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POEMS AND CAROLS OF WINTER.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

"It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born Child,
All meanly wrapped, in the rude manger lies."

SWEETER carols than bird ever sang usher in the wintry weather. The poem of childhood was chanted by angels on the hills of Palestine eighteen hundred years ago, and its meaning has been deepening in the hearts of Christian men and women ever since.

Dear children, the secret of true poetry, as well as of all other true things, lies hidden in the heart of the Babe of Bethlehem—the secret of heavenly love, without which there is no beauty in the works or words of men. "Peace on earth, good-will to man!" is the hymn which must be sung in the heart before any poem worth keeping can be written.

Is it not beautiful that when the flowers of the wood and field have done blossoming, when the trees are leafless, and no birds make melody among the barren boughs, the whole world breaks out into singing over the cradle of its dearest Child?

Some of the Christmas carols are as simple as nursery-songs, and rude as the ages in which they began to be sung, when Christianity itself was in its childhood. The wassail-cups and yule-fires of the old Saxons were often strangely mixed up with the tender and sacred birthday-story of the New Testament. Sometimes these carols were sung by children at the mansion window or door:

"Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green;
Here we come a-wandering,
So fair to be seen.

Love and joy come to you,
And to your wassail too,
And God bless you, and send you
A Happy New Year!

"We are not daily beggars,
That beg from door to door;
But we are neighbors' children,
Whom you have seen before.
God bless the master of this house,
God bless the mistress too,
And all the little children
That round the table go."

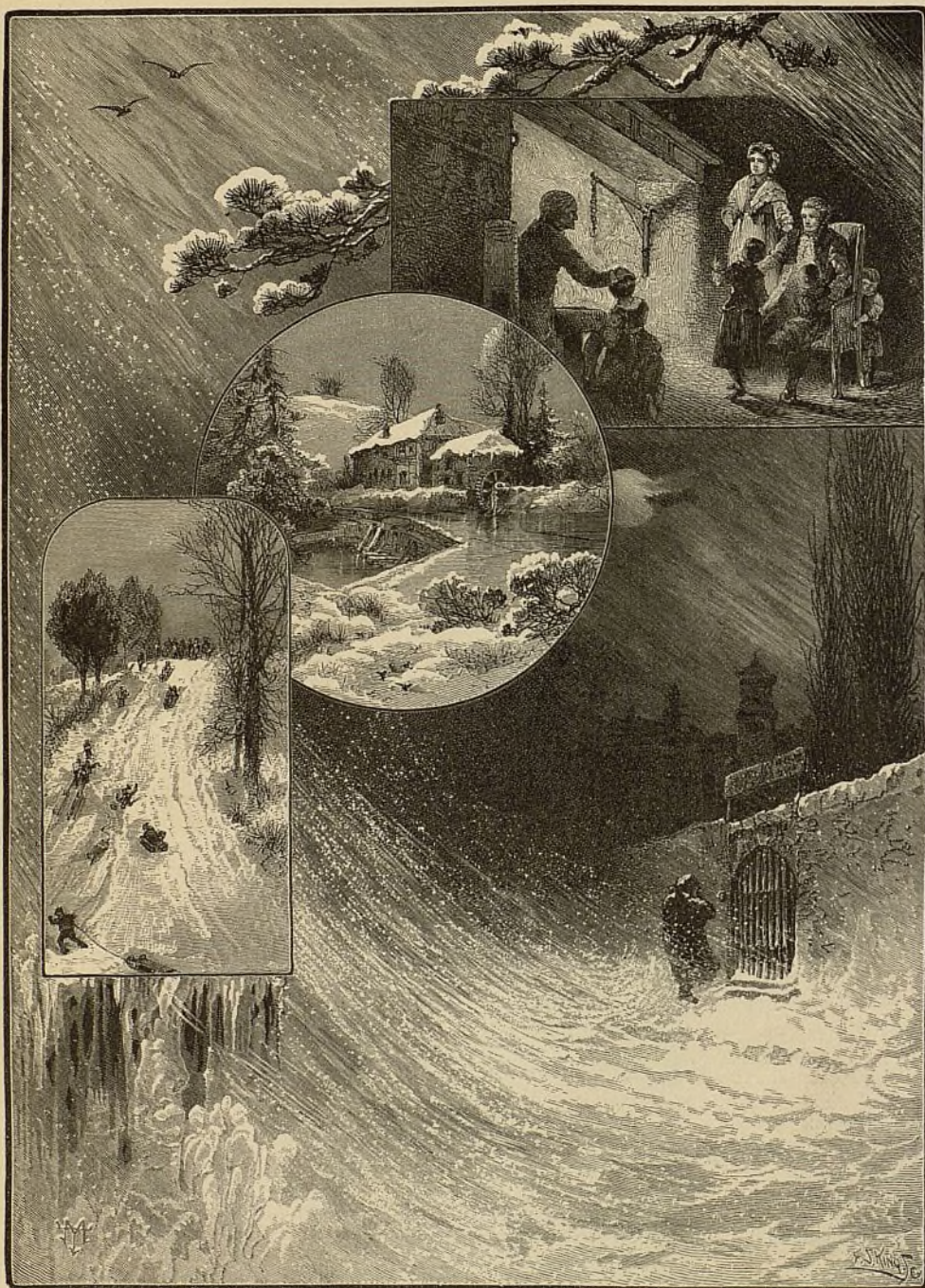
And some of them show a curious blending of church-music and hunting-songs:

"The holly and the ivy,
Now both are full well grown;
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
The holly bears the crown.
O the rising of the sun,
The running of the deer!
The playing of the merry organ;
Sweet singing in the choir!"

There are others which, through their very simplicity, carry us back to the hills where the watching shepherds listened to the song of the angels, so many centuries ago, so that we hear with them the first notes of that celestial anthem whose echo will never die away from the earth.

Listen to this:

"All in the time of winter,
When the fields were white with snow,
A babe was born in Bethlehem,
A long, long time ago.
Oh, what a thing was that, good folks,
That the Lord whom we do know,
Should have been a babe for all our sakes,
To take away our woe!



Drawn by Thomas Moran.

Engraved by F. S. King.

THE HEART OF WINTER.

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"Not in a golden castle
Was this sweet baby born,
But only in a stable,
With cattle and with corn;
But forth afield the angels
Were singing in the air;
And when the shepherds heard the news,
To that Child they did repair.

"The wise men, also, from the East
Were guided by a star,—
Oh, I wonder often, at this day,
Where those good wise men are!"

Milton's "Hymn on the Nativity," from which we copy a few lines, is among the grandest of Christmas poems. Written when the great poet was a very young man, it is full of the noble rhythm which makes all his poetry so wonderful.

the "Hymn on the Nativity"—the one, for instance, beginning—

"But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began;"

or this:

"Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the base of Heaven's deep organ blow,"—

and you will feel what rhythm is, without explanation.

Milton was a very learned poet, but that has not prevented him from being a favorite with a great many children. Grown-up people cannot always decide for the younger ones what they shall read.



THE HEAVEN-BORN CHILD.

Now, children, look in your dictionary and find out what "rhythm" means, for you cannot know much about poetry unless you have some idea of rhythm. If you are not satisfied with the definition in the dictionary, we will explain it as the tune to which poetry goes; for the best poetry always has a tune, which is part of itself, like the stir of pine-forests in the wind, or the sound of a mighty river as it sweeps along. There are many kinds of rhythm—flute-like, bugle-like, piano-like; it may have any musical resemblance you can think of. But Milton's poetry seems filled with the deep, strong harmonies of the organ, upon which he loved to play when he became a blind old man. If you have an ear for music, ask any one who knows how, to read aloud to you some verses from

mire, and grand poetry often takes the childish and heart more than rhymes prepared expressly for juvenile readers.

This is because a love of rhythm, or harmony, is born with us, and we cannot help enjoying it whether we understand the words it is shaped into or not. Who understands the roar of the cataract or the mighty organ-swell of the sea? The aged man knows their meaning no better than the little child. To both they bring wonder, and delight, and awe. And so it is with the voices of great poets in their highest inspiration. Old and young are alike charmed with the music that comes from the soul when it is nearest to nature and to God.

I remember that when under ten years old at school, the favorite piece in the reading-book, with

myself and other school-mates about my age, was Coleridge's "Hymn at Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni." In the midst of our playing, one of us would sometimes break out with a line of it, another would take it up, and so it would be carried on, until, alone or in concert, we had repeated the whole. Indeed, though I have never seen the Alps, it often seems to me as if I must have visited them in my childhood, through the vision that then came to me, and lingers with me, in the lines—

"Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?"

And I remember also, that the poem I liked best, long before I had outgrown Dr. Watts's "Divine

to this day. And I do not think my tastes were unlike those of many of my child-companions,—nor that the children of to-day are very different from those who lived forty years ago.

The best poetry belongs to those who can enjoy it best, without regard to age. This rule—if it is a rule—works both ways. A perfect child-poem will be one that men and women also will take delight in; for, through poetry as well as religion, we are all of us in some ways—or ought to become,—“as little children.”

So do not be afraid, children, to claim your grand poetical favorites, and do not be ashamed of your humble and childish ones. If they are real poets, they all belong to one family.

We were speaking of Christmas poems,—Christmas!—that we all recognize as the loveliest and



"THE SHEPHERDS HEARD THE NEWS."

