

"My dear child," said Mr. McFarland, "don't worry yourself about that. You are all the comfort Papa has left to him in this world. You just keep up courage, and I think better times will come before long. I don't want you to earn money; whatever happens, Papa will always have enough to take care of you."

This he said to cheer Elsie, but in the bottom of his heart he did not feel sure of it.

Only three weeks were left before the time fixed for him to go to Tin Cup, and there were so many things to be done to make Elsie comfortable for the winter, that it kept him busy enough till the last minute. In the first place, he cut and split and piled up a quantity of wood for her to burn. He piled it so high that Elsie said the wood-pile looked bigger than the cabin, as indeed it did. Besides this big pile out-of-doors, he filled one small room in the house full of wood, to be used when the weather was too bad or the snow too deep for her to get to the big pile outside.

The next thing he did was to get Mrs. Christy's permission to build a covered passage-way from her kitchen window to Elsie's bedroom window. Elsie's window he made into a door, opening into this passage-way, and then he built steps at the end which joined Mrs. Christy's house, so that, by going up these steps, Elsie could get into Mrs. Christy's kitchen through the window. When Elsie found that this was to be done, she jumped for joy. "Now I won't be one bit afraid," she said; and by that, her father knew that she had really felt a little afraid before, but would not distress him by letting him know it. Elsie was a very brave and loving little girl, as you will see before we get to the end of the story of this winter.

There was no difficulty about her food; for in the store were barrels of flour and crackers and sugar and salt pork, and shelves full of canned fruits, vegetables, and meats. When Mr. McFarland had carried in as much of all these as he thought Elsie could use, and had arranged them on shelves and in the corners of the room, the place looked more like a shop than like the living-room of one little girl.

Elsie thought so herself. "Why, Papa," she exclaimed, "it looks just like a little store! What made you bring in so many things? Why could n't I go to the store when I wanted things? Or you could get them out for me Sundays, when you come down."

"I know," replied her father. "But it won't do any harm to have them all here. There may be such deep snows that I can't get down some weeks, and you can't get out. I'd feel easier to know that you have everything under this roof that you could need for the whole winter."

"Well, I'm sure I have," answered Elsie, looking around. "I should think I'd enough for a whole year. I've enough to take boarders! You'll see there'll be lots left when you come home in the spring."

"Papa," she continued, "can I get anything else out of the store, if I want to? I don't mean things to eat, but other things."

"What is there in the store that you want, Elsie?" said her father, a little surprised. "Do you want a new gown?"

"Oh, no, no, indeed!" cried Elsie. "I have plenty of gowns. But there is something there that I'd like to crib from; but I don't want to tell you what it is," and she turned very red in the face.

Mr. McFarland hesitated. He did not like to refuse Elsie anything, but he could not imagine what it could be she wanted; and, as he had some valuable silks and laces in the store, he feared she might have set her heart on something he could not afford to let her have. But he need not have been afraid to trust his little Elsie's good sense. Seeing that he was hesitating, Elsie laughed out:

"Oh, you need n't be afraid, Papa; it is n't any of the nice things I want. It is only some of that yarn that old Mrs. Johns brought to pay for the flour. Don't you remember? It's under the counter, in a box, a whole lot of it; I heard you tell Mamma when you took it, you did n't believe you'd ever sell it, it was such a horrid slaty color. Mrs. Johns dyed it herself. Mrs. Christy says she'll teach me to knit this winter, if I can get the yarn. So I thought of that."

"Yes, indeed, child," replied Mr. McFarland, and he felt quite ashamed of himself. "You can have that and welcome,—the whole of it."

So when he went to the store the last time, he

brought over the box of Mrs. Johns's yarn, and away down in the bottom of the box, under the "horrid slaty" skeins, he put in some nicer yarns, a big bunch of bright red and some blue, and green, and yellow, and a great lot of white.

"Poor little girlie!" he said to himself, "if she is going to find any pleasure in her knitting, she must have some bright colors to mix in."

And so Elsie was left all alone to keep house by herself in the cabin, where only one year before she had been living, a happy, gay little girl, with her father and mother. It was pretty hard, but Elsie never stopped to think about its being hard. She just went to work. That is the only way in this world ever to bear up under things that are hard. Go to work, and keep busy. It is worth all and everything else in the way of what people call "consolation." That word "consolation" I never liked, myself. It does not seem to me to mean much. There is n't any such thing, to my mind, as being "consoled" for a real trouble. If it is a real trouble, it will be a real trouble always, as long as you live; but you can always go to work and keep busy, and so long as you do that the trouble can not get the better of you. But that is neither here nor there in this story about Elsie McFarland, except that it was the way Elsie did. How the wisdom came to her, I don't know. Nobody had ever told her, and she never put it into words to herself. It simply seemed to her the natural way to do.

Her head was full of plans of what she would accomplish in the winter. She was going to learn to knit, for one thing. She already knew a great many ways of crocheting, but she was going to learn to knit stockings and mittens, and perhaps a bed-spread like one Mrs. Christy had once shown her. She was going also to learn to cook a great many things; she now knew how to cook only a few simple dishes.

"I mean to have some one new thing for Papa every Sunday when he comes down," she said. "I'll go right straight through Mamma's cook-book; only, the worst of it is, most of the things take eggs, and there won't be any eggs very often. I remember Mamma used to say she wished somebody would make a cook-book of good things for poor people," and Elsie sighed and felt sad as she recalled the days when she used to help her mother in all the household work.

There was another air-castle in Elsie's mind,—a beautiful secret which gave her joy whenever she thought of it. In one of the trunks where her mother's clothes had been put away was nearly a whole piece of cotton cloth, a half dozen linen bosoms and collars and cuffs, and, nearly finished, one shirt, on which Elsie had been at work just

before her mother died. Three more shirts were cut out, and Elsie's air-castle was to cut out two more, and have a half dozen nice new shirts all ready for her father in the spring. She had been meaning to go to work on them all through the summer, but summer days were great temptations to Elsie; there was nothing she loved better than to ramble in the cañons and grassy hill slopes, and gather flowers. Red Jacket was a wonderful place for flowers; such fields full of purple asters were never seen anywhere else in the world, I do believe. They were as thick as clover in a clover field, and looked like a solid surface of beautiful purple. Then there were dozens of other flowers, red and blue, and white and yellow, some of which are not to be found anywhere outside of Colorado. Elsie was never tired of arranging great bouquets of them. She put them in the window-seats, on the shelves, on the table, in the fire-place, till sometimes the little cabin looked like a garden.

So, while the summer lasted, Elsie had not found time to sew. After her housework was done, she had usually rambled off after flowers. When her own room was as full as it would hold, she would bring bunches to Mrs. Christy, who did not care much for them at first, but after a time began to notice their splendid colors, and to like them for their own as well as for Elsie's sake. Mrs. Christy loved Elsie with all the strength of her warm Irish heart.

"Indade, an' she's more to me, thin, than I'm loikely to be to her, an' that's the thruth," she replied to Mr. McFarland, when, on the morning he set off for Tin Cup, he had told her how grateful he felt for her kindness to Elsie, and that he felt easy to leave the child in her protection.

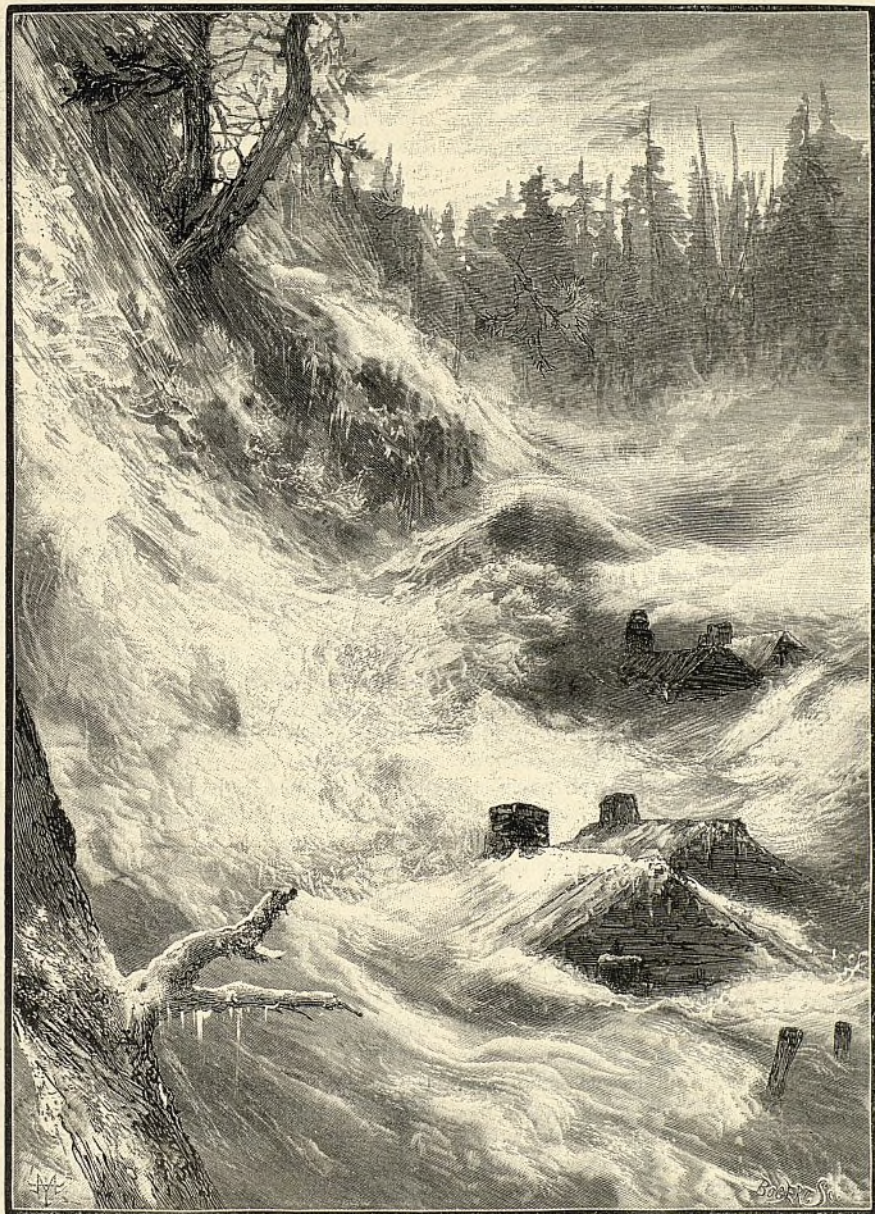
"An' it's no great purtectin' she nades," she added, looking after Mr. McFarland as he walked slowly and sadly away. "To my way o' thinkin', it's pertectin' yees she'll be, an' not so long time first, nayther. There's more o' the makin' uv a man in her than ye've got yersilf!"

But we have run away from Elsie's air-castles. There were the knitting, the cooking, the shirt-making, these three; then there was one other, which I dare say many of you will think was the queerest of all: Elsie was going to learn to wash. This also was a secret from her father. He had arranged with Mrs. Christy to continue to do the washing, as she had hitherto done, and Elsie had said nothing; but in her own mind it was all arranged that, as soon as her father had gone, she would coax Mrs. Christy to teach her how to do it herself.

"And then I can do up the shirts as fast as they are finished," thought Elsie, "and that will be the greatest surprise of all to Papa."

And so Elsie entered on her winter. It was the first of October when her father went away. In less than a month, the snow came; day after day it snowed soft, steady, and still, until nothing could

of them were shoveled clear, so as to let the light in. The covered passage-way between Elsie's room and Mrs. Christy's kitchen was buried up entirely, so that it looked like nothing but a snow-drift.



THE SNOW-SLIDE. [SEE PAGE 195.]

be seen of the Red Jacket cabins except their roofs, chimneys, and, in some of the higher ones, the upper halves of the windows. To the door of every inhabited cabin a long passage-way, like a tunnel, was dug through the snow, and the windows in some

There is something beautiful as well as terrible in such a winter as this. The surface of the snow shines and sparkles as if it were made of millions of diamonds. It is sometimes almost as hard as ice, and men can glide about it on snow-shoes,

over miles of country and from one town to another, as fast as they can skate.

One of the last things Mr. McFarland had done for Elsie was to make her a new pair of snow-shoes. She had learned the art of walking on them the winter before, and was as fond of it as of sliding down hill on a sled. She often caught a tumble, but she only thought it all the more fun. Everybody in the camp liked to see her go skimming by, with her cheeks red and her eyes shining; and there was not a boy in the camp who could go faster than she.

Mrs. Christy used to stand at the window and watch her with mingled terror and pride.

"Luk at her, thin!" she would exclaim. "Is n't it a birrd she is! But the heart av me's in me mouth, so long ez she's got her two feet in thim boats."

Mrs. Christy herself had never mustered courage to learn to use snow-shoes. She put them on once, took two steps from her door, lost her balance, and fell headlong in the snow.

"I'll not timpt Providence any more," she said. "I'll stay in till it plazes God to lift the snows from aff us." And stay in she did through that entire winter—twelve long weeks—until the snows melted.

Nobody would believe how fast Elsie's days flew by in this strange and lonely life. She was as busy as a bee all day long, and in the evenings she sat with Mrs. Christy, knitting and listening to Irish fairy stories, of which Mrs. Christy knew many, so weird and fascinating that Elsie was never tired of hearing them over and over. The "slaty-colored" yarn proved a great success, when the gayly-colored was mixed with it; and Elsie before many days had passed, had completed a pair of mittens with long gauntlet tops, and a splendid scarf a yard and a half long, for her Christmas presents to her father.

These Mrs. Christy exhibited with great pride to her acquaintances, and the first thing Elsie knew she was besieged with entreaties to knit more such mittens for sale. This gave her real delight. Here, at last, was a way by which she could earn money,—only a little, to be sure, but it was something. Every one who saw the mittens wanted a pair, men and women alike. They would have bought twice as many as Elsie could have knit before spring.

All through November, Mr. McFarland came down every Sunday and spent the whole day with Elsie. What happy days they were! Elsie grew reconciled to her father's being a miner, as she listened to all he had to tell her of the wonderful ores in the mine, and how they were made into money. He brought her some pieces of what is called "peacock ore." It has all the colors of a peacock's

neck in it. Elsie was never tired of holding it in the sun and turning it over and over.

The first Sunday in December came a great disappointment,—instead of her father, a strange man, whom Elsie had never seen, bringing a note from her father, to say that he had hurt his foot and could not come down. But he hoped he should be well enough to come the next Sunday. The next Sunday came. No father. The same kind man, however, came all the way down to tell Elsie that her father's foot was much better, but still not strong enough for snow-shoe walking.

By this time, all the miners in Tin Cup knew about the little girl left alone in the cabin at Red Jacket, and there was not a man of them all who would n't have gladly walked the eight miles to save her from being anxious about her father. In fact, after the report which the first messenger carried back, describing the neat room, cheery little girl, and good dinner she gave him, there was almost a rivalry among the men as to who should go next time.

They had all become attached to Mr. McFarland also. They had found that he did not really mean to hold himself aloof from them at all; that he took hold of the hardest work with good courage, unused as he had been to it, and that he was as friendly and kind-hearted as it was possible for a man to be. Without knowing it, or trying to do so, he had made dozens of friends, who were all ready, if he should re-open his store, to give him all the help they could.

At last there were only three days left before the arrival of the Christmas Sunday, to which Elsie had looked forward so long. Her father had written that he would certainly be able to come down if it did not storm.

"An' it 'ud niver have the heart to storm on the blissed Christmas, an' it comin' on a Sunday," said Mrs. Christy.

"No, indeed!" said Elsie. "I'm sure it wont. I wish Christmas always came on a Sunday." And she danced around the room and hugged Mrs. Christy for very joy.

Mrs. Christy's two boys also were coming from the Chieftain mine, where they worked. Elsie had long since got over her dislike of the Christy boys. She had learned how kind and good they were under all their roughness of manner. The last time they had been home, they had, of their own accord, brought her two splendid young fir-trees for Christmas greens. They cut the trees down, fastened them by stout ropes to their belts, and came shooting into camp on their snow-shoes, each with a fir-tree dragging twenty feet behind him on the snow. Such a sight had never been seen in Red Jacket before. Then they

chopped the boughs off in front of the cabin, brought them in, and threw them on the floor in a heap huge enough to trim two much bigger rooms than Elsie's and Mrs. Christy's. Elsie and Mrs. Christy worked the whole day before Christmas, making wreaths and long festoons; and when all was done, the rooms were so changed one would hardly know them. Very late Elsie sat up that night, for she had some things to do she did not want Mrs. Christy to see: a nice scarf she had knit for each of the Christy boys, and a warm jacket for Mrs. Christy herself; and these were to be wrapped up in clean paper, and a little note written to go with each gift, and Elsie was a slow writer. It was past twelve o'clock when she crawled into her bed, very tired and sleepy. "It is Christmas now," she thought. "By nine o'clock Papa will be here. How he will like the greens! We never had it so pretty before," and Elsie was asleep in two minutes.

The next thing she knew, she heard voices talking outside, and saw lights flashing on the ceiling of her room. It did not seem to her she had been asleep a minute. The voices grew louder, and more and more, and the lights kept flashing. Terribly frightened, Elsie sprang up, and ran through the covered way to Mrs. Christy's room. As she reached the window, she heard Mrs. Christy sobbing, and crying:

"Och, an' who 'll till her? Who 'll have a hart to till her? I 'll niver be the one to till her!"

Like a flash of lightning, Elsie knew it was of her that Mrs. Christy was speaking, and in a second more she had sprung through the window, into the center of a group of excited men, all talking together, but all silent, as soon as she appeared; all except Mrs. Christy, who burst out crying louder than ever, and running to Elsie, threw her arms around her, and gasped out: "Och, honey, there 's bad news for ye. It 's a slide they 've had! Och, an' who 'll till her?" and Mrs. Christy broke down.

Elsie looked from one to another. She did not cry, but she turned very white, and that frightened the men. They were used to seeing women cry, as Mrs. Christy was doing; but this little white-faced, resolute-looking child,—as one of the men said afterward, "it took the strength right out of a man to see her."

"Is my Papa dead? Is he buried up in the snow-slide?" said Elsie, speaking very loud in a shrill voice. "Wont somebody please tell me what has happened?" and the tears began to roll down her cheeks.

Then they told her all there was to tell. It did not take many words. A man had just come down from Tin Cup, running for dear life, to call all the

Red Jacket men to come up and help dig out three cabins that had been buried in a snow-slide at midnight. The slide was a terrible one, he said. It had started with a sudden noise like a gun-shot, waking everybody in the camp. Then, with a great roaring sound like wind or a waterfall, the avalanche of snow had swept down the mountain-side, carrying away all the buildings of the Silver Queen Mine, and burying up three of the miners' cabins, nobody could tell how many feet deep. It was all over in the twinkling of an eye.

Luckily, the moon was shining at the time; and the people had turned out, and were digging as near as they could judge where the first cabin stood. But the snow was piled like a mountain, and there was hardly a hope of finding any one alive in the cabins. The messenger had gone on to the next town to get more help. While the men were telling all this, Elsie stood very still, her eyes turning first to one, then to another; she did not interrupt till they stopped speaking. Then she said:

"Are you sure my papa was in one of those cabins?"

The man who had been speaking last nodded his head and looked away from her. He could not speak.

"The man that came down, he said so," said another man. "He guv us the names. There 's ten men in the three cabins, and there 's a woman and baby in one. But we must be goin'. It 's a poor kind of a Christmas we 've got," and he glanced at the evergreen wreaths and boughs around the room. "It 's miners' luck, anyhow. But keep up your heart, Miss; we 'll send a man down to tell ye the very fust news there is."

Elsie did not speak nor move. She stood as if she were turned to stone, watching the men as they examined and lighted their lanterns, muffled themselves up, and prepared to set off. It was not yet four o'clock.

"Three more hours before daylight!" thought Elsie. "How can they see in this awful darkness?"

"Could n't I go with you?" she exclaimed, suddenly. "I can run fast on snow-shoes. Oh, do take me, so I can be there when they get my Papa out! Oh, let me come! I wont be any trouble."

"Bless your sweet eyes," cried one of the men, "it 's all we 'll be able to do ourselves to get up Coal Creek Gulch! Ye could n't stand up a minute, little gal, in the wind thet blows down thet gulch a night like this 'ere. It 'ud take ye like a dead leaf off a tree."

It was only a few minutes since the first sound of voices and the flash of light in Elsie's room had awakened her,—only a few minutes; but it seemed a thousand years. The men were all gone; silence reigned inside and outside; one flickering candle

gave a fitful half light in the room. Mrs. Christy sat rocking backward and forward, occasionally sobbing, and looking at Elsie without speaking. She did not dare to say a word to her. She could not understand the sort of grief which neither cried, nor moaned, nor spoke. She was almost afraid of Elsie. Elsie stood still at the window, her face pressed against the pane. Occasionally, a light would flash out in the distance, twinkle for a few seconds, then fade away in the direction of the Coal Gulch road—one more helper on the way to Tin Cup. In times of such disaster, mining people are all like brothers, in their eagerness to help and to rescue.

Finally, Elsie turned away from the window and said to Mrs. Christy:

"I think I will go back to bed again. There is n't anything to do."

Mrs. Christy stared at her. She was on the point of exclaiming in remonstrance, but suddenly changed her mind, and replied:

"An' indade, if ye can slape, it 'ud be the best thing for ye."

"I don't think I shall go to sleep," said Elsie, "but I suppose if I could, it would be better than to lie thinking."

"An' there's no knowin' thin; ye might jist fall off unawaires like, an' a dale o' good it 'ud do ye, darlin'. I'll not make a sound. Ye call me when ye want me. I think I'll maybe take a bit av a nap meself," said Mrs. Christy, as she helped Elsie over the window-sill.

Elsie felt guiltily relieved at these words, and there was almost a remorseful tenderness in the kiss she gave to the tender old Irishwoman as she stepped down into the passage-way.

For nothing was further from Elsie's mind than going to sleep. She had already decided on a plan of action, which she knew Mrs. Christy would oppose, perhaps even by force. Elsie had determined to go to Tin Cup. She knew the way. Her father had told her where the road lay; it was a road on which she herself had often walked a long distance, gathering flowers. There were no such purple asters anywhere as on the hills on the north side of that road. The south side of it, as far as Elsie knew it, was a steep slope down to the bottom of the gulch, where ran a swift little stream, called Coal Creek because there were coal mines on the banks of it. Beyond this stream, the hill rose abruptly again like a precipice, and was covered thickly with a fir forest. Elsie never liked to look at that side of the gulch. The fir forest looked so black and gloomy, and reminded her of fairy stories of forests where evil gnomes and elves lived.

Poor child! If the fir forest had been grim and

terrible to her in summer, how much more so would it seem now! She little dreamed how black and fierce it would look with the whole country round about white with snow, and the sparkling stream hid from sight!

It seemed to Elsie that it would never be light. When the first streak of red came in the sky, she jumped out of bed and began to dress. By the time it was light enough to see distinctly, she was all ready.

"How lucky that our front door is on the side Mrs. Christy can not see," thought Elsie, as she crept out, strapped on her snow-shoes, and set off. Nobody in the camp saw her. All the men had gone to Tin Cup, and most of the women were still asleep as Elsie sped down the silent street. When she came to the corner where the road turned off up Coal Creek Gulch, she halted a moment, dismayed at the sight. She would not have known the place. It seemed to her at first that it could not be the way. The gulch was so filled in with snow that the sides did not look half so high as they used to look; and there was not a trace of a road. No sleigh had been up Coal Creek Gulch for a month.

Still, she could see the tracks where the men had gone that morning, on their snow shoes.

"I can follow those tracks," thought Elsie, "and I can go by the trees, too. I think the fir forest reaches all the way up!" and she hurried on. Oh, how black the fir-trees looked, and how terribly still it was! Not a sound except the sound of Elsie's own sliding steps; and, to make it worse, the rising sun, which at first had shone out for a few minutes, soon went under a great gray cloud, which gradually spread and covered the whole sky. Elsie shuddered as she saw this. She knew what it meant. It was going to snow. "If it snows hard, I shall lose my way, surely," thought Elsie, and she hurried on faster and faster; too fast, alas! for before long, she lost her balance on the treacherous snow-shoes, reeled, pitched headlong, and fell. Luckily, the leather bands of her snow-shoes gave way; if they had not, she would have broken her ankles. As it was, one of them was so sprained that when she tried to get upon her feet, she fell back again, almost faint from the pain. She tried again and again, but each time the pain made her more weak and dizzy.

"I guess I've broken my leg," thought Elsie, "so now I shall have to lie here till I die. I don't care; if my papa is dead, I might as well die, too."

Scattering snow-flakes began to fall. They came faster and faster; soon, it was a blinding snow-storm. Elsie was so cold, she could hardly move. Again she tried to get upon her feet. It was of no use; the ankle was powerless, and the torture

of moving it was more dreadful each time she tried. Elsie shut her eyes, and thought to herself, "Now, I will just say my prayers, and then I'll be dead pretty soon."

A few tears rolled down her cheeks, but she

Elsie shrieked with the pain: "Oh, sir! my leg! Don't. My leg's broken. I can't stand up."

As soon as she opened her eyes and spoke, the man bent over and took another look at her face.

"Great Almighty!" he cried. "If it aint McFar-



"'IF IT SNOWS HARD, I SHALL LOSE MY WAY, SURE ENOUGH,' THOUGHT ELSIE, AND SHE HURRIED ON FASTER AND FASTER."

did not cry hard; in fact, she did not in any way suffer so much as you would have supposed. She was already benumbed by cold. To be frozen to death is not so terrible a death as the words suggest. A gentle drowsiness comes on, and the last thing people who are frozen know is that they feel like going to sleep. This was what Elsie thought.

"Why, how queer it is," she thought. "I don't feel half so cold as I did. Perhaps it is getting warmer. I'm so sleepy, I can't keep my eyes open," and that was the last Elsie knew till she felt a man shaking her shoulder hard, and pouring into her mouth some bad-tasting stuff that made her throat burn like fire.

"Git up, little gal—git up!" he said, trying to lift her on her feet.

land's little gal! Excuse me, Miss," he added; for even in her great pain Elsie lifted her eyes reproachfully at his first words. "But how in thunder come you here?"

It was the man who came down to Elsie's house, the first time, to bring the note from her father, when he was hurt. As soon as Elsie recognized his face, she felt she had found a friend, and then, in spite of herself, she began to cry and sob.

"My papa's buried up in the snow," she said, "and I was going up to Tin Cup, so as to be there when they got him out. The men are all digging. Don't you know about the slide? All the Red Jacket men have gone up to help; and I knew the way, and I could n't stay at home, and I was going too fast, and I fell over, and

my leg's broken. I've tried and tried to get up, and I can't."

Before she had done speaking, the man had cut her boot off from the sprained foot. As it fell, the relief was so great that Elsie exclaimed:

"Oh, thank you; it was the foot that was hurt—was n't it? I guess I can get up now," and she made a movement to try; but the man put his hand on her shoulder and said:

"I guess you can't, my gal. You've got to let me carry you. We'll fix that all right. I'll have you into Tin Cup in next to no time."

"Oh," said Elsie, "you never can carry me. I'm very heavy. If you can mend the straps to my snow-shoes, I'm sure I can walk."

"Snow-shoes be hanged!" said the man gruffly. "That looks like snow-shoes, don't it?" pointing to Elsie's foot. It frightened Elsie to see it. It was already much swollen, and the pain was coming back again worse than ever.

"Now, jist don't you cry, little woman," said the man, patting her head. "You jist do as I tell ye, an' I'll tow yer in 's easy 's nothin'! You heavy?" he went on. "Why, ye'r no more 'n a skeeter!"

At this, Elsie gave a little smile, which seemed to please the man greatly.

"Fact!" he said. "Ef I kin onct git ye hoisted on my shoulders, I kin run with ye's well's I could without ye. There's nothin' to ye, anyhow."

Then he picked up Elsie's snow-shoes, tied them together, and hung them upon a tree.

"We'll git them another day," he said. "They'll be safe there. Aint many tramps 'round this kind o' weather."

Then he took off his comforter, bound the poor swelled foot in it, and then, grasping his walking pole in his right hand, he managed with some difficulty to kneel down, close to Elsie, with his back to her.

"There, deâr," he said; "now you jist hug your arms tight 'roun' my neck, and hang on, an' I'll git up slow, an' then we'll be off in a jiffy."

Elsie did as she was told, and the man, with his strange load on his shoulders, rose slowly and carefully to his feet; but as soon as Elsie's sprained ankle hung at its full weight, the pain was so terrible that she could not endure it, and she gave a shriek, exclaiming: "Oh, my foot, my foot! Oh, sir, please put me down! I can't!"

"Blast it all!" said the man. "Ye poor little young 'un, I might ha' known ye could n't. I forgot about yer feet a hangin'," and setting Elsie down gently, he scratched his head and fell to thinking.

Elsie had around her neck a small plaid shawl, tied on like a comforter. "Could ye git along without that shawl; ye'll be putty wârm up there close to my back hair?" he asked, laughing.

"Oh, yes," said Elsie, taking it off at once, and handing it to him.

Out of this shawl he made a kind of sling, and knotted it across one of his shoulders. Then, while still on his knees, he took the swollen foot and very carefully set it in the sling.



ELSIE'S RESCUER.

"There," he said, "that's the best we can do. It'll help considerable to hold you up. I'm afeard it'll hurt ye putty bad, even this way; but ye'll have to bear it's well's ye kin, my gal," and he set off at a quick pace. At first Elsie did not suffer much, but in a few minutes the pain grew so

severe that she could not keep from groaning, though she tried very hard to desist.

"Don't mind my groaning," she said at last. "It hurts so I can't help it; but I can bear the hurt. Please go quick. How far is it?"

"Only two miles," he said. "We'll soon be there."

"I did not think I had come two miles," said Elsie, feebly, and that was the last word she said. The man spoke to her several times, but could get no answer.

"Blest if the kid aint fainted," he thought. "Well, it's jist as well; I'll git her there quicker," and he shot along in great strides.

Just in the outskirts of Tin Cup was a two-story frame house, the only frame house, the only two-story house, in the region. It was a miner's boarding-house. It was painted an indescribable shade of light red, and known as the "Pink Boarding-house." Its size and its color combined made it a conspicuous landmark, well known to everybody.

"Ef I can jist git to the Pink Boardin'-us, thet's all I'll ask," thought Elsie's rescuer. "Mis' Barrett, she'll bring her round first-rate. But I dunno 's the poor little thing 's got much to come round to. Her father 's dead 'n' gone, an' she haint got any other folks as ever I heern on. Blamed if it wa' n't a mighty foolish thing, a feller like McFarland goin' into minin', anyhow."

It was not half an hour from the time Elsie had been lifted on this kind miner's broad shoulders before she was laid in Mrs. Barrett's own bed, with blankets and bottles of hot water all around her, and Mrs. Barrett rubbing her hands, holding hartshorn to her nose, and doing all she could think of to bring her to consciousness;—crying over her, too, for Mrs. Barrett was a motherly soul, and her lonely life of three long years at the head of the Pink Boarding-house, and all the sufferings and troubles she had seen in the mining country, had made her compassionate and tender.

"I reckon she 's gone, Phil," she said, when he first staggered in with Elsie on his back.

"No, she aint," he cried. "Ye kin feel her little heart a-beatin', if ye try; she 's the pluckiest kid ever I saw. It 's McFarland's little gal; she 'd set out to come up here all alone, do ye know, 's soon 's she heard the news o' the slide. Got any on 'em out yit?"

"No," said Mrs. Barrett. "They have n't come to any o' the cabins yet."

"They'll all be dead, then, I'm afeard," said the man; adding "More 's the pity!" as he looked toward Elsie. Mrs. Barrett nodded silently. "Which cabin was McFarland in?" she asked.

"The one nearest the mine," replied Phil.

"That one'll have the best chance. It can't be so deep up there 's 't is down in the holler."

"Poor young un," he added, "she 'd got the two cabins, her'n and Christy's—(they was jined into one; Mac did it before he came up here, so Mis' Christy could look after the gal)—she 'd got the two cabins all trimmed up with greens, like a meetin'-us, a-lookin' for her father to come down to-day. I never 'll get over that fust time I took her down the note to say he wa' n't comin'. The tears cum in her eyes at fust, but in a minnit she had 'em brushed away, and sez she, 'But you will stay and eat your dinner with me, sir. That is what my papa would like, and I, too. Then I wont be all alone; an' the dinner 's ready,' jist like a woman; an' a mighty good dinner the little kid 'd cooked, too, all by herself."