Songs" and Jane Taylor's "Hymns for Infant Minds,"—the classics of my Puritan childhood,—was Milton's "Paradise Lost." Of course I skipped all the learned dialogues that went on in heaven and in the Garden of Eden; but the beautiful garden itself, where grew

"Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose,"

and the wonderful palace of Pandemonium, that "rose like an exhalation," lighted by

"Many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets,"

fixed themselves as unfading pictures in my mind; and the "harpings and hallelujahs" that seemed to roll through the poem, resound in my thoughts

most welcome guest brought us by winter. Merry Christmas! that comes to us loaded with gifts, and that we, in return, delight to wreath with evergreen, and bright autumn leaves, and greenhouse rose-buds, and all fragrant and brilliant blossoms,

In memory of that Flower Divine,
Whose fragrance fills the world.

A very sweet poem, bringing Christmas before us in several different characters, is this, by Rose Terry (now Mrs. Cooke):

CHRISTMAS.

"Here comes old Father Christmas,
With sound of fife and drums;
With mistletoe about his brows,
So merrily he comes!"

His arms are full of all good cheer,
 His face with laughter glows,
 He shines like any household fire
 Amid the cruel snows.
 He is the old folks' Christmas;
 He warms their hearts like wine,
 He thaws their winter into spring,
 And makes their faces shine.
 Hurrah for Father Christmas!
 Ring all the merry bells!
 And bring the grandsires all around
 To hear the tale he tells.

"Here comes the Christmas Angel,
 So gentle and so calm;
 As softly as the falling flakes,
 He comes with flute and psalm.
 All in a cloud of glory,
 As once upon the plain
 To shepherd boys in Jewry,
 He brings good news again.
 He is the young folks' Christmas;
 He makes their eyes grow bright
 With words of hope and tender thought,
 And visions of delight.
 Hail to the Christmas Angel!
 All peace on earth he brings;
 He gathers all the youths and maids
 Beneath his shining wings.

"Here comes the little Christ-child,
 All innocence and joy,
 And bearing gifts in either hand
 For every girl and boy.
 He tells the tender story
 About the Holy Maid,
 And Jesus in the manger
 Before the oxen laid.
 Like any little winter bird
 He sings this sweetest song,
 Till all the cherubs in the sky
 To hear his carol throng.
 He is the children's Christmas;
 They come, without a call,
 To gather round the gracious Child,
 Who bringeth joy to all.

"But who shall bring their Christmas,
 Who wrestle still with life?
 Not grandsires, youths, nor little folks,
 But they who wage the strife:
 The fathers and the mothers
 Who fight for homes and bread,
 Who watch and ward the living,
 And bury all the dead.
 Ah! by their side at Christmas-tide
 The Lord of Christmas stands;
 He smooths the furrows from their brow
 With strong and tender hands.
 'I take my Christmas gift,' he saith,
 'From thee, tired soul, and he
 Who giveth to my little ones
 Gives also unto me!'"

Another of our welcome winter guests is Happy New Year, brought in like a smiling baby in its white christening-robcs, to be tossed about from one to another with good wishes and feasting and laughter. You might fill many volumes with the poetry that has been written about the New Year.

But the wonder and beauty of winter itself are what the poets of the North have loved to show.

We sometimes think of winter as the most un-

poetic among the seasons; but there is a different way of looking at it. The snow is a blank sheet to some eyes, but not to all. A fresh snow-drift is often molded like the most exquisite sculpture, and its waves and lines and shadows are a joy to artistic eyes. The tints it reveals in the sunset rays are purer than any color we know, and suggest the light that may shine upon us in some lovelier world which we have not yet seen.

And the falling of the snow—how delicate and dreamy it is! There are poems through which it seems to glide as airily as it descends from the sky itself.

This is the way Thomson, the poet of "The Seasons," describes it:

"Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends.
 At first thin wavering, till at last the flakes
 Fall broad and wide and fast, dimming the day
 With a continual flow. The cherished fields
 Put on their winter robe of purest white.
 'Tis brightness all, save where the new snow melts
 Along the mazy current. Low the woods
 Bow their hoar heads; and ere the languid sun,
 Faint from the west, emits his evening ray,
 Earth's universal face, deep hid and chill,
 Is one wild, dazzling waste, that buries wide
 The works of man."

And somebody else writes of the snow-flakes as the blossoms of winter:

Softly down from the cold, gray sky,
 On the withering air, they flit and fly;
 Resting anywhere, there they lie,—
 The feathery flowers!
 Borne on the breath of the wintry day,
 Leaves and flowers and gems are they,
 Fresh and fair as the gay array
 Of the sunlit hours."

Still, again, they are spoken of by a poet (John James Piatt) as flowers exiled from the gardens of heaven:

"The wonderful snow is falling,
 Over river and woodland and wold;
 The trees bear spectral blossoms
 In the moonlight blurred and cold.

"There's a beautiful garden in heaven;
 And these are the banished flowers,
 Fallen and driven and drifting
 To this dark world of ours!"

You will remember Bryant's "Snow-Shower,"—

"Flake after flake,
 Dissolved in the dark and silent lake,"—

and Longfellow's "Snow-flakes":

"Out of the bosom of the air,
 Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,
 Over the woodlands brown and bare,
 Over the harvest-fields forsaken,
 Silent and soft and slow
 Descends the snow."

Is it not true, as he says, that

"This is the poem of the air,
Slowly in silent syllables recorded,—
Now whispered and revealed
To wold and field?"

A merrier little song, and one that American children have long been familiar with, is Hannah Gould's "It Snows":

"It snows! it snows! From out the sky
The feathered flakes how fast they fly!
Like little birds, that don't know why
They're on the chase, from place to place,
While neither can the other trace.
It snows! it snows! A merry play
Is o'er us in the air to-day!

"As dancers in an airy hall
That has n't room to hold them all,
While some keep up, and others fall,
The atoms shift, then, thick and swift,
They drive along to form the drift,
That waving up, so dazzling white,
Is rising like a wall of white.

"But now the wind comes whistling loud,
To snatch and waft it as a cloud,
Or giant phantom in a shroud.
It spreads, it curls, it mounts, and whirls;
At length a mighty wing unfurls,
And then, away!—but where, none knows,
Or ever will. It snows! it snows!

"To-morrow will the storm be done;
Then out will come the golden sun.
And we shall see upon the run,
Before his beams, in sparkling streams,
What now a curtain o'er him seems.
And thus with life it ever goes!
'Tis shade and shine! It snows! it snows!"

How strange it must seem to live in a country where snow never comes! The natives of such countries will not believe the frosty and icy stories told them by travelers from colder regions. Stranger still it must seem to them when, at long intervals, they are visited by a snow-storm.

Bruce, the African traveler, tells us that an aged Abyssinian once drew him aside, to tell him, as a great wonder, that when he was a young man something white one day descended from the sky, covering the earth, and disappearing as silently as it came. Some one has very prettily versified this story of

SNOW IN ABYSSINIA.

"Bruce of Kinnaird could scarce repress the smile
That twitched the bearded ambush of his mouth,
When, in his quest of the mysterious Nile,
Amid the perilous wilds of the swart South,
An old man told him, with a grave surprise
Which made his child-like wonder almost grand,
How, in his youth, there fell from out the skies
A feathery whiteness over all their land,—
A strange, soft, spotless something, pure as light,
For which their questioned language had no name,
That shone and sparkled for a day and night,
Then vanished all as weirdly as it came,

Leaving no vestige, gleam, or hue, or scent,
On the round hills or in the purple air,
To satisfy their mute bewilderment
That such a presence had indeed been there!"

And you may have read of the little Barbadoes girl who, when she came to a northern country, and saw the snow falling for the first time, cried out that the angels were emptying their feather-beds upon the earth!

When the north wind sets our teeth chattering, and pierces us with needles of frost, we sigh for a climate where summer is perpetual. Yet no—not "we" exactly; for there is nothing that a healthy child delights in more than the wild, stormy mirth that winter brings.

Childhood and Winter are the best of playmates. Like some kind, rough old grandsire, he sets the boys and girls running races, tosses them about among the snow-drifts, and pushes them along the ice until they are rosy and strong with the merry exercise. Look at this German portrait of winter, boys, and see if you do not like it:

"Old Winter is a sturdy one,
And lasting stuff he's made of;
His flesh is firm as iron-stone;
There's nothing he's afraid of.

"Of flowers that bloom, or birds that sing,
Full little cares or knows he;
He hates the fire, and hates the spring,
And all that's warm and cosey.

"But when the foxes bark aloud
On frozen lake and river,—
When round the fire the people crowd,
And rub their hands and shiver,—

"When frost is splitting stone and wall,
And trees come crashing after,—
That hates he not, but loves it all:
Then bursts he out in laughter.

"His home is by the North Sea's strand,
Where earth and sea are frozen;
His summer home, we understand,
In Switzerland he's chosen."