"She 's comin' to," said Mrs. Barrett, who had not for a moment stopped chafing Elsie's hands. "She 's comin' to, poor little thing; how 'll I ever muster up courage to tell her about her father?"

"Oh, she knows," said Phil, as he hurried away. "She knows it. That 's what brought her up here. She overheard the men tellin' it at Christy's."

When Elsie opened her eyes and saw Mrs. Barrett's kind face bending over her, she thought she had died and gone to heaven.

"Is this heaven?" she said. "Are you an angel?"

Good Mrs. Barrett, in telling the story afterward, used to say: "Well, of all the things that ever happened to me, I was never so took aback as I was at that. And I never knew rightly what I did say to the child in the first of it. But in a minute or two she got her eyes really open, and then she saw I was n't an angel. And she said, 'Oh, thank you very much! I feel better. Where is the kind man that brought me here? Have they got my papa out of the snow yet?' An' she was as calm 's a grown woman, and a sight calmer than most of 'em; and there she lay all that dreadful morning, just as peaceful 's any lamb. She 'd answer when I spoke to her, and she 'd eat and drink whatever I told her to. But I don't believe she spoke six words o' her own accord—not till the door opened, and her father walked in. And then the scream that child gave! It would ha' raised the dead! I thought I 'd never get it out o' my ears. She just raised up in bed, and gave that one scream, and then she fell back in another dead faint, worse than the one I 'd brought her out of in the morning. I thought she never would come out on 't. I wont ever forget it's long 's I live. And her father, he stood lookin' at her with the tears rolling down. And, says he, 'Mrs. Barrett, this little girl's all I've got in the world to live for.'"

Yes, it was indeed Elsie's father that opened the door and walked in—safe and sound, and as well as ever. A very strange thing had happened. On the evening before, one of the miners, Mr. McFarland's best friend and room-mate, had asked him to take his place on what is called the "night shift"—that is, the gang of men who work in mines at night. It is a very common thing, when mines are prosperous, to keep the work going on in them night and day,—one set of men working in the day-time and another at night. So Mr. McFarland, to relieve his friend, had gone into the mine to work that night, and was in the tunnel when the snow-slide took place. His friend had staid in the cabin, and was killed instantly—crushed to death in his bed, under the timbers of the cabin. All who were in the other cabins were killed except one man, whose escape seemed like a miracle. The broken timbers fell in such a way that they did not press on him, and held the snow up like a roof above him; and there he lay in his bed, unable to stir hand or foot, in total darkness under the mountain of snow, till the morn-

ing of the second day, when he was taken out, nearly dead from fright, but with not a hurt of any kind.

Elsie did not want to speak when she came out of her fainting fit and found her father holding her hand. She clasped both her hands tightly around his, but she did not speak nor move. As he told her how it had happened that he was saved, tears trickled down her cheeks; but still she did not speak. It seemed to her that she should never want to do anything as long as she lived but to hold her father's hand in hers and look into his face. And he felt almost in the same way; as if he never wanted to have his little daughter out of his sight again.

In the course of the afternoon, he said to her:

"I have n't got any Christmas present for you, Elsie, dear."

"Oh, Papa!" she said, in a faint little voice,—for she was very weak still,—"I've got the best Christmas present in the world! I don't believe any other girl in the world ever had a Christmas present of a papa!"

THE OAK AND THE MUSHROOM.—A FABLE.

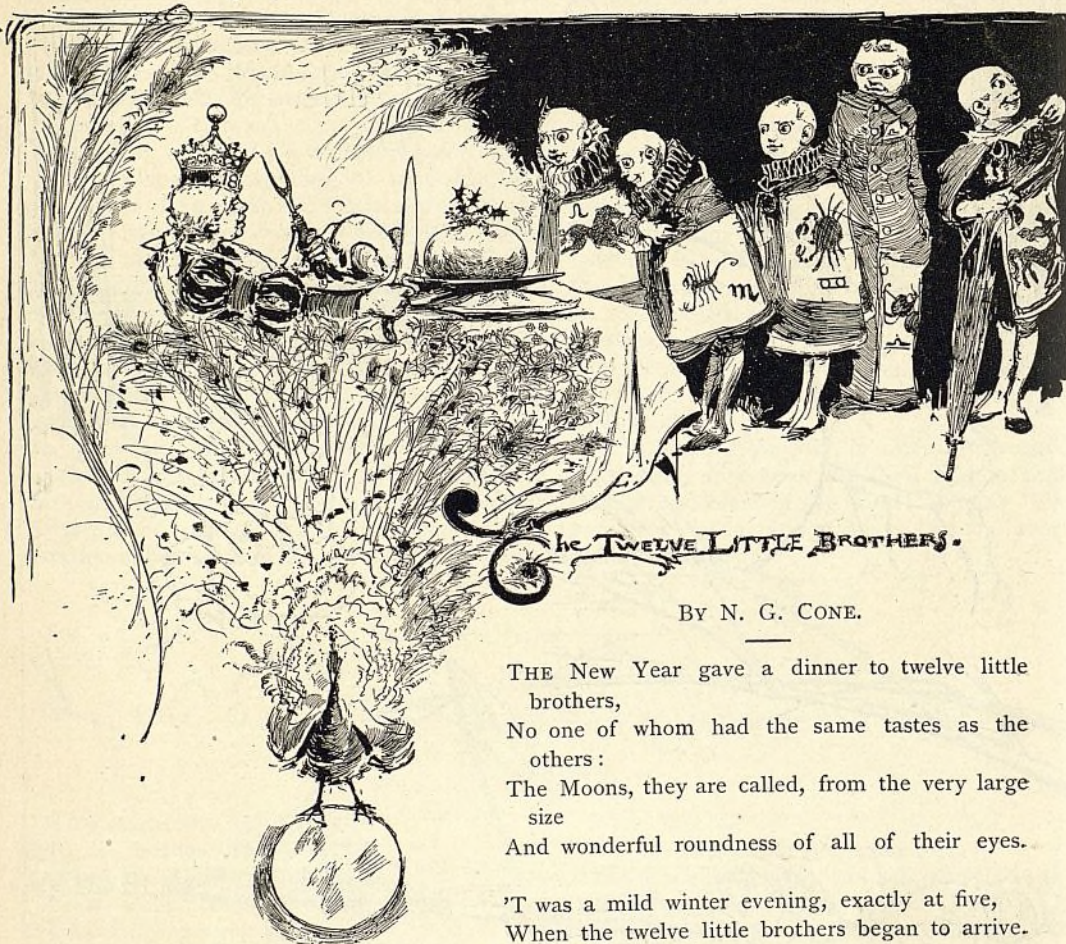
BY JOEL BENTON.

THE mushroom and the oak
In the meadow stood together,
When the former, in his cloak
Pearly-white, briskly said:
"I have just got out of bed,
And I find the world is radiant with good
weather.
I see a thousand pretty things—
Flowers with color, birds with wings
That fly so far and so fleetly;—
But there's one thing puzzles me most com-
pletely:
How a tree of power and size
Should take so long to rise.
I at once sprang from the ground,
And have hardly looked around,
And have not been here an hour;—
But, to win your state and power,
As your wrinkledness appears,
Took a dozen score of years.
Look at me,
And you'll agree
I am whole and clear and sound.
Is n't that a perfect dower?
And I've not been here an hour!"

Then the oak
To his callow comrade spoke:
"All depends on what you set yourself to be—
Whether mushroom, or a tree.
Very little needs but little for supply;
And to one who can say
He has had no yesterday—
Who, springing from a shower,
Was born in an hour,
And with weeping and quick sorrow,
Must vanish ere to-morrow,—
Things are easy, I admit.
But if you had had a bit of real, sturdy wit,
You would know
Quick to come is quick to go.
"—But hither strolls the epicure;
He will settle this debate, I'm sure.
See, he ends our fact or fable,
By picking you to sit as a morsel on his table.
But to you 't is little difference, any way—
Small intruder of a day—
Had he missed your meadowy spot,
Found you here, or found you not,
Death has uses:—and your take-off is as just,
For to-morrow you would crumble into dust."



'T WAS A MILD WINTER EVENING, EXACTLY AT FIVE,



BY N. G. CONE.

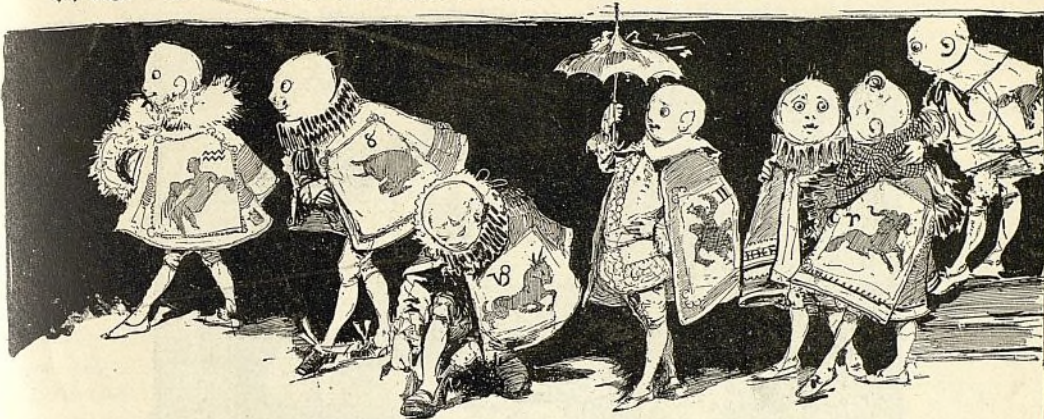
THE New Year gave a dinner to twelve little
brothers,
No one of whom had the same tastes as the
others:
The Moons, they are called, from the very large
size
And wonderful roundness of all of their eyes.

'T was a mild winter evening, exactly at five,
When the twelve little brothers began to arrive.

March came in a comforter big as a shawl;
And August without any stockings at all;
And Feb. in an ulster, although he was small;
And April in boots, which he left in the hall;
December in arctics—he feared he would fall,
And therefore was constantly giving a haul
To the straps; and November, if right I recall,
Had brought an umbrella in case of a squall;
And May had a beautiful blue parasol;
And then came July, with the rosy-cheeked Jan.,
Though Jan. was in furs, and July had a fan;
And Septy and Octy in round caps and frills;
And June in a pinafore old as the hills.

There was plum pie, and peacock, and turtles, and thyme,
And more than I ever can tell in my rhyme.
May remarked, "If you please, I'll take lamb and green peas,"
While September exclaimed, "Apple dumplings and cheese;"

When THE TWELVE LITTLE BROTHERS BEGAN TO ARRIVE.



And July was inquiring for lemons to squeeze;
 And August for ices his palate to freeze;
 And June a great spoon did impatiently seize
 And drummed on the table for "Fresh strawberries!"
 November said, "Turkey—I can't wait a minute!"
 December said, "Pudding, with cinnamon in it!"
 Jan. clamored for oysters—March hinted "Half-shell;"
 Feb. thought chicken salad would do very well;
 Said Octy, "Dessert without nuts can't excel;"
 And April was anxious his wishes to tell—
 (They were chiefly boiled eggs)—till, the tumult to quell,
 The New Year made use of his silver hand-bell,
 And was forced to confess, not at all at his ease,
 That there *never* were twelve little brothers like these.
 And he rose and declared he would stand it no more,
 And the twelve little brothers he savagely bore,
 By their twelve little collars, outside of his door;
 And the last thing I heard of was June's pinafore,
 Which caught on the door-knob and dolefully tore.

So, if these little brothers, in good Eighty-four,
 Get treated to weather they 'll sadly deplore;
 And it rains every day in the sweet month of May,
 And freezes in August, my readers can say
 That the twelve little brothers, so fractious and queer,
 Have excited the wrath of the lordly New Year.





"TAKING TURNS."

TALES OF TWO CONTINENTS.

BY HJALMAR HJORTH BOYSEN.

FIRST STORY—MAGNIE'S DANGEROUS RIDE.—(PART II.)

MAGNIE never knew how long he was unconscious. The first thing he remembered was a delicious sense of warmth and comfort stealing through him, and strange, unintelligible sounds buzzing in the air about him. Somebody was talking kindly to him, and a large, warm hand was gliding over his forehead and cheeks. The peace and warmth were grateful to him after the intense strain of his dangerous ride. He was even loth to open his eyes when his reviving memory began to make the situation clear to him.

"It was a reckless shot, Harry," he heard some one saying in a foreign tongue, which he soon recognized as English, "even if it did turn out well. Suppose you had sent your bullet crashing through

the young fellow instead of the buck. How would you have felt then?"

"I should have felt very badly, I am sure," answered a younger voice, which obviously belonged to Magnie's rescuer; "but I followed my usual way of doing things. If I did n't act that way, I should n't act at all. And you will admit, Uncle, it is a queer sort of thing to see a fellow come riding on a reindeer buck, in the midst of a wild herd, and in a trackless wilderness like this, where nobody but wolves or geologists would be apt to discover any attractions. Now, I saw by the young man's respectable appearance that he could n't be a geologist; and if he was a wolf, I did n't mind much if I did shoot him."

At this point, Magnie opened his eyes and stared wonderingly about him. He found himself in a small, cramped room, the walls of which were draped with canvas, and scarcely high enough under the ceiling to allow a man to stand erect. Against the walls a number of shining brass instruments were leaning, and in a corner there was a hearth, the smoke of which escaped through a hole in the roof. Two bunks filled with moss, with a sheet and a blanket thrown over each, completed the outfit of the primitive dwelling. But Magnie was more interested in the people, than in the looks of the room. A large, blonde, middle-aged man, inclined to stoutness, was holding Magnie's hand as if counting his pulse-beat, and a very good-looking young fellow, of about his own age, was standing at the hearth, turning a spit upon which was a venison steak.

"Hallo! Our young friend is returning from the land of Nod," said the youth who had been addressed as Harry. "I am glad you did n't start on a longer journey, young chap, when I fired at you; for if you had, you would have interfered seriously with my comfort."

Magnie, who was a fair English scholar, understood perfectly what was said to him, but several minutes elapsed before he could collect himself sufficiently to answer. In order to gain time, he made an effort to raise himself and take a closer look at his surroundings, but was forced by the older man to abandon the attempt. "Not so fast, my dear, not so fast," he said, stooping over him, and gently pushing him back into a reclining position. "You must remember that you have a big lump on your head from your fall, and it wont do to be frisky just yet. But before conversing further, it might be well to ascertain whether we understand each other."

"Yes, I think—I think—I do," stammered Magnie. "I know some English."

"Ah, then we shall get along charmingly," the man remarked, with an encouraging smile. "And I think Harry's venison steak is done by this time; and dinner, as you know, affords the most delightful opportunity for getting acquainted. Gunnar, our guide, who is outside skinning your reindeer buck, will soon present himself and serve the dinner. Here he is, and he is our cook, butler, chambermaid, laundress, beast of burden, and interpreter, all in one."

The man to whom the professor alluded was at this moment seen crawling on his hands and feet through the low door-way, which his bulky figure completely filled. He was a Norwegian peasant of the ordinary sort, with a square, rudely cut face, dull blue eyes, and a tuft of towy hair hanging down over his forehead. With one hand he was drag-

ging the skin of the buck, and between his teeth he held an ugly-looking knife.

"We have got to bury him," he said.

"Bury him!" cried Harry! "Why, you blood-thirsty wretch! Don't you see he is sitting there, looking as bright as a sixpence?"

"I mean the buck," replied Gunnar, imperturbably.

"And why do you wish to bury the buck? I would much rather eat him. This steak here has a most tempting flavor, and I am quite tired of canned abominations by this time."

"The wolves will be sure to scent the meat, now that it is flayed, and before an hour we might have a whole congregation of them here."

"Well, then, we will shoot them down," insisted the cheerful Harry. "Come, now, Uncle, and let us have a civilized dinner. I don't pretend to be an expert in the noble art of cookery; but if this tastes as good as it smells, I would n't exchange it for a Delmonico banquet. And if the wolves, as Gunnar says, can smell a dead reindeer miles away, why they would be likely to smell a venison steak from the ends of creation. Perhaps, if we don't hurry, all the wolves of the earth may invite themselves to our dinner."

Gunnar, upon whom this fanciful raillery was lost, was still standing on all-fours in the door, with his front half in the warm room and his rearward portion in the arctic regions without. He was gazing helplessly from one to another, as if asking for an explanation of all this superfluous talk. "Vill you cawme and help me, Mester Harry?" he asked at last, stolidly.

"Yes, when I have had my dinner, I will, Mester Gunnar," answered Harry, gayly.

"Vell, I have nothing more to say, den," grumbled the guide; "but it vould vonder me much if, before you are troo, you vont have some unbidden guests."

"All right, Gunnar—the more the merrier;" retorted Harry as, with exaggerated imitation of a waiter's manner, he distributed plates, knives, and napkins to Magnie and his uncle.

They now fell to chatting, and Magnie learned, after having given a brief account of himself, that his entertainers were Professor Winchester, an American geologist, and his nephew, Harry Winchester, who was accompanying his uncle, chiefly for the fun of the thing, and also for the purpose of seeing the world and picking up some crumbs of scientific knowledge. The Professor was especially interested in glaciers and their action in ages past upon the surface of the earth, and, as the Norwegian glaciers had never been thoroughly studied, he had determined to devote a couple of months to observations and measurements, with a

view to settling some mooted geological questions upon which he had almost staked his reputation.

They had just finished the steak, which would perhaps have been tenderer if it had not been so fresh, and were helping themselves to the contents of a jar of raspberry preserves, when Harry suddenly dropped his spoon and turned with a serious face to his uncle.

"Did you hear that?" he said.

"No; what was it?"

Harry waited for a minute; then, as a wild, doleful howl was heard, he laid his hand on the Professor's arm, and remarked:

"The old fellow was right. We shall have unbidden guests."

"But they are hardly dangerous in these regions, so far as I can learn," said the Professor, reassuringly.

"That depends upon their number. We could tackle a dozen; but two dozen we might find troublesome. At any rate, they have spoiled my appetite for raspberry jam, and that is something I sha'n't soon forgive them."

Three or four howls, sounding nearer, and echoing with terrible distinctness from the glaciers, seemed to depress Harry's spirits still further, and he put the jar away and began to examine the lock of his rifle.

"They are evidently summoning a mass meeting," remarked the Professor, as another chorus of howls reëchoed from the glacier. "I wish we had more guns."

"And I wish mine were a Remington or a Springfield breech-loader, with a dozen cartridges in it," Harry exclaimed. "These double-barreled Norwegian machines, with two shots in them, are really good for nothing in an emergency. They are antediluvian both in shape and construction."

He had scarcely finished this lament, when Gunnar's huge form re-appeared in the door, quadruped fashion, and made an attempt to enter. But his great bulk nearly filled the narrow room, and made it impossible for the others to move. He examined silently first Harry's rifle, then his own, cut off a slice of steak with his pocket-knife, and was about to crawl out again, when the Professor, who could not quite conceal his anxiety, asked him what he had done with the reindeer.

"Oh!" he answered, triumphantly, "I haf buried him among de stones, where it vill be safe from all de voves in de world."

"But, my dear fellow," ejaculated the Professor, hotly, "why did n't you rather let the wolves have it? Then, at least, they would spare us."

"You surely would n't give a goot fresh reindeer, legs and all, to a pack of skountrelly voves, would you?"

"I would much rather give them that than give them myself."

"But it is woth twenty dollars, ef you can get it down fresh and sell it to de English yachts," protested Gunnar, stolidly.

"Yes, yes; but you great stupid," cried the Professor in despair, "what do you think my life is worth? and Master Harry's? and this young fellow's?" (pointing to Magnie). "Now, go as quick as you can and dig the deer out again."

Gunnar, scarcely able to comprehend such criminal wastefulness, was backing out cautiously with his feet foremost, when suddenly he gave a scream and a jump which nearly raised the roof from the hut. It was evident that he had been bitten. In the same moment a fresh chorus of howls resounded without, mingled with sharp, whining barks, expressive of hunger and ferocity. There was something shudderingly wild and mournful in these long-drawn discords, as they rose toward the sky in this lonely desert; and brave as he was, Magnie could not quite restrain the terror which he felt stealing upon him. Weakened by his icy bath, moreover, and by the nervous strain of his first adventure, he had no great desire to encounter a pack of ravenous wolves. Still, he manned himself for the occasion and, in as steady a voice as he could command, begged the Professor to hand him some weapon. Harry, who had instinctively taken the lead, had just time to reach him a long hunting-knife, and arm his uncle with an ax, when, through the door which Gunnar had left open, two wolves came leaping in and paused in bewilderment at the sight of the fire on the hearth. They seemed dazed by the light, and stood panting and blinking, with their trembling red tongues lolling out of their mouths. Harry, whose gun was useless at such close range, snatched the ax away from the Professor, and at one blow split the skull of one of the intruders, while Magnie ran his knife up to the very hilt in the neck of the other. The beast was, however, by no means dead after that, but leaped up on his assailant's chest, and would have given him an ugly wound in the neck, had not the Professor torn it away and flung it down upon the fire, where with a howling whine it expired. The Professor had also found time to bolt the door, before more visitors could enter; and two successive shots without seemed to indicate that Gunnar was holding his own against the pack. But the question was, how long would he succeed in keeping them at bay? He had fired both his shots, and he would scarcely have a chance to load again, with twenty hungry beasts leaping about him. This they read in one another's faces, but no one was anxious to anticipate the other in uttering his dread.

"Help, help!" cried Gunnar, in dire need.

"Take your hand away, Uncle!" demanded Harry. "I am going out to help him."

"For your life's sake, Harry," implored the Professor, "don't go! Let me go! What would your Mother say to me, if I should return without you?"

"I'll come back again, Uncle, don't you fear," said the youth, with feigned cheerfulness; "but I won't let this poor fellow perish before my very eyes, even though he is a fool."

"It was his foolishness which brought this danger upon us," remonstrated the Professor.

"He knew no better," cried Harry, tearing the door open, and with ax uplifted rushing out into the twilight. What he saw seemed merely a dark mass, huddled together and swaying sideways, from which now and then a black figure detached itself with a howl, jumped wildly about, and again joined the dark, struggling mass. He could distinguish Gunnar's head, and his arms fighting desperately, and, from the yelps and howls of the wolves, he concluded that he had thrown away the rifle and was using his knife with good effect.

"Help!" he yelled, "help!"

"You shall have it, old fellow," cried Harry, plunging forward and swinging his ax about him; and the Professor, who had followed close at his heels, shouting at the top of his voice, pressed in Harry's wake right into the center of the furious pack. But, at that very instant, there came a long "Hallo-o!" from the lake below, and a rifle bullet flew whistling above their heads and struck a rock scarcely a yard above the Professor's hat. Several wolves lay gasping and yelping on the ground, and the rest slunk aside. Another shot followed, and a large beast made a leap and fell dead among the stones. Gunnar, who was lying bleeding upon the ground, was helped to his feet, and supported by Harry and the Professor to the door of the cottage.

"Hallo, there!" shouted Harry, in response to the call from below.

"Hallo!" some one shouted back.

The figures of three men were now seen looming up in the dusk, and Magnie, who instinctively knew who they were, sprang to meet them, and in another moment lay sobbing in his brother's arms. The poor lad was so completely unnerved by the prolonged suspense and excitement, that he had to be carried back into the hut, and his brother, after having hurriedly introduced himself to the

Professor, came very near giving way to his feelings, too. Gunnar's wounds, which were numerous, though not serious, were washed and bandaged by Grim Hering-Luck; and having been wrapped in a horse-blanket, to keep out the cold, he was stowed away in a bunk and was soon asleep. As the hut was too small to admit all the company at once, Grim and Bjarne remained outside, and busied themselves in skinning the seven wolves which had fallen on the field of battle. Harry, who had got a bad bite in his arm, which he refused to regard as serious, consented with reluctance to his uncle's surgery, and insisted upon sitting up and conversing with Olaf Birk, to whom he had taken a great liking. But after a while the conversation began to lag, and tired heads began to droop; and when, about midnight, Grim crept in to see how his invalid was doing, he found the Professor reclining on some loose moss upon the floor, while Harry was snoring peacefully in a bunk, using Olaf's back for a pillow. And Olaf, in spite of his uncomfortable attitude, seemed also to have found his way to the land of Nod. Grim, knowing the danger of exposure in this cold glacier air, covered them all up with skins and horse-blankets, threw a few dry sticks upon the fire, and resumed his post as sentinel at the door.

The next morning, Professor Winchester and his nephew accepted Olaf's invitation to spend a few days at Hasselrud, and without further adventures the whole caravan descended into the valley, calling on their way at the *saeter* where Edwin had been left. It appeared, when they came to discuss the strange incidents of the preceding day, that it was Magnie's silk handkerchief which had enabled them to track him to the edge of the lake, and, by means of a raft, which Bjarne kept hidden among the stones in a little bay, they had been enabled to cross, leaving their horses in charge of a shepherd boy whom they had found tending goats close by.

The reindeer cow which Olaf had killed was safely carried down to the valley, and two wolf-skins were presented to Magnie by Harry Winchester. The other wolf-skins, as well as the skin of the reindeer buck, Bjarne prepared in a special manner, and Harry looked forward with much pleasure to seeing them as rugs upon the floor of his room at college; and he positively swelled with pride when he imagined himself relating to his admiring fellow-students the adventures which had brought him these precious possessions.

LUCY LEE from HIGH DUNDEE

Quaint Lucy Lee
From High Dundee
Came sauntering into town;
She came to see
ST. NICK, and me,
ST. NICHOLAS dear to all of us,
SAINT NICHOLAS of renown.

Now faire to see
Was Lucy Lee
All dressed in her brave silk gown;
She courtisied. We,
(ST. NICK and me),
Said: "How d'yd'?" Then outspake she—
SAINT NICHOLAS of renown
"I come, you see,
From High Dundee,
I come for a good look down
Right into y
Black bottles' wee
'Of artists who draw with y pen for thee
SAINT NICHOLAS of renown."



SPINNING-WHEEL STORIES. NO. I.

BY LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

"It is too bad to have our jolly vacation spoilt by this provoking storm. Did n't mind it yesterday, because we could eat all the time; but here we are cooped up for a week, perhaps, and I'd like to know what we are to do," growled Geoff, as he stood at the window looking gloomily at the bleak scene without. It certainly was discouraging; for the north wind howled, the air was dark with falling snow, and drifts were rising over fences, roads, and fields, as if to barricade the Christmas party in the great country house.

"We can bear it pleasantly, since it can't be helped," said gentle sister Mary, with a kind hand on his shoulder, and a face full of sympathy for his disappointment. "I'm sorry for the coasting, skating, and sleighing frolics we have lost; but if we must be shut up, I'm sure we could n't have a pleasanter prison or a kinder jailer. Don't let Grandma hear us complain, for she has made great exertions to have our visit a merry one, and it will trouble her if we are not gay and contented."

"That's easy for a parcel of girls, who only want to mull over the fire, and chatter, and drink tea; but it's rough on us fellows, who come for the outside fun. House is well enough, but when you've seen it once there's an end. Eating is jolly, but you can't stuff forever. We might dig or snowball if it did n't blow a gale. Never saw such a beast of a storm!" and Geoff flattened his nose against the window-pane and scowled at the elements.

A laugh made him turn around and forget his woes, to stare at the quaint little figure that stood curtseying in the door-way of the keeping-room, where a dozen young people were penned while the maids cleared up the remains of yesterday's feast in the kitchen, the mothers were busy with the babies upstairs, and the fathers read papers in the best parlor; for this was a family gathering under the roof of the old homestead.

A rosy, dark-eyed face looked out from the faded green calash, a gayly flowered gown was looped up over a blue quilted petticoat, and a red camlet cloak hung down behind. A big reticule and a funny umbrella were held in either hand, and red hose and very high-heeled, pointed shoes covered a trim pair of feet.

"God bless you, merry gentlemen,
May nothing you dismay;
Here's your ancient granny come
To call, this Christmas day,"

sang Minnie, the lively member of the flock, as she

bobbed little curtseys and smiled so infectiously that even cross Geoff cheered up.

"Where did you get that rigging?" "Is n't it becoming!" "What queer stuff!" "Did Grandma ever look so, I wonder?"

These and many other questions rained upon the wearer of the old costume, and she answered them as fast as she could.

"I went rummaging up garret for something to read, and found two chests of old duds. Thought I'd dress up and see how you liked me. Grandma said I might, and told me I looked like her when she was young. She was a beauty, you know, so I feel as proud as a peacock." And Min danced away to stand before the portrait of a blooming girl in a short-waisted, white satin gown and a pearl necklace, which hung opposite the companion portrait of an officer in an old-fashioned uniform.

"So you do. Wonder if I should look like Grandpa if I got into his old toggery?" said Geoff, looking up at the handsome man with the queue and the high coat-collar.

"Go and try; the uniform is in the chest, and not much moth-eaten. Let's have a jolly rummage, and see what we can find. *We* did n't eat ourselves sick, so we will amuse these lazy invalids," and Min glanced pityingly at several cousins who lay about on sofas or in easy chairs, pretending to read, but evidently suffering from too great devotion to the bountiful dinner and evening feast of yesterday.

Away went Min and Lotty, Geoff and Walt, glad of anything to beguile the stormy afternoon. Grandma smiled as she heard the tramp of feet overhead, the peals of laughter, and the bang of chest-lids, well knowing that a scene of dire confusion awaited her when the noisy frolic was done, but thankful for the stores of ancient finery which would keep the restless children happy for a day.

It was truly a noble garret, for it extended the whole length of the great square house, with windows at either end, and divided in the middle by a solid chimney. All around stood rows of chests, dilapidated furniture, and wardrobes full of old relics, while the walls were hung with many things for which modern tongues can find no names. In one corner was a book-case full of musty books and papers; in another, kitchen utensils and rusty weapons; the third was devoted to quilts hung on

lines, and in the fourth stood a loom with a spinning-wheel beside it, both seemingly well cared for, as the dust lay lightly on them, and flax was still upon the distaff.

A glorious rummage followed the irruption of the Goths and Vandals into this quiet spot, and soon Geoff quite forgot the storm as he pranced about in the buff and blue coat, with a cocked hat on his head, and Grandfather's sword at his side. Lottie arrayed herself in a pumpkin hood and quilted cloak for warmth, while Walt, the book-worm, went straight to the ancient library, and became absorbed in faded souvenirs, yellow newspapers, and almanacs of a century ago.

Having displayed themselves below and romped all over the house, the masqueraders grew tired at last, and early twilight warned them to leave before ghostly shadows began to haunt the garret.

"I mean to take this down and ask Grandma to show me how it's done. I've heard her tell about spinning and weaving when she was a girl, and I know I can learn," said Minnie, who had fallen in love with the little wheel, and vainly tried to twist the flax into as smooth a thread as the one hanging from the distaff, as if shadowy fingers had lately spun it.

"Queen Victoria set the fashion in England, and we might do it here. Would n't it be fun to have a wheel in the parlor at home, and really use it, not keep it tied up with blue ribbons, as the other girls do!" cried Lotty, charmed with the new idea.

"Come, Geoff, take it down for us. You ought to do it out of gratitude for my cheering you up so nicely," said Min, leading the way.

"So I will. Here, Walt, give it a hoist, and come behind to pick up the pieces, for the old machine must be about a hundred, I guess."

Shouldering the wheel, Geoff carried it down; but no bits fell by the way, for the stout little wheel was all in order, kept so by loving hands that for more than eighty years had been spinning the mingled thread of a long and useful life.

Glorious fires were roaring up the wide chimneys in parlor and keeping-room, and old and young were gathering around them, while the storm beat on the window-panes, and the wintry wind howled as if angry at being shut out.

"See what we've stolen, Grandma," cried Min, as the procession came in, rosy, dusty, gay and eager.

"Bless the child! What possessed you to lug that old thing down?" asked Madam Shirley, much amused, as the prize was placed before her where she sat in her high-backed chair, a right splendid old lady in her stately cap, black silk gown and muslin apron, with a bunch of keys at her side, like a model housekeeper as she was.

"You don't mind our playing with it, do you? And will you teach me to spin? I think it's such a pretty little thing, and I want to be like you in all ways, Grandma dear," answered Min, sitting on the arm of the great chair, with her fresh cheek close to the wrinkled one where winter roses still bloomed.

"You wheedling gypsy! I'll teach you with all my heart, for it is pretty work, and I often wonder ladies don't keep it up. I did till I was too busy, and now I often take a turn at it when I'm tired of knitting. The hum is very soothing, and the thread much stronger than any we get nowadays."

As she spoke, the old lady dusted the wheel, and gave it a skillful turn or two, till the soft whirl made pleasant music in the room.

"Is it really a hundred years old?" asked Geoff, drawing nearer with the others to watch the new work.

"Just about. It was one of my mother's wedding presents, and she gave it to me when I was fifteen. Deary me, how well I remember that day," and Grandma seemed to fall a-dreaming as her eyes rested on the letters E. R. M. rudely cut in the wood, and below these were three others with something meant for a true lover's knot between.

"Whose initials are these?" asked Min, scenting a romance with girlish quickness, for Grandma was smiling as if her eyes read the title to some little story in those worn letters.

"Elizabeth Rachel Morgan and Joel Manlius Shirley. Your blessed Grandfather cut our names there the day I was sixteen, and put the flourish between to show what he wanted," added the old lady, laughing as she made the wheel hum again.

"Tell about it, please do," begged Min, remembering that Grandma had been a beauty and a belle.

"It's a long tale, my darling, and I could n't tell it now. Sometime when I'm teaching you to spin I'll do it, maybe."

But the girl was determined to have her story; and after tea, when the little ones were in bed, the elders playing whist in the parlor, and the young folks deciding what game to begin, Minnie sat down and tried to spin, sure that the familiar sound would lure Grandma to give the lesson and tell the tale.

She was right, for the wheel had not gone around many times, when the tap of the cane was heard, and the old lady came rustling in, quite ready for a chat, now that three cups of her own good tea and a nap in the chimney corner had refreshed her.

"No, dear, that's not the way; you need a dish of water to wet your fingers in, and you must draw the flax out slow and steady, else it

runs to waste, and makes a poor thread. Fetch me that chair, and I'll show you how, since you are bent on learning."

Establishing herself in the straight-backed seat, a skillful tap of the foot set the wheel in swift and easy motion, and the gray thread twisted fine and evenly from the distaff.

"Is n't it a pretty picture?" said Min to Lotty, as they watched the old lady work.

"Not so pretty as the one I used to see when my dear mother sat here, and I, a little child, at her knee. Ah, my dears, she could have told you stories all night long, and well worth hearing. I was never tired of them."

"Please tell one now, Grandma. We don't know what to play, and it would be so nice to sit around the fire and hear it this stormy night," suggested Min, artfully seizing the hint.

"Do! do! We all love stories, and we'll be as still as mice," added Geoff, beckoning to the others as he took the big arm-chair, being the oldest grandson and leader of the flock.

Camping on the rug, or nestling in the sofa corner, the boys and girls all turned expectant faces toward Grandma, who settled her cap-strings and smoothed her spotless apron, with an indulgent smile at her little audience.

"I don't know which one to tell first."

"The ghost story; that's a splendid one, and most of the children never heard it," said Walt.

"Have Indians and fighting in it. I like that kind," added Geoff.

"No; tell a love story. They are *so* interesting," said Lotty.

"I want the story about the initials first. I know it is very sentimental. So do begin with that, Grandma," begged Min.

"Well, dears, perhaps I'd better choose that one, for it has the battle of New Orleans, and wolves, and spinning, and sweethearts in it; so it will suit you all, I hope."

"Oh, lovely! Do begin right away," cried Minnie, as the clapping of hands showed how satisfactory the prospect was.

Grandma gave a loud "hem!" and began at once, while the little wheel hummed a soft accompaniment to her words.

GRANDMA'S STORY.

"WHEN I was fifteen, my mother gave me this wheel, and said: 'Now, daughter Betsey, it is time for you to begin your wedding outfit, for I mistrust you'll marry young.' In those days girls spun and wove webs of fine linen and laid 'em up in chests, with lavender and rosemary, for sheets and table-linen after they married. So I

spun away, making all manner of fine plans in my silly head, for I was a pretty piece, they all said, and young as I was, two or three fine lads used to come evenings and sit staring at me while I worked.

"Among these, was my neighbor Joel Manlius Shirley, and I was fond of him, but he had n't much money, so I put on airs, and tried his patience very much. One day he came in and said: 'Betsey, I'm going a-soldiering; they need men, and I'm off. Will you think of poor Joe when I'm gone?'

"I don't know how I looked, but I felt as if I could n't bear it. Only I was too proud to show my trouble; so I laughed and gave my wheel a twist, and said I was glad of it, since anything was better than hanging round at home.

"That hurt him, but he was always gentle to saucy Betsey, and taking out his knife, he cut those letters under mine, saying, with a look I never could forget:

"'That will remind you of me if you are likely to forget. Good-bye; I'm going right away, and may never come back.'

"He kissed me and was off before I could say a word, and then I cried till my flax was wet and my thread tangled, and my heart 'most broken. Deary me, how well I remember that heavy day!"

Grandma smiled, but something shone in her old eyes very like a tear, and sentimental Lotty felt deeply interested at this point.

"Where does the fighting come in?" asked Geoff, who was of a military turn, as became the descendant of a soldier.

"I did n't know or care much about the War of 1812, except as far as the safety of one man was concerned. Joe got on without any harm till the battle of New Orleans, when he was nearly killed behind the cotton-bale breastworks General Jackson built."

"Yes, I know all about it! Jackson fought against twelve thousand and lost only seven men. That was the last battle of the war, January 8, 1815. Three cheers for Grandpa!" shouted Geoff, waving a tidy, as no hat was at hand.

The others echoed the hurrah, and Grandma beamed with pride as she went on: "We could n't get news from the army very often in those troublous times, and Joe was gone two years before the war ended. After the great battle we had no news for a long spell, and we feared he was one of the seven men killed. Those were dreadful days for all of us. My honored mother was a pious soul, and so was Mrs. Shirley, and they kept up their hearts with hope and prayer; but I, poor thing, was young and weak, and I cried myself half blind, remembering how naughty I had been. I would spin no more, but set the wheel away, saying I

should have no need of wedding gear, as I should never marry; and I wore black ribbon on my caps, and one of Joe's buttons strung about my neck, mourning dismally for my lost dear.

"So the winter ended, and the summer went, and no news came of Joe. All said he was dead, and we had prayers at church, and talked of setting a stone up in the grave-yard, and I thought my life was done; for I pined sadly, and felt as if I could never laugh again. But I did, for the Lord was very good to us, and out of danger and captivity delivered that dear boy."

Grandma spoke solemnly, and folded her hands in thanksgiving as she looked up to the picture of the handsome officer hanging on the wall before her. The elder children could just remember Grandpa as a very old and feeble man, and it struck them as funny to speak of him as a "dear boy"; but they never smiled, and dutifully lifted their eyes to the queue and the high-collared coat, wondering if Joe was as rosy in real life as in the portrait.

"Well, that's the sentimental part; now comes the merry part, and that will suit the boys," said the old lady, briskly, as she spun away, and went on in a lively tone:

"One December day, as I sat by that very window, dreaming sorrowfully at my sewing work, while old Sally nodded over her knitting by the fire, I saw a man come creeping along by the fence and dodge behind the wood-pile. There were many bad folks 'round in those times; for war always leaves a sight of lazy rascals afloat, as well as poor fellows maimed and homeless.

"Mother had gone over to the sewing society at

Mrs. Shirley's, and I was all alone, for Sally was so stiff with rheumatics she could scarce stir, and that was why I staid to take care of her. The old musket always hung over the kitchen chimney-piece loaded, and I knew how to fire it, for Joe taught me. So away I went and got it down, for I



"WHEN MY DEAR MOTHER SAT HERE, AND I, A LITTLE CHILD, AT HER KNEE." [SEE PAGE 211.]

saw the man popping up his head now and then to spy the land, and I felt sure he meant mischief. I knew Sally would only scream like a scared hen, so I let her sleep; and getting behind the shutter I pointed my gun, and waited to blaze away as soon as the enemy showed signs of attacking.

"Presently he came creeping up to the back door, and I heard him try the latch. All was fast, so I just slipped into the kitchen and stood behind the settle, for I was surer than ever he was a rascal since I'd seen him nearer. He was a tall man,

dreadful shabby in an old coat and boots, a ragged hat over his eyes, and a great beard hiding the lower part of his face. He had a little bundle and a big stick in his hands, and limped as if foot-sore or lame.

"I was much afeard; but those were times that made heroes of men and taught women to be brave for love of home and country. So I kept steady, with my eye on the window, and my finger on the trigger of the old gun that had n't been fired for years. Presently the man looked in, and I saw what a strange roll his great eyes had, for he was thin-faced, and looked half-starved. If Mother had been there, she'd have called him in and fed him well, but I dared not, and when he tried the window I aimed, but did not fire; for finding the button down he went away, and I dropped on the settle shaking like a leaf. All was still, and in a minute I plucked up courage to go to look out a bit; but just as I reached the middle of the kitchen, the buttery door opened, and there stood the robber, with a carving knife in one hand and my best loaf of spice bread in the other. He said something, and made a rush at me; but I pulled the trigger, saw a flash, felt a blow, and fell somewhere, thinking, 'Now I'm dead!'"

Here Grandma paused for breath, having spoken rapidly and acted out the scene dramatically, to the intense delight of the children, who sat like images of interest, staring at her with round eyes.

"But you were n't dead? What next?" cried Walt, eagerly.

"Bless you, no! I only fell into Joe's arms, and when I came to, there the dear fellow was, crying over me like a baby, while old Sally danced round us like a bedlamite, in spite of her rheumatics, shouting: 'Hosanna! Thanks and praise! He's come, he's come!'"

"Was he shot?" asked Geoff, anxious for a little bloodshed.

"No, dear; the old gun burst and hurt my hands, but not a mite of harm was done to Joe. I don't think I could tell all that happened for a spell, being quite dazed with joy and surprise; but by the time Mother came home I was as peart as a wren, and Joe was at the table eating and drinking every mortal thing I could find in the house.

"He'd been kept a prisoner till exchanged, and had had a hard time getting home, with little money and a bad wound in the leg, besides being feeble with jail fever. But we did n't fret over past troubles, being so glad to get him back. How my blessed mother did laugh, when we told her the reception I gave the poor lad. But I said it served him right, since he came sneaking home like a thief, instead of marching in like a hero. Then he owned that he came there to get something to eat,

being ashamed to go in upon his mother with all her company about her. So we fed and comforted him; and when we'd got our wits about us, I whipped away to Mrs. Shirley's and told my news, and every one of those twenty-five women went straight over to our house and burst in upon poor Joe as he lay resting on the settle. That was my revenge for the scare he gave me, and a fine one it was; for the women chattered over him like a flock of magpies, and I sat in the corner and laughed at him. Ah, I was a sad puss in those days!"

The old lady's black eyes twinkled with fun, and the children laughed with her, till Walt caused a lull by asking:

"Where do the wolves come in, Grandma?"

"Right along, dear; I'm not likely to forget 'em, for they most cost me my life, to say nothing of my new slippers. There was great rejoicing over Joe, and every one wanted to do something to honor our hero; for he had done well, we found out, when the General heard his story. We had a great dinner, and Judge Mullikin gave a supper; but Major Belknap was bound to outshine the rest, so he invited all the young folks over to his house, nigh ten miles away, to a ball, and we all went. I made myself fine, you may believe, and wore a pair of blue kid slippers, with Mother's best buckles to set 'em off. Joe had a new uniform, and was an elegant figure of a man, I do assure you. He could n't dance, poor dear, being still very lame; but I was a proud girl when I marched into that ball-room on the arm of my limping beau. The men cheered, and the ladies stood up in chairs to see him, and he was as red as my ribbons, and I could hardly keep from crying, as I held him up; the floor being slippery as glass with the extra waxing it had got.

"I declared I would n't dance, because Joe could n't; but he made me, saying he could see me better, so I footed it till two o'clock, soon forgetting all my sorrow and my good resolutions as well. I wanted to show Joe that I was as much a favorite as ever, though I'd lived like a widow for a year. Young folks will be giddy, and I hope these girls will take warning by me and behave better when their time comes. There may n't be any wolves to sober 'em, but trouble of some sort always follows foolish actions; so be careful, my dears, and behave with propriety when you 'come out,' as you call it nowadays."

Grandma held up a warning forefinger at the girls, and shook her head impressively, feeling that the moral of her tale must be made clear before she went on. But the lassies blushed a little, and the lads looked all impatience, so the dear old lady introduced the wolves as quickly as she could.

"About half-past two, Joe and I drove off home with four fine hams in the bottom of the sleigh, sent by the Major to our mothers. It was a bitter-cold February night, with just light enough to see the road, and splendid sleighing, so we went along at a good pace till we came to the great woods. They are all gone now, and the woolen mills stand there, but then they were a thick forest of pines, and for more than three miles the road led through them. In former days Indians had lurked there; bears and foxes were still shot, and occasionally wolves were seen when cold weather drove them to seek food near the sheep-folds and barn-yards.

"Well, we were skimming along pleasantly enough, I rather sleepy, and Joe very careful of me, when, just as I was beginning to doze a bit with my head on his arm, I felt him start. Old Buck, the horse, gave a jump that woke me up, and in a minute I knew what the trouble was, for from behind us came the howl of a wolf.

"Just the night to bring 'em out,' muttered Joe, using the whip till Buck went at his quickest trot, with his ears down and every sign of hurry and worry about him.

"Are you afraid of them?' I asked, for I'd never had a scare of this sort, though I'd heard other people tell of the fierceness of the brutes when hunger made them bold.

"Not a bit, only I wish I had my gun along,' said Joe, looking over his shoulder anxiously.

"Pity I had n't brought mine—I do so well with it,' I said, and I laughed as I remembered how I aimed at Joe and hurt myself.

"Are they chasing us?' I asked, standing up to look back along the white road, for we were just on the edge of the woods now.

"Should n't wonder. If I had a better horse it would be a lively race, but Buck can't keep this pace long, and if he founders we are in a fix, for I can't run, and you can't fight. Betsey, there's more than one—hold tight and try to count 'em.'

"Something in Joe's voice told me plainer than words that we were in danger, and I wished we'd waited till the rest of our party came; but I was tired, and so we started alone.

"Straining my eyes, I could see *three* black spots on the snow, and hear three howls as the wolves came galloping after us. I was a brave girl, but I'd never tried this kind of thing before, and in a minute all the wolf stories I'd ever heard came flying through my mind. I *was* mortally afeared, but I would n't show it, and turned to Joe, trying to laugh as I said: 'Only three as yet. Tell me just what to do, and I'll do it.'

"Brave lass! I must see to Buck or he'll be down, for he's badly scared. You wait till the rascals are pretty close, then heave over one of

these confounded hams to amuse 'em, while we make the most of their halt. They smell this meat, and that's what they are after,' said Joe, driving his best, for the poor old horse began to pant, and limp on his stiff legs.

"Lucky for us we've got 'em,' says I, bound to be cool and gay, 'if we had n't, they'd get fresh meat instead of smoked.'

"Joe laughed, but a long howl close by made me dive for a ham, for in the darkness of the woods the beasts had got closer, and now all I could see were several balls of fire not many yards away. Out went the ham, and a snarling sound showed that the wolves were busy eating it.

"All right!' said Joe. 'Rest a bit, and have another ready. They'll soon finish that and want more. We must go easy, for Buck is nearly blown.'

"I prepared my ammunition, and, in what seemed five minutes, I heard the patter of feet behind us, and the fiery eyes were close by. Over went the second mouthful, and then the third, and the fourth; but they seemed more ravenous than ever, and each time were back sooner in greater numbers.

"We were nearly out of the woods when the last was gone, and if Buck had only had strength we should have been safe. But it was plain to see that he could n't keep up much longer, for he was very old, though he'd been a fine horse in his prime.

"This looks bad, little Betsey. Cover up in the robes, and hold fast to me. The beasts will begin to snatch presently, and I'll have to fight 'em off. Thank the powers, I've my arms left.'

"As he spoke, Joe pulled me close, and wrapped me up, then took the whip, ready to rap the first wolf that dared come near enough to be hit. We did n't wait long; up they raced, and began to leap and snarl in a way that made my heart stand still at first. Then my temper rose, and catching up the hot brick I had for my feet, I fired it with such good aim, that one sharp, black nose disappeared with a yelp of pain.

"Hit 'em again, Betsey! Take the demijohn and bang 'em well. We are nearing Beaman's, and the brutes will soon drop off.'

"It was a lively scrimmage for a few minutes, as we both warmed to our work, Joe thrashing away with his whip on one side, and I on the other flourishing the demijohn in which we had carried some cider for the supper.

"But it was soon over, for in the fury of the fight Joe forgot the horse; poor Buck made a sudden bolt, upset the sleigh down a bank, and, breaking loose, tore back along the road with the wolves after him.

"Run, Betsey! run for your life, and send Beaman's folks back! I'm done for—my leg's broken. Never mind, I'll crawl under the sleigh,

and be all right till you come. The wolves will take a good while to pick poor Buck's bones.'

"Just waiting to see Joe safe, I ran as I never ran before, and I was always light of foot. How I did it I don't know, for I'd forgot to put on my moccasins (we did n't have snow-boots, you know, in my young days), and there I was tearing along that snowy road in my blue kid slippers like a crazy thing. It was nigh a mile, and my heart was 'most broke before I got there; but I kept my eye on the light in Hetty's winder and tugged along, blessing her for the guide and comfort that candle was. The last bit was down hill, or I could n't have done it; for when I fell on the door-step my voice was clean gone, and I could only lie and rap, rap, rap! till they came flying. I just got breath enough to gasp out and point:

"Joe—wolves—the big woods—go!" when my senses failed me, and I was carried in."

Here Madam Shirley leaned back in her chair quite used up, for she had been acting the scene to a breathless audience, and laying about her with her handkerchief so vigorously, that her eyes snapped, her cheeks were red, and her dear old cap all awry.

"But Joe—did they eat him?" cried the boys in great excitement, while the girls held to one another, and the poor little wheel lay flat, upset by the blows of the imaginary demijohn dealt to an equally imaginary wolf.

"Hardly,—since he lived to be your grandfather," laughed the old lady, in high feather at the success of her story.

"No, no,—we mean the horse;" shouted Geoff, while the others roared at the mistake.

"Yes, they did. Poor old Buck saved us at the cost of his own life. His troubles were over, but mine were not; for when I came to I saw Mr. Beaman, and my first thought and word was 'Joe?'"

"Too late—they'd got him, so we turned back to tell you," said that stupid man.

"I gave one cry and was going off again, when his wife shook me, and says, laughing:

"You little goose! He means the folks from the Major's. A lot came along and found Joe, and took him home, and soon 's ever you 're fit we'll send you along, too."

"I'm ready now," says I, jumping up in a hurry. But I had to sit down again, for my feet were all cut and bleeding, and my slippers just rags. They fixed me up and off I went, to find Mother in a sad taking. But Joe was all right; he had n't broken his leg, but only sprained it badly, and being the wounded one he was laid up longer than I. We both got well, however, and the

first time Joe went out he hobbled over to our house. I was spinning again then, and thought I might need my wedding outfit after all—. On the whole, I guess we'll end the story here; young folks would n't care for that part."

As Grandma paused, the girls cried out with one voice: "Yes, we do! we like it best. You said you would. Tell about the wedding and all."

"Well, well, it is n't much. Joe came and sat by me, and, as we talked over our adventure, he cut that true lover's knot between the letters. I did n't seem to mind, and spun away till he pointed to it, saying with the look that always made me meek as a lamb: "'May it stand so, my little Betsey?'"

"I said 'Yes, Joe,' and then—well, never mind that bit;—we were married in June, and I spun and wove my wedding things afterward. Dreadful slack, my mother thought, but I did n't care. My wedding gown was white lutestring, full trimmed with old lace. Hair over a cushion with white roses, and the pearl necklace, just as you see up there. Joe wore his uniform, and I tied up his hair with a white satin ribbon. He looked beautiful, and so did I."

At this artless bit of vanity, the girls smiled, but all agreed that Grandma was right, as they looked at the portraits with fresh interest.

"I call that a pretty good story," said Walt, with the air of an accomplished critic.

"Specially the wolf part. I wanted that longer," added Geoff.

"It was quite long enough for me, my dear, and I did n't hear the last of it for years. Why, one of my wedding presents was four hams done up elegantly in white paper, with posies on 'em, from the Major. He loved a joke, and never forgot how well we fought with the pigs' legs that night. Joe gave me a new sleigh, the next Christmas, with two wolf-skin robes for it. Shot the beasts himself, and I kept those rugs till the moths ate the last bit. He kept the leavings of my slippers, and I have them still. Fetch 'em, Minnie—you know where they are."

Grandma pointed to the tall secretary that stood in a corner, and Minnie quickly took a box from one of the many drawers. All the heads clustered around Grandma, and the faded, ragged shoes went from hand to hand, while questions rained upon the story-teller till she bade them go to bed.

Nothing but the promise of more tales would appease them; then, with thanks and kisses, the young folks trooped away, leaving the old lady to put the little wheel to rights and sit thinking over her girlhood, in the fire-light.

OUR SOAP-BUBBLE PARTY

BY GEO. B. BARTLETT

DURING last winter's holiday season, the young people of our quiet village were surprised and pleased at receiving pretty cards, each bearing a picture of a huge bubble, with two pipes crossed beneath it, and an invitation to attend a soap-bubble party at Wistaria Cottage.

All were curious to attend the party; for, although they had seen this novel entertainment mentioned in the newspapers, no one had the least idea of what it consisted.

In fact, the young ladies who were to give the party were almost as ignorant as their guests as to the manner of conducting it; but they called together a few of their brightest friends and quietly made such preparations as seemed most needful. They ordered from the grocer a box of common clay pipes with long slender stems, and eight different-colored narrow ribbons, five

yards of each. They also purchased two dozen bright Japanese fans and a large bowl, which they filled with strong soap-suds, to every quart of which were added two teaspoon-

fuls of gelatine. Then they held a meeting and selected by vote eight prizes, consisting of one box of assorted candied fruits, one box of chocolate-cream drops, a Tam o' Shanter cap, one pair of silver bangles, a box of cologne, a silk mouchoir-case, a story-book, and the amount needed for a year's subscription to the ST. NICHOLAS. Each prize was done up in several wrappers to make the parcels nearly alike in size, and each was tied with a ribbon of a special color, viz.: red, green, white, brown, yellow, violet, pink or blue.

As about forty guests were expected, forty pipes were decorated, each with a ribbon bow and streamers of one of the above-named colors—five pipes with one color, five with another, and so on till the eight colors were apportioned. Besides these decorations, there were forty rosettes, five of a color, so that each guest could have a rosette and pipe to match. A grand single prize was next prepared. This consisted of a pair of bellows very finely painted in bright colors, with two slender pipes crossed on the upper side. Chinese lanterns and flowers were procured for the halls and parlors, and an experienced pianist was engaged to supply the music.

At last the long-expected evening arrived, and as the guests drew near, the windows of Wistaria Cottage glowed through the wintry darkness with the light that shone from its broad fireplaces, piled high with blazing brands.

When ready, the guests were formed in pairs for the march; and as the leading couple reached the entrance to the drawing-room, they were stopped



by a little boy and girl holding a basket, from wreaths of bright flowers, and gay fans and white pipes in graceful groups. From the ceiling, lanterns



WHOSE IS THE BIGGEST?

fasten it upon the left shoulder with a pin, from a of many colors were suspended, but some were cushion held by the girl. As pair after pair were made of plain white oiled paper to represent huge



REPELLING AN ATTACK OF BUBBLE-BLOWERS.

thus decorated, the procession moved on, into bubbles. Large vases of flowers and graceful ferns the room, the walls of which were adorned with filled each corner, and in the center of the room a

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round table was placed, bearing, on a pedestal of moss and flowers, the bowl of soap-suds, around which were the prizes in packages and the forty decorated pipes. After marching twice around this table, the company were grouped about it and the colors were called out by the little girl who had distributed the rosettes. As one color was called, all who wore it advanced and selected pipes to match, and when each had taken one, all formed themselves into groups of a color, each group choosing two umpires from one of the seven other shades.

The girl then again called out a color, and the five blowers who wore it took their places around the bowl. She next named a color for umpires, and they also took their places at the right and left of the circle, where each could see plainly. It was the aim of each blower to make the largest bubble. Each was allowed five minutes at first for practice, but had the privilege of devoting all of this time to one bubble. But when one of their umpires called "Time!" all were obliged to go on with the one then begun. Some by blowing too hard exploded their bubbles, but could not begin another after the word "Time" had been spoken. Others were so careful, that their bubbles were small. The umpires, of course, awarded the prize to the one making the largest bubble that was the last to explode; but, if two or more bubbles were alike in size and duration, the blowers of them were at once allowed to contest again until one gained the prize.

And so the fun and merriment went on that memorable night at Wistaria Cottage, and it was a late hour before the last of the happy guests departed.

In order to give our boy and girl readers an intelligent idea of all that may be done on such an occasion, we will follow out in detail the plan which we have seen adopted with the greatest success. We will suppose the party assembled as described above, and one merry group of blowers to have been disposed of by their umpires. The latter and those of their color then take their places, while another

group, marked with a ribbon of different color, sit in judgment upon them; and thus the contest goes on until one player of each color has won a prize. The children then bring in a quantity of smaller bowls or cups, which they fill from the large bowl and pass to any of the players who are ready for them.

The grand march, shown in the picture on page 220, is then formed, and the winners of the



THE CHAMPION PRIZE-WINNER OF THE EVENING.

prizes are escorted by the others once around the room, and then take their places in a semicircle in front of the table, where the prizes are distributed to them by some gentleman, designated by the hostess to act as orator, who should make a pompous speech of a humorous nature to each one of the fortunate winners. During this march and lively presentation ceremony, the air is filled with bubbles

blown by the other players in honor of the winners and of the orator, who, perhaps, is surrounded by a cloud of them in acknowledgment of some very brilliant remark. Then the grand trial for the

prizes then each take a fan from the wall and station themselves outside of the rows of players, four on each side; they choose umpires for each of the lines, who stand midway between them,



BURSTING THE BUBBLES.

chief prize is announced; and the fortunate winners of the minor prizes,—one from each group,—each having deposited in a place of safety the package which was tied with ribbon of his color, surround the bowl and prepare for the contest. The orator acts as chief umpire, summoning to his aid two of the other players, and when he calls “Time!” great is the interest felt in the trial. Among so many of the best blowers, the rivalry is very close; but after a merry struggle, the champion is at last decided upon, and is made the happy recipient of the grand prize (whatever may have been selected for the purpose), which is delivered to him by the orator, with a flowery speech; a general salute of bubbles from the other players follows, after which the march is continued around the room, and the players, bowl in hand, form in two lines, ten feet apart. The winners of the

at the end of each row. Two players from each side provide themselves also with fans, and stand between the lines at the center. The umpire calls “Time!” and the blowers in each line make bubbles as fast as they can, which the fan-players in the center try to fan (without exploding them) over the heads of the opposite line. The players outside try to fan them back, and the umpires declare that side to be the winner which has been able to drive the most bubbles over the heads of the opposite line, in spite of the efforts of the outside players to fan them back. A little practice in using the fan will often enable the players to drive the bubbles very quickly without exploding them.

The prize for this contest is, appropriately, a fan for each player on the winning side, the fans being selected from the decorations on the walls. Afterward, the pleasures of the evening may be length-

ened by a social dance, during the changes of which the flight of bubbles may be kept up. Any dancer can devote a hand to that purpose — as, while dancing, the pipe may be worn around the neck, attached by the long streamers, and it may be dipped in the large bowl or in one of the cups, which should be left about the room in convenient places.

Between the dances, some quiet contests may be tried by a few players, to see which can make a bubble that will outlast the others, using their own judgment as to size. Each player may, if he chooses, follow his own bubble around the room, endeavoring all the time to protect it from injury; as in this game no fans are allowed, the players can only attack one another's bubbles, or move their own, by blowing upon them through the empty pipes. But this style of attack and defense is a very interesting and effective one.

Another party may find much amusement by competing to see which player can touch the ceiling first with a bubble, under the same regulations as before. But the bubble must remain unbroken; none will count which

A simpler contest, depending wholly on strength of lungs, may be tried, by seeing which can make the largest collection of bubbles



simply touches there and breaks by the contact.

THE GRAND MARCH.

on the top of the large bowl, by blowing with his pipe beneath the surface of the soap-suds. During all the contests, a little boy and girl should flit about the room with sprayers, from which they blow a fine mist of cologne

and lavender water, thus making an agreeable contrast to the odor of the soap and giving refreshment to the merry players.

A very pretty dance for the soap-bubble party may be found in the pyramid figure, where one couple waltzes to the center, two couples follow and stand three feet behind them, three couples form the next line, and all stand

prepare by wearing any odd costume or fancy dress which the wearers may possess. And, indeed, fancy-dress costumes are in themselves most appropriate for a soap-bubble party, as they form a bright pageant well-suited to the glowing lanterns, the gay fans and parasols, and the iridescent hues of the bubbles.

The final music should begin with a slow march and quicken



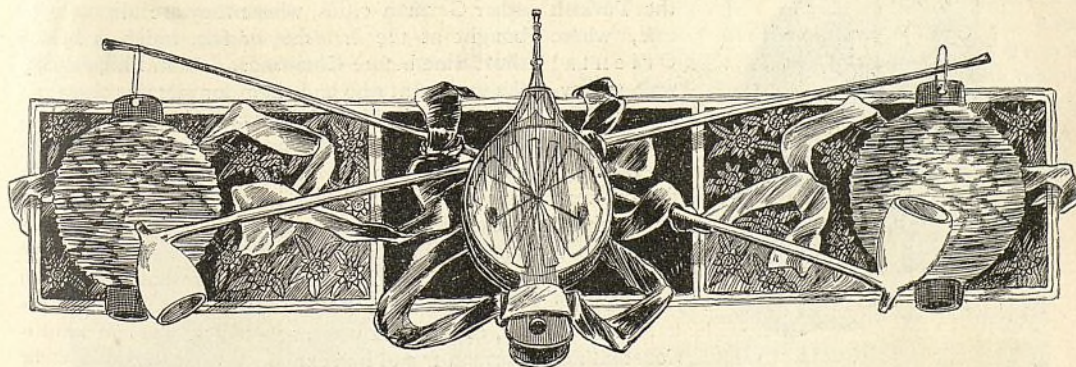
A SOAP-BUBBLE PARTY OF TWO.

blowing bubbles while the rest of the company march in single file in and out between the lines.

Later in the evening, bon-bon costume crackers may be used to advantage, and their fanciful paper caps may be useful also to protect the hair of the ladies from the showers of bubbles which are constantly falling in the soap-bubble carnival.

For these showers, by the way, it may be well to

into a rapid measure, all the guests blowing bubbles as fast as possible, so that the air shall be bright with them. In that way almost the finest scene of the entertainment is produced. The shining bubbles mount up to the lighted ceiling and are driven up and down in clouds by the flying fans, and around about into the faces and over the heads of the whirling dancers, until the bubbles burst, and the soap-suds are exhausted as well as the merriness and delighted guests of the soap-bubble party.



IN THE PARK.

BY BESSIE CHANDLER.

"WE must n't go near the pond, sissy,
 'Cos there 's something—I don't know what—there.
 But I heard Mamma talking about it:
 It is n't exactly a bear,—
 But a *stagnant*, I think Mamma called it;
 And she says she 's afraid every day
 To live by the Park any longer,
 And she wishes they 'd take it away.

"I never have seen a *real* stagnant,
 But I guess it has teeth and would bite;
 But don't be afraid, little sissy,
 Because, if it comes, I will fight.
 I 'd be glad to see just what it looks like,
 But I don't want to get *very* near,
 'Cos it might make a spring of a sudden!
 —I guess we had better stop here,
 And sit down on one of the benches.
 Now, don't make a noise;—just keep mum!
 And don't take your eyes off the water,
 And we 'll watch for the stagnant to come."

JERICHO ROSES.

BY JOHN R. TAIT.



AT the Centennial Exposition, not far from the Turkish café, where Oriental waiters served customers with very tolerable coffee and very long pipes, there was a stand owned and kept by a Turk from Constantinople, whose stock-in-trade consisted principally of rosaries cut in olive wood, and little heaps of what looked like dried herbs. These latter were objects of much speculation to American visitors;

but I recognized them at once, having often seen them before, not in the Holy Land, whence they come, but in the streets and squares of Munich and other German cities, where they are always to be bought at the *kirmesse*, or fair, which is held a short time before Christmas. As in Philadelphia, the merchant who had them for sale was always an Oriental. In Munich, he was a Jew from Smyrna, with a venerable white beard, and I well remember his piping cry: "*Jericho Rosen!*" and the curiosity with which I first looked upon the seemingly withered and worthless twigs he called by that name, and which had not the slightest resemblance to roses or, in fact, to any flower whatever.