But when any of us dream of summer lands in winter-time, we must remember how much that is rare and curious and wonderful the people of the tropics lose, in never seeing icicles or frost-work, or what Emerson calls

"The frolic architecture of the snow,"

as Whittier describes it, for instance, in picturing for us the winter farm-life of his boyhood:

"Strange domes and towers
Rose up where sty or corn-crib stood,
Or garden-wall, or belt of wood;
A smooth white mound the brush-pile showed;
A fenceless drift what once was road;
The bridle-post an old man sat,
With loose-flung coat and high cocked hat;

The well-curb had a Chinese roof;
And even the long sweep, high aloof,
In its slant splendor, seemed to tell
Of Pisa's leaning miracle:"

or as it is given in Lowell's lovely poem, "The First Snow-fall":

"The snow had begun in the gloaming,
And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
With a silence deep and white.

beauty of the summer woods, shows them to us in
their wintry whiteness:

"But winter has yet brighter scenes,—he boasts
Splendors beyond what gorgeous summer knows;
Or autumn with his many fruits, and woods
All flushed with many hues. Come when the rains
Have glazed the snow, and clothed the trees with ice;
While the slant sun of February pours
Into the bowers a flood of light. Approach!
The incrustated surface shall upbear thy steps,
And the broad arching portals of the grove



THE FIRST SNOW-FALL.

"Every pine and fir and hemlock
Wore ermine too dear for an earl;
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree
Was ridged inch-deep with pearl.

"From sheds new-roofed with Carrara
Came chanticleer's muffled crow;
The stiff rails were softened to swan's-down,
And still fluttered down the snow."

And see how Bryant, who paints so well the

Welcome thy entering. Look! the mossy trunks
Are cased in the pure crystal; each light spray,
Nodding and tinkling in the breath of heaven,
Is studded with its trembling water-drops,
That stream with rainbow radiance as they move."

And Whittier, in his "Pageant," bids us look

"Where, keen against the walls of sapphire,
The gleaming tree-boles, ice-embossed,
Hold up their chandeliers of frost."

In the ice-gleaming, sunlit forest, he exclaims :

"I tread in Orient halls enchanted,
I dream the Saga's dream of caves,
Gem-lit, beneath the North Sea waves.

"I walk the land of Eldorado;
I touch its mimic garden-bowers,
Its silver leaves and diamond flowers."

You see, little friends, that there is a poetry of snow and ice as well as of flowers and fields and rivers. Here is a specimen of it from Thomson :

"An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
Arrests the bickering stream. The loosened ice,
Let down the flood, and half dissolved by day,
Rustles no more; but to the sedgy bank
Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone
A crystal pavement, by the breath of Heaven
Cemented firm; till, seized from shore to shore,
The whole imprisoned river grows below."

That last line, which compares the stream to a caged lion under the ice, has been said to be the best description of a frozen river in the language.

For all the cold, there are live things in the woods in winter. Bryant found them there :

"The pure, keen air abroad,
Albeit it breathed no scent of herb, nor heard
Love-call of bird nor merry hum of bee,
Was not the air of death. Bright mosses crept
Over the spotted trunks, and the close buds,
That lay along the boughs, instinct with life,
Patient, and waiting the soft breath of spring,
Feared not the piercing spirit of the North.
The snow-bird twittered on the beechen bough,
And 'neath the hemlock, whose thick branches bent
Beneath its bright cold burden, and kept dry
A circle on the earth of withered leaves,
The partridge found a shelter. Through the snow
The rabbit sprang away. The lighter track
Of fox, and the raccoon's broad path, were there,
Crossing each other. From his hollow tree,
The squirrel was abroad, gathering the nuts
Just fallen, that asked the winter cold, and sway
Of winter blast, to shake them from their hold."

And Emerson writes of a little friend he met in the deep forest on a stinging day of midwinter :

"Piped a tiny voice hard by,
Gay and polite, a cheerful cry,
'Chic-chicadeedee!'—saucy note,
Out of sound heart and merry throat,
As if it said, 'Good day, good sir!
Fine afternoon, old passenger!
Happy to meet you in these places,
Where January brings few faces'"

Then he tells us that the bird, glad to meet his shivering guest,

"Flew near, with soft wing grazed my hand,
Hopped on the bough, then, darting low,
Prints his small impress on the snow,
Shows feats of his gymnastic play,
Head downward, clinging to the spray."

The titmouse, or snow-bird, you know, has a different song for different seasons,—

"In spring
Crying out of the hazel-copse, 'Phe-be!'
And in winter, 'Chic-a-dee-dee!'"

Dear little fellow! No wonder the poets have sung of him so often. Doubtless one of your best-known pieces from babyhood is Hannah Gould's

"Oh, what will become of thee, poor little bird?
'The muttering storm in the distance is heard.'"

She speaks of the snow-bird as the "Winter King,"

'Because in all weather I'm happy and free,
They call me the Winter King. Pee-dee-dee!'"

We cannot help loving the snow-birds, they are so neighborly, calling upon us at our door-steps, as well as keeping company with us in the leafless forest-paths. It does us good to have our little cousins of the woods, who do not know our alphabet, come and ask us, in their own language, for such small favors as we can bestow upon them.

A pretty song, with this idea in it, has been written by Mrs. Anderson, who has made many other charming verses for children :

"When winter winds are blowing,
And clouds are full of snow,
There comes a flock of little birds,
A-flying to and fro;
About the withered garden,
Around the naked field,
In any way-side shrub or tree,
That may a berry yield,
You'll see them flitting, flitting,
And hear their merry song;
The scattered crumbs of summer's feast
Feed winter birdlings long.

"But when the snow-drifts cover
The garden and the field,—
When all the shrubs are cased in ice,
And every brook is sealed,
Then come the little snow-birds,
As beggars, to your door;
They pick up every tiny crumb,
With eager chirps for more.
Like wandering musicians,
They 'neath the windows sing;
All winter long they stroll about,
And leave us in the spring.

"Off to the land of icebergs,
To islands cold and drear,
They fly before the summer comes
To frolic with us here.
Give them a hearty welcome!
It surely were not good
That they who sing in winter-time
Should ever lack for food."

If there were less beauty upon the outside earth in winter, there would still be the charm of home-life, which is always more perfect in a cold climate.

One stronger reason than all others for being glad that we live in the temperate zone, is that it is the zone of homes.

Greenlanders and Laplanders, it is said, each consider their own country the fairest the sun shines upon, and charming stories of domestic life have come to us from those icy latitudes. But the Esquimaux and Kamtchatkans, and those inhabitants of extreme Arctic regions who must live in snow-huts, or burrow underground for warmth, cannot know the rich and tender meanings the word "home" has for us.

How much comfort there is in our cosy houses alone,—in the clean, warm room, perhaps with a glowing fireside; the white table spread with wholesome and delicate food; the cheerful circle around the lamp at evening; the books, the sewing, the games; the sound sleep of the long, snowy night, in beds as white as the drifts outside; and the many other nameless blessings of a civilized home! These the children of the eternal snows must do without.

There is more poetry in a really beautiful home-life than in the finest natural scenery; but it lies too deep in the heart for words to express. It is poetry that is felt rather than spoken. A happy home is a poem which every one of the family is helping to write, each for the enjoyment of the rest, by little deeds of tenderness and self-sacrifice, which mean so much more than words. This home-poem is all the more delightful because it does not ask or need admiration from anybody outside. The poetry that people live in, of which they are a part, and which is a part of them, is always the most satisfactory, because it is the most real.

Think, little folks, of all the poems and fragments of poems you know, that never could have been written except in a country where tempest and sleet and long hours of darkness drove men and women and children within-doors, and kept them there to find out how dear and sweet a thing it is for a family to live together in love.

The list is a long one, so long that it is of no use to try to fill it out here. But a hint or two, and a few extracts, may put you on the track of a great many beautiful things.

There is Cowper's "Task,"—a domestic poem throughout, and in great part a winter poem, too,—with its famous tea-table picture:

"Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in."

If you do not care to drink tea with the poet Cowper, you may like to hear him talk of the post-

man, and the budget of news he brings; or of the Empress of Russia's wonderful palace of ice.

Then, there is Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night," which it will be strange if most of you do not enjoy, it is so full of pictures. You seem to be inside of the Scottish cottage, where

"The mither, wi' her needle and her shears,
Gars auld claes look amais't as weel's the new;"

while outside

"November chill blaws loud wi' angry sigh."

There is Emerson's indoor view of a snow-storm;

"Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight. The whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveler stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the house-mates sit
Around the radiant fire-place, inclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm."

If you have ever known what it is to be shut in with a happy household through a long, driving winter storm, those last two lines will often be coming back to you, after you have read them, as one of the cosiest of home-pictures. That "tumultuous privacy of storm," how deep and close and warm it is!

Best of all, perhaps,—certainly the finest epic of old-fashioned New England family-life ever written,—is Whittier's "Snow-Bound." "Epic" may not be the right word to use, and yet why not? It is "narrative," and "heroic" adventures are achieved by the men and boys out-of-doors in meeting the snows and the winds; while within, mother and aunt and sisters weave together a web of home-life lovelier than anything to be shown by Penelope, or Helen of Troy.

By such a fireside as that described in "Snow-Bound," with the red blaze flashing up

"Until the old, rude-furnished room
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom,"

one might well be

"Content to let the north wind roar
In baffled rage at pane and door."

Children of the old-fashioned days had a hard time, perhaps; but it was worth a great deal to live around one of those deep, log-heaped fire-places. It was "jolly," as you boys would say, to hear how

"When a louder blast
Shook beam and rafter as it passed,
The merrier up its roaring draught
The great throat of the chimney laughed."