Nevertheless, the Jew used to find many customers, of whom I was one; but it was not until a German friend had explained what the queer thing was, that I knew what to do with it, or whether it was not, perhaps, intended to be eaten. The gray, shriveled, apparently dead plant, the size of a child's hand, possesses a singular and interesting

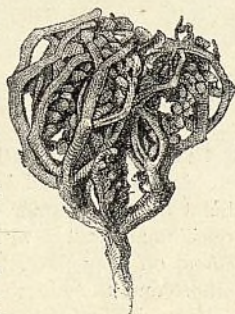
characteristic, which has given rise to the belief (some would call it superstition), very general among the people of Southern Europe, that, when placed in a vessel of water on the night before Easter or on the holy eve of Christmas, the withered stems will—if good fortune awaits the household during the year—revive, expand their tendrils, and change to a fresher hue before morning.

After hearing this account of the plant, I carried one home on a certain evening, when on my table a little Christmas-tree stood, winking its waxen tapers through a net-work of silver tissue, its green boughs weighed down with incongruous fruit,—rosy-cheeked apples, oranges, gilded walnuts, and glass balls. Underneath it, in a glass of water, I put the "rose," and went to bed.

My first thought the next morning was to see what had happened. The story told of it was substantiated, and the rose had really bloomed, if by "blooming" one understands only an entire change of form and increase of size. The same thing happened again at Easter; but I am bound to state also, that it has happened frequently on other evenings as well, which takes away a little of the poetry of the story, and has made me doubt whether, after all, its blooming is a sign of any especial good fortune. Yet I hope it may be; for when I brought it home, the specimen I still possess looked like the picture here shown, while, placed in a glass of water, it grew, within twenty-four hours, to the form indicated by the illustration near the top of this page.

Naturalists call the plant by a very hard name: *Anastatica hierochuntina*. The leaves fall off from the plant after the flowering, and the branches and branchlets become dry, hard, and woody, rising upward and bending inward at their points; hence, they become contracted into a globular form, in which state the plant is carried off the sand by the

wind, and blown from the desert places where it had its birth into the sea. Here, floating on the water, the branches gradually expand and the pods open and let out the seeds, which are in turn thrown



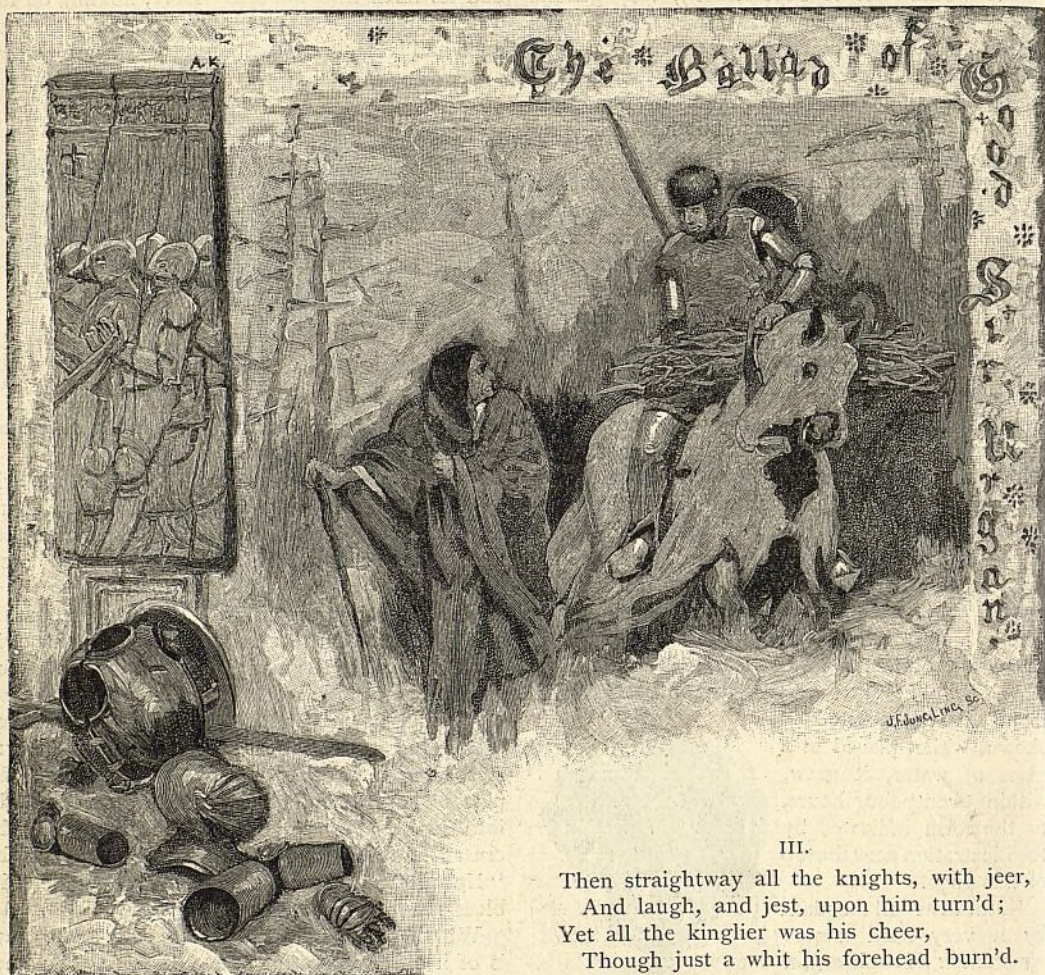
back again upon the shore by the tides, to germinate and grow.

The home of the queer "rose" is amid the arid wastes of Egypt, near Cairo, and those of Palestine and Barbary. It flourishes on the roofs of houses and on rubbish in Syria, and on the sandy coasts of the Red Sea.

The plant long retains the power of expansion when immersed in water,—the circumstance in which originated the many wonderful stories told of its miraculous influence. It is called *Kaf Maryam*, or "Mary's flower," in Palestine, where it is believed that it bloomed at the time the Savior was born. According to another legend, it sprung up in the places where the Virgin Mary rested on her flight into Egypt. It was probably first brought by the crusaders to Europe, where it is still named the "Holy Rose" by those who believe the fable of its blossoming only on the great festivals.

Whether one believes the fable or not, the plant is of itself a wonderful one, and all of its names are pretty. When it can be procured, it makes a fitting accessory to a Christmas-tree, for the reason that it grew in the far country where our Lord was born, and its strange reviving is a type of his immortality and resurrection, from which, indeed, it derives its generic name—*Anastasis* being the Greek word for Resurrection.





I.

OH, blue are the hills of Faeryland,
 And green the summer meadows be,
 And reedy many a river's strand,
 And stately every forest tree.
 And all the bridle bells do ring,
 As knights come riding, two and two,
 Aneath the wood; and, like a king,
 Sir Urgan rides in armor blue.

II.

And lo! as down the wood they rode,—
 The lake beyond just gleams in sight,—
 A wrinkled crone beneath a load
 Bewails her bones in sorry plight.
 "Good mother, be of better cheer;
 Give me your load," quoth Urgan; "so—
 Your fagots on my crupper here
 Will ease you in the path you go."

III.

Then straightway all the knights, with jeer,
 And laugh, and jest, upon him turn'd;
 Yet all the kinglier was his cheer,
 Though just a whit his forehead burn'd.
 And off they rode, the flouting train;
 Behind the hill the laughter died;
 With kindly face and slackened rein,
 He rode the aged dame beside.

IV.

"Now whither rid'st thou, fair Sir Knight,
 By wild and waste and woody lane?"
 "I ride," quoth he, "in joust to fight,
 Before the King in fair Mentaine."
 "Now good betide thee, fair Sir Knight;
 When thou a league hast parted hence,
 The path that swerveth to the right
 Will lead to Mentaine's battlements.

V.

"And midway down the thicket's maze,
 A horse and armor thou wilt find;
 Mount; leave thine own; and ride thy ways;
 Yon flouting train thou 'lt leave behind.

Who rides him, conquers; thou shalt win
Fame at this joust, good knight and fair."
And lo! the beldame old and thin
Did vanish into empty air!

VI.

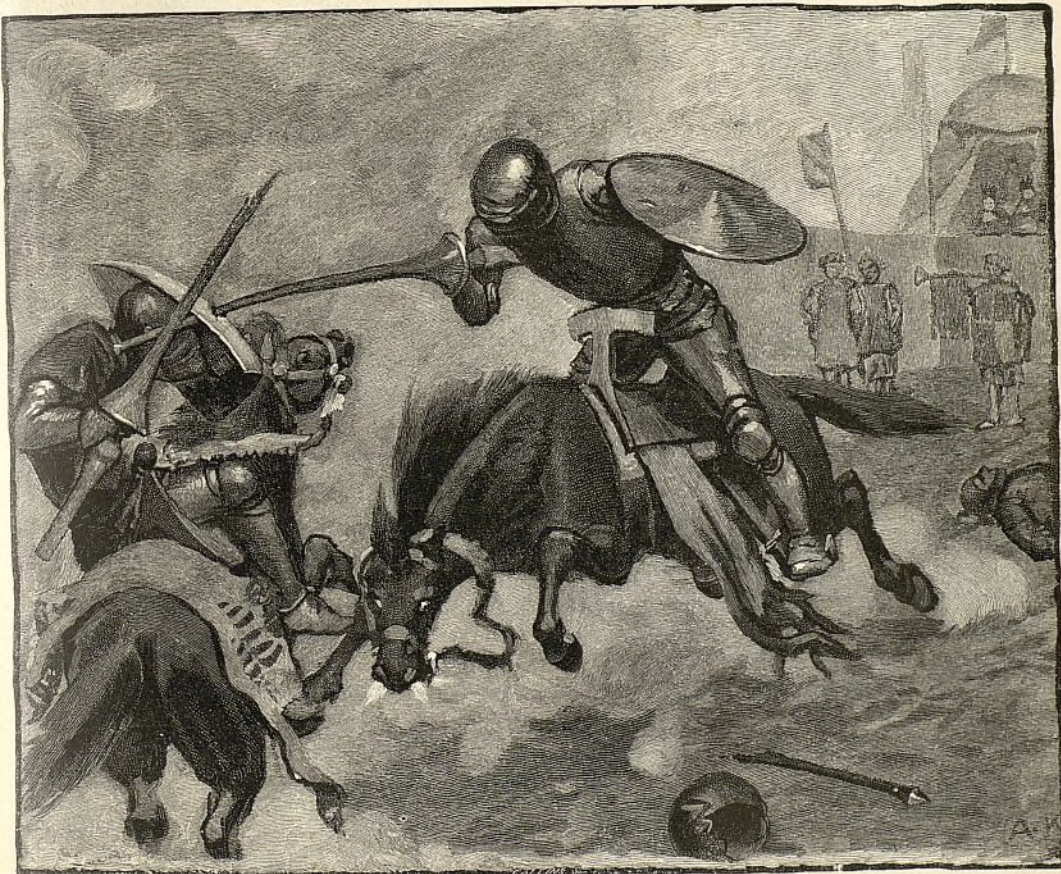
Right well amaz'd, Sir Urgan rode
By many a bosky thicket's edge;
A summer brook beside him flowed
With hidden laughter in the sedge.
Till, gleaming through the dancing leaves,
A brazen charger reared on high;
With rusted lance, and helm, and greaves,
The faery armor hung thereby.

VIII.

Flashed wide the charger's brazen eyes;
All fleshly warm the metal grew;
His mane began to stir and rise;
A single struggling breath he drew;
Through swelling veins his blood did run;
Sir Urgan felt his pulses beat,
He reared—he plunged from off the stone
And lighted down upon his feet!

IX.

Hold fast, Sir Urgan! with such haste
Thy courser never sped before!
By hill and dale and windy waste,
With headlong speed, the charger bore.



VII.

All mute upon the statue stared
Sir Urgan: "By my faith!" he cried,
"An thou hadst life, I had not cared
To find a nobler steed to ride.
'Who rides thee, conquers!'" Then in haste
He cast his mail upon the gorse;
Soon, in the rusty armor laced,
He vaulted on the brazen horse.

As past the flouting knights he burst,
"Who rides," they wondered, "in such haste?—
A churlish knight, adorned with rust,
And in his grandsire's armor laced!"

X.

But later, in the tourney's fight,
These scoffers somewhat changed their cheer;

"A braver than this stranger knight,
In joust hath never battled here."
For helms were cloven, spears were broke,
And knights and steeds of gallant course
Went down, before the charge and stroke
Of Urgan and his faery horse.

XI.

Him to the King the herald brought;
Throned high he sat above the lists.—
"Right well, Sir Stranger, have ye fought,
Though of your name we nothing wist."
His rusty helm the victor doff'd;
A murmur broke amid the crowd,

And acclamations swelled aloft
As good Sir Urgan, kneeling, bowed.

XII.

They crowned him victor.
Ye who read
With kindly eyes my story through,
Say, lives there not some victor's meed
For all good deeds that you shall do?
And when did Urgan kinglier show?
When glowed his breast with holier flame?
Was't when he rushed upon the foe,
Or bent to help the aged dame?

FUN-BEAMS.

BY ROSE HAWTHORNE LATHROP.



NO MATTER how dark the day, there can be fun-beams; and where there are children, the mothers know how often they shine. There was such a snow-storm outdoors that Roger said the nursery must have sailed away from the rest of the house, up into a cloud; and almost everybody went to the window to see if what he said was strictly founded on fact.

"The Angel" stood in the middle of the big, unencumbered nursery-floor (covered with a carpet of roses on green grass), and seemed to be thinking about the large snow-flakes which he saw falling, falling, down across the upper panes of the wide, wide window, while the others looked out of the

lower panes, with their faces close to the glass. "The Angel's" other name was Dan.

The fire on the hearth crackled like a cricket and whirled like a bird, and intimated that it could melt the snow-flakes quicker than anybody else, if it got hold of them. The children shivered and ran back to the fire, eager to warm themselves, heart and soul, by the genial blaze.

"If there's to be a cold storm all the afternoon," said Vernon, "we'd better play 'tropics,' and I speak for being the boa-constrictor."

"Oh," said Marie, "you make such a big one, it is terrible! If you were only delicate, like Cara, it would be more like 'playing.'"

"If you want Cara to play something huge, you can make her the elephant," replied Vernon, who was the oldest of the children. "And Roger shall be a monkey, and Marie a lovely, red-headed cockatoo, as you really are. Then 'the Angel' must have a part assigned him. What shall it be, my dear?"

"I'll be a *man*," answered Dan, with good-natured dignity, thrusting his fingers into his side-pockets over his kilt, and walking forward and backward with a slow step, like a sentinel.

"All right," cried Roger; "you shall be the explorer who comes through the forest and finds us all. As for me, I am a monkey from now on; and I find it dreadfully hot all at once!"

Among some odds and ends, Roger hunted out the enamel-cloth cover to an umbrella, and this he pinned to his jacket as the "monkey's" tail. As often as necessary, however, Roger also fanned himself with this article. The umbrella itself was a

fine big, green, one, and Vernon spread it and set it between two chairs, and then coiled himself in and out of his jungle with dangerous grace; while Cara, dear little sylph, upset everything small and climbed over it; and, in short, swept all before her as elephant, not forgetting to tie Dan's trumpet over her mouth for a rather stiff trunk. Marie put on a little gray cape, and pinned her auburn braids up like a tuft on her head, and sat upon a table whistling in various fashions, to represent a lively bird.

"Now, Dan, be prepared to make your way through the forest," cried Vernon. "We shall all be obliged to attack you, as wild things do men; but you must not be afraid. See, here I come, wriggling out from my trees and bushes!" And Vernon hissed himself purple as he slid around the floor and then glided up to Dan's vicinity. "Now, you must run away from me, Dan, and then make up your mind to fight me," Vernon was saying; but all of a sudden gave a splutter and grunt, for Dan's warm little shoe had come down on the back of his neck and pinned him fast.

"No fair," called the monkey from under the table, to the center-leg of which he was clinging.

"You mustn't *really* kill him, Dan, my boy!"

Dan had n't yet taken his fingers out of those pockets of which he was so proud, and now nonchalantly lifted his conquering toe from the boa-constrictor and sauntered off. Vernon was too much ashamed to follow his little brother at once, but made for the monkey, and got dreadfully mixed up with his tail and the pin which held it; while Dan tried to catch the cockatoo, who flew down from the table to the floor and hopped away, hotly pursued by the explorer. They both met the elephant in her war-path, who tried hard to trample them down, amid shouts of laughter and a good deal of damage from the trumpet. The elephant, in her peregrinations, had collected two palm-leaf fans, which she had hung in her hair by the handles for a couple of ears; but in the heat of combat, the fans forsook her, instead of serving to cool her

fury; and when Dan seized her by her tin nose and trotted her all over the floor at his will, you may be sure the elephant's dignity was greatly impaired, and her own laughter crowned her defeat.

The boa had made off at the same time with the monkey's tail, and hung his head down from the top of a bureau, with glittering eyes; while Roger, who, the boa said, looked his part sufficiently without any tail at all, stood pleading for his chief point of distinction.

"I assure you, Vernon, there is nothing else in the room that makes such a good tail as that!" cried the monkey, tearfully. "It's too bad to be able to understand that like a boy, and then keep my tail like a real boa!"

"He ought to eat it, if he's a real boa," said four-year-old Dan, pompously, as if he were accustomed to being the Doge of Venice, and settling nice difficulties of the law. "If you keep it, Vern, you must swallow it!" he commanded.

"I give it up, then!" exclaimed Vernon, with a wriggle on the bureau, "for I can't think of the right answer to Dan's puzzle. Oh, you dear pet!" And down the boa clambered, and coiled over his small

brother, giving him such an affectionate hug that he *did* nearly choke him.

"Oh," said Marie, "I am actually hot! Playing 'tropics' is no joke, if it is going to bring it on in this way."

"You speak as if South America was measles," responded Vernon; "and I suppose we all should feel as we do when we have fever, if we roamed about under a broiling sun. Cara, go pick up your ears and pass them to us, for I feel hot, too."

As Vernon was speaking, the monkey wound his tail about his enemy's neck, and pulled him down



WATCHING THE SNOW-FLAKES.

to the ground, from which he had risen, as the boa occasionally rises from its coil; and when Vernon fell there was a sound of parting splinters.

"Oh, dear!" cried Marie, "what is broken now?"

"I don't know," replied Vernon, with a wry face; "but whatever it is, I don't believe it feels as badly as I do!" He got up, and Dan rushed to the ruins. It was his darling little red cart, which he loved better than all his other pet playthings, and the four wheels were peeping into the cart in a manner wholly at odds with the toy-maker's intentions.

Big tears stood in "the Angel's" eyes, and his lips looked pinker and softer than ever, with heart-felt distress; and pretty soon one of his hands slid out of his pocket to his face in the perfect silence of the nursery, while the other children breathed gently out of sympathy with him.

"It's too bad, my dear boy," said his eldest brother, with a trembling voice, "and I'll mend it, if I have to learn the carpenter's trade, my little man."

Dan stooped down and put the lolling wheels into the body of the cart, and then took up the disjointed mass in his arms, without a sob.

"Good Vernon," he said, in sweet accents, and walked away to mourn in a nook alone, and try to arrange his cart into a semblance of its old self.

"The Angel's" self-control was too much for Marie, who took down her cockatoo's red top-knot in honor of her feelings, and went to the fire to throw on another cheering back-log.

Just then, when shadows hung throughout the play-room, the door opened, and there was Mamma; and, after one of her loving looks around the circle, she came in with her delightful step.

"Where's Nurse?" said she. "It is time for you older children to come with me for your lesson; but Dan is not old enough to learn this lesson, and so he has to stay behind."

She saw by this time that there was rain in the wind, and as everybody looked at Dan's back where he sat on the floor, she knew that something had happened to him. So, after ringing the bell for Nurse, she went over to her small son and found out the latest nursery news.



"WHO MAY THIS YOUNGSTER BE WHO NEVER SAW A CHRISTMAS-TREE?" [PAGE 230.]

"Mamma loves that cart, too," said she, cordially, "and wants to have it in her own room until it is mended, so that no more harm can come to it. And here is Nurse, and she will help take



it into Mamma's room, where Dan shall choose the place he wishes it to wait in; and then Vernon shall do his best to put it together—dear old cart!" And with a big kiss, that bright Mamma was gone, and "the Angel" was looking almost as happy as she had.

The older children followed her, and brought up in the sewing-room, where great preparations were going on for the Christmas-tree, and for the costumes of Dan's brothers and sisters, who were to be quite transformed for Christmas Eve. There had been no tree for several years, because everybody wanted to have it a complete surprise to Dan when he should be old enough to thoroughly enjoy it. And Vernon was to be St. Nicholas; and Marie, Titania; and Roger, Robin Goodfellow; and Cara, the "Frog who would a-wooing go, with a hi and a ho and a gammon and spinach, heigh-ho for Anthony Rowley!" which latter was a personage in a nursery-rhyme of no easily explained meaning, but deeply dear to Dan's noddle at bedtime, when he always heard it. Of course, the children had to rehearse their parts for the performance, in order to conceal their real selves as long as possible from Dan; and then they had to help make their dresses, besides collecting the ornaments for the tree. An hour every afternoon had long been devoted to this busy pastime, and Mamma always called it their lesson-hour, so that Dan should only know that they were learning something, and not that they were having quantities of fun, or he would never have lingered so patiently in the nursery until the great day.

Things were far advanced, as may be supposed, on that stormy afternoon, for the next evening would be Christmas Eve; and Cara's green saracenet frog-dress, with yellow spots, had to be tried on, and her outer head (which looked dreadfully like a frog's) stuffed with a little more wool. Then down she sat on the floor, and between long pauses gave a jump, with so much effort (on account of her awkward position) that she looked for all the world like a frog, which never seems quite contented with its own style of getting about.

Titania was very beautiful in a gown of feathery aspect, covered with pearls and spangles which had each been put on by her own fingers, and bordered by a fringe of shells of her own gathering that hung down in drops and tinkled together. And she had a long white veil of several thicknesses of tulle, so that her face was rather indistinct. And oh, how her wand sparkled with a large paste diamond on its tip, and a thread of steel beads wound down its whole length!

Roger had had all his ten fingers in the pie of making his own costume, and had used more paste in sticking paper on his mask than any boy ever

handled before—which was one of his objects. Mamma said, for many a day afterward, that he had even succeeded in getting paste on the sewing-room ceiling, by dropping one end of Marie's wand into the paste-bowl (an accident, no doubt) and then tumbling over the other end, which sent everything flying. Then, too, Roger had a way of drying his sticky fingers on his hair, so that after awhile, if you touched him in the neighborhood of his head, you were apt to get scratched, as if with cork-screws. Toward all remarks and exclamations of disgust, Roger remained calm and silent; for he was having a lovely time, and could not stop to argue.

Vernon's mamma seemed to take immense delight in turning him into an old man as soon as possible, and knit him a flowing beard and curly wig of light-gray split zephyr, and then sprinkled it well with little bits of wool and a glittering dust for snow-flakes. His cap and muffler were made of crocheted silver thread, which Vernon had been taught to work himself; and his coat was cut out of Papa's faded purple velvet dressing-gown. His leggings were fashioned out of old white satin, with wool snow-flakes and more sparkling dust; and his switch was a bundle of twigs covered with tiny tin bells.

The old storm, which usually comes around at Christmas Eve, staid to see the celebrations all over town, and the fine snow-flakes scattered themselves about next day, and got on people's noses, and stuck in their eyes, and tried to peep into the bundles of presents which were being carried to every house. But oh, how the great parlor, emptied of its tables, and its floor covered with white linen, and with its white and gold wood-work, looked at six o'clock! The wonder-tree was alight near the middle of the room, and the fairy children, St. Nicholas, and Titania, were gliding near it, while Robin Goodfellow capered in and out of every corner. At the tree's foot sat the frog.

"Bravo!" cried Papa, laughing gayly. "This is a grand success, and dear old Dan must be called forthwith!"

So Mamma went to bring the small fellow for whom all this magic and frolic had been planned; and presently he was heard chatting on the stairs, as he came down. The little brothers and sisters waited with bated breath to see his face, eager to find that he was enchanted by their work. The door at the end of the room was thrown open, and Dan ran in.

In a moment, he stood transfixed. His bright, expressive eyes shone back at the gleaming tree, and his fair, waving hair fell like a gauzy veil from under its golden cap over his forehead.

"Oh, tree of stars!" he said.

"Darling child," called Titania, in an even voice, coming toward him all sparkling like a mist, "how do you do, this pleasant Christmas Eve?"

"Are you real, or a talking doll?" Dan asked, stoutly, but feeling as if it was time to find out just where he might be.

"I am the Queen of the Fairies," answered she, "who always does what is kind in your fairy tales. And here is St. Nicholas, hobbling up to us, who is always old, just as I am always young."

"Ho, ho!" cried St. Nicholas, in a deep bass, dropping some big apples and oranges out of the bag over his arm as he approached. "Who may this little youngster be, who, I hear, never saw a Christmas-tree till to-night?"

"My name is Daniel Fairmont Roseley," replied Dan, with pomp, "and I think you are a very nice man. I have heard of you. Pray, sit down," and then Dan turned to Titania, slipping a couple of fingers into his sash, as was his wont, and speaking in a tone of great deference; "please sit down, or fly, whichever you like best."

Titania and St. Nicholas laughed and twirled around on their toes, and Robin Goodfellow, who really was a naughty rogue, came scampering up; and St. Nicholas shook his switch of silvery bells at him. Then the Frog hopped slowly out from under the tree and all at once rolled over on the floor with a burst of laughter; and pop! off came Cara's green head with its big mouth and eyes, and her pretty flaxen curls peeped about her shoulders.

At this, Dan gave a tremendous shout, and Papa and Mamma chimed in, together with Nurse and everybody in the hall; and Titania went sailing and whirling hither and thither, like a dancing dove, for sheer merriment.

"How did you get in there, Cara?" asked Dan, going up to the little green heap of sarcenet on the white carpet, and placing his hands on his knees while he took a good look. "Do you want your other head again, dear?"

Just then, Robin Goodfellow blew a tiny horn at Dan's ear, and made him turn about with a jerk; but Robin was ever so far away before his rosy victim stopped winking, and who could only run after him. Then Titania called out in her clear, high tones:

"There are presents for 'the Angel' on this tree! Come and see what they are!"

Dan knew his pet name well, and dashed up to the tree from pursuit of Robin, his cheeks as red with all this fun as if he had been out on a sleigh-ride.

Titania waved her sparkling wand, and then St. Nicholas reached up to a branch and cried:

"Here's a little purse with Daniel's name on it; does that little boy know what to do with it? It

says on the outside, '*Give this to the poor.*' Are you willing to give all this money to the poor?"

"The sick-looking people on the street?" asked Dan.

"Yes," said Titania.

Dan thought awhile, feeling the soft purse with all his small fresh fingers.

"Yes, I do want to," he replied at last, looking up at the tree. "Because they were not invited to our great Christmas Eve!"

Here Robin gave Dan another merry jump by blowing his wee horn at his elbow, and shooting off again.

"You funny-looking thing!" called Dan. "What makes you dance so? Does the floor scorch your toes?"

Papa laughed loudly at this, and Mamma's sweet notes rang in; and everybody in the hall chuckled again.

"Hallo, here's another present for Dan Fairmont," calls St. Nicholas. "A French doll for him to give as a present to his sister Cara. Will you give it to her, Dan? Or shall you keep it yourself?"

Dan took the doll, and looked into its face earnestly.

"I like it," said he.

"Yes, but so would Cara," Titania remarked in a gentle voice.

Cara stood by, gazing with wide open eyes at her possible treasure.

"Oh, Dan, I hope I know what you are going to say!" she gasped.

"Take it!" he gulped; but instantly drew dolly back. Then he kissed it and hugged it, and thrust out his arm again. "You are Cara's dolly," he said firmly, scowling a little. And Cara pounced upon it immediately.

Here Goodfellow performed a wild, original reel, all by himself, and to a song of his own, criss-crossing down the center of the saloon, and ended up with a somersault. This seemed to inspire Cara, who put on her green head and began frog-jumping, singing aloud the rhyme which Dan had heard every night for a year.

The boy was delighted beyond measure, and he followed Froggie's doublings to catch every word, and to hasten the jumping process with a sturdy little push upon Froggie's shoulder.

Suddenly, he stood still and turned all around.

"Where are Marie, and Vernon, and Roger?" he exclaimed, in a frightened voice. "Oh, Mamma, why did not you tell them there was *everything* in the parlor to-night?" And he ran up to her, looking very solemn.

"Oh, you must find them, Dan, my pet," said Papa, giving him a toss up on his shoulder and down again.

"You must ask Titania if she can help you," added his mother.

"Naughty Titania!" said Dan. "Do you think you are good, when you let my sister stay in the dark while you sparkle so? My sister would be more polite, if she were you."

At this, Marie threw back her veil and knelt down before Dan, who looked a trifle scared; and then flung his arms around her neck and tried, apparently, to dance off with it; which ended in a heap of tarlatan and screams, and Dan's black velvet body and rosy, white-socked legs showing here and there in the veil.

And now, what had naughty Robin done but gone hovering about the tree with a stage-strut, looking at all the presents through his mask, and calling out:

"Where's Roger Roseley; where's that sweet child, I say? He wants his presents badly, I know!"

A very queer fragrance pervaded the parlor at that moment, and Roger's heavily pasted and scarcely dry nose was seen to smoke like a new sort of chimney.

"Oh, dear!" he shrieked, "I believe my paste is cooking over again, Mamma! Do untie my face, somebody!"

Papa had rushed to him and dragged him away from the small candle which had too cordially accosted his big paper nose, and St. Nicholas showered a volley of thumps at him with his musical birch, and Mamma took the delinquent aside and talked to him about the danger he had been in from going too near the dazzling bough. It must be confessed that the expression of Roger's funny mask in contrast to his dejected figure, during this whispered lecture, nearly cost Mamma a laugh, in spite of her alarm.

"So that was Roger," said Dan, musingly; and walked up to St. Nicholas. "Did you ever hear of Vernon Roseley?" asked he, with a merry twitch of the lip.

St. Nicholas doubled himself over, and roared like the winter wind in the country.

"Oh, you little duck!" he cried. "Don't you think I am too old to know the names of such young folks as Vernon?"

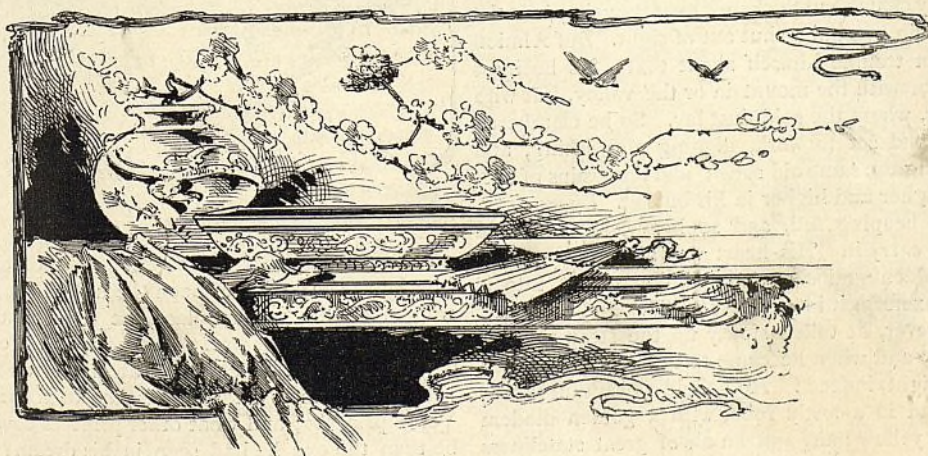
"I think, if you let me pull your beard," Dan said, "that it will come off!" And he whirled around on his heel with his splendid deep laugh, ending in a silvery chuckle, which nobody could hear without wishing to be able to laugh in the same way.

"Come, St. Nicholas, come," called Papa from the tree. "If you can prove that you are really Vernon, you shall have a present—a box of very fine minerals from Marie."

This was too overwhelming for old St. Nicholas, who dropped his infirm step at once, and strode quickly to his father.

So everybody was discovered, and all the presents distributed. Dan had a number of new treasures to add to his old stores, and he piled them in a sort of triumphal heap upon the floor; and by and by, when Nurse reminded him that there was still bread and milk in the world, and the "heigh-ho for Anthony Rowley" waiting in the book—at *this* point, without more words, Dan became sleepy, and walked away from the scene.

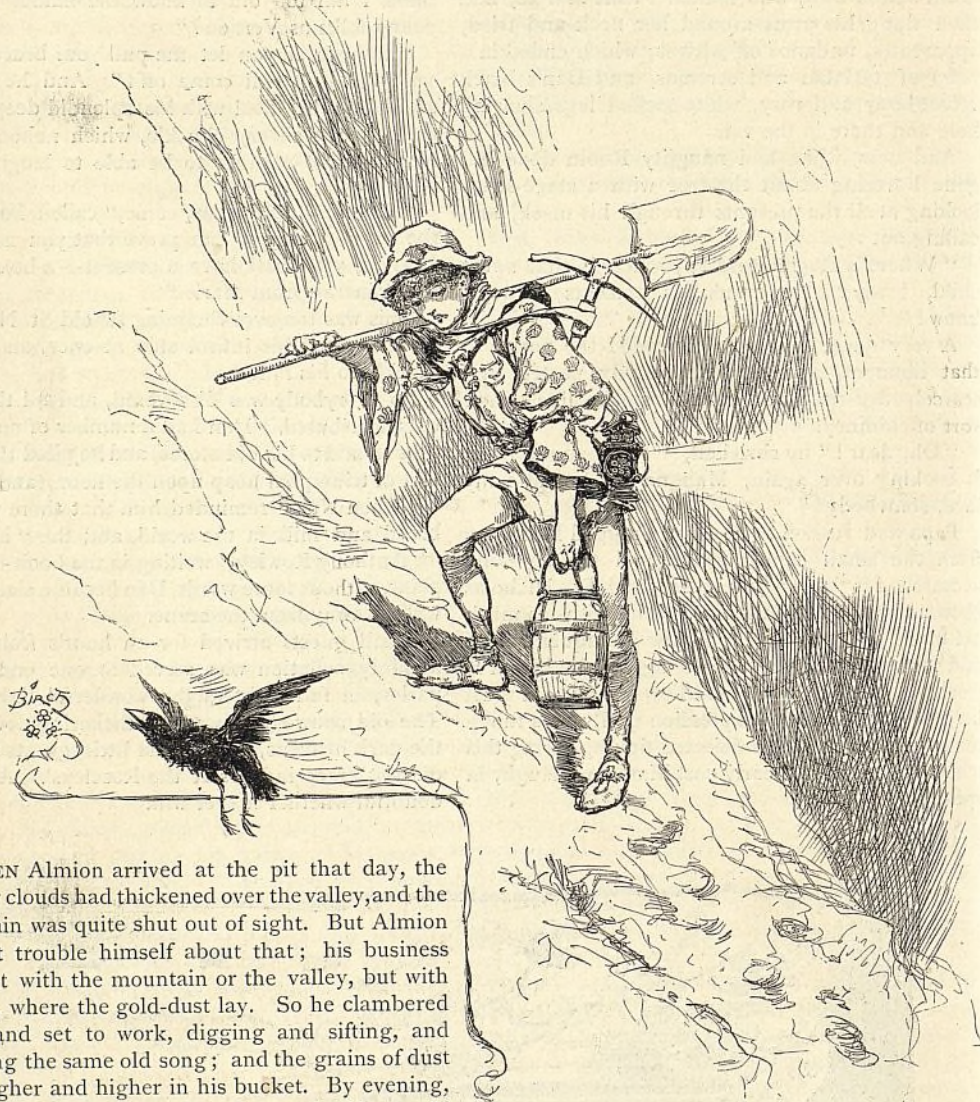
Small guests arrived for an hour's frolic; and a dainty collation was served at one end of the parlor, in full sight of the wonderful lighted fir. The old snow-storm was still flickering down from the dark heavens, so said the little guests; but it did not creep indoors at the Roseleys'. And it is doubtful whether it ever will.



ALMION, AURIA, AND MONA.

Concluded.

By JULIAN HAWTHORNE.



WHEN Almion arrived at the pit that day, the gloomy clouds had thickened over the valley, and the mountain was quite shut out of sight. But Almion did not trouble himself about that; his business was not with the mountain or the valley, but with the pit, where the gold-dust lay. So he clambered down and set to work, digging and sifting, and chanting the same old song; and the grains of dust rose higher and higher in his bucket. By evening, it was heaping full, and so heavy that he could hardly carry it. His heart was also heavy, as if the golden grains were beginning to sift into it and transform it into lifeless metal.

However, he toiled slowly up the steep sides of the pit, and when he came to the brink there was a fine sight, indeed! He beheld a beautiful young girl, clad in a costly robe, with a golden diadem on her yellow hair, and an air of great stateliness

and dignity. What it was about her that made him know she had ever been the ugly, hooded old woman of the market-place, he could not have told; and yet, so it was. But now, at all events, she was a charming creature, about his own age, with the manners and appearance of a princess. Yes, a princess; and what other princess could she be than the one he had seen in his dream? She

was not exactly like her, it is true; there was a difference,—it would be hard to say what; but probably it was only such a difference as there must always be between a dream and a reality. She greeted him with a most enchanting smile.

"My dear, beautiful, wealthy Almion," she said, "at last our troubles are over! You have done your work, and now all that remains for us is to enjoy our riches and our happiness. Your garment is all finished, and to-morrow you shall put it on and become my prince. We will sit side by side at our ease, and look down upon all the rest of the world, and fare sumptuously every day. Until now, I have been compelled to wear a disguise; but hereafter you must know me as the Princess Auria, and we belong to each other forever."

"And Mona—what is to become of her?" inquired Almion.

"Oh! she will not trouble us much longer," replied Auria, tossing her head; "nor must you think of her any more. She is a lazy, malicious little wretch, and when she sees you in your jeweled garment, and knows how happy we are, I should n't wonder if she were to die of spite."

Almion said nothing, but went homeward gloomily, with his eyes fixed on the ground and his heart heavier than ever. He had won beauty and riches and a princess; and yet, for some reason or other, he was not happy. That must be a mistake, however; he must be happy, only he had not yet become so accustomed to happiness as to know what it was. When he had had his supper and a good night's sleep, and had sat at his ease beside Auria, and looked down at all the rest of the world,—then, no doubt, he would be as happy as the day is long.

When they reached home, a sumptuous banquet was already set out on the table; and Mona was nowhere to be seen, though Almion fancied that he caught a glimpse of a little bundle of black rags, huddled up in a corner of the kitchen, which might have been she. But Auria was so handsome, her eyes were so blue, and her cheeks were so rosy, and her hair was so yellow, and she talked to Almion and admired him in such a soft and charming way, that the idea of troubling himself about such a miserable little wretch as Mona seemed absurd. Auria brought out the garment that he was to wear in the morning, and really it was magnificent, though so heavy that Almion could hardly lift it. But since he was going to sit at his ease for the rest of his days, that did not so much matter.

So he sat down to supper, and Auria sat opposite to him; but, although all the viands were so delicate and so exquisitely cooked, and though

Auria kept pressing him to eat and tempting him with one dish after another, Almion felt no appetite, and was able to swallow scarcely anything. He almost wished that he had never awakened from that pleasant dream that had come to him on the borders of the new country; for then he had thought that there was something better to do in the world than to dig all day in a dust-hole, or even to sit in a jeweled robe and look down on other people. He was tired of looking down; he would have liked to look up, for a change. But what was there to look up to? There was the dream-princess,—he might have looked up to her, for she had seemed to him like some holy spirit descended from heaven. And yet, since she was but a dream-princess, she could have lasted no longer than the dream; or, if there were anything real in her, then Auria must be that reality. Almion looked at Auria; she was smooth and smiling and handsome, but he could not look up to her, for she sat directly in front of him. When supper was over, she got up and went into the kitchen, and he heard her voice—the harsh, cracked, angry voice of the old woman. What was she doing to poor Mona? In order not to be troubled by this thought, Almion stretched out his weary limbs and tried to go to sleep.

He could not sleep at first, though he was not quite awake, either; but lay in a half dream, so that the sounds and movements that went on around him seemed strange and fantastic. He fancied that Auria had laid aside all her comeliness and youth, as one lays aside a mask, and was once more the hideous old woman of the marketplace. And now she was creeping on tip-toe toward the corner of the kitchen where Mona was lying. She pounced upon her with a shriek of triumph, as a great cat pounces on a mouse; and in a moment she had bound her, hand and foot, and laid her out upon the hearth. Almion looked to see whether Mona made any resistance, but she lay quite still, and only a faint fluttering of the heart showed that any life was left in her. "If I were awake," said Almion to himself, "I would not let that old hag use the poor creature so." But he could not move any more than Mona. Now the old woman was scraping together all the gold-dust that Almion had dug and sifted during his three days in the pit. She came up to Mona, with the dust in her hands, and began to spread it all over her motionless form, until it was quite covered up, and nothing was to be seen of Mona but a mound of dust. "But, after all, this is nothing but a nightmare," said Almion to himself. Then all became dark and still, and Almion sank into a still deeper sleep; and by and by he had a vision.

It seemed to him that Mona had come out of the kitchen and was standing at his bedside. She was as slender and fragile as a spirit, and she was robed in a garment of gray mist, and a veil was over her face. Yet he felt that she was gazing at him, and that her gaze was mournful and tender. And he gazed back, in his dream, trying to see through the misty veil. Then slowly, slowly, beneath his gaze, the veil melted away, and he beheld a face that made his heart burn and tremble. Ah, why had he not known her before? He did not know that his eyes had been darkened by a pair of horn spectacles, which the old woman had slipped over them while he slept so heavily, the first night he spent in her house. But now it was too late; for, as he continued to gaze at Mona, she seemed to move slowly away from him, as a memory vanishes away from us, though we try to call it back. And now she was gone!

All at once, Almion awoke. It was still dark night, and the air was full of mysterious meaning and muttering; for the spirits of the storm were rousing themselves, and would soon be rushing and howling abroad. Almion, too, arose, and stood erect, listening and peering into the darkness. Through the door-way of the kitchen came a little glimmer of light, from the dying embers on the hearth. With a light step, and holding his breath, Almion stole toward it. Yes, there lay Mona, motionless, with the yellow dust all sifted over her. Almion bent down and gently blew it off. How pale her face was! and her star-like eyes were closed. But there was a spark of life left in her still, even as there was a spark of fire in the embers. Almion stooped and lifted her in his arms; but either he had grown very weak or Mona, in spite of her slender fragility, was strangely heavy; it was all his strength could do to hold her. He staggered with her to the door of the house, trying to make no noise lest he should awaken Auria. But behold! there lay, directly across the threshold,—not Auria, indeed, but the hideous hag who had worn the Auria mask. She was asleep, with a malicious grin upon her lips; for the old witch was dreaming how, by the cunning of her wicked enchantments, she had got Almion into her power, and had almost destroyed the only guardian power that could redeem him. But her victory was not yet complete. Gathering Mona more closely in his arms, Almion summoned all his strength to leap across the threshold; but, as he did so, his foot touched the old woman's shoulder, and with a cry the witch awoke!

"Fly, fly!" whispered a voice in Almion's ear; "fly, or we are lost!"

He fled on, stumbling through the darkness and panting with the strain of the heavy weight he

bore,—so heavy that he thought it must drag him to the earth. Yet he kept on, for the faint voice in his ear was like the call of a trumpet to his heart; it was the voice of the dream-princess from whom he had so nearly been separated forever. He fled toward the dark valley; but now the storm burst forth and shrieked in his face, and the wind and the fierce rain drove against him, and the lightning divided the darkness, and the thunder shuddered and rumbled in the black heavens. And as he fled, he saw that the village, with all its inhabitants, had vanished: they had been but a part of the witch's enchantments, helping to beguile Almion into mistaking the dirt of the pit for gold and smothering his soul to death in it. But the witch herself had not vanished: she was following close behind them, carrying with her the garment of gold and jewels which she had woven for Almion. And well might she carry it, for it was upon that garment that her power over Almion depended. It was woven, warp and woof, out of the selfishness and greediness that nature spins around men's hearts as a spider spins its web; and if she could once succeed in throwing it over Almion's shoulders, he was lost forever. But the wind became entangled in the garment, and struggled with it so furiously that the old witch could scarcely keep her hold upon it, and it prevented her from running so fast as she would otherwise have done. Almion, therefore, burdened though he was by Mona's weight, was able to keep a little in advance; but just before he reached the verge of the plain, where it overhung the valley, he stumbled and fell, and a great terror passed over his soul; but he still held Mona safely.

Then the witch laughed, for she thought her victory was secure. And in a moment she had re-assumed the smiling and rosy mask of Auria; and when Almion lifted up his eyes from his fall, he saw her standing there, between him and the valley, holding out the jeweled garment in her hands.

"Dear Almion," she said, in her softest voice, "what madness has come over you? Why do you fly from your Auria, who loves you and serves you? And why do you carry that dead creature in your arms? Throw her down, and let me wrap you in this garment, and you shall be the greatest prince in the world. Throw her down into the valley, and return with me."

The witch said this because she had not the power to cast the garment over Almion so long as he clung to Mona. But if she could separate them, then Almion was hers.

"I will not throw her down," replied he, struggling to his feet. "I have found her, and I will never leave her."

"She has left you already," said the other, "for she is dead; that body that you carry, and which weighs so heavily, has no life in it. Throw it away, and come back with me to ease and happiness."

He looked at Mona, and she seemed lifeless indeed; her face was like marble. But tears gushed to his eyes as he answered: "Dead or alive, I will never leave her; and I will have no ease or happiness except with her."

"Whither will you carry her?" asked Auria.

"Through the valley and up the mountain," he replied.

"You would perish by the way," she said. "Yet, if you will go, I will guide you thither, for only by my help can you find the road. Give Mona to me, and wrap yourself in your garment, and I will fly with you to the mountain-top in the twinkling of an eye."

"I will not go with you," said Almion.

The witch trembled with rage, but she made one last effort.

"Almion," she cried, "I have done all this to try you,—to prove whether you were really worthy of my love. You have withstood the test, and now I will declare myself to you: I am the true Mona,—the princess of your dream,—your guardian angel! That burden you carry is but a figure that I have made in my own image. Cast her down, and claim your own Mona!"

Then Almion became indignant, and his indignation renewed his strength. He struggled to his feet, still holding the form of Mona, and exclaimed:

"You are false and wicked! And I have been your slave; but your power over me is ended. This is my princess, and you shall not part us. Stand aside and let me pass; for, with Mona as my guardian, I am mightier and more terrible than you!"

So saying, he strode boldly forward; and the witch, with a long howl of hate and fury, resumed her proper form, and was swallowed up in the earth. But Almion stood for a moment on the verge of the dark valley, and then sprang forward into the abyss.

And even as he sprang he felt a change come over him, and Mona stirred and breathed, and awakened from her death-like trance; and her form was no longer heavy, but lighter than the air, so that her lightness bore him up; and, instead of being dashed to pieces against the rocks at the bottom of the valley, they ended their fearful flight through the air as softly as a feather from a bird's wing touches the earth. The storm had passed away, and in the deep sky above them the stars shone out. Mona took Almion by the hand, and said: "Come, we shall yet find the right gold and

the true beauty. But we have far to go, and the way is dark and perilous. Lose no time, therefore, but follow me."

So Almion followed his guide with a trusting and quiet heart, though she led him straight down into the depths of that wild and awful valley. They went onward, but slowly; for great bowlders of rock rose up and opposed their progress, and tangled vines coiled themselves like snakes across their path, and rude brambles stretched out their thorns like claws and strove to hold them back. And they passed by yawning caverns, in the depths of which glowed the savage eyes of wild beasts; and through obscure ravines, which echoed with the bark and whine of wolves and the snarling of hungry tigers. At other times, their feet were chilled by the slimy waters of a pathless morass, in which Almion had surely been lost but for Mona's unerring guidance. Now the air about them was stirred by the silent wings of birds of the night, and bats, which are to the air what reptiles are to the earth; and here and there phantoms lights moved over the surface of the swamp, now seeming to retreat before them and now to follow them in pursuit. But, through all, Mona moved onward toward the distant mountain, though even its topmost summit was now hidden from Almion's eyes by the surrounding rocks and pines. Still the path plunged downward, until it seemed as if it would lead them to the center of the earth, and that never again could they hope to breathe the upper air. At this depth, all presence of living creatures, save themselves, ceased; no vegetation softened the naked rocks; the very atmosphere was dead and still, and a profound silence, more appalling than any sounds, brooded over all. The heavens above were shut out by the beetling cliffs, and Almion's spirit began to faint within him.

"Mona, Mona," he whispered, "I dare go no further. There is no bottom to this abyss, and no hope that I can ever ascend from it to the mountain,—if, indeed, there be any mountain, which I almost doubt."

"Would you go back, Almion?" said Mona.

"No, that I never will," he replied. "But my spirit faints in this darkness and solitude, and I have no hope. Leave me here to die, if it must be so."

"You shall not die, Almion," she answered, "nor shall the darkness and the solitude drive away your hope. Hold fast my hand, and close your eyes, and you shall see something that will comfort you."

Almion did as she bade him; and soon, as it were, through his closed eyelids, he became aware of a distant brightness, small at first, but seeming

to grow nearer and larger. At last, it appeared as a great door-way, through which came trooping many glorious and lovely figures, whose faces shone with cheerfulness and peace. Down they came into the dark valley, and gathered about Almion with looks and smiles of encouragement; so that, instead of being alone, as he had thought he was, this heavenly retinue encompassed him on every side. And Mona said: "All these have been through the valley before us, and some of them had to pass through even profounder abysses than we; yet all, at last, reached the mountain, and their hope did not fail them."

"Your hand in mine helps me more than all," said Almion.

With that he opened his eyes; and behold, the valley lay behind them, and they were upon the side of the mountain. The air was fresh and pure, and the dawn was beginning to break; even now the highest peaks were tinted with rosy light. A delicious vigor, such as he had never known before, began to grow warm in Almion's limbs and to brighten in his eyes. He stepped forward joyfully, but Mona still led the way. As they mounted higher and higher, leaving the dark valley far beneath, the great splendor of the coming sun kindled all the east, and the stars in the vault of heaven withdrew themselves one by one. All things were undergoing a wondrous transformation, and out of gloom and emptiness came forth beauty and life. And Almion saw how the robe of misty gray that Mona wore was illuminated by the increasing light, until it took on once more the celestial tints that he remembered the first night of his dream, only now it had the more vivid luster of a waking vision. Then, with a sense of shame and humility, he remembered how mean and shabby was his own appearance. His garments were torn by the brambles of the valley, and he was stained by the slimy waters of the swamp, and he was not even cleansed from the defilement of the dust-pit

in which he had toiled for the witch's gold. He paused and hung his head.

"Come, dear Almion," said Mona; "we are nearly at our journey's end."

"I can not come, Mona," he murmured sadly. "I am not fit to tread this holy mountain, nor to be seen with those who came out of the door to meet us. I have brought no beauty, nor any riches, but only poverty and ugliness. Let me go down again to the valley, for it is better I should be there than here."

Mona made no answer in words; but she smiled upon him with her star-like eyes, and pointed toward the east.

Almion looked; and the sun rose up above the margin of the waiting world, and flooded all the earth, and turned the mountain-top on which they stood into a spire of gold. Its rays fell upon Almion, and clothed him with a radiance more beautiful than all the gorgeous accoutrement of kings. It placed an airy diadem on Mona's head, and revealed all the love and loveliness of the countenance which she turned upon Almion.

"This is the right gold, dear Almion," she said, "and it is all yours, for the lord of our country gives it to you. And all the beauty that you see in me is yours, for it was your bravery and devotion that saved me from the witch and lent me the power to guide you through the dark valley. And all the love of the inhabitants of this kingdom is yours, because you were merciful and pitiful, and chose to plunge into the abyss with me rather than to live in ease and luxury without me. So come with me, and be at peace!"

Nevertheless, Almion still hung his head, for he felt that, of himself, he could do nothing, and that he was unworthy of this happiness. But Mona held fast his hand, and drew him on along a bright ascent of clouds, until, with a distant triumph of music, they vanished into a region whither our eyes can not follow them.

SANTA CLAUS AND THE MOUSE.

BY EMILIE POULSSON.

ONE Christmas eve, when Santa Claus
Came to a certain house,
To fill the children's stockings there,
He found a little mouse.

"A merry Christmas, little friend,"
Said Santa, good and kind.
"The same to you, sir," said the mouse;
"I thought you would n't mind

"If I should stay awake to-night
And watch you for awhile."
"You 're very welcome, little mouse,"
Said Santa, with a smile.

And then he filled the stockings up
Before the mouse could wink,—
From toe to top, from top to toe,
There was n't left a chink.

"Now, they wont hold another thing,"
Said Santa Claus, with pride.
A twinkle came in mouse's eyes,
But humbly he replied:

"It's not polite to contradict,—
Your pardon I implore,—
But in the fullest stocking there
I could put one thing more."

"Oh, ho!" laughed Santa, "silly mouse!
Don't I know how to pack?

By filling stockings all these years,
I should have learned the knack."

And then he took the stocking down
From where it hung so high,
And said: "Now put in one thing more;
I give you leave to try."

The mousie chuckled to himself,
And then he softly stole
Right to the stocking's crowded toe
And gnawed a little hole!

"Now, if you please, good Santa Claus,
I've put in one thing more;
For you will own that little hole
Was not in there before."

How Santa Claus did laugh and laugh!
And then he gayly spoke:

"Well! you shall have a Christmas cheese
For that nice little joke."



A New Jack & Jill:

By Margaret Johnson.



Jack & Jill went up the Hill.
To fetch a pail of water.
Jill held the handle steadily.
As her Mamma had taught her.
They did not trip, they did not fall.
Nor by the wayside stop.
Yet when they reached their home.
The pail
Held not a single drop.



Then back again they quickly went
And filled it up once more.
But when they got the bucket
"It was empty as before."
"You let it spill," said Jack to Jill.
"It was you," said Jill to Jack.
"It was all your fault," cried one.
"It was yours,"
The other answered back.



They wrangled up they wrangled down:
 Seven times they climbed the Hill.
 But at each weary journey's end.
 The pail was empty still.
 Then hotter grew the hot dispute
 And words gave place to blows.
 Till suddenly their stern Mamma
 Appeared to interpose.



"Now hush," she cried, "this wicked strife.
 Give me the pail a minute."

O most unhappy children, don't!

You see the hole that's in it!"

She sent them forth with frown severe.

A weeping son & daughter.

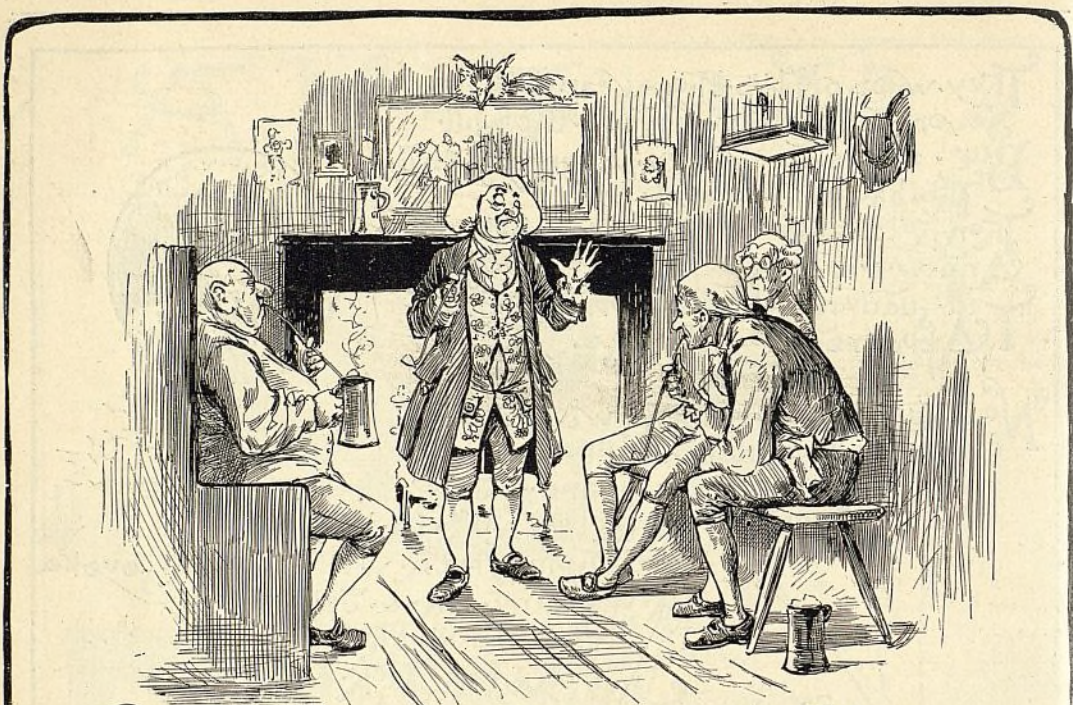
And up the Hill.

Went Jack & Jill.

To fetch a pail of water.



"She sent them forth
 With frown severe."



There was a small person of Pah,
Who cried at all ghost stories, "Bah!"

But every night
In a terrible fright,
He would jump out of bed shouting, "Ha!!"



Birch

WINTER FUN.

BY WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

(Continued from page 22 of the November number.)

CHAPTER II.

VOSH STEBBINS hurried away from Deacon Farnham's a little after supper, but he had understood his duty precisely, all along; for the first words of his mother, on his return, were:

"Made you stay to tea, did they? Well, I would n't have had you not stay for anything. Susie's brought her brother with her this time, has she? Sit right down, and I won't say one word till you get through. And I want to know——"

"Miss Farnham wants a dozen of eggs——"

"You don't say! Well, take 'em right over, but don't wait a minute. Tell her our poultry's doing well, and I don't see why she does n't ever have any kind of luck with her chickens. She does n't manage right, I'm afraid."

Vosh had his eggs in a basket and was out of the door before his mother had said half she wanted to about the best way of caring for poultry in cold weather. He obeyed orders, however, and came back at once, to sit still and put in a few words, here and there, while Mrs. Stebbins told him all he had done and said, and all anybody else had done and said, at Deacon Farnham's tea-table. It seemed as if she could almost have gone right on and told him all that was being done and said around the big sitting-room fire, where he so much desired to be, just then.

There was a good deal of pleasant talk there; but Mrs. Farnham insisted upon it that her niece and nephew must be tired with their long journey, and that they must go to bed in good season.

The last words Porter Hudson heard anybody say, that night, just before he shut the door of his bedroom, came from Penelope: "You need n't wait for me to ring the second bell in the morning, and you'd better come right down into the sitting-room, where it's warm."

It had taken three generations of hard-working and well-to-do Farnhams to build that great, queer, comfortable old farm-house. Each had made some addition, on one side or another, and there was room in it now for a very large family. So Porter Hudson had a good-sized chamber all to himself; but he remarked, after he got into it:

"No furnace heaters in this house. Of course not. They don't have such things in the country."

He had never before slept on a feather bed; but

he was not at all sorry to burrow into one, that night, out of the frosty air of his room.

It was as dark as a pocket when he heard the clang of Pen's "first bell," next morning, but he sprang out of bed at once.

One glance through the frosty window-panes told him how little of the country around could be seen in winter before sunrise. In another instant all his thoughts were centered on the great fireplace down-stairs, and he dressed himself very quickly. He thought he had never seen a finer looking fire, the moment he was able to rub his hands in front of it.

Mrs. Farnham was there, too, setting the breakfast table and smiling on him, and Porter's next thought was, that his aunt was the rosiest, pleasantest, most comfortable of women.

"It would take a good deal of cold weather to freeze her," he said to himself, and he was right.

He could hear Aunt Judith, out in the kitchen, complaining to Susie and Pen that everything in the milk-room had frozen; and when Corry and his father came in from feeding the stock, they both declared that it was a "splendid, frosty, nipping kind of a morning." They looked as if it might be, and Porter hitched his chair a little nearer the fire, but Corry added: "Now for some fun, Port."

"All right. What is it?"

"We're going to the woods after breakfast. You and I'll take our guns with us and see if we can't knock over some rabbits. I'll take father's gun and you can take mine."

Just then Pen's voice sounded from the kitchen, excitedly: "Do you hear that, Susie? They're going to the woods! Let's go!"

"Oh, if they'll let us!"

"Of course they will——"

"Penelope Farnham! Look out for those cakes!"

"I'm turning 'em, Aunt Judith. I'm minding 'em every minute,—Susie, those sausages are almost done; let me take them out for you."

"No, Pen. I want to cook them all myself. You take care of your cakes."

Buckwheat cakes and home-made sausages—what a breakfast that was for a frosty morning!

Susie Hudson would have been puzzled to say which she enjoyed most, the cooking or the eating, and she certainly did her share of both very well, for a young lady from the city.

"Port, can you shoot?" asked Corry, somewhat suddenly, at table.

"Shoot? I should say so. Do you ever get anything bigger than rabbits out here?"

"Did n't you know? Why, right back from where we're going this morning are the mountains. And then, there is n't a farm, till you get away out into the St. Lawrence River country."

"Yes, I know all that."

"Well, sometimes the deer come right down among us, especially in winter. Last winter a bear came down and stole one of our pigs. But we followed the bear, and we got him; Vosh Stebbins and father and I."

Porter tried hard to look as if he were quite accustomed to following and killing all the bears that meddled with his pigs, but Pen exclaimed: "Now, Susie, you need n't be scared a bit. There won't be a single bear, not where we're going."

"Wont there?" said Susie, almost regretfully. "How I'd like to see one!"

There was a good deal more to be said about bears and other wild creatures and, just as breakfast was over, there came a great noise of rattling and creaking and shouting in front of the sitting-room windows; and "there he is!" said Corry.

Susie and her brother hurried to look, and there was Vosh Stebbins, with Deacon Farnham's great "wood-sleigh," drawn by two pairs of strong, long-horned, placid-looking oxen. "Couldn't one pair draw it?" asked Porter of Corry.

"Guess they could, but two pairs can do it more easily, and beside, they've nothing else to do. We'll heap it up, too. You'll see."

There was not long to wait, for the excitement rose fast in the sitting-room, and Susie and Pen were in that sleigh a little in advance of anybody else. Its driver stood by the heads of his first yoke of oxen, and Susie at once exclaimed:

"Good-morning, Vosh. What a whip!"

"Why, Susie," said Pen; "that is n't a whip, it's an ox-gad."

"That's it," said Vosh, but he seemed disposed to talk to his oxen rather than to anybody else. The yoke next the sleigh stood on either side of a long, heavy "tongue," to the end of which the forward pair were fastened by a chain, which passed between them to a hook in their yoke. These forward oxen animals, as Vosh explained to Susie, "were only about half-educated, and they took more than their share of drivin'."

He began to pay attention to them, now, and it was half a wonder to see how accurately the huge beasts kept the right track, down through the gate, and out into the road. It seemed easier then, for all they had to do was to go straight ahead.

"Let me take the whip. Do, please," said

Susie, and Vosh only remarked, as he handed it to her: "Guess you'll find it heavy."

She lifted it with both hands, and a smile illuminated his broad, ruddy face, as she made a desperate effort to swing the lash over the oxen.

"Go 'long, now! Get up! Cluck—cluck!"

She chirruped to the oxen with all her might, while Vosh put his handkerchief over his mouth and had a violent fit of coughing.

"Boys," shouted her uncle, from behind the sleigh, "you'd better put down your guns. Lay them flat, and don't step on 'em."

Porter Hudson had clung to his gun manfully, from the moment it was handed him. He had carried it over his shoulder, slanting it a little across toward the other shoulder. He had seen whole regiments of city soldiers do that, and so he knew it was the correct way to carry a gun. He was now quite willing, however, to imitate Corry and put his weapon down flat on the bottom of the sleigh. The gun would be safe there, and, besides, he had been watching Vosh Stebbins and listening, and he had an idea it was time he should show what he knew about oxen. They were plodding along very well at the moment.

"Susie," he said, "give me that gad."

Vosh looked somewhat doubtful as she surrendered the whip. They were going up a little ascent and, just beyond, the fences on either side of the road seemed to stop. Still further on, all was forest, and the road had a crooked look as it went in among the trees.

Porter had stronger arms than his sister, and he could do more with an ox-gad. He gave the long, hickory "stalk" a swing, and the heavy, far-reaching lash at the end of it came around with a "swish" and knocked the coon-skin cap from the head of Vosh. Then the whip came down, stalk, lash and all, along the broad backs of the oxen.