We must not forget one poetic thing that winter

does for us all indoors, however humble our dwelling may be; and that is to decorate our window-panes, making them more exquisite in their white, delicate tracery than the stained glass of ancient cathedrals. This is Jack Frost's work, and we are told, in one case, how he did it:

"He went to the window of those who slept,
And over each pane like a fairy crept.
Wherever he breathed, wherever he stepped,
By the morning light were seen
Most beautiful things! There were flowers and trees,
There were beves of birds, and swarms of bees,
There were cities and temples and towers; and these
All pictured in silver sheen!"

There is a dark and cheerless side to winter, which is not to be forgotten even by the poets. Thomson has written of it, as you will find in the

You bring poetry into a life, whenever you bring it any real happiness. Think of that, dear children, and see how many hearts you can make sing aloud for joy!

There is a legend of the Child Jesus, which tells how he made flowers bloom and birds sing in the midst of winter, by a smile of love given to his mother. A beautiful meaning may be drawn from this. Love is the true sunshine, and all children can make a cold world blossom with it, after the example of the Holy Child.

THE CHILD JESUS IN THE GARDEN.

"Cold was the day, when in a garden bare,
Walked the Child Jesus, wrapt in holy thought;
His brow seemed clouded with a weight of care;
Calmness and rest from worldly things he sought.



THE CHILD JESUS IN THE GARDEN.

"Seasons." He draws a picture of a man lost in the snow, so vivid as to awaken our sympathies very painfully.

And Wordsworth has told us the piteous story of "Lucy Gray,"—

"The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door,"—

how she wandered up and down the moor, bewildered by the falling snow, and perished at last in sight of her own dwelling.

And Bryant's "Little People of the Snow," although so dazzling in its fairy fancies, contains a sad story of a similar kind.

To the very poor, who suffer for want of food and fuel, winter is anything but poetical. It is the privilege of those who are better off, to make it a pleasant season to them, and to supply the heart-sunshine and home-warmth, without which winter is bitter indeed. A little kindness goes a great way toward brightening dark days and warming up snow-drifts.

"Soon was his presence missed within his home;
His mother gently marked his every way;
Forth then she came to seek where he did roam,
Full of sweet words his trouble to allay.

"Through chilling snow she toiled to reach his side,
Forcing her way mid branches brown and sere,
Hastening that she his sorrows might divide,
Share all his woe, or calm his gloomy fear.

"Sweet was her face, as o'er his head she bent,
Longing to melt his look of saddest grief.
With lifted eyes, his ear to her he lent;
Her kindly solace brought his soul relief.

"Then did he smile—a smile of love so deep,
Winter himself grew warm beneath its glow;
From drooping branches scented blossoms peep;
Up springs the grass; the scaled fountains flow.

"Summer and spring did with each other vie,
Offering to Him the fragrance of their store;
Chanting sweet notes, the birds around him fly,
Wondering why earth had checkered so her floor."

Every season has a beauty of its own, and the poets usually find it out for us, or else show us that

there is a poetry of the gloomy and terrible as well as of the beautiful. So Cowper says :

"O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,
Thy scattered hair with sleet like ashes filled,
Thy breath congealed upon thy lips, thy cheeks
Fringed with a beard made white with other snows
Than those of age, thy forehead wrapped in clouds,
A leafless branch thy scepter, and thy throne
A sliding car, indebted to no wheels,
But urged by storms along its slippery way,—
I love thee, all unlovely as thou seem'st,
And dreaded as thou art!"

But we come back, in spite of our attempt to look on the dark side, to the brightness and jollity of the winter months. Where is there fun like that of skating? Hear the poet Allingham sing of it :

"The time of frost is the time for me!
When the gay blood spins through the heart with glee,
When the voice leaps out with a chiming sound,
When the footstep rings on the musical ground,
When the earth is gay, and the air is bright,
And every breath is a new delight.

"Hurrah! the lake is a league of glass!—
Buckle and strap on the stiff white grass!
Off we shoot, and poise and wheel,
And swiftly turn upon scoring heel;
And our flying sandals chirp and sing,
Like a flock of gay swallows on the wing!"

And sleighing-songs innumerable might be brought together; but we will only take, at present, a verse or two by Stedman :

"In January, when down the dairy
The cream and clabber freeze,
When snow-drifts cover the fences over,
We farmers take our ease.
At night we rig the team,
And bring the cutter out;
Then fill it, fill it, fill it,
And heap the furs about.

"Here friends and cousins dash up by dozens,
And sleighs at least a score;
There John and Molly, behind, are jolly,—
Nell rides with me, before.
All down the village street
We range us in a row;
Now jingle, jingle, jingle, jingle,
And over the crispy snow!"

Now, children, which season is pleasantest—which has most poetry in it? This is so hard a question to answer, it must be settled by leaving it open on all sides, as it is here, in "Marjorie's Almanac," by Aldrich :

"Robins in the tree-top,
Blossoms in the grass,
Green things a-growing
Everywhere you pass;
Sudden little breezes,
Showers of silver dew,
Black bough and bent twig
Budding out anew;
Pine-tree and willow-tree,
Fringed elm, and larch—
Don't you think that May-time's
Pleasanter than March?"

"Apples in the orchard,
Mellowing one by one;
Strawberries upturning
Soft cheeks to the sun;
Roses faint with sweetness,
Lilies fair of face,
Drowsy scents and murmurs
Haunting every place;
Lengths of golden sunshine,
Moonlight bright as day—
Don't you think that summer's
Pleasanter than May?"

"Roger in the corn-patch,
Whistling negro songs;
Pussy by the hearth-side,
Romping with the tongs;
Chestnuts in the ashes,
Bursting through the rind;
Red leaf and gold leaf
Rustling down the wind;
Mother "doin' peaches"
All the afternoon—
Don't you think that autumn's
Pleasanter than June?"

"Little fairy snow-flakes
Dancing in the flue;
Old Mr. Santa Claus,
What is keeping you?
Twilight and firelight;
Shadows come and go;
Merry chime of sleigh-bells,
Tinkling through the snow;
Mother knitting stockings
(Pussy's got the ball)—
Don't you think that winter's
Pleasanter than all?"



NO POCKET.

BY SARAH WINTER KELLOGG.



T was at Katie McPherson's Christmas party that the announcement was made,—in the dining-room, where the scores of bright children were assembled to partake of the good things which Mrs. McPherson had bountifully provided,—Jimmy Johnson made the announcement, and this it was: "Bushy Caruthers aint got no pocket!"

Jimmy delivered this in such tones and with such a manner as he might have used if he had said: "Bushy Caruthers aint got no thumbs!" or "Bushy Caruthers aint got no nose!"

"Has n't he?" said Bobby Smedley, with as much eager concern as Jimmy Johnson, or, indeed, the most exacting news-bearer could have asked or desired.

"Has n't he?" said also Dickey Simpkins.

There was that in Dickey's tone which added, "I'm glad I'm not in Bushy's trousers."

Nellie Partridge, who was one of Jimmy Johnson's audience, opened her eyes roundly and puckered her mouth into a perfect O, and then gave vent to a long "W-h-y!" of astonishment.

"No, he aint got no pocket," Jimmy repeated, with no abatement in his can-you-believe-it manner.

"That's 'cause he's a little boy," said Tommy Mayneer, who was large of his age.

With this explanation, Tommy thrust his hands into his trousers' pockets, drew himself up to the full capacity of his inches, and marched back and forth a few paces with great dignity.

Nellie Partridge, who, I much fear, will in time grow to be a gossip, hurried over to the group of children in the next corner, and repeated, with solemn eyes:

"Say! Bushy Caruthers aint got no pocket!"

"Did you ever?" said one little auditor. "It's too bad," said another. "Why!" exclaimed a third, hurrying away to carry the story to the next group of children. Then the word went to the company of little folks collected at the window; thence to the children outside the dining-room door in the hall, on and on, until everybody knew that Bushy Caruthers was so unfortunate as to be at a party where candy and nuts and oranges and

all manner of good things abounded, and where there was a Christmas-tree, and yet to have no pocket.

What made it worse was, that it was Mrs. McPherson's way at her Katie's Christmas parties always to insist upon each little guest filling his or her pockets with good things "to take home."

Poor Bushy!

After a while the word reached Bushy himself. Of course he knew he had n't any pocket before the children flocked around him with their expressions of condolence and their eager inquiries and exclamations of concern; but until he had heard these, and seen the consternation in the little faces, he had no conception of the magnitude of his misfortune. When this really dawned upon Bushy, he thought he ought to cry; but that seemed too much like baby-conduct. So he perked up his head with an heroic look in his funny little face, and rolled his eyes from one to another of his condolers, as if he would say, "Well, if I aint got any pocket, I'm going to bear my trouble like a man."

"Well, Bushy," Barney Williamson advised, "you eat all the candy and jelly and nuts and cake and oranges you can hold."

"What makes um call you Bushy, anyhow?" asked Henry Clay Martin. "You aint bushy a bit; you're slick as my black-and-tan terrier," and Henry Clay looked the unfortunate over from the crown of his glossy black head to the soles of his polished gaiters.

"My name's Bushrod, and they call me Bushy for short," was the explanation; whereupon a dozen or more children proceeded to tell what their right names were and what they were called for short.

Meantime Bushy, in accordance with Barney Williamson's advice, was engaged in storing away cakes and candies, regardless of headaches and doctors. At the end of fifteen minutes he had probably discovered the limit of his capacity; for at this time he went over to his papa with both hands full of bon-bons, and emptied them in that gentleman's big coat-pocket; and when papa looked behind him for an explanation of the pullings, and so on, Bushy said, pathetically:

"I aint got no pocket, papa."

"You *have* no pocket, you mean," corrected papa, gently.

"Yes, sir, I have n't no pocket."

In a few moments he was back again, and papa felt another tugging at his coat behind, and heard something rattling down into his pocket; again

mamma's silk dress were disturbed, and down on top of her lace handkerchief streamed the candy and nuts from Bushy's overflowing hands, attended



GOING UPSTAIRS TO THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

by the inevitable explanation: "I aint got no pocket, mamma. Katie says we must all take home something."

Again and again was the silk-dress pocket visited, for it was roomy, and mamma, busy in conversation, was unconscious of the visitations.

Then Bushy's sister, Minnie, thirteen years old, was petitioned to lend the aid of her pocket to the pocketless boy. Beside this, Bobby Smedley, whose home was just across the street from Bushy's, volunteered the loan of one-quarter of one of his pockets for the transportation of Bushy's nick-nacks. Miriam Endicott, who lived next door to the unfortunate boy, hearing of Bobby Smedley's generosity, forthwith devoted a half of her roomy pocket to Bushy's relief.

But it was when the children had gone upstairs to the parlors where the Christmas-tree stood, that Bushy's concern attained its height.

"S'pose," he said to Barney Williamson, remembering Barney's role as adviser, "s'pose I was to get a great lot of things—that ball"—and he pointed to the spangled, radiant tree, with its wonderful blossoms and fruit—"and that top, and that drum, and that trumpet with a whistle, and oh! them two wrasling heathen Chinees, and that whistle, and that cannon, and that velocipede, and that locomotive, and that there wheel-barrow, and a great lot more, how could I get them all home?—'cause I aint got no pocket, you know."

"Well I'll tell you," said the ready Barney.

came the explanation from Bushy: "I aint got no pocket, papa."

It was not long after this before the folds of

"I'll pack all the other things in your wheelbarrow, you know, and roll 'em home for you."

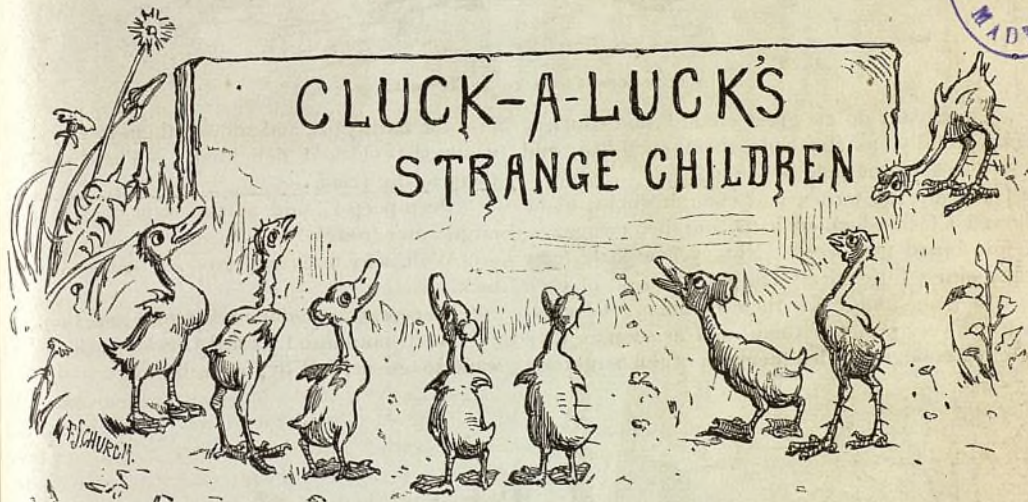
Bushy did get the wheelbarrow, sure enough, and soon had it loaded up.

You may well believe there was laughing at Bushy's house when all the pockets were emptied, and all the boxes and baskets. Such heaps of candy! such piles of cakes! such quantities of almonds and raisins, mottoes, lady-apples, oranges, and other good things, as were displayed! In Bushy's eagerness he had actually smuggled a

chicken's wing and buttered biscuit into his mother's keeping. There was enough, as he said, ecstatically, for another party.

If he had gone to Katie's entertainment with pockets all over his chubby little form, he could not have fared so well.

"Mamma," said Bushy, gravely, as he cracked an almond between his white teeth, his black eyes, meanwhile, sweeping the table which held his collection of sweets, "don't never put no pocket in my party-breeches."



BY E. MÜLLER.

Of course Cluck-a-luck thought she had been sitting on her own eggs. Why should she not think so? There were ten of them, just as many as she had counted when she first began to sit upon them; so when her young brood turned out to be ducklings, she was naturally surprised and disgusted. But that was the farmer's fault. Cluck-a-luck was such a good hen-mother that he chose her to raise the brood of ducklings. For a duck-mother is such a careless creature—such a very careless creature! All she thinks of is her own toes, and how to say "Quack" amiably, and to plume herself. So Cluck-a-luck had to see her fuzzy yellow brood step into the water at a spring-pond, and paddle away from her, while she sat on the shore and scolded at them.

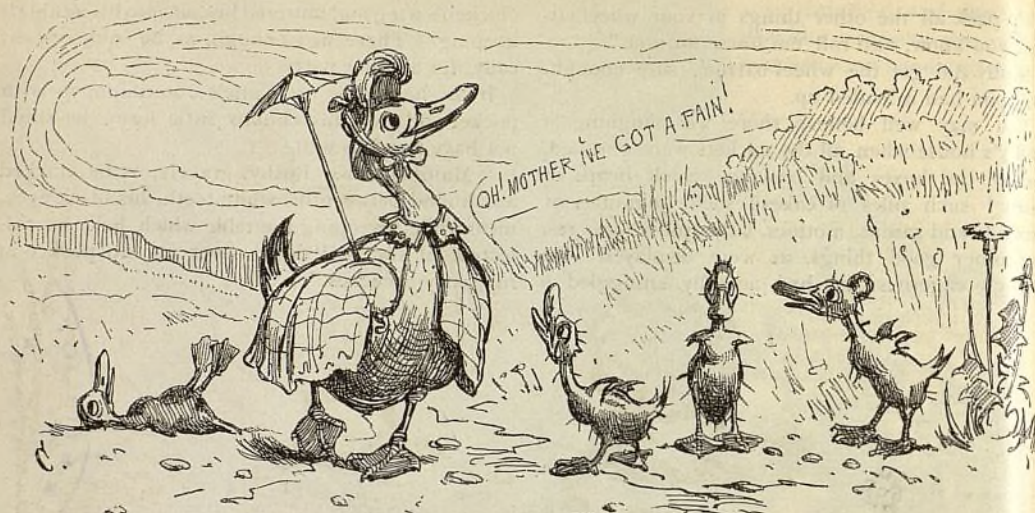
"You'll take your deaths of cold!" she screamed, when she found they did not drown, as she had

told them they would. "I shall have the whole ten of you down with the croup," moaned Cluck-a-luck, and she ran off to consult Grandpa Wattles, the great Dorking cock. "Dear Grandpa Wattles! what shall I do with my children? None of our family ever acted this way before!"

"Took-a-rook-a-law, raw," said Grandpa Wattles, gravely; he always said that when he felt puzzled. "You must make allowances, make allowances. Young folks are very different, nowadays. You can't always tell how they are going to turn out. Sometimes they are one thing and sometimes they are another. Don't fret. Here's a fine grub for you. Don't fret."

So Cluck-a-luck ate the grub and stopped fretting.

By and by the ducklings grew large and handsome, with fine purple necks and broad yellow bills.



"A DUCK-MOTHER IS SUCH A CARELESS CREATURE!"

"They really do me great credit," said Cluck-a-luck, proudly, as she bade them good-bye, and began to hatch out another brood.

This time the farmer had enough ducks, so he allowed Cluck-a-luck to hatch out her own eggs. A fine brood they were. Nine yellow little fuzzy balls, with a little silvery chirp put inside of each one, to make music for their mamma. Cluck-a-luck was very proud of them, and as soon as they were big enough, she led them out of the hen-house

into the barn-yard, and showed them to everybody, while she clucked delightedly. Then she took them to the pond.

"Peep-peep!" said all the little ones, "such a large water-trough!"

"Well, why don't you go in?" asked Cluck-a-luck.

"Peep-peep! we don't want to," said they.

"What nonsense!" cried Cluck-a-luck. "No want to go in? Why, your brothers and sisters



THE WHOLE TEN OF THEM DOWN WITH THE CROUP.



"WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY STAY DOWN SO LONG?"

ran in, of their own accord, before they were as old as you. Go in at once, before they laugh at you."

"What's the matter there?" cried Shiny Tail, one of the eldest duck-sons, coming up. "Afraid to go in? Give them a push, that's all they want."

So Cluck-a-luck led the little chickens to a board that leaned out over the water, and then pushed them in, first one, then another, till all the nine were in the water.

"Peep-peep! it's very cold! It's very wet. Peep-peep, p-e-e-p!" cried all the little ones, and then they went down under the water, and staid there.

"Why do you suppose they stay down so long?" asked Cluck-a-luck of Shiny Tail, who stood near.

"I'm sure I don't know. I never staid down so long," answered he, thoughtfully.