"Gee! Haw! G'lang! Get up! G'lang, now!"

Porter felt that his reputation was at stake. He raised the gad again and he shouted vigorously. The hinder pair of oxen did not seem to mind it much and plodded along as if they had not heard any one say a word to them, but their younger and more skittish helpers in front shook their heads a little uneasily. "Gee! Haw! G'lang!"

Porter was quite proud of the way the lash came down, this time, and the cracker of it caught the near ox of the forward team smartly on the left ear. It was a complete success, undoubtedly; but, to Porter's astonishment, the bewildered yoke of oxen in front whirled suddenly to the right. The next moment, they were floundering in a snow-drift.

On the instant, Vosh snatched the gad from

Porter and sprang out of the sleigh, saying something, as he went, about "not wanting to have the girls upset." Corry was dancing a sort of double-shuffle and shouting: "Well done, Port! That 's the first time I ever saw an ox-team 'gee'

The double team had set out to do it, quite obediently; but Vosh got matters straightened very quickly. Then he kept the whip and did his own driving, until the sleigh was pulled out of the road, half a mile further, into a sort of open space in the forest. There was not much depth of snow on the ground, and there were stumps of trees sticking up through it all about. Vosh drove right on until he halted his team by a great pile of logs that were already cut for hauling. "Are they not too big for the fire-place?" asked Susie of Pen.

"Of course they are," said Pen; but Corry added: "We can cut up all we want for the stoves after we get the logs home. And the big ones will be cut up for back-logs for the fire-place."

He had been telling Porter, on the way, about the fun there was in felling big trees, and that young gentleman had proposed to cut down a few before they set out after any rabbits or bears. "Just see father swing that ax!" said Pen, proudly, as the stalwart old farmer walked up to a tall hickory and began to make the chips fly.

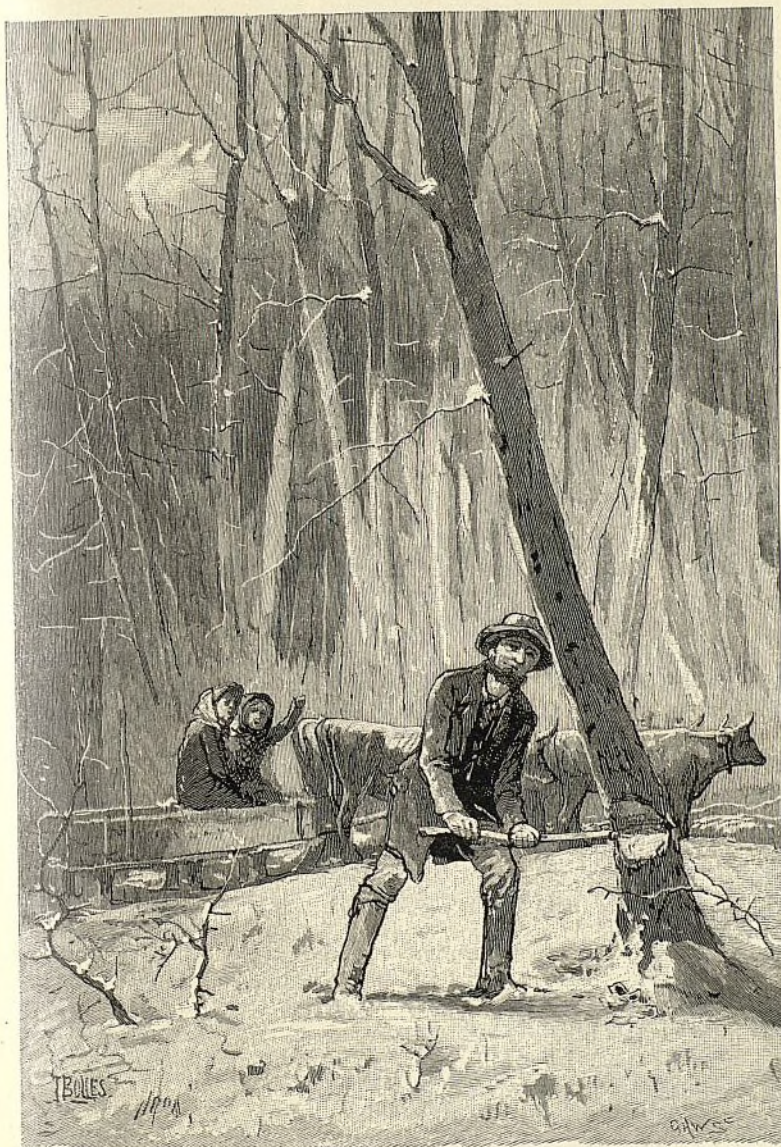
"Is n't it a fine sight?" said Susie.

Vosh Stebbins had his ax out of the sleigh, now, determined to show what he could do.

It looked like the easiest thing in the world. He and the deacon merely swung their axes up and let them go down exactly

in the right place, and the glittering edges went in, in, with a hollow thud, and at every other stroke a great chip would spring away across the snow.

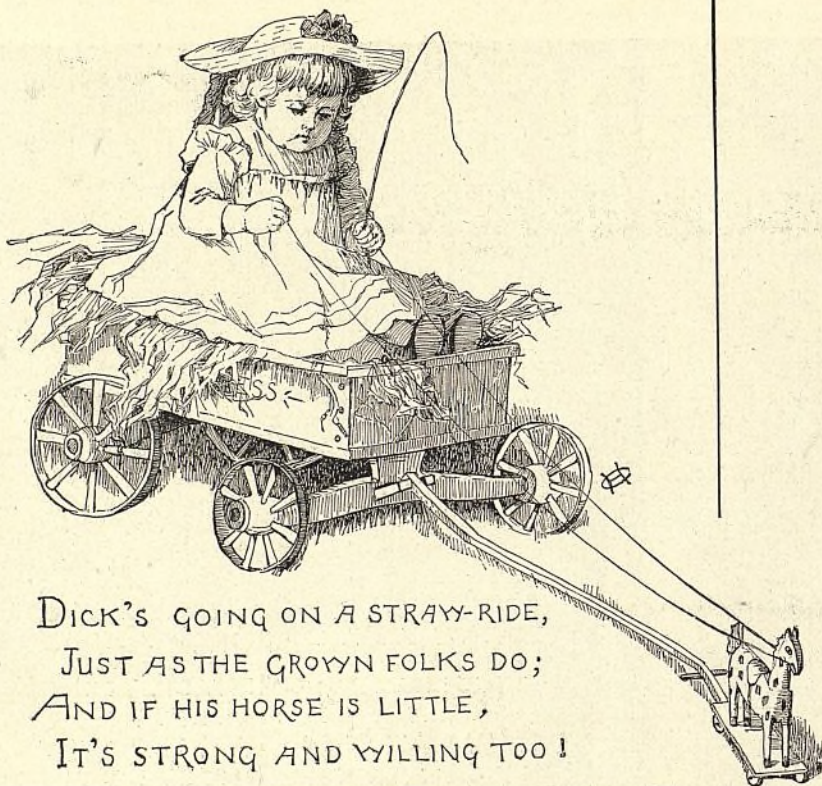
"It does n't take either of them long to bring a tree down," said Corry. "Take that other ax there and we 'll try one. They 've all got to come



"IT WAS ENTERTAINMENT ENOUGH TO WATCH THE CHOPPERS AND SEE THE CHIPS FLY."

and 'haw' at the same time. Hurrah for you, Port!" "Pen," said Susie, "what does he mean?"

"Mean? Don't you know? Why, you say 'gee' to turn 'em this way, and 'haw' to turn 'em that way. They can't turn both ways at once."



DICK'S GOING ON A STRAY-RIDE,
JUST AS THE GROWN FOLKS DO;
AND IF HIS HORSE IS LITTLE,
IT'S STRONG AND WILLING TOO!

THE LAND OF FIRE.

A Tale of Adventure in Tierra del Fuego.

BY CAPTAIN MAYNE REID.

CHAPTER V.

THE CASTAWAYS.

NOT long does Captain Gancy lament the loss of his fine vessel and valuable cargo. In the face and fear of a far greater loss—his own life and the lives of his companions,—there is no time for vain regrets. The storm is still in full fury; the winds and the waves are as high as ever; and their boat is threatened with the fate of the bark.

The bulk of the "Calypso's" crew, with Lyons, the chief mate, have taken to the pinnace; and the skipper is in his own gig, with his wife, daughter, son, young Chester, and two others—Seagriff, the carpenter, and the cook, a negro. In all, only

seven persons, but enough to bring the gunwale of the little craft dangerously near the water's edge. The captain himself is in the stern-sheets, tiller-lines in hand. Mrs. Gancy and her daughter crouch beside him, while the others are at the oars—in which occupation Ned and Chester occasionally pause to bale out, as showers of spray keep breaking over the boat, threatening to swamp it.

What point shall they steer for? This is a question that no one asks, nor thinks of asking as yet. Course and direction are as nothing now; all their energies are bent on keeping the boat above water. However, they naturally endeavor to remain in the company of the pinnace. But those in the larger craft, like themselves, are engaged in

a life-and-death conflict with the sea, and both must fight it out in their own way, neither being able to give aid to the other. So, despite their efforts to keep near each other, the winds and waves soon separate them. Anon, they can catch glimpses of each other only when buoyed up on the crest of a billow. And presently, the night coming on,—a night of dungeon darkness,—they see each other no more.

But, dark as it is, there is still visible that which they have been long regarding with dread—the breakers known as the “Milky Way.” Snow-white during the day, these terrible rock-tortured billows now gleam like a belt of liquid fire, the breakers at every crest seeming to break into veritable flames. Well for the castaways that this is the case; else how, in such obscurity, could the dangerous lee shore be shunned? To keep off that is, for the time, the chief care of those in the gig; and all their energies are exerted in holding their craft well to windward.

By good fortune, the approach of night has brought about a shifting of the wind, which has veered around to the west-northwest, making it possible for them to “scud,” without nearer approach to the dreaded fire-like line. In their cockle-shell of a boat, they know that to run before the wind is their safest plan, and so they speed on south-eastward. An ocean current setting from the north-west also helps them in this course.

Thus doubly driven, they make rapid progress, and before midnight the Milky Way is behind them, out of sight. But, though they breathe more freely, they are by no means out of danger—alone in a frail skiff on the still turbulent ocean, and groping in thick darkness, with neither moon nor star to guide them. They have no compass; that having been forgotten in their scramble out of the sinking ship. But even if they had one, it would be of little assistance to them at present, as, for the time being, they have enough to do in keeping the boat baled out and above water.

At break of day, matters look a little better. The storm has somewhat abated, and there is land in sight to leeward, with no visible breakers between. Still, they have a heavy swell to contend with, and an ugly cross sea.

But land to a castaway! His first thought, and most anxious desire, is to set foot on it. So in the case of our shipwrecked party; risking all reefs and surfs, they at once set the gig's head shoreward.

Closing in upon the land, they perceive a high promontory on the port bow and another on the starboard, separated by a wide reach of open water; and, about half-way between these promontories and somewhat farther out, lies what appears to be an island. Taking it for one, Seagriff counsels putting in there instead of running on for the more distant main-land.

“But why should we put in upon the island?” asks the skipper. “Would n't it be better to keep on to the main?”

“No, Captain. There's a reason agin it; the which I'll make known to you as soon as we get safe ashore.”

Captain Gancy is aware that the late “Calypso's” carpenter was for a long time a sealer, and in this capacity had spent more than one season in the sounds and channels of Tierra del Fuego. He knows also that the old sailor can be trusted, and so, without pressing for further explanation, he steers straight for the island.

When about half a mile from its shore, they come upon a bed of kelp,* growing so close and thick as to bar their farther advance. Were they still on board the bark, the weed would be given a wide berth, as giving evidence of rocks underneath. But, in the light-draught gig, they have no fear of these; and with the swell still tossing them about, are even glad to get in among the kelp, and so steady themselves awhile. Their anxiety to force a way through the tangled mass is heightened by the fact that, on the farther side of it, they can descry waveless water, seemingly as tranquil as a pond. Luckily the weed-bed is not continuous, but traversed by an irregular sort of break, through which it seems practicable to make way. So into this the gig is directed, and pulled through with vigorous strokes. Five minutes afterward, her keel grates upon a beach, against which, despite the tumbling swell outside, there is scarce so much as a ripple! There is no better breakwater than a bed of kelp.

The island proves to be a small one; less than a mile in diameter, rising in the center to a rounded summit, three hundred feet above sea-level. It is treeless, though in part overgrown with a rank vegetation, chiefly tussac grass,† with its grand bunches of leaves, six feet in height, surrounded by plume-like flower-spikes, almost as much higher.

Little regard, however, do the castaways pay to the isle or its productions. After being so long

*The *fucus giganteus* of Solander. The stem of this remarkable sea-weed, though but the thickness of a man's thumb, is often over 130 yards in length, perhaps the longest of any known plant. It grows on every rock in Fuegian waters, from low-water mark to a depth of fifty or sixty fathoms, and among the most violent breakers. Often loose stones are raised up by it, and carried about, when the weed gets adrift; some of these are so large and heavy that they can with difficulty be lifted into a boat. The reader will learn more of it further on.

†*Dactylis cespitosa*. The leaves of this singular grass are often eight feet in length, and an inch broad at the base; the flower-stalks being as long as the leaves. It bears much resemblance to the “pampas grass,” now well known as an ornamental shrubbery.

tossed about on rough seas, in momentary peril of their lives, and with scarcely a mouthful of food the while, they are now suffering from the pangs of hunger. So, as soon as the boat is beached, and they have set foot on shore, the services of Cæsar, the cook, are called into requisition.

As yet, they scarcely know what provisions they have with them, so confusedly were things flung into the gig. An examination of their stock proved that it is scant indeed; a barrel of biscuits, a ham, some corned beef, a small bag of coffee in the berry, a canister of tea, and a loaf of lump sugar were all they had brought with them. The condition of these articles, too, is most disheartening. Much of the biscuit seems a mass of briny pulp; the beef is pickled for the second time (on this occasion with sea-water); the sugar is more than half melted, and the tea spoiled outright, from the canister not having been water-tight. The ham and coffee have received least damage; yet both will require a cleansing operation to make them fit for food.

Fortunately, some culinary utensils are found in the boat; the most useful of them being a frying-pan, kettle, and coffee-pot.

And now for a fire! Ah, the fire!

Up to this moment no one has thought of a fire; but now it suddenly presents itself to them as a difficulty they see no means of overcoming. The mere work of kindling it were an easy enough task, the late occupant of the "Calypso's" caboose being provided with flint, steel, and tinder. So, too, is Seagriff, who, an inveterate smoker, is never without igniting apparatus, carried in a pocket of his pilot-coat. But where are they to find firewood? There is none on the islet—not a stick,—as no trees grow there; while the tussac and other plants are soaking wet; the very ground being a sodden, spongy peat.

Upon making this discovery, Captain Gancy turns to Seagriff and remarks, with some vexation:

"Chips,* I think, 't would have been better if we 'd kept on to the main. There 's timber enough there, on either side," he adds, after a look through his binocular "The hills appear to be thickly wooded half-way up."

His words are manifestly intended as a reflection upon the judgment of the quondam seal-hunter, who rejoins shortly:

"It would have been a deal worse, sir. Aye, worse nor if we should have to eat our vittels raw."

"I don't comprehend you," says the skipper; "you spoke of a reason for our not making the main-land. What is it?"

"Wal, Captain, there is a reason, as I said, an' a good one. I did n't like to tell you, wi' the

others listenin'." He nods toward the rest of the party, who are at some distance, and then continues: "'Specially the women folks; as 't aint a thing they ought to be told about."

"Do you fear some danger?" queries the Skipper, in a tone of apprehension.

"Jest that; an' bad kind o' danger. As fur 's I kin see, we've drifted onter a part of the Fewee-gin Coast, where the Ailikoleeps live; the which air the worst and cruelest o' savages—some of 'em rank cannyballs! It is n't but five or six years since they murdered sev'ral men of a sealin' vessel that was wrecked somewhere about here. For killin' 'em, mebbe they might have had reason, seein' as there was blame on both sides, an' some whites have behaved no better than the savages. But jest fur that, we, as are innocent, may hev to pay fur the misdeeds o' the guilty! Now, Captain, you perceive the wharfor o' my not wantin' you to land over yonder. Ef we went now, like as not we 'd have a crowd o' the ugly critters yellin' around us."

"But, if that 's so," queried the Captain, "will we be any safer here?"

"Yes! we're safe enough here—'s long as the wind's blowin' as 't is now, an' I guess it allers does blow that way, round this speck of an island. It must be all o' five mile to that land either side; an' in their rickety canoes the Fewee-gins never venture fur out in anythin' o' a rough sea. I calculate, Captain, we need n't trouble ourselves much about 'em—leastways, not jest yet."

"Aye,—but afterward!" murmurs Captain Gancy, in a desponding tone, as his eyes turn upon those by the boat.

"Wal, sir," says the old sealer, encouragingly, "arterward 'll have to take care o' itself. An' now I guess I 'd better determine ef thar aint some way of helpin' Cæsar to a spark o' fire. Don't look like it, but looks are sometimes deceivin'."

And, so saying, he strolls off among the bunches of tussac grass and is soon out of sight.

But it is not long before he is again making himself heard, by an exclamation, telling of some discovery—a joyful one, as evinced by the tone of his voice. The two youths hasten to his side and find him bending over a small heath-like bush, from which he has torn a handful of branches.

"What is it, Chips?" ask both in a breath.

"The gum-plant, sure," he replies.

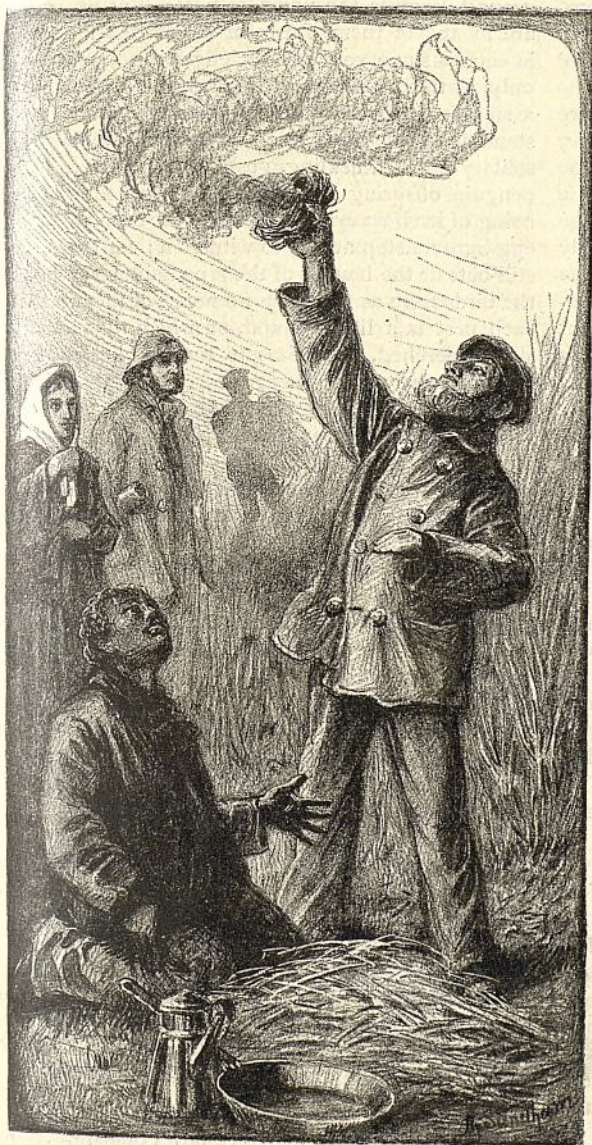
"Well, what then? What 's the good of it?" they further interrogate. "You don't suppose that green thing will burn—wet as a fish, too?"

"That 's jest what I do suppose," replied the old sailor, deliberately. "You young ones wait, an' you 'll see. Mebbe you 'll lend a hand, an' help me to gather some of it. We 'll want armfuls; an'

* All ship-carpenters are called "Chips."

there 's plenty o' the welcome plants growin' all about, you see."

They do see, and at once begin tearing at them, breaking off the branches of some and plucking up others by the roots, till Seagriff cries, "Enough!" Then, with arms full, they return to the beach in high spirits and with joyful faces.



MAKING A FIRE IN THE LAND OF FIRE.

Arrived there, Seagriff selects some of the finest twigs, which he rubs between his hands till they are reduced to a fine fiber and nearly dry. Rolling these into a rounded shape, resembling a

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bird's nest, click! goes his flint and steel,—a piece of "punk" is ignited and slipped into the heart of the ball. This, held on high, and kept whirling around his head, is soon ablaze, when it is thrust in among the gathered heap of green plants. Green and wet as these are, they at once catch fire and flame up like kindling-wood.

All are astonished, and pleased as well; and not the least delighted is Cæsar, who dances over the ground in high glee as he prepares to resume his vocation.

CHAPTER VI.

A BATTLE WITH BIRDS.

THROUGH Cæsar's skillful manipulations the sea-water is extracted from the ham; and the coffee, which is in the berry and unroasted, after a course of judicious washing and scorching, is also rendered fit for use. The biscuits also turn out better than was anticipated. So their breakfast is not so bad, after all,—indeed, to such appetites as theirs, it seems a veritable feast.

While they are enjoying it, Seagriff tells them something more about the plant which has proved of such service to them. They learn from him that it grows in the Falkland Islands, as well as in Tierra del Fuego, and is known as the "gum-plant,"* because of a viscous substance it exudes in large quantities; this sap is called "balsam," and is used by the natives of the countries where it is found as a poultice for wounds. But its most important property, in their eyes, is the ease with which it can be set on fire, even when green and growing, as above described,—a matter of no slight consequence in regions where rain falls five days out of every six. In the Falkland Islands, where there are no trees, the natives often roast their beef over a fire of bones,—the very bones of the animal from which, but the moment before, the meat itself was stripped,—and they use the gum-plant to kindle this fire.

Just as Seagriff finishes his interesting dissertation, his listeners have their attention called to a spectacle quite new to them and somewhat comical. Near the spot where they have landed, a naked sand-bar projects into the water, and along this a number of odd-looking creatures are seen, side by side. There are quite two hundred of them, all facing the same way, mute images of propriety and good deportment, reminding one of a row of

* *Hydrocelice gummifera*.

little charity children, all in white bibs and tuckers, ranged in a rank for inspection.

But very different is the behavior of the birds—for birds they are. One or another, every now and then, raises its head aloft and so holds it, while giving utterance to a series of cries, as hoarse and long-drawn as the braying of an ass, to which sound it bears a ludicrous resemblance.

"Jack-ass penguins,"* Seagriff pronounces them, without waiting to be questioned; "yonder're more of 'em," he explains, "out among the kelp, divin' after shell-fish, the which are their proper food."

The others, looking off toward the kelp, then see more of the birds. They had noticed them before, but supposed them to be fish leaping out of the water; for the penguin, on coming up after a dive, goes down again with so quick a plunge that an observer, even at short distance, may easily mistake it for a fish. Turning to those on the shore, it is now seen that numbers of them are constantly passing in among the tussac grass and out again, their mode of progression being also very odd. Instead of a walk or hop, as with other birds, it is a sort of rapid rush, in which the rudimentary wings of the birds are used as fore-legs, so that, from even a slight distance, they might easily be mistaken for quadrupeds.

"It is likely they have their nests yonder," observes Mrs. Gancy, pointing to where the penguins keep going in and out of the tussac.

The remark makes a vivid impression on her son and the young Englishman, neither of whom is so old as to have quite outgrown a boyish propensity for nest-robbing.

"Sure to have, ma'am," affirms Seagriff, respectfully raising his hand to his forelock; "an' a pity we did n't think of it sooner. We might 'a' hed fresh eggs for breakfast."

"Why can't we have them for dinner, then?" demands the second mate, the third adding:

"Yes; why not?"

"Sartin we kin, young masters. I knows of no reason agin it," answers the old sealer.

"Then let's go egg-gathering!" exclaimed Ned, eagerly.

The proposal is accepted by Seagriff, who is about to set out with the two youths, when, looking inquiringly around, he says:

"As thar aint anything in the shape of a stick about, we had best take the boat-hook an' a couple of oars."

"What for?" ask the others, in some surprise.

"You'll larn, by an' by," answers the old salt, who, like most of his kind, is somewhat given to mystification.

* *Aptenodytes Patachonica*. This singular bird has been christened "Jack-ass penguin" by sailors, on account of its curious note, which bears an odd resemblance to the bray of an ass. "King penguin" is another of its names, from its superior size; as it is the largest of the auk, or penguin family.

In accordance with this suggestion, each of the boys arms himself with an oar, leaving Seagriff the boat-hook.

They enter the tussac; and, after tramping through it a hundred yards or so, they come upon a "penguinnery," sure enough. It is a grand one, extending over acres, with hundreds of nests—if a slight depression in the naked surface of the ground deserves the name of nest. But no eggs are in any of them, fresh, or otherwise; instead, in each sits one young, half-fledged bird, and one only, as this kind of penguin lays and hatches but a single egg. Many of the nests have old birds standing beside them, each occupied in feeding its solitary chick, duckling, gosling, or whatever the penguin offspring may be properly called. This being of itself a curious spectacle, the disappointed egg-hunters stop awhile to witness it; for they are still outside the bounds of the "penguinnery," and the birds have as yet taken no notice of them. By each nest is a little mound, on which the mother stands perched, from time to time projecting her head outward and upward, at the same time giving forth a queer chattering noise, half-quack, half-bray, with the air of a stump-orator haranguing an open-air audience. Meanwhile, the youngster stands patiently waiting below, evidently with a foreknowledge of what is to come. Then, after a few seconds of the quacking and braying, the mother-bird suddenly ducks her head, with the mandibles of her beak wide agape, between which the fledgeling thrusts its head, almost out of sight, and so keeps it for more than a minute. Finally withdrawing it, up again goes the head of the mother, with neck craned out, and oscillating from side to side in a second spell of speech-making. These curious actions are repeated several times, the entire performance lasting for a period of nearly a quarter of an hour.

When it ends, possibly from the food-supply having become exhausted, the mother-bird leaves the little glutton to itself and scuttles off seaward, to replenish her throat-larder with a fresh stock of molluscs.

Although, during their long four years' cruise, Edward Gancy and Henry Chester have seen many a strange sight, they think the one now before their eyes as strange as any, and unique in its



"CHIPS."

quaint comicality. They would have continued their observations much longer but for Seagriff, to whom the sight is neither strange nor new. It has no interest for him, save economically; and in this sense he proceeds to utilize it, saying, after an interrogative glance, sent all over the breeding ground:

"Sartin, there aint a single egg in any o' the nests. It's too late in the season for them now, an' I might 'a' known it. Wal, we wont go back empty-handed, anyhow. The young penguins aint sech bad eatin', though the old uns taste some'at fishy, b'sides bein' tough as tan leather. So, let's heave ahead, an' grab a few of the goslin's. But look out, or you'll get your legs nipped!"

All three advance upon the "penguinnery," the two youths still skeptical as to there being any danger—in fact rather under the belief that the old salt is endeavoring to impose on their credulity. But they are soon undeceived. Scarcely have they set foot within the breeding precinct, when fully half a score of old penguins rush fiercely at each of the intruders, with necks outstretched, mouths open, and mandibles snapping together with a clatter like that of castanets.

Then follows a laying about with oars and boat-hook, accompanied by shouts on the side of the attacking party, and hoarse, guttural screams on that of the attacked. The racket is kept up till the latter are at length beaten off, though but few of them are slain outright; for the penguin, with its thick skull and dense coat of feathers, takes as much killing as a cat.

Even the young birds make resistance against being captured, croaking and hissing like so many little ganders, and biting sharply. But all this does not prevent our determined party from finally securing some ten or twelve of the featherless creatures, and subsequently carrying them to the friends at the shore, where they are delivered into the eager hands of Cæsar.

CHAPTER VII.

A WORLD ON A WEED.

A PAIR of penguin "squabs" makes an ample dinner for the entire party, nor is it without the accompaniment of vegetables; these being supplied by the tussac-grass, the stalks of which contain an edible substance, in taste somewhat resembling a hazel-nut, while the young shoots boiled are almost equal to asparagus.*

* It is the soft, crisp, inner part of the stem, just above the root, that is chiefly eaten. Horses and cattle are very fond of the tussac-grass, and in the Falkland Islands feed upon it. It is said, however, that there it is threatened with extirpation, on account of these animals browsing it too closely. It has been introduced with success into the Hebrides and Orkney Islands, where the conditions of its existence are favorable—a peaty soil, exposed to winds loaded with sea-spray.

† *Cathartes jota*. Closely allied to the "turkey-buzzard" of the United States.

While seated at their midday meal, they have before their eyes a moving world of Nature, such as may be found only in her wildest solitudes. All around the kelp-bed, porpoises are plowing the water, now and then bounding up out of it; while seals and sea-otters show their human-like heads, swimming among the weeds. Birds hover above, in such numbers as to darken the air; at intervals, individual birds dart down and go under with a plunge that sends the spray aloft in showers, white as a snow-drift. Others do their fishing seated on the water; for there are many different kinds of water-fowl here represented:—gulls, shags, cormorants, gannets, noddies, and petrels, with several species of *Anatifa*, among them the beautiful black-necked swan. Nor are they all sea-birds, or exclusively inhabitants of the water. Some of those wheeling in the air above are eagles, hawks, and vultures—the last, the Chilean *jota*.† Even the gigantic condor often extends its flight to the Land of Fire, whose mountains are but a continuation of the great Andean chain.

The ways and movements of this teeming ornithological world are so strange and varied that our castaways, despite all anxiety about their own future, can not help being interested in observing them. They see a bird of one kind diving and bringing to the surface a fish, which another, of a different species, snatches from it and bears aloft; in its turn, to be attacked by a third equally rapacious winged hunter, that, swooping at the robber, makes him forsake his ill-gotten prey; while the prey itself, reluctantly dropped, is dexterously recaught in its whirling descent, long ere it reaches its own element—the whole incident forming a very chain of tyranny and destruction! And yet a chain of but few links, compared with that to be found in and under the water, among the leaves and stalks of the kelp itself. There, the destroyers and the destroyed are legion; not only in numbers, but in kind. A vast conglomeration of animated beings, always at war with one another,—a world of itself, densely populated, and of so many varied organisms that, for a due delineation of it, I must again borrow from the inimitable pen of Darwin. Thus he describes it:—

"The number of living creatures of all orders, whose existence entirely depends on the kelp, is wonderful. A great volume might be written describing the inhabitants of one of these beds of seaweed. Almost all the leaves, excepting those that float on the surface, are so thickly encrusted with corallines as to be of a white color. We find exquisitely delicate structures, some inhabited by simple, hydra-like polyps; others by more organized kinds. On the leaves, also, various shells, uncovered molluscs, and bivalves, are

attached. Innumerable crustacea frequent every part of the plant. On shaking the great, entangled roots, a pile of small fish-shells, cuttle-fish, crabs of all orders, sea-eggs, star-fish, sea-cucumbers, and crawling sea-centipedes of a multitude of forms, all fall out together. Often as I recurred to the kelp, I never failed to discover animals of new and curious structures. * * * * * I can only compare these great aquatic forests of the Southern Hemisphere with the terrestrial ones of the intertropical regions. Yet, if in any country a forest were destroyed, I do not believe so many species of animals would perish as would here from the destruction of the kelp. Amidst the leaves of this plant numerous species of fish live, which nowhere else could find food or shelter; with their destruction, the many cormorants and other fishing birds, the otters, seals, and porpoises, would perish also; and lastly, the Fuegian savage, the miserable lord of this miserable land, would redouble his cannibal feast, decrease in numbers, and perhaps cease to exist."

While still watching the birds at their game of grab, the spectators observe that the kelp-bed has become darker in certain places, as though from the weeds being piled up in layers.

"It's lowering to ebb tide," remarks Captain Gancy, in reply to an interrogation from his wife, "and the rocks are a-wash. They'll soon be above water, I take it."

"Jest so, Captain," assents Seagriff; "but 't aint the weeds that's makin' those black spots. They're movin',—don't you see?"

The skipper now observes, as do all the others, a number of odd-looking animals, large-headed, and with long, slender bodies, to all appearance covered with a coat of dark-brown wool, crawling and floundering about among the kelp, in constantly increasing numbers. Each new ledge of reef, as it rises to the surface, becomes crowded with them, while some disport themselves in the pools between.