But the little chickens never came up again, though Cluck-a-luck waited all day long for them, and clucked till she was quite hoarse. So she ran to Grandpa Wattles, and told him about it.

"Took-a-rook —," began Grandpa Wattles, but seeing she felt very badly indeed, he stopped before he got to "raw, raw," and said: "Now don't fret, there's a good creature. You have made a little mistake in their education. You can't always tell; sometimes they turn out one thing, and sometimes they —"

"But they are all drowned, gone entirely!" interrupted Cluck-a-luck. "What am I to do?"

"Well, well! Don't fret. Go and hatch another

brood. Here's a fine caterpillar I've saved for you. Don't fret," said Grandpa Wattles, very kindly.

So Cluck-a-luck ate the fine caterpillar and stopped fretting, and began to hatch another brood. While she was sitting, a weasel ate all her eggs but two. These she hatched out, saying to herself:

"It is just as well; there will be less trouble about their education, when there are so few, and I shall not go near the water with them, that's certain."



WACKSY AND WEEPSY.

So, when they grew strong enough, she took them up to the orchard, where there was no water, and there little Wacksy and Weepsy were good

and happy for a long time. Cluck-a-luck gave them these names because one of them always said "Wack" and the other one said "Weep," when he cried.

The little things were very fond of each other, and could not bear to be parted for a minute. One day Cluck-a-luck missed them. She had just been taking her morning sand-bath, in a lovely dust-hole under an apple-tree, and when she got up she missed both her children. She ran to the barn-yard and asked all her friends if they had seen her children.

"I saw them a minute ago," said her cousin,

as possible, and he was squawking as only a young Shanghai cock can squawk, because he could not be a duck, like Wacksy, and swim with her.

"It seems to me you have very strange children, Cluck-a-luck," said old Madam Brahma. "There must be something wrong in your system of education; my children never showed such dispositions."

"Oh dear! oh dear!" cried poor little Cluck-a-luck, "I'm sure I don't know what it is. I've done everything a mother could do, and I'm disgraced by them after it all."

Everybody stood watching and laughing at Cluck-a-luck's children. Everybody made remarks.



WACKSY AND WEEPSY IN THE POND.

Pulletta. "It seems to me they were going down to the pond."

"The pond! Oh, dreadful!" cried Cluck-a-luck. "Then they will surely drown!"

She hurried to the pond, and so did every one else, and all the chickens and ducks and turkeys and geese stood in a great crowd on the shore. And what do you think they saw? There was Wacksy, in the middle of the pond, swimming proudly around, while Weepsy stood near the shore, but up to his neck in the water, shrieking for her to come back and play with him! What a disgraceful sight for a proud mamma! Weepsy's long legs and long neck were stretched out as far

"Who in the world but a Dorking would think of hatching one duck and one great awkward Shanghai!" exclaimed an aristocratic Bantam.

"How was I to know?" asked poor Cluck-a-luck, indignantly. "I'm sure I never knew there could be so many different patterns of chickens, or I never would have hatched any!"

Grandpa Wattles felt very sorry, but he could not conscientiously advise her to go and try another brood, so he only said "Took-a-rook-a-raw, raw," and stood gazing at Wacksy and Weepsy, who were still making themselves ridiculous.

"I'll never hatch another brood!" cried Cluck-a-luck; "I'll never lay another egg! I'll go

somewhere
At this dread
at her and
each other.

"You see
who could
would end
Oh, pl
said Grand
hen-mother

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JACOB F
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Jacob had
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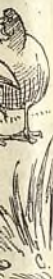
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a young somewhere all by myself, and learn to crow!"
 could not At this dreadful threat, all the other hens looked
 children, at her and drew up their wings, and nodded at
 each other.

"There "You see she's going to crow. I knew a hen
 of educa who could not bring up her chickens properly
 sitions." would end by crowing. How very shocking!"

Cluck- "Oh, please don't, there's a good creature,"
 s. I've said Grandpa Wattles. "You are an excellent
 'm dis hen-mother; don't be discouraged; don't crow;

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Cluck-a-
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Cluck-
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hens never crow unless they're good for nothing else."

"But I will crow," said Cluck-a-luck. "I feel like doing something desperate. I can't make my children behave, and none of you sympathize with me."

So she went away and got on a high fence, and crowed, and she tumbled over backward while she was crowing, and broke her neck, and her claws all curled up, and she was dead.

HIS OWN MASTER.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

CHAPTER I.

OUR HERO BEGINS THE WORLD.

JACOB FORTUNE, fifteen years old, barefooted, ragged at the knees, and with locks of very light hair showing through the torn crown of his old straw hat, sat on the door-yard fence, looking lonesome.

Jacob had never known father or mother; and it was now three days since his aunt, who had brought him up and given him a home in the old house there, was carried out of it and laid to rest in the old burying-ground, just out of sight over the hill.

Jacob had not thought that he was very fond of his aunt; and if she felt any affection for him, she had a rather odd way of showing it. She worked hard herself, and made him work hard as soon as he was old enough. She made him go to meeting and Sunday-school, and would not let him play after sundown on Saturday. She kept bundles of dried herbs, which she steeped, and was always taking a little "yarb-drink" herself, because she was sick, and making him take a little, not because he was sick, but because she was afraid he would be. She had no teeth, and she made him eat all the crusts. Then, too, she took snuff, and was dreadfully sallow and wrinkled, and had a crooked back, and sunken black eyes, and a harsh voice and temper which made him often wish that there was no such thing as an aunt in the world, and which put wicked thoughts into his head of running away, in order to be his own master.

But now that there was no aunt in the world for

him, and he was his own master without running away, poor Jacob sat on the fence there and thought of all her real kindness to him, and remembered with remorse how many things he had himself done to make her cross and unhappy.

How empty the old house seemed without her! How empty and dreary the world seemed! He knew now that there had always been in his heart a great deal more love for her than he or she ever suspected; and he felt very much like going over to the old burying-ground, throwing himself down by her grave, and telling her so.

He was awfully lonesome, and was wishing that somebody would come along and say something to comfort him, when he saw Deacon Jaffers approaching.

"May be he'll have a good word for me," thought Jacob, brightening a little, not caring to be seen looking melancholy.

The deacon, in his white starched linen, black straw hat and cool alpaca coat, appearing every way prosperous and well satisfied with himself, stopped when he came opposite to Jacob, and swung his buckhorn-headed cane.

"So you are a free man now, Jacob—eh?" said he. "And how do you like it?"

"Don't know," said Jacob, with a sorry grin. "It aint so lively as I thought it would be."

"Would you like any better to have a guardeen appointed and put over ye? There's been talk on 't," said Jaffers.

Jacob did not greatly fancy the idea of a guardian.

"Would n't like to be bound out to some good

man, eh? Wal, Jacob, you've the name of being a perty stiddy boy, and I don't know but you can be trusted to look out for yourself. But you must be industrious. Mus' n't set too long on the fence. Keep on going to Sunday-school, and to meeting. Don't be off nutting and fishing with bad boys, in sermon-time; your aunt never allowed that. Don't play cards or drink. That's my advice to you, Jacob."

And the excellent deacon walked away, leaving the boy's mind darkened by the hint of a guardian, and his heart heavier than ever.

Presently a man drove along the street in a one-horse wagon. He was broad as a tub, filling almost the entire wagon-seat. He had a broad hat-brim, and a broad, red face, and a broad smile on it as he reined up by the fence where the boy was sitting.

It was Friend David Doane, the Quaker, famed for his butter and cheese. Jacob had always heard that he was a kind man, and he felt a thrill of hope as he thought, "I guess *he* will have a good word for me."

"How does thee get on with the world, Jacob? The world, Jacob," added Friend David, "is much like an edged tool, good and useful to the wise who take hold of it rightly by the handle."

Friend David looked like one who always held firmly by the said handle, and knew how to use the tool to his advantage. He went on:

"I hear that thy worthy aunt, before she died, gave thee her cow, Jacob. How is it? Has thee a clear title?"

"She gave me the cow in the presence of witnesses, if that is what you mean," said Jacob.

"Thee is very young to be the owner of a cow!"—and the broad, smiling face beamed like a full moon on Jacob. "What will thee do with her?"

"Don't know," said Jacob, to whom the cow's future looked as dubious as his own.

"Would thee like to sell her?"

"Don't know."

"Will thee take twelve dollars for her?"

"Folks have told me she is worth more than that," replied Jacob.

"How much, then?"

"Twenty-five dollars."

"Twenty-five dollars!" repeated Friend David, with a solemn shake of the broad hat-brim. "Thee has been told amiss. I will give thee fifteen dollars for the cow. Will that satisfy thee?"

Jacob answered timidly that he did n't think he ought to sell her for less than twenty-five. Friend David regarded him sternly.

"Thee is beginning young, Jacob!"

"Beginning to—to what?" stammered the boy. He was simply endeavoring in his poor way to hold

the world rightly by the handle, and could not understand how he had merited Friend David's crushing disapprobation.

The Quaker did not throw any light upon the question, but raised his bid to sixteen dollars.

"That is because I would like to encourage thee in well-doing," said David.

Which seemed so kind in him that Jacob almost made to feel that he would be an ungrateful wretch if he did not accept the offer.

"Sixteen dollars is a great deal of money for a lad like thee! What does thee say to it?"

Jacob hung his head, and, being pressed further murmured feebly, "I can't—really—take less than—twenty-five."

"Thee is a grasping lad—very grasping!" said Friend David. "I would have been glad to buy a friend thee, but I find I can do nothing for thee."



"HIS HEART HEAVIER THAN EVER."

thee is so grasping. If I should offer thee twenty dollars, I dare say thee would take it, though thou knows it is too much."

Jacob was a patient fellow; but he had a will of his own, which he would sometimes show when provoked, as his late aunt knew to his sorrow, and as Friend David now discovered. Felt that he was being imposed upon, and looking up and seeing something very much like cunning in the broad face, answered in the Quaker's language:

"Thee thinks wrong, Friend David. I would not take twenty dollars for the cow if I knew it was too much, and I will not take it because I know as well as thee that it is too little."

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Friend David contracted his brows, compressed his lips, gave Jacob a terrible look and his horse a touch with the whip, and drove on without a word.

The future did not look brighter to Jacob after this lesson. It was well to talk of holding the world by the handle, but where everybody was trying to get and keep a hold, would there not be trouble?

Some boys now came along, who had a cat in a basket, and a big dog.

"Hurrah, Jake!" said they. "Come and have some fun."

"What?" said Jacob.

"We're goin' to let the cat loose in Towner's woods and set the dog on her. If she climbs a tree, we'll club her off, and see him shake her."

Jacob was excited by the thought of sport. But then a soft feeling rose in his unmanly breast regarding the cat.

"Oh, I would n't, Joe!" said he.

"Would n't what?" cried Joe, the leader and spokesman of the boys.

"I would n't club and dog the poor thing!"

And yet Jacob had half made up his mind to go with them and see the fun, if he could not prevent it.

The rebuke, however, nettled Joe, who cried: "Who asked ye to, anyway? We'll club you if you come!"

"You never'd dare to do that, Joe Berry!"

"You try it! Say three words, and I'll heave a rock at you now!"

So saying, Joe stooped and picked up from the road, not exactly a rock, but a pebble of the size of a walnut, which he threatened to let fly at Jacob's head.

"Three words!—there!" exclaimed Jacob, defiantly.

The stone was flung, but it hit only the rail on which Jacob was sitting. He made a motion to jump down, whereat Joe, who was really a coward, started to run, followed by the other boys and the big dog. A little way off they stopped and began to jeer him and look for stones—"rocks" they called them—by the road-side.

"Jake feels awful big since he had a funeral to his house!" said one.

"Sober, Jake is; guess he's going to study to be a minister," said another.

"He's begun to preach," said Joe. "Here's something for his contribution-box," and he let fly another pebble.

Other stones followed, but all so wide of the mark that Jacob sat quietly on the fence and merely looked his contempt. The allusion to the funeral and his low spirits hurt him worse than the stones could. He thought he had never heard anything

so mean and hateful; and, since his own companions had turned against him in this way, he felt wretched and desolate enough.

The boys continued to throw stones as they slowly retreated, until they were quite out of range; then hurried off with the basket and the dog.

As soon as there was nobody to see him, Jacob gave way to his feelings and cried. He had not got much comfort from anybody who came along yet, and it was a bitter thought that he had missed his only chance of a good time by refusing to join hands with the wicked.

"Why should I care for the cat? Why can't I go and do like other boys who don't care?" he asked himself, almost repenting of the scruples which had gained nothing for himself or the cat, and only earned his companions' ill will.

But now the sight of another person approaching caused him quickly to dry his tears.

"It's Professor Pinkey!" thought Jacob.

CHAPTER II.

PROFESSOR ALPHONSE PINKEY.

PROFESSOR Alphonse Pinkey, the dancing-master, was an airy youth, hardly more than twenty years old, in very wide mouse-colored trousers, a light-brown frock-coat buttoned with one button at the waist, and an expansive shirt-front. He wore his black hair in graceful ringlets, and had a mustache and strip of beard which resembled a fanciful letter T. Seeing Jacob, he waved his little cane with a smile, and walked up and shook hands with him.

"I did n't know you were in town," said Jacob.

"I'm not," said the professor. "That is, I'm merely flitting through; a bird of passage. Don't get down; let me get up."

And the bird of passage perched beside Jacob on the fence.

When the professor kept a dancing-school in the village the winter before, Jacob had attended it, and swept the hall for his tuition. The aunt, who was opposed to dancing, had known nothing of this arrangement beyond the fact that Jacob took care of the hall—to which circumstance the professor now made some playful allusion.

Jacob looked sober.

"How is the dear old lady?" cried Alphonse.

"She's dead—I thank you," faltered Jacob.

"Dead! you don't say! Excuse my ill-timed levity. How long since?"

"She has been buried three days."

"How distressing! You lived alone with her, did n't you?"

"Yes,—all alone."

"Well, well! don't feel bad," said the professor,

thinking Jacob was going to choke. "Where do you live now?"

"Here; that is, I stay here and take care of things, but since she died I've slept over there at the neighbor's,—the old house seemed so lonesome!"

"Certainly; I can understand that. But—what are you going to do? What are your prospects?"

"I have n't any," said Jacob.

"What did the—excuse me if I come too abruptly to the sordid business question," said Alphonse,—“what did the old lady do with her property?"

"She had n't much, anyway."

"Was n't the cottage hers?"

"Oh no; she rented it of Mr. Jordan, and paid twenty dollars a year for it. All the money she had saved went to pay the funeral expenses. After she was taken sick, I had to leave the place where I was at work, to take care of her; so I was n't earning anything."

"Then there were the medicines and doctors' bills," suggested Alphonse.

"She was her own doctor, and took her own medicines, till the very last," replied Jacob. "She would n't have had a doctor at all, if it had n't been for the neighbors."

"But—to return to the question of property—she must have left something," Alphonse insisted.

"A little. There's the cow, and the pig, and the things in the house," said Jacob. "She gave everything to me. She was very kind to me toward the last."

"Made you her heir!" exclaimed Alphonse. "Let's go and see what you've got; have you any objection?"

Jacob was glad to have a friend to talk with. He took the professor over the house and ground, and showed him everything but the cow, which was in the pasture.

"Now," said the professor, as they came round to the wood-shed and sat down on a step, "here you are in possession of a certain amount of personal property, and you want to know the best thing to do with it."

"Exactly," said Jacob.

"With all due respect to your late lamented relative," Alphonse continued, taking a knife from his pocket and picking up a stick, "her household stuff don't amount to much. Throw in the cow and the pig and the chickens, and it is n't a brilliant fortune, Jacob. Still, here's a problem to be considered. Have n't you a jack-knife? Well, find a stick and go to whittling, as I do."

"What for?" inquired Jacob, as he obeyed.

"Don't you see?" replied the airy Alphonse.

"Nothing helps a man to think like a piece of pine

and a knife. Now my thoughts begin to come, he added, throwing off long, curled shavings from his stick. "I perceive three ways open to you for making the most of your inheritance." He paused in his whittling and put up three fingers. "The first is for you to get married, bring a little wife right in here to fill your aunt's place, and go on with the housekeeping on the same humble and inexpensive scale."

"Get married!" laughed Jacob. "Why, I'm only fifteen!"

"I hardly thought you would consider that notion practicable," said Alphonse. "We'll dismiss it for the present," and he closed one of the fingers. "The next thing is for you to underlet the cottage with your furniture, to some poor but worthy family that will take you to board at a low figure."

"I don't know of any such family," said Jacob. "Then we will dismiss that notion for the present," and Alphonse closed another finger. "There's only one way left." He held up the last finger and touched it with the end of his stick. "Sell out."

"I've thought of that; but how?" said Jacob. "An auction. Don't you know how the thing is done? I'll write the posters for you. 'Auction sale of personal property at the late residence of Mrs. Myra Hapgood, deceased. One cow, one pig, two feather beds, one gridiron, three wash-tubs, one arm-chair with rockers and a stuffing back, two floor-rugs made by her own hands, two pine tables, crockery, flat-irons, one broom, one little worn, and so forth, and so forth. To be sold unconditionally to the highest bidders. Professor Alphonse Pinkey, auctioneer.' How's that, my boy?"

"It sounds well," said Jacob, laughing. "Are you an auctioneer?"

"I am anything and everything. You have known me as a dancing-master. I am also a music-master, writing-master, fencing-master, and a portrait-painter. I have been a flatboat-man, a clerk in a grocery, and a stage-driver. I never sold goods at auction; but I do not hesitate to say that I can sell goods at auction, if I try."

Jacob did not know that this lively talk would lead to any practical results, but it made him happy.

"Now tell me about yourself," said Alphonse. "By the way, what's the matter with your ear? I've noticed that scar."

"That's where the old sow bit me," said Jacob.

"Is n't that a rather remarkable place for an old sow to bite?" inquired the professor. "How does it happen?"

"You see," said Jacob, "I was puny when I was a little feller, and my aunt had her own notions

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doctoring me. She used to think there was *varieu* in the ground to cure all diseases; you could get it out of herbs by steeping them, or you could get it out of the ground itself. So she used to bury me in the warm earth of the garden, all but my head, and leave me there sometimes for half a day at a time. It kept me out of mischief, for one thing; I could n't stir hand or foot after she left me. One day, after she had buried me, she went to the neighbor's for something, and a peddler came, and was scared when I hollered to him out of the ground, and went out and left the gate open. Then an old sow with a litter of nine pigs walked in. She went rooting around, and finally came up grunting to me, with her mouth open, and all her little pigs squealing at her heels. I screamed. That only excited her. She came close up to me, snorting and showing her tusks, and I believe was actually going to eat me, when Aunt Myry came rushing into the gate with a club. She had actually begun at my ear."