"Fur-seals* they are," pronounces Seagriff, his eyes fixed upon them as eagerly as were those of Tantalus on the forbidden water; "an' every skin of 'em worth a mint o' money. Bad luck!" he continues, in a tone of spiteful vexation. "A mine o' wealth, an' no chance to work it! Ef we only had the ship by us now, we could put a good thousan' dollars' worth o' thar pelts into it. Jest see how they swarm out yonder! An' tame as pet tabby cats! There's enough of 'em to supply seal-skin jackets fur nigh all the women o' New York!"

No one makes rejoinder to the old sealer's regretful rhapsody. The situation is too grave for them to be thinking of gain by the capture of fur-seals, even though it should prove "a mine of wealth," as Seagriff called it. Of what value is wealth to them while their very lives are in jeopardy? They were rejoiced when they first set foot on land; but time is passing; they have in part

recovered from their fatigue, and the dark, doubtful future is once more uppermost in their minds. They can not stay forever on the isle—indeed, they may not be able to remain many days on it, owing to the exhaustion of their limited stock of provisions, if for no other reason. Even could they subsist on penguin's flesh and tussac-stalks, the young birds, already well feathered, will ere long disappear, while the tender shoots of the grass, growing tougher as it ripens, will in time be uneatable.

No; they can not abide there, and must go elsewhere. But whither? That is the all-absorbing question. Ever since they landed, the sky has been overcast, and the distant main-land is barely visible through a misty vapor spread over the sea between. All the better for that, Seagriff has been thinking hitherto, with the Fuegians in his mind.

"It'll hinder 'em seein' the smoke of our fire," he said; "the which mout draw 'em on us."

But he has now less fear of this, seeing that which tells him that the isle is never visited by the savages.

"They hain't been on it fur years, anyhow," he says, re-assuring the captain, who has again taken him aside to talk over the matter. "I'm sartin they haint."

"What makes you certain?" questions the other.

"Them 'ere—both of 'em," nodding first toward the fur-seals and then toward the penguins. "If the Feweebins dar' fetch thar craft so fur 'out seaward, neither o' them ud be so plentiful nor yit so tame. Both sort o' critters air jest what they sets most store by—yieldin' 'em not only thar vittels, but sech scant kiver as they're 'customed to w'ar. No, Capting—the savagers haint been out hyar, an' aint a-goin' to be. An' I weesh, now," he continues, glancing up to the sky, "I weesh 't wud brighten a bit. Wi' thet fog hidin' the hills over yonder, 't aint possybul to gie a guess az to whar we air. Ef it ud lift, I mout be able to make out some o' the land-marks. Let's hope we may hev a cl'ar sky the morrer, an' a glimp' o' the sun to boot."

"Aye, let us hope that," rejoins the skipper, "and pray for it, as we shall."

The promise is made in all seriousness, Captain Gancy being a religious man. So, on retiring to rest on their shake-down couches of tussac-grass, he summons the little party around him and offers up a prayer for their deliverance from their present danger; no doubt, the first Christian devotion ever heard ascending over that lone desert isle.

* *Otaria Falklandica*. There are several distinct species of "otary," or "fur-seal"; those of the Falkland Islands and Tierra del Fuego being different from the fur-seals of northern latitudes.

(To be continued.)

THERE'S A SONG IN THE AIR.

WORDS BY DR. J. G. HOLLAND.

MUSIC BY HUBERT P. MAIN.

1. There's a song in the
 2. There's a tu - mult of
 3. In the light of that
 4. We re - joice in the

air! There's a star in the sky! There's a moth - er's deep prayer And a
 joy O'er the won - der - ful birth, For the Vir - gin's sweet boy Is the
 star Lie the a - ges im - pearled; And that song from a - far Has swept
 light And we ech - o the song That comes down through the night From the

cres.
 ba - by's low cry! And the star rains its fire while the Beau - ti - ful
 Lord of the earth; Ay! the star rains its fire, and the Beau - ti - ful
 o - ver the world; Ev - ery hearth is a - flame and the Beau - ti - ful
 heav - en - ly thron'g; Ay! we shout to the love - ly e - van - gel they

sing, For the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a King!
 sing, For the man - ger of Beth - le - hem cra - dles a King!
 sing, In the homes of the na - tions that Je - sus is King!
 bring, And we greet in His cra - dle, our Sav - iour and King!

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GOING TO SLEEP.



BABY, her head
on the pillow
turning,

Watches the pretty
night-light burning.

Her little eyes sleepily wink and
blink,

But never a thought does baby
think ;

So over the counterpane one last peep,——



The night-light 's shown her the way to sleep!

Ayuntamiento de Madrid

INTRODUCTION TO "THE ST. NICHOLAS ALMANAC FOR BOYS AND GIRLS."

BY ROYAL AND BARR HILL.

IN each number of ST. NICHOLAS for this year, our young readers will find that portion of an almanac, specially prepared for their use, which belongs to the month for which it is issued. Owing to the very extended circulation of ST. NICHOLAS, it is found impossible to give columns for the time of the rising and setting of the sun and moon, the length of the day, etc., etc. These should be looked for in the local almanacs, which are now calculated for nearly every large city of the United States.

The column after the days of the month and week gives the age of the moon; that is, the number of days since new moon. The next column gives the moon's place in the heavens at the hour of half-past eight every evening, whether it is visible at that hour or not. Almanacs usually refer the moon's place to the sign in which it is said to be; but as it is the object of this almanac to teach the young readers of ST. NICHOLAS something about the principal stars and constellations, advantage is taken of the moon's daily change of place to make use of it as an index, like the hand of a clock, to show what constellation it is situated in as nearly as can be given without explanation; and by watching the motion of the moon throughout the year, and comparing it with this almanac, a very fair idea can be gained of the position of the constellations of the Zodiac. For two days on each side of new moon, the moon's place is not given, as the stars near it are also too near the sun to be seen.

The next column gives the time near 12 o'clock every day, when the shadows of upright objects point exactly north. If any of our readers have a noon-mark, they can regulate their time-pieces very closely, as, at the moment the shadow is on the noon-mark, the hands of a clock or watch should show the time here given.

In the next column are noted such occurrences as are interesting to those who watch the skies, the principal events being the dates when the moon and principal planets pass each other in their wanderings over the sky; for, though the stars are fixed, the planets move among them in a very curious way,—forward, backward, stopping, starting up and down, wandering about, so that the ancients called them *planetes*, or "wanderers."

One of the special features of our almanac will be found under the head of "Evening Skies for Young Astronomers," and we hope many of our young readers will avail themselves of this opportunity to learn the places of, and find for themselves, the principal constellations and brightest stars that adorn the skies.

On account of the motion of the earth around the sun, the heavens never present quite the same appearance at the same hour on two successive evenings. It varies by about four minutes each day, and thus, during the course of the year, the whole circuit of the heavens is presented to our gaze; that part which now is hidden in the glare of the sunlight will be visible in the south at midnight on the first of July, while the sun will then be among the stars which we now see at midnight on the meridian.

In each of the short articles describing the evening skies, the reader is supposed to be out-of-doors, or at some window having a southern view, and to have the exact direction of the south from the chosen position indicated by some conspicuous mark, as a steeple, chimney, cupola or, best of all, a pole set up in the required direction. A lantern placed upon the ground also forms a very good mark. By carefully noticing the direction of the shadows of upright objects, as cast by the sun at the time given in the noon-mark column, the exact direction of the south from the place of observation can be ascertained.

The time for which the descriptions of the evening skies are written is half-past eight on the evening of the 15th of each month. This date has been chosen, because throughout the year the moon will never be above the horizon on the 15th day of the month at that hour of the evening. Many of the most interesting objects in the heavens cannot be observed when the moon is above the horizon, especially if it be near the full. The aspect of the heavens will not vary much for several days before and after the 15th of the month. On the days immediately preceding the 15th, the stars and planets will be a little east of the positions described, and for a few days following the 15th a little west of them.

It is only possible, in the limits of the short space given each month for that purpose, to point out the most conspicuous of the objects in view. The four planets, VENUS, MARS, JUPITER, and SATURN, will always be pointed out when visible; the other planets being too difficult of observation, no mention will be made of them. Twenty-eight of the constellations will be pointed out during the year, nine of which belong to the Zodiac, which is the name given to that path among the stars which is pursued by the sun, moon, and planets in their circuit around the heavens. Among these twenty-eight constellations will be mentioned twenty-four bright stars, besides other stars not so bright, and minor groups of stars, in all about forty conspicuous and interesting objects, the names of which will be given, and their positions pointed out in such a way that they can be easily recognized.

In order that everything in our almanac may be perfectly intelligible to our readers, the marks and signs which are commonly used in all other almanacs are omitted in this one, except that the sign ϵ is used for the moon in the calendar. By a little observation, our young readers may easily learn the names and positions of a number of the most interesting objects in the starry skies, and be prepared to observe the heavens more minutely, if they have a taste in that direction.

It is not very often that any year begins with such a fine exhibition of celestial objects, as, independently of the fine view of the fixed stars which belongs to every month of January, three of the planets are near their brightest phase, and are also situated in the richest part of the sky.

1st
MONTH.

THE ST. NICHOLAS ALMANAC

JANUARY,

BY ROYAL AND BARR HILL.

Through Aquarius
drives the Sun,
and the water
spills,



But the weather
is so cold, into
snow it chills.

Day of Month.	Day of Week.	Moon's Age.	Moon's Place.	Sun on Noon Mark.	Holidays and Incidents.
1	Tues.	3	Aquar.	H. M. 12.4	New Year's day.
2	Wed.	4	"	12.4	General Wolfe born, 1727.
3	Thur.	5	Pisces	12.5	
4	Fri.	6	"	12.5	
5	Sat.	7	"	12.6	
6	S	8	Aries	12.6	Epiphany.
7	Mon.	9	"	12.6	
8	Tues.	10	Taurus	12.7	☾ close to Saturn.
9	Wed.	11	"	12.7	☾ near star Aldebaran.
10	Thur.	12	Orion	12.8	
11	Fri.	13	Gemini	12.8	(12th) ☾ near Jupiter.
12	Sat.	FULL	Cancer	12.8	(13th) ☾ passes over star
13	S	15	"	12.9	1st Sunday after E. { about 7 P.M.
14	Mon.	16	Leo	12.9	☾ near Mars.
15	Tues.	17	"	12.10	☾ near star Regulus.
16	Wed.	18	"	12.10	Gibbon, historian, d. 1794.
17	Thur.	19	Virgo	12.10	Benj. Franklin born, 1706.
18	Fri.	20	"	12.11	Daniel Webster, b. 1782.
19	Sat.	21	"	12.11	☾ near Spica.
20	S	22	Libra	12.11	2d Sunday after E.
21	Mon.	23	"	12.11	
22	Tues.	24	Scorpio	12.12	Francis Bacon born, 1561
23	Wed.	25	Ophiuch	12.12	
24	Thur.	26	Sagitt.	12.12	
25	Fri.	27	"	12.13	Robert Burns born, 1759.
26	Sat.	28	"	12.13	Dr. Jenner died, 1823.
27	S	29	"	12.13	3d Sunday after E.
28	Mon.	NEW	"	12.13	
29	Tues.	1	"	12.14	
30	Wed.	2	"	12.14	☾ near Venus after sunset.
31	Thur.	3	Pisces	12.14	Ben. Jonson born, 1574.

SPORTS FOR THE MONTH.

SNEEZY, breezy, very freezy, in comes January, wheezy. Boys and girls, with flying feet, racing to see which can beat, O'er the ice, which cracks so loud underneath the skating crowd.

EVENING SKIES FOR YOUNG ASTRONOMERS.

JANUARY 15, 8.30 P. M.—The moon does not rise till about this time, and will not interfere with our view of the most beautiful part of the starry heavens that can be seen during the year.*

VENUS is not above the horizon. MARS is in the south-east, about two hours high, and may be recognized by its red color and steady light. JUPITER is higher up, in the south-east, and is by far the most conspicuous and beautiful object in the heavens. SATURN, though not near so bright as JUPITER, shines brightly and steadily exactly in the south. SATURN is situated half way between the Pleiades, or Seven Stars, and the bright, red star, Aldebaran, which are the principal marks in the constellation of *Taurus*, or *The Bull*, one of the constellations of the Zodiac. The two bright stars near JUPITER, but a little higher up, are the twin stars, Castor (the upper one) and Pollux (the lower one); they are the principal stars of the constellation *Gemini*, or *The Twins*, also one of the constellations of the Zodiac. If you imagine a line drawn from SATURN through Aldebaran, it will strike the star Betelgeuse, the brightest star in *Orion*, which is the finest of all the constellations. Another star in *Orion*, nearly as bright, but lower down, is Rigel; and between Betelgeuse and Rigel is a row of three bright stars, called *The Sword Belt* of *Orion*. A line drawn through the *Sword Belt* toward the south-east will strike Sirius, the brightest fixed star in the heavens. It is in the constellation of *Canis Major*, the *Great Dog*. Between JUPITER and Sirius is the fine star Procyon, in the constellation *Canis Minor*, the *Little Dog*. Nearly overhead is the bright star Capella, in the constellation *Auriga*, or the *Charioteer*.

Let us notice the path that the Sun, in his yearly course around the heavens, travels among the stars now in view. On the 24th of May he will almost cover the spot where you now see SATURN, and on the 22d of July he will be exactly in the place where you now see JUPITER.

THE FOX AND THE HEN.

[A Fable with many Morals.]

"How big a brood shall you have this year, madam?" said the Fox to the Hen, one cold winter evening in the barn-yard.

"What's that to you?" said the Hen to the Fox.

"Supper!" replied the Fox, promptly.

"Well, I don't know," said the Hen, in reply; "I may have ten; but I never count *my* chickens before they are hatched."

"Quite right," said the Fox, "neither do I; and, as a hen in the present is worth ten chickens in the future, I will eat you now." So saying, he carried her off.

The next morning the farmer, seeing the tracks of the fox in the snow, took his gun and went out and shot him. "Alas!" said the Fox, "I should have waited for the ten chickens; there is no snow in summer time."

*The names of planets are printed in capitals; those of constellations in Italics.



"WELL!" said January, walking in one bright winter morning, with the snow clinging to his hair and beard, "here I am once more, Mother; how have you got along without me all these eleven months?"

"Oh, very well, indeed," said sweet Mother Nature, cheerily. "I've had plenty of your brothers and sisters; but turn and turn about, it is your turn now, and I am very glad to see you. You know it is my motto to welcome the coming and speed the parting guest; so walk in, walk in, January, and sit right down on that lump of ice. I do hope you will give me plenty of snow. December was very stingy, in spite of all his promises, and my poor roots and plants are freezing down in their earthy bed. Do be good now, January, and spread a good thick coverlid over them."

"All right," said January, "I'll go and blow up some clouds this minute."

THE SNOW-STORM.

The old Earth lying bare and cold,
Beneath the winter sky,
Beheld the storm-king marshal forth
His battle force on high.
"Ah! soon," she said, "beneath the snow
Full warmly I shall lie."

The wind unfurled his banners
And rushed into the fray,
The round moon hid her jolly face
Within a cloud of gray,
And not one single star peeped out,
To drive the gloom away.

The snow, encamped behind a cloud,
Sent flying, here and there,
Its white-winged heralds to proclaim
Its presence in the air;
Until, at last, the fairy host
Burst from its cloudy lair.

The snow-flakes rushing downward,
Each in a whirling dance,
Before the winds are driven
Like armies by the lance;
But still, upon the waiting Earth
The shining hosts advance.

The wild wind, shrieking as he goes,
Flies fiercely to and fro,
And strives, with all his mighty force,
To sweep away the snow;
But bravely still the soft flakes fall
Upon the Earth below.

All white and swift it settles down,
Though Boreas howl and storm,
Till soft as Summer's green the robe
It folds about her form;
No drapery of leaf and flower
Could make the Earth so warm.

It charges with no battle-cry;
But pure, and soft, and still,
It falls upon the waiting Earth,
Its promise to fulfill:
And foils the angry, shrieking wind
By force of gentle will.

The foe has furled his banners,
And hastened from the fray;
The round moon peeps with jolly face
From out the cloud of gray;
And all the stars come twinkling out
To see who gained the day.

There all the earth lay shining,
In garments pure and white;
The snow fulfilled its mission,
And, conquering in the fight,
Had warmed the old Earth to the heart,
Beneath its mantle white.



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

A HAPPY Christmas to you, one and all, dear friends, and a right wholesome New Year! I'd like to give you some good advice on this occasion, but the fact is I already have given you so much—Christmas after Christmas, New Year after New Year—that you surely must be fully supplied by this time.

Let us therefore all join hands,—first calling in as many new friends and followers as possible, so as to make the circle doubly large,—and then resolve to behave ourselves better than usual in future.

We really have not done this up to the present date, my beloved, but it is never too late to try.

Here 's for a fresh start.

COASTING ON BARE GROUND.

SHOULD you like to read this letter just received from a little friend in Kansas?

PARADISE RANCH, 1883.

DEAR JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT: I am a little girl thirteen years old. I live on a sheep ranch in Central Kansas, and when I see the mail carrier, with his funny home-made stage, coming down the road on "ST. NICHOLAS day," as we call it, I know what is just the very best thing he has in that old stage: it's dear old ST. NICK, with his splendid stories, and beautiful pictures that make the stories real.

Our family once lived in Massachusetts, so I know a little about coasting in the New England States; but did any one ever hear of coasting on bare ground?

I used to read in "Mother Goose" about "five children sliding on dry ground," and since I came here, where the ground is bare a good part of the winter, I find that such a thing is possible. We who came from a coasting country take our sleds out to an incline covered with buffalo grass, and by getting a good start we can ride a long way without stopping.

There used to be a great many buffaloes in this place. Papa says that he has heard settlers say that only ten years ago, in 1873, fifteen hundred buffaloes were killed on this range within the short space of two weeks. This prairie is covered with countless old buffalo wallows, which show what vast numbers of buffaloes must once have roved over it. Now we can find nothing but their bleached bones and, once in a great while, a head with the horns complete. But we still have plenty of buffalo grass, and this is what they used to feed on. It is short and curly, and does not have to be cut to dry as other grass does, and it is used here as food for all kinds of stock. After walking a little while upon this grass, your shoes become so slippery that you can hardly stand up when running or walking fast, and this is what makes our slopes so capital for coasting.

We have some very dear pets among the sheep. Once, while the herder was eating his dinner on the range, one, named "Jim Sheep," and a pet, of course, coolly pulled the cork out of the herder's sirup bottle and ate it up—the cork, I mean.

Yours, with love, B. H. S.

A SHELL FOR YOUNG CONCHOLOGISTS TO OPEN.

DEAR JACK: Pray allow me to tell you "chicks" this true story: Certainly not less than twenty years ago, I gathered on the Cohasset beach a quantity of the common little white shells that are abundant, I suppose, on every shore. When I came home, I put them away in an old vase, and finally in an attic closet. There they were forgotten for many years; but last November, having gathered some beautiful mosses and ferns, I arranged a miniature fernery, with a soup-plate for my "wardian case" and a gigantic goblet for a cover. With the help of a warm temperature, and with daily sprinkling, my tiny fernery was soon a "thing of beauty," and a joy to me, at any rate. Then it struck me that a row of those white shells placed round the edge of the plate, outside the glass shade, would be charming; so I hunted up my long-forgotten shells, and when I had arranged them to my mind, I thought my little center-table ornament was about perfect. Well, one day, two or three weeks after, when I was about to sprinkle my mosses, as usual, I saw one of the shells *move*! I rubbed my eyes—it could not be! Yes, it certainly did move, and another and another! Goodness! What did it mean? For a minute or two I was too much frightened to do anything but stare and wonder. Presently, I ventured to look closer, and with a bit of stick to turn two or three of the shells over, when, lo and behold! in every one were three or four moving white bodies with black heads. Then I was thoroughly scared, and what do you think I did? I, who had fancied myself something of a naturalist, and who pride myself on being humane as well as scientific. What did I do but take my pet fernery, with its living occupants, into the "jungle" at the back of our house and slide it off the plate into the leafless bushes. Cruel and stupid, too, was it not? For who knows what wonderful discovery I might have made if I had only watched over and petted these little nondescripts, instead of turning them out on the frozen ground to shift for themselves. So would not Agassiz have done. Now, all I can do, dear Jack, is to ask some of your bright young hearers, who, no doubt, are posted up in conchology, what *were* these tiny creatures that the warm air and the moisture oozing from the fernery brought to life, after twenty years of dry and dark imprisonment,—fishes or insects or what?

INQUIRER.

A VERY WORDY POEM.

HERE is a verse containing some X-Z-dingly queer words. Deacon Green wrote it one day, in the hope of puzzling the dear Little School-ma'am's best scholar. And what do you think that bright little youngster did?

Why, he opened a big volume, which the School-ma'am calls her UNABRIDGED, and in less than five minutes he understood the Deacon's story perfectly. And so may you. It is called

THE ZEALLESS XYLOGRAPHER.

A Xylographer started to cross the sea
By means of a Xanthic Xebec;
But, alas, he sighed for the Zuyder Zee,
And feared he was in for a wreck.
He tried to smile, but 'twas all in vain,
Because of a Zygomatoc pain;
And as for singing, his cheeriest tone
Reminded him of a Xylophone—
Or else when the pain would sharper grow
His notes were as keen as a Zuffolo!
And so, it is likely, he did not find
On board, Xenodochy to his mind.
The fare was poor, and he was sure
Xerophagy he could not endure;
And the end of it was, he never again
In a Xanthic Xebec went sailing the main.

THREE BLACK CROWS.

DEAR JACK: Pray let me tell you and your flock a new Three Black Crows story, which differs from the great original story in *not* being an exaggeration. Indeed, I have been assured on good authority that it is a perfectly true incident.

A dog who was enjoying a large piece of meat was watched by three envious crows, who soon made an effort to snatch it away from him, but in vain. Then they withdrew to a neighboring tree, and apparently holding a hasty consultation, they proceeded to carry their plan of attack into execution. Two of them approached

the dog in the rear and suddenly bit his tail, while at the same instant a third crow drew as close as he dared to the meat. The biting was severe, and of course doggie turned with a yelp. Instantly the crows seized upon the coveted meat and flew with it to the top of a high wall, where they made a hearty meal (for crows) in full sight of their astonished victim.

Your faithful friend,

M. G. L.

THREE CENTS FOR A LIFE.

ALBANY, N. Y., Nov. 10, 1883.

DEAR JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT: It will be just a year ago Christmas since a very queer thing happened at our house. You see my brother Henry had a perfect rage for catching mice, and so had Ella's cat. I forgot to mention that there are three of us,—Ella, Henry, and me. Well, just for fun, Santa Claus put a large mouse-trap among Henry's Christmas presents, and that very night Henry set it in the back kitchen. In the morning, before any one else was up, our cook came softly to our room and whispered for Ella and me to "come and see." Well, we put on our clothes in a hurry and stole softly after her in our stocking-feet, neither of us saying another word, because she held her fingers to her lips. When we reached the back kitchen, what do you think we saw? Why, Henry's trap, with three fine mice in it, safe and sound, but dreadfully frightened, and Ella's puss watching them with glaring eyes. She was too mad to move. You never saw a cat so dumbfounded. Well, Ella and I did n't know what to do. We knew the mice really belonged to Henry—but we knew, too, that the cat would seize them the moment he opened the trap. Boys are so dreadful! Any way, the mice would be killed in some way, and it did seem too bad that they should suffer any more after their double fright. So what did I do

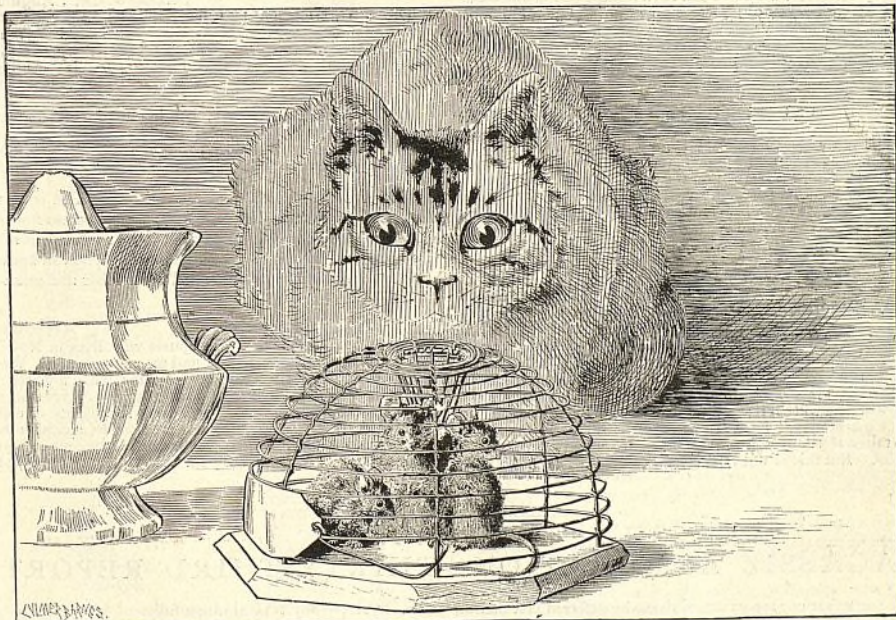
child money with which to buy the material. The queen forgot the circumstance till her birthday came, when she was reminded of it by the arrival of a pair of well-knit stockings and the maker's best wishes. Not to be outdone, Queen Margherita sent a pair to her young friend as a return gift, one stocking being full of silver coin and the other of bonbons. They were accompanied by a little note, "Tell me, my dear, which you liked best?" This reply reached the palace next day: "Dearest Queen: Both the stockings have made me shed many bitter tears. Papa took the one with the money, and my brother took the one with the bonbons."

A ROYAL DETECTIVE.

DEAR JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT: Here is a little story, which I clip, for your young folk, from *Our Venture*, an admirable amateur magazine published in Scotland. Yours faithfully,

SILAS GREEN.

Prince Peter of Oldenburg is chief of the Imperial colleges for girls, and exercises the duties of the office with diligence. Lately he decided to investigate, himself, whether there were any grounds for the numerous complaints which had reached him of the food at the Smolning Convent, where about eight hundred girls are educated. Going to the institute just before the dinner-hour, this chief of the Imperial colleges walked straight to the kitchen. At its door he met two soldiers carrying a huge steaming caldron. "Halt!" he cried out; "put that kettle down." The soldiers



but run up and wake Henry, and ask him what he would take for the first three mice he caught in his trap.

"Three cents apiece," says he, quick as a flash.

"Done!" says I, and off I ran.

Ella and Cook held the cat; I carried the trap all the way to the cellar, where I let the poor little creature out close by a hole in the wall. My, how they scampered! They were out of sight in a twinkling. I was so glad. By that time Henry was up, but he was too late. I handed him his nine cents. You see, three cents a life was cheap, though it was a good deal of money for me. BERTHA G.

A SAD PAIR OF STOCKINGS.

Now, how can a pair of stockings be sad?

The only answer I can give is to tell you this true story that came one breezy day to my pulpit:

Some months ago, Queen Margherita, of Italy, asked a little girl to knit her a pair of silk stockings as a birthday gift, and gave the

obeyed. "Bring me a spoon," added the Prince. The spoon was produced, but one of the soldiers ventured to begin a stammering remonstrance. "Hold your tongue!" cried the Prince; "take off the lid: I insist on tasting it." No further objection was raised, and his Highness took a large spoonful. "You call this soup?" he exclaimed; "why, it is dirty water!" "It is, your Highness," replied the soldier; "we have just been cleaning out the laundry."

THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS CLUB.

THE dear Little School-ma'am requests me to call your special attention to a paper in ST. NICHOLAS for last month, entitled "The Children's Christmas Club." This is a sort of seed-story, I'm told, which, if properly attended to, will bloom and bear fine fruit for the next Christmas holidays—and many a New Year after.

THE LETTER-BOX.

DES MOINES, IOWA.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: The children in our neighborhood had a concert for the benefit of the Cottage Hospital this summer, and the principal piece in it was "The Land of Nod," published in ST. NICHOLAS of 1880. The concert was under the management of Carrie Weaver and myself, two girls of sixteen. We played it at Carrie's home, her father being so kind as to make a stage for us. We made nearly thirty dollars. Every one who heard the play thinks it is lovely. The oldest one in it was thirteen years old; the youngest, four. A little girl played the accompaniments. As we realized so much, I thought you would like to hear of our success.

Your constant reader,

JULIA MORRISON.

The above is only one out of many letters informing us of the successful performance of Mr. Brooks's capital operetta; and we are sure that we shall hear as favorable accounts from the same author's Christmas play, in our last number, entitled, "The Three Sombre Young Gentlemen and the Three Pretty Girls." Mr. Brooks has written a whole series of similar plays, which, under the general title of "Comedies for Children," will appear in future numbers of ST. NICHOLAS.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I think I can tell a funnier tale about birds' nests. Our servant hung out some clothes to air one day, and a little wren began to build a nest in one leg of a pair of trousers.

Your constant reader,

REGINALD.

Locust Grove, Kent Co., Md.

NEW ORLEANS.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Please print this letter for me; I am seven years old, and when my ST. NICHOLAS comes, Mamma reads it to me, and helps me guess the puzzles. We live in the country, but my sister Flora got sick, and Mamma took her here, and took me, too. Flora says I must not write on the other side of this paper, so I won't. In the country I have a sweet little pony named Slipper; I go out riding every evening. Flora says I have written too much, so I'll stop.

Your loving friend,

JENNIE C.

TARRYTOWN, October 31st, 1883.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: In the "Letter-box" I saw that a lady wanted to know how to train her dog. I do not think that there is any particular way to do it. We have a pug, and he knows quite a good many tricks—at least, I think so. He can sit up on his haunches, give his paw, sneeze when he wants you to take a walk, walk on his hind-legs for his dinner, sit up with a cake on his nose till you count five, when he will eat it; and then if you put a cake on the floor and say, "Cost money," he will not touch it till you say, "Paid for." He takes the letters from the postman, and plays hide the handkerchief. But this is not telling how to teach other dogs to do

these things. When I taught him to "cost money," I slapped his head when he went to eat the cake; then he tried to paw it, but I hit his paw, and he was wise enough not to try it again. He taught himself to play hide the handkerchief—that is, when we were playing, as he was running around he found it; he seemed to be pleased, so after that we played with him. This is such a long letter that I am afraid you will not publish it; but I hope you will. I have taken you for a long time.

Your loving friend,

SUSIE E. M.

BOSTON, September 3, 1883.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I saw, in a recent Jack-in-the-Pulpit, an inquiry as to how rubber balls were made hollow. I think they are made in two pieces, which are afterward fitted together. My brother had a rubber ball, and it came apart in two pieces.

I would like to ask you a question, to be answered through the Letter-box. What is the difference between gutta-percha and India-rubber? It is not a conundrum.

I like you very much. I have you from the beginning bound in the covers you have for that purpose. I think "The Tinkham Brothers' Tide-Mill" is very nice indeed. I liked "Phaeton Rogers" very much.

I hope you will print this letter, as it is the first I have written you.

Yours truly,

C. HERBERT SWAN, JR.

OAKLAND, CAL., August 29, 1883.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have taken you for over a year, and love you a great deal. I think the way rubber balls are made is by blowing them the way you do glass things. I can't think of anything else to say, so will bid you good-bye.

Your little friend,

KARL SEVINSON.

My little brother has been hearing of the way in which glass is manufactured and blown, and thought, all of himself, that rubber balls were made in that way, so dictated the above note, thinking that it *might* be the right answer. Yours, ESTHER SEVINSON.

Which of the theories about the rubber ball is correct, young friends? One of the letters, you'll notice, comes from the Atlantic coast and the other from the Pacific—so, rubber balls must be familiar affairs at both ends of the continent.—Who can answer the question as to the difference between India-rubber and gutta-percha?

OTTUMWA, IOWA.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: My cousin who lives in New York sends the ST. NICHOLAS to my sister and me every month. We enjoy reading it ever so much. A friend of mine made a match house from the description given in ST. NICHOLAS for November, 1881, and it was a perfect success. We have a sewing society of eighteen girls, and when we sold the things we had made, among others we sold the match house, for which we received forty cents. I will be fifteen very soon.

Ever your friend,

NELLIE H. P.

AGASSIZ ASSOCIATION—THIRTY-THIRD REPORT.

We were sorry that our report was necessarily deferred last month, but we are partially consoled by the very large number of bright and encouraging letters which have reached us during the past four weeks. The most satisfactory evidence of the real vigor of the A. A. is the fresh zeal with which our Chapters return to their work after the long summer vacation.

Their unanimous voice is, "We are more interested than ever." "We have returned to our work with renewed enthusiasm." "We have not forgotten the A. A. during our vacation journeyings, but have brought back from sea-side or mountain-top many beautiful specimens for our cabinet, which shall serve also as pleasant reminders of the happy hours spent in searching for them."

Such expressions prove that our interest in Nature is not a passing fancy, but a permanent attachment; the reason being that the field for our observation is without limit, and the more we learn, the more we see, beyond, that we wish to know.

The subject for the entomological essays this month is INSECTS IN GENERAL. The papers should be planned somewhat as follows:—

1. Define insects, as a class, as fully and accurately as possible.

2. Describe any typical insect fully.
3. Give the sub-divisions of the class Insecta, with a definition and example of each.

4. Uses of insects: { a. Scavengers.
b. Food-producers.
c. Spinners.
Etc., etc.

5. Insects as emblems or types.

Of course, it is not necessary that this scheme be rigidly followed, or even adopted at all. But it may prove useful in showing how to go to work to outline a paper that shall have some logical connection of thought.

This is the last exercise of the course; and as soon as possible after the papers have been sent to Prof. G. Howard Parker (as explained in July ST. NICHOLAS), the diplomas will be awarded, and the successful students named here.

The following scheme closes our course in botanical observation. It might be continued through *Trichomes*, or the minute hairs that beset plants; but perhaps that would be too difficult at present. For full explanation of the work to be done this month, we refer

again to ST. NICHOLAS for July, where Prof. Jones's plan is fully set forth.

Even those who have not followed this course during the past six months, will find Prof. Jones's schedules of great value as a guide to private botanical study next summer.

d. *Pistils*.
Number,
Shapes (see leaves, etc.),
Open (pines, etc.),
Closed,
Simple,
Compound,
Parts,
stigmas,
shapes (see leaves and stems),
lobes,
number,
number,
appendages,
brushes (compositæ, etc.),
etc.,
structure,
styles,
lengths,
shapes (see leaves and stems),
appendages,
etc.,
structure,
ovary (see fruit also),
one-celled,
parietal,
placental,
number,
central placental,
two or more celled,
ovules (see seeds also),
position in pod,
erect,
ascending,
horizontal,
pendulous,
suspended,
position on stalk,
straight,
curved,
half-inverted,
inverted,
stalked,
sessile,
parts,
orifice,
hilum,
chalaza,
coats,
outer,
wings,
coma,
aril,
etc.,
inner,
kernel,
albumen,
embryo,

straight,
curved,
accumbent,
incumbent,
conduplicate,
circinate,
etc.,
parts,
radicle,
cotyledons,
number,
shapes,
plumule,
seeds (mature ovules),
shapes,
appendages (see pollen),
uses,
fruits (mature pistils),
dry fruits,
indehiscent (never opening),
akenes,
utricles,
pyxis,
grains,
nuts,
samaras,
dehiscent (opening to release the seeds),
follicles,
legumes,
lomentes,
true capsules,
loculicidal,
septicidal,
septifragal,
stone fruits,
shapes,
parts,
outer coat (dry or fleshy),
inner coat,
kernel,
fleshy fruits,
berry,
gourd,
apple,
multiple,
shapes,
strobiles (cones),
uses.

e. *Receptacle*.
Shapes,
conical (compositæ, etc.),
urn-shaped (roses, etc.),
etc. (see leaves),
disk-like,
dry,
fleshy.

It is proper to note in passing that, by an error, Prof. Jones's name was given incorrectly in a recent report. His address is—
Marcus E. Jones, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Our thanks are due to the gentlemen whose kind offers of assistance follow.

It will give me much pleasure to assist your A. A. Society, so far as I am able, in matters pertaining to American *coleoptera*.

Very truly yours,

FRED. C. BOWDITCH, Tappa st., Brookline, Mass.

51 DOUGLASS STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

I shall be glad to assist your A. A. with the *macro-lepidoptera*. I hope that the members will freely tax my knowledge of this branch of entomology with questions and determinations.

Sincerely yours, A. W. PUTMAN-CRAMER.

Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia,

S. W. Cor. of Nineteenth and Race streets,

PHILADELPHIA, August 14, 1883.

To HARLAN H. BALLARD, Esq., Agassiz Association, Lenox, Mass.

Dear Sir: I beg leave to state that, if agreeable to you, I would be most happy to aid in answering any questions, that can

be answered, upon ethnology. Communications addressed to me, care of Ethnological Department, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia will receive prompt attention.

Yours truly,

H. T. CRESSON.

The new chapters, formed since our latest report, follow:

NEW CHAPTERS.

No.	Name.	No. of Members.	Address.
522	Sharon, Conn., (A).....	16..	Miss Caroline S. Roberts.
523	Chicago, Ill., (O).....	4..	A. L. Baxter, 334 Monroe st.
524	Milwaukee, Wis., (A)....	6..	A. S. Taylor, 135 Martin st.
525	Monmouth, Ill., (A).....	4..	D. E. Waid.
526	Leavenworth, Kas., (B)..	5..	Harry Johnson.
527	San Francisco, Cal., (G)..	6..	Norman Sinclair, 1633 Tyler st.
528	Huntingburg, Ind., (A)..	4..	H. C. Rother.
529	Buffalo, N. Y., (H).....	7..	Miss Margaret Evans, 44 No. Pearl.
530	St. Johnland, N. Y., (A)..	7..	Wm. H. White.
531	Chicago, Ill., (P).....	6..	Harry Hirsch, 3011 Mich ave.
532	Sewickley, Pa., (A).....	7..	M. A. Christy.
533	Troy, N. Y., (A).....	7..	Robert M. Cluett, Jr., 52 4th.
534	London, Eng., (C).....	5..	Montague Gunning, 52 Tavistock square.
535	Chapel Hill, N. C., (A)..	5..	Miss Clara J. Martin.
536	St. Johnsbury, Vt., (A) ..	5..	I. J. Romer, box 821.
537	Mansfield, O., (A).....	11..	E. Wilkinson, Jr.
538	Evanston, Ill., (A).....	4..	Mrs. Morton Hull.
539	W. Phila., Pa., (P).....	10..	C. M. List, 3406 Hamilton.
540	Oskaloosa, Iowa, (B)....	18..	O. D. McMains, box 682.
541	Chicago, Ill., (Q).....	4..	Oren E. Taft, 3014 Mich ave.
542	Faribault, Minn., (A)....	10..	St. Mary's Hall.
543	Washington, N. J., (A)..	5..	Dr. W. M. Bairdlock, box 6.
544	Oxford, Miss., (A).....	6..	Ch. Woodward Hutson, University of Miss.
545	Fall River, Mass., (A)...	8..	O. K. Hawes.
546	Palo, Iowa, (A).....	10..	Miss Mella Barnhill.
547	Shellsburg, Iowa, (A)....	25..	Ollie M. Thompson.

EXCHANGES.

Minerals for Indian relics. Write first.—W. G. Merritt, Battle Creek, Mich.

Maple and other leaves, pressed and oiled leaves.—L. A. Nicholson, Vancouver, W. T.

Silkworm cocoons (*Samia cynthia*), for pressed plants.—J. McLeod, 247 W. 23d st., New York, N. Y.

Fine minerals.—E. Y. Gibson, 123 W. Washington ave., Jackson, Mich.

Attacus cecropia, for other moths, or butterflies.—Miss McFarland, 1727 F. st. Washington, D. C.

Michigan copper ore, for nearly pure mica.—E. R. Heitsch, Lancaster, Pa.

Cotton balls and leaves. Write first.—Ennie Stone, Columbia, S. C.

Eggs, blown through one hole, and bird skins.—Grafton Parker, 2238 Michigan ave., Chicago, Ill.

Perfect pentremites, for 4-oz. specimens of stilbite, wavellite, lepidolite, or ores of zinc, tin, or mercury.—F. W. Wentworth, 153 25th st., Chicago, Ill.

A collection of twelve different kinds of eggs, a sand-dollar, sea-urchin, and star-fish, for a perfect trilobite, not less than three inches long. Also, petrified shark's teeth. Write first.—R. W. Wood, Jr., Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Correspondence with a view to exchange.—A. S. Taylor, 153 Martin st., Milwaukee, Wis.

Skins of black-capped titmice and other birds, for insects. Insects in papers preferred.—W. B. Olney, East Providence, R. I.

Pampas grass plumes and sea mosses for minerals and shells. Write first.—Edith Drennan, Santa Cruz, Cal.

Book on insects and cocoons of Illinois. Write first.—Ch. B. Cox, box 78, Rogers Park, Ill.

Four-leaved clovers.—L. L. Lewis, box 174, Copenhagen, N. Y.

Gold and silver ore, etc., for insects.—Frank Burrill, Lisbon, Maine.

Sand-dollars, sea-urchins, and star-fish, for rare moths or beetles. —Belle Walker, 81 School st., Concord, N. H.

Minerals and eggs.—W. K. Trimble, Princeton, Ill.

Star-fish and crystals. Write first.—Ch. Ennis, Lyons, N. Y.

Petrified palm-wood, for eggs or insects.—W. D. Burnham, 697 Curtis st., Denver, Col.

N. B.—What can we feed silkworms on? There are no mulberry leaves here. [*Some one please tell us all.*]

General exchanges.—Kitty C. Roberts, sec., Blackwater, Florida.

I will send good specimens of concretions of pyrites in argillite to any Chapter sending ten cents to pay postage. I will send my exchange list of invertebrate fossils to any one who will send me his.—W. R. Lighton, sec. Chapter 15.

Minerals and flowers.—Annie Darling, 47 Concord sq., Boston, Mass.

Eggs, moths, and butterflies.—Warren Adams, 307 N. 3d st., Camden, N. J.

Horned nuts from China, for a "sea-horse."—A. Lawson Baxter, sec. 523, 334 W. Monroe st., Chicago, Ill.

Canal coal, iron ore, and canary eggs, for eggs.—John C. Clapp, Jr., 729 E. 4th, So. Boston, Mass.

Labeled minerals, for labeled fossils; crinoids, for zinc, tin, and iron ore.—E. P. Boynton, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Rare lepidoptera, for Luna and 10 cocoons, H. Eurytris, Lycæna Epinanthæ, P. Ajax, Cynthia Lavinia, etc. Send for list of duplicates. Folded specimens preferred.—Edwin H. Pierce, 16 Seminary st., Auburn, N. Y.

REPORTS FROM CHAPTERS.

15. *Ottumwa, Iowa*.—We have been very busy since my last report. By an entertainment which we gave, we cleared \$32.05, and we are going to get a room at once. Most of the furnishings have been promised to us already. Dr. C. N. Ball, Eldon, Iowa, offers his services to the A. A. as an expert mineralogist and chemist.—Will R. Lighton.

441. *Valparaiso, Chili*.—You asked me to give you some account of South American life. The Chilenos carry their milk about in tins on horses. They carry their potatoes and other vegetables in skins tied on horses, and in selling them, they measure by deka litres. They sell grapes by the bunch, and peaches, apples, etc., by the dozen. The common people wear a large shawl, called a "manto," instead of a hat. On feast days, they dance several fancy dances. The *huasas*, or country men, go about on horseback. Their saddles are made of sheep-skins; and if overtaken by night, they unstrap them, and make themselves comfortable beds. Here in Valparaiso are seven English schools and some lyceums. We have a cabinet. A gentleman very generously gave us \$10. A microscope has been ordered. Hoping the A. A. will prosper.—W. Sabina, Sec.

109. *Washington, D. C.*—We have had several field meetings. One at Mt. Vernon, where we found Indian strawberry (*Fragaria Vesca*), which is rare here.—Robert P. Bigelow, 1501 18th, N.W.

499. *Princeton, Ill.*, Oct. 15, 1883.—Our Chapter, which numbered six in July, has now fifteen members. We hold meetings every week. The attendance is always good, and the reports full of interest. I wish the A. A. reports were longer.—Harry Bailey.

[They are?]

257. *Plantville, Conn.*, B., Oct. 15, 1883.—During the summer quite a number of coleoptera have been collected—some quite rare. Last summer we collected many cocoons, and kept them carefully through the winter. This summer several fine moths hatched from them. One of our members has brought from Switzerland a very pretty collection of Alpine flowers. The latest meetings promise well for the work during the fall and winter.—L. J. Smith.

87. *N. Y., B.*—The fall has brought new enthusiasm to us. More interest is now felt than ever. One of our members has just returned from a tour in Europe. We are attempting to combine the Chapters of this city on the same plan as the Buffalo Chapters.—Geo. Aery, Jr., 257 Madison Ave.

[The plan is excellent, and ought to succeed.]

339. *Salt Lake, A.*—Two new members. The interest in our meetings is steadily growing. We have notes on subjects relating to Natural Science, and learn a great deal in studying for them. Then, we have started something in the way of original investigation. Each selects one object, and examines it carefully, finds out all he can about it, and then tells us what he has discovered. We are now preparing microscopic slides of all things of interest which we have. For instance, of the pubescence of plants, the hairs of quadrupeds, the feathers of birds, and the different parts of the bodies of insects. Our zoologist has a stuffed specimen of the yellow-bellied marmot, which he killed at the height of about 10,000 feet near Alta. Our ornithologist had an owl in confinement for some time, studying its habits. Please ask the other Chapters whether an owl has the power of moving its eyes in their sockets or not.

[We will, with pleasure. Has an owl the power of moving its eyes in their sockets?]

We are going to spend next summer in taking mountain trips and collecting specimens.—Fred E. Leonard.

353. *Phila., Pa., K.*—Our Chapter is still progressing. Two new members. We have put up some shelves in our room, and have some minerals and birds' eggs. We have added several new books to our library, and have a scrap-book nearly full of newspaper clippings. We have visited the Academy of Sciences.—W. M. Yeomans, 1959 N. 13th.

448. *Washington, D. C., G.*—We have lately been busy with the back numbers of ST. NICHOLAS, and are now quite familiar with the history of a very "happy thought." Chapter 448 is disposed to be enthusiastic. Its members have, with one exception, all been present at every meeting. The absentee was on a trip to California. We have a cabinet, an herbarium, and many miscellaneous specimens. Our members are about twelve years old, on an average. We have two new members. Over our cabinet hangs a stalk of shepherd's crook grass (?) from Kansas, eight feet in length.—Isabelle F. MacFarland.

[Will some one tell us more about this shepherd's crook grass?]

509. *Macomb, Ill., A.*—Progressing nicely. We meet at each other's houses every Friday afternoon after school. Almost all of us have been collecting insects during the summer. We have a paper read every two weeks, to which we contribute original articles on anything pertaining to Natural History. The Chapter is divided into two parts, and each part edits the paper alternately. We cannot understand how other Chapters have nice club-rooms and cabinets and microscopes, etc. Where do they get their money? We like the A. A. very much.—Nellie H. Tunnichiff.

[The next letter may show where the money comes from.]

395. *Montreal, Canada, A.*—H. H. BALLARD, Lenox, Mass., U. S.—Dear Sir: I intended to write you before this; but as the press of business has been so great, I could not get time. Since writing you last, seven very pleasant meetings have been held, at which sixteen new members joined, making a total of twenty-eight regular members. We also elected seven honorary members, including Messrs. F. B. Caulfield, taxidermist; J. M. M. Duff; Wm. Couper, editor *Canadian Sportsman* and *Naturalist*; Rev. Canon Norman, M. A., D. C. L.; Rev. Canon Ellegood, M. A.; Rev. Jas. McCaul, and Dr. Dawson, LL. D., F. R. S., F. G. S., C. M. G., Principal McGill University. We have purchased a cabinet, and have already filled it so full that we had to order another one about twice as large. You can imagine the size of the collection we have, when I tell you the cabinet we have now is six feet high and three feet wide, and then it does not hold half the collection. We held a lecture a few weeks ago in aid of the society. It was a grand success, as we paid for the cabinet, purchased a number of valuable specimens for the museum, and had \$7 as a balance on hand. We are going to open a room for the society about the 1st of May, which will be used as a museum and reading-room.—W. D. Shaw. Address: 34 St. Peter st., Montreal, Can.

313. *Chicago, H.*—We have been going on over a year; and although our numbers are small, we take quite an interest in our work. We hope to have a nice cabinet in a short time. We gave an entertainment, and it could not have gone off better. Each member had his piece perfectly. Here is the programme: 1. Piano solo. 2. Opening address. 3. Essay—Life of Agassiz. 4. Debate—Resolved, That the study of minerals is more useful than the study of plants. 5. Recitation. 6. Essay—Wood and its uses. 7. Speech. Part 2.—1. Music. 2. Song. 3. Debate—Resolved, That generalists accomplish more than specialists in the study of Nature. 4. Poem, by Longfellow, on Agassiz's birthday. 5. Essay—Benefits derived from the study of Nature. 6. Recitation. 7. Recitation. 8. Humorous reading. 9. Music. 10. Refreshments—Ice cream (animal and vegetable and mineral). Cake (vegetable and animal). Strawberries (vegetable). Lemonade (mineral and vegetable).—O. J. Stein.

2214. Corresponding member.—My interest in the A. A. has never flagged. My older sister and one younger are alike interested in every branch. Our specialty is insects. We have many from foreign countries, and all found in this vicinity. We have over three hundred cocoons and chrysalids now, that will come out during the next six months. We have five hundred sea-shells, two hundred minerals, one hundred and ten kinds of woods, sea-mosses, lichens, pressed flowers and ferns, and about seventy-five birds' eggs. We try to learn about insects first, but learn what we can, from time to time, of the other things. We have Harris, all of Dr. Packard's books, "Insect Lives," and "English Butterflies"; and we take the *Papilio*, by Edwards. My sister often writes to him for information when we cannot find a name; also to Professor Riley, of Washington, D. C., and to Dr. Scudder of Cambridge. We have Grot's Check List and one of the Lepidoptera of U. A.—Will C. Phillips, New Bedford, Mass., box 3.

157. *Detroit, Mich., C.*—One new member. We are planning a large cabinet for our united collections.—A. T. Worthington.

352. *Anherst, Mass.*—With the exception of two, who have left town, our working members remain with us. We have many plants to exchange. Our boys find nothing so interesting as entomology. We had one place for meeting last year, but now go about to the homes of the members, and find that what was begun as a necessity proves pleasanter than the old way.—Edith M. Field.

391. *Meredith, N. H.*—Our Chapter has been doing finely all summer. Our labor has been confined chiefly to the collection of plants, of which we have about one hundred and fifty. We are all farmers' children, some of us at school, some teaching, or working at trades, so we do not have so much time as we wish, but we shall do our best.—C. F. Robinson.

258. *Reading, Pa., A.*—We have a total of twenty-four active and interested members. All of us have the silver engraved badges, and are quite proud of them. We have studied coral, lichens, pond-lilies, moss, diamonds, cotton, flax, spiders, and birds. Our routine was on one occasion varied by a general discussion on the sparrow question. We have had some correspondence with 133, and earnestly desire to communicate with other Chapters.—Miss Helen B. Baer, and G. F. Baer, Esq., Sec.

409. *Sag Harbor, N. Y.*—Our Chapter is getting on very well, and now numbers twenty-seven regular and seven honorary members. Our collection of specimens has increased largely. At our weekly meetings, the president gives out two questions to each member, to be answered at next meeting.—Cornelius R. Sleight.

374. *Brooklyn, E.*—We have given a parlor concert. C. K. Lin-

son gave us a "chalk talk." At one side of the parlor we had a table with some specimens on it; and after the entertainment we invited our friends to inspect them. We have now money enough to get a cabinet. We have decided to have a course of lectures—one delivered by each member on his chosen branch.—A. D. Phillips. [This "course of lectures" is one of the brightest plans yet proposed.]

350. *Neillsville, Wis., A.*—My report is late, but not for lack of interest. Though busy people, we find time to pursue our study outdoors. Sometimes, instead of our regular evening meeting, we take the afternoon, or all day, and go off for a regular tramp to the woods, the fields, or the river.—Mrs. M. F. Bradshaw.

472. *Hazleton, Pa., A.*—We are making individual collections. We spend most of our time in studying the formation of the rock and coal found here.—Anne A. McNair.

189. *Milford, Conn., A.*—The secretary's address is changed to W. A. Buckingham, box 422.

NOTES.

57. *Icebergs.*—Icebergs are formed from glaciers. These often extend from the sea for miles into the interior, and have an exceed-

ingly slow motion down into the water. When the end of the glacier has been forced so far into the sea that the strain caused by the upward pressure of the water is stronger than the cohesive force of the ice, vast portions break off from the glacier, and rising through the water, float off as icebergs. [See Question 7, in Report 23.]—E. B. Stockton.

58. *Star-fish.*—I have seen a six-rayed star-fish—in other respects exactly like the ordinary five-rayed ones.—A.

59. *Bluets.*—I have found bluets (*Houstonia Cerulea*) with three, four, five, and six petals.—H.

Other interesting notes must go over until February, and we close this report by wishing all the members and friends of the Agassiz Association a very Happy New Year.

Address all communications to the President,

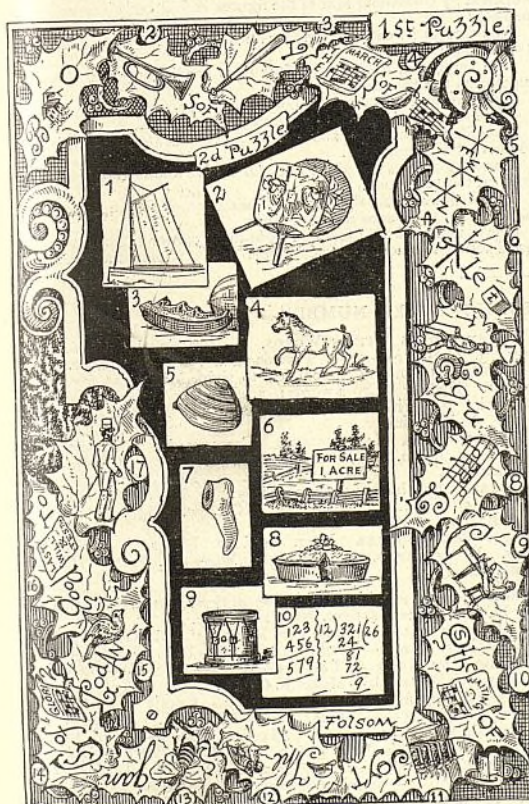
HARLAN H. BALLARD,

PRINCIPAL OF LENOX ACADEMY,

LENOX, BERKSHIRE CO., MASS.

THE RIDDLE-BOX.

TWO HOLIDAY PUZZLES.



FIRST PUZZLE. Rebus. Read, as a rebus, the pictures on the holly-leaves, beginning with the one in the upper left-hand corner. The result will be a verse from one of J. G. Whittier's poems.

SECOND PUZZLE. Illustrated Zigzag. Each of the ten small illustrations may be described by a word of four letters. When these

have been rightly guessed, and placed one below another in the order here given, the zigzag, beginning at the upper left-hand corner, will spell a name familiar at this season. G. S.

PI.

LICHL rais dan nirtwy sniwd! Ym rea
Sha wrong arimlafi twih royu noge;
I erha ti ni cht nigenop arey,
I selnit, dan ti sherce em goln.

NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

I AM composed of seventy-eight letters, and am part of a poem by John Ruskin.

My 35-51-21-10-24 is to observe attentively. My 54-22-47-14-5 is dexterous. My 33-75-49-15-62-23 is a small cable. My 26 is one hundred. My 69-45-17-27-64-9-50-25-78 is to institute. My 52-36-4-70 is a dish that has been cooked by boiling slowly. My 52-30-71 is an adjective often used in connection with the foregoing dish. My 19-68-6-39-16 is a place of public contest. My 66-11-55-20-40 is to move to and fro. My 18-60-13-57 is a girl's name. My 32-12-44 is a covering for the head. My 48-74-3-8-31 is a fiend. My 67-53-42-59-37 is to weave so as to produce the appearance of diagonal lines. My 58-46-1-73 is external aspect. My 41-76-34-77-56-65-43 is inscribed. My 72-38-29-28-2-7-61 is a small elevation of land. "PARTHENIA."

RIMLESS WHEEL.

8 1 2

7 9 3

6 5 4

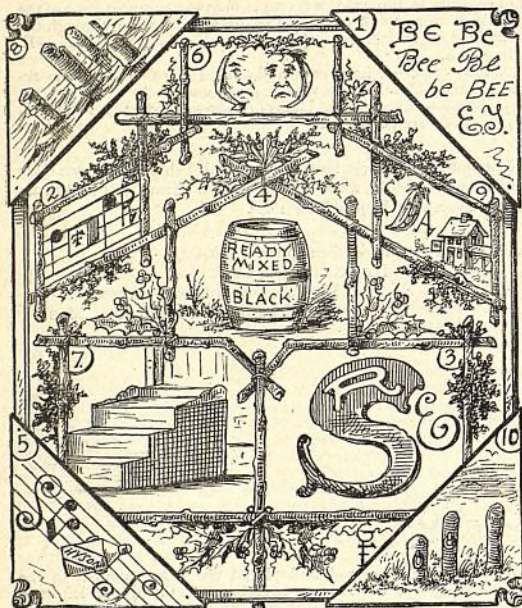
From 1 to 9, to oscitate; from 2 to 9, a preposition; from 3 to 9, a sort of fine linen; from 4 to 9, black; from 5 to 9, an aquatic fowl; from 6 to 9, a metal; from 7 to 9, an ecclesiastical dignitary; from 8 to 9, level.

The letters represented by the figures from 1 to 8 spell the old name for a time of merry-making. DVCIE.

GEOGRAPHICAL HOUR-GLASS.

THE centrals, reading downward, name an inland country of Asia. CROSS-WORDS: 1. A seaport town of England. 2. The most south-western county of Connecticut. 3. A name by which a city of Belgium, capital of the province of West Flanders, is sometimes called. 4. A seaport city of Brazil. 5. The city of France in which Henry IV. was born. 6. In Atlantic. 7. The abbreviation of one of the United States. 8. A city of Hungary located on the Danube. 9. The capital of New Mexico. 10. An island in the Atlantic Ocean belonging to Great Britain. 11. A small town in Bradford County, Pennsylvania. A. TASSIN.

CENTRAL SYNCOPATIONS.



EACH of the ten pictures may be described by a word of five letters, or else is a five-letter word made into a rebus. When these ten words have been rightly guessed, syncopate the central letter of the first word, and it will leave a garden vegetable; the second, a fleet animal; the third, an ascent; the fourth, to gasp; the fifth, places; the sixth, units; the seventh, a pause; the eighth, pastry; the ninth, to revolve; the tenth, kitchen utensils. The syncopated letters will spell a well-known name.

A. G.

EASY BEHEADINGS.

THE first letters of the beheaded words, read in the order here given, will spell the name of an American poet.

Cross-words: 1. Behead sluggish, and leave depressed. 2. Be-

head a small opening, and leave unrefined metal. 3. Behead to oscillate, and leave a side-building. 4. Behead a kind of turf, and leave to consume. 5. Behead round, and leave a small mass of no definite shape. 6. Behead a very hard mineral, and leave raveled linen.

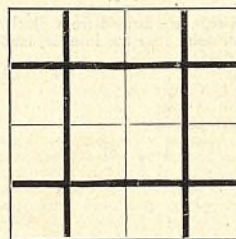
H. POWELL.

CHARADE.

How short my *first*, when pleasure has full sway;
How long, when pain and sickness fill the day.
How oft my *second* fills my *first* with glee,
Though on the morrow sad the reckoning be.
My *whole* will tell you when my *first* is past,
Useful no more till you reverse my *last*.

R. H. W.

MAGIC SQUARE.



9-8-5-4-3-6-4-7-4-4-9-8-6-2-4-1.

PLACE these sixteen figures in the sixteen vacant squares of the diagram in such a manner that the sum of twenty-one may be obtained by combining four of the figures in fourteen different ways, namely:

The figures in each of the four lines reading across to amount to twenty-one:

The figures in each of the four lines reading up and down to amount to twenty-one.

The four corner figures to amount to twenty-one.

The four central figures to amount to twenty-one.

The four figures (2) above and (2) below the central figures to amount to twenty-one.

The four figures (2) right and (2) left of the central figures to amount to twenty-one.

The diagonals from the upper left-hand corner to the lower right-hand corner to amount to twenty-one.

The diagonals from the upper right-hand corner to the lower left-hand corner to amount to twenty-one.

WILLIAM ROBERT H.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE NOVEMBER NUMBER.

PROVERB REBUS. Fools make feasts and wise men eat them.

TWO PUZZLES FOR THANKSGIVING. I. "Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast,"—Comedy of Errors, Act iii., Sc. i. II. Primals, Suez; finals, Erie. Cross-words: 1. Scribble. 2. Ulterior. 3. Ennui. 4. Zouave. Rebus: The Suez Canal opened November seventeenth, 1868. Erie Canal finished November second, 1825.

INCOMPLETE RHOMBOID. Across: 1. Hoop. 2. Wood. 3. Fool. 4. Loot. 5. Room. 6. Poor. 7. Tool. 8. Doom. 9. Foot. 10. Noon. 11. Rook.

DIAMOND. 1. P. 2. For. 3. Corea. 4. Forceps. 5. Porcelain. 6. Reelect. 7. Apace. 8. Sit. 9. N.

ANAGRAMMATICAL SPELLING-LESSON. 1. Liliputian. 2. Omnipotent. 3. Promiscuous. 4. Tempestuous. 5. Lexicographer. 6. Constellation.

THE NAMES of those who send solutions are printed in the second number after that in which the puzzles appear. Answers should be addressed to St. Nicholas "Riddle-box," care of THE CENTURY CO., 33 East Seventeenth street, New York City.

ANSWERS TO ALL THE PUZZLES IN THE OCTOBER NUMBER were received, before October 20, from Paul Reese—"A. P. Owdar, Jr."—"Professor and Co."—S. R. T.—Philip Embury, Jr.—Alex. Laidlaw—Maggie T. Turrill—Heath Sutherland—P. S. Clarkson—Willard Little—Bessie C. Rogers—"2045" lamb—"San Anselmo Valley"—The Two Annies—Two Subscribers—C. S. C.—Madeleine Vultee—George William Sumner—Hugh and Cis—Francis W. Islip—Harry M. Wheelock—Mabel B. Canon.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE OCTOBER NUMBER were received, before October 20, from Samuel Holzman, 4—Fannie S., 1—George Denton, 1—Susie Sadtler and Lillie Van Meter, 5—Howard Rondthaler, 1—Tille, 5—G. M. R. T., 5—Edward J. V. Shipsey, 8—Guy Van Arminge, 1—Weston Stickney, 4—Albert Stickney, Jr., 1—Wm. B. Morningstern, 11—C. Louise Weir, 3—M. T. Pierce, 12—M. B. Clarke, 5—C. Howard Williams, 2—"Patience," 8—E. T. S., 1—"Buckingham Lodge," 8—Marie Pitts, 8—Ed and Louis, 4—Henry Amsden, 2—Ernestine Wyer, Arthur G. Farwell, and Sidney E. Farwell, 5—"Gen'l Warren," 7—Allan Lindsley, 1—"The Stewart Browns," 12—Minnie B. Murray, 7—W. H. W., 4—Arian Arnold, 10—Jennie and Birdie, 10—Effe K. Talboys, 9—Ethel M. Eager, 9—"Kansas Boy," 3—"Hoffman H.," 5—"Fin. I. S.," 12—Louisa H., 6—Pansy and Elsie, 4—F. Sternberg, 12—"Boston," 4—Dvcie, 10—Willie Trapier, 1—Emma Trapier, 2—Samuel Branson, 7—E. M., Jr., 2—Florence Galbraith Lane, 9—Emmit and Frankie Nicoli, 1—D. B. Shumway, 12—"Kingfishers," 4—Beth Lovitt, 8—No Name, Philadelphia, 12—Millie White, 7—Fred Thwaites, 12—Jessie A. Platt, 12—Charles H. Kyte, 10—Marguerite Kyte, 1—Eliza Westervelt, 4—Florence Savoye, 6—Essie Jackson, 10—Florence E. Provost, 9—Vessie Westover, 7—L. I., 10—Theo. B. Appel, 10—Annie Custer, 12—Margaret S. Bush, 6—Clara J. Child, 12—Paul England, 3—Jeanne Bull, 2—The Tame Irishman, 8—Katie L. Robertson, 6—Mother, Bertha, and Reby, 3—G. Lansing, 11—Nella, Maude, and Tat, 11—Lily and Agnes Warburg, 12—Hester Powell, 5—Marion Kent, 7.

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