"Lucky she did n't begin at your nose!" said Alphonse. "If I were in your place, I should wear my hair long, to cover that scar."

"I shall, now I'm my own master. She always kept my hair cut short; I don't know why, unless it was because it took less time to comb it. She never buried me up in the ground after that. I remember how frightened I was; I can see the old sow's tusks to this day. Her mouth looked as large as a fire-place, and the eye that was turned toward me was as big as a tea-cup."

"Have you any other relatives?" Alphonse inquired.

"No very near ones; only an uncle. But he and my aunt did n't agree very well, and I don't think she ever heard much of him of late years."

"Where does he live?"

"He's some kind of a merchant in Cincinnati."

"Cincinnati!" echoed Alphonse, interested.

"What's his name?"

"Higglestone," said Jacob.

"You don't say!" cried Alphonse, rising to his feet and standing before Jacob, poised knife and stick. "Your aunt has n't done much for you, but you've a fortune in your uncle."

Jacob wondered how that could be.

"Don't you see?" said Alphonse, whittling fast again. "Higglestone & West are dealers in hardware in the lower town; one of the richest firms in the city; and your uncle is well known as a public-spirited, liberal sort of man."

"Aunt Myry used to call him close-fisted and grouty."

"Your aunt was prejudiced. Uncle Higglestone is the mine you are to work, my boy." The professor's fancies flew like his shavings. He rattled away.

"Here's the programme for you. Auction sale—convert everything into cash. Then—Ho for Cincinnati! I'm on my way there now, and I'll take you along with me and introduce you to your uncle. You never had any quarrel with him, did you?"

"I never even saw him."

"So much the better. He'll be astonished to find he has such a fine, promising young fellow for a nephew. I see the excellent old gentleman before me now. I say, 'Your long-lost nephew, sir!' He exclaims, 'Is it possible—my poor sister's orphan child!' He welcomes you with open arms. He sheds tears at the recollection of your mother, but turns to you with smiles of pride and affection. A career is open to you at once. Don't you see?"—and the professor laughed as he whittled.

"I believe I will write to him," said Jacob, pleased with the picture drawn from his friend's vivid imagination.

"Why write? If you wait for an answer, you will be too late to make the journey with me. Better take the old gentleman by surprise."

"But suppose it should n't be so pleasant a surprise to him," suggested the modest Jacob.

"That is n't a supposable case. But, even if he should not welcome you, what of that? You are in Cincinnati. It is a great city—a great business center. I have hosts of friends there. We shall easily find something for you to do, which will be far better than trying to get a living in this miserable little country town."

"When are you going?" Jacob asked, with kindling looks.

"I was going right on to-morrow. But I know your uncle will thank me if I wait to help you settle up your affairs and take you with me. Let's see—to-day is Wednesday. We'll have the auction on Saturday. Take the stage on Monday. Steamboat Tuesday—floating down the river on the O-hi-o!" sang Alphonse. "Cincinnati—when we get there. A delightful trip this season of the year. There you are!"

So saying, he threw away his stick and shut his pocket-knife, as if the matter were settled.

"I'll think of it to-night," began Jacob.

"Think of it? Why, we *have* thought of it. There's nothing more to be said. We might whittle and talk for a month of Sundays, and nothing better would come of it. My valise and violin are at the hotel. Let me see."

Alphonse hesitated, and seemed about to resort to his knife and stick again.

"You'll be there to-night?" said Jacob.

"I was thinking. You would n't object to sleeping in the old house if I should come over and stay with you? Of course not," the professor went on.

"We shall want to be together for consultation. So I'll have my traps sent over. What have you got for supper?"

"Plenty of milk, and johnny-cake of my own making, and I can bake a few potatoes; it'll do for me, but it's nothing to invite *you* to."

"Nothing could suit me better, my dear Jacob! I'm vastly fond of johnny-cake and milk—so simple, so novel! And baked potatoes—how charming! Go and help me bring over my traps, and we are all right."

Alphonse gayly whirled about on one foot, and snapped his thumb and finger in the air.

Jacob could not help feeling some vague misgivings as to the lively professor and his programme. He got up, brushed the dust from his clothes, and wished to give the matter a little consideration. Whittle as he would, he could not think so fast as Alphonse.

"Perhaps you would n't like to have me come and stop with you," said Pinkey.

"Oh, that is n't it,—yes, I would,—but it's so sudden!" replied Jacob.

He was indeed delighted, after his lonely hours and small comfort from old acquaintances, to have a companion whose condescension was so flattering and whose talk so cheering. And he felt that he ought to do all he could for one who proposed to do so much for him.

"Everything happens sudden with me—that's the sort of fellow I am," cried Alphonse, patting him on the shoulder. "Come along!"

And they started for the tavern.

CHAPTER III.

CARRYING OUT THE PROGRAMME.

PROFESSOR PINKEY did not care to have Jacob hear his talk with the landlord, so he told him to stop at the porch while he went into the bar-room. The truth is, the professor's credit was not good at the inn, and he had been requested, when he applied for a room there that afternoon, to pay something in advance.

"Oh, certainly!" he had said. "A rather singular request to make of a gentleman, but it's the same thing to me. I'm going out now to collect some outstanding bills due from two or three of my last winter's pupils. I'll leave my traps here till I come back; then I'll pay what you wish."

As he had not succeeded in collecting any money, perhaps it would not have been convenient for him to advance any to the landlord. But he was not the man to say just that.

"Sorry I sha'n't have the pleasure of stopping with you, my good friend," he cried, familiarly, on

his return, striking the landlord on the back. "Fact is, I've received such pressing invitations to visit the families of some of my pupils—I've had to accept one or two of them—and I've come for my traps."

"Very well," said the landlord, passing out a light valise and a violin-case from behind the counter. He held on to them, however, as he added with a grim smile, "I don't care for your present or future custom; but I should like, before we part, professor, to have you pay me a small sum due for your board here last winter."

"Certainly. I'll call before I leave town and make it all right. When my pupils don't pay me I am sometimes obliged to ask for favors. How about your lovely daughter? She was one of my most interesting and promising pupils; if I could always have such young ladies to teach, and men of honor like you to deal with, my profession would be delightful."

With which little stroke of flattery, and an exquisite bow and smile, the dancing-master withdrew his "traps" from the landlord's yielding hands, and walked gayly out of the tavern. On the porch, he gave the valise to Jacob, and carrying the violin himself, triumphantly retreated; the landlord gazing after him with a puzzled and rather rueful look.

"Do you believe he'll ever pay?" asked the bar-tender.

"I don't know," muttered the landlord. "I meant to hold on to his traps; but somehow he got them out of my hands 'fore I knew it. He's certainly one of the politest men I ever saw; you can't resist him!"

The dancing-master made things lively for Jacob that evening. After supper he wrote, in a bold and ornate hand, notices of the auction, to be posted at the post-office and store and on the town pump the next day. Then he got a lath and the fire-poker, and insisted on giving Jacob a lesson in fencing. Then he played tunes on his violin, and danced, and sang, and shouted, until the old house shook and rang, and it seemed to Jacob that his arm might at any moment appear, and with a terrible look demand, "What's all this noise?"

She never would have allowed any such carrying on there while she lived; and it would have troubled him, even if the shadow of death had not still hung over the house and damped his merriment. Of course Alphonse had no such feeling as to the old lady and the recent funeral, and Jacob excused him.

The next day Pinkey put up the written notice, and also took the precaution to go about and talk of Jacob's plans and prospects with the neighbors. He relied, not without reason, upon his own glib tongue to smooth away any objections on the part

of the boy's friends or the town authorities, and to interest people in the auction sale.

Saturday afternoon arrived, and with it a goodly crowd of men, women, girls and boys. A few came out of good-will to Jacob, but more to gratify their curiosity and to see the fun.

Everything was in readiness. Professor Pinkey had provided himself with a hammer, which he struck upon the head of an overturned barrel in the kitchen, to call the company to order, after some time had been spent in looking about the premises; and opened the sale with the following eloquent address:

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is with feelings of profound emotion that I step up to wield the hammer upon this peculiar, I may say this affecting occasion. Who can contemplate the home of an aged widow, the humble board where she has partaken of her solitary meals, the flat-iron she has used to smooth the ruffles of her faultless cap, the pillow where she has suffered, the bedside where she has prayed, without the tribute of a tear?"

Here Alphonse actually shook out his handkerchief, and used it. Strange to say, there was a glistening moisture in his eyes, and a tremor in his voice. Jacob felt his own eyes fill; and he could not help wondering if he were really listening to the same man who had so lately made the old house shake with reckless merriment.

"This is the scene," Alphonse went on, "of her life-long, silent sorrow, her pious hopes, her anxious cares. In this rocking-chair she has sat and knit, and lived over the past, and" (he gave an ardent upward glance which would have become a divinity student) "contemplated a heavenly future. In that kettle, she steeped the herbs and brewed the drink that alleviated pain. In yonder skillet, she turned her frugal flapjacks for more than twenty years. It is good for at least twenty years more. Everything shows evidence of the most careful usage. Those blue-rimmed cups and saucers, out of which she imbibed the solace of the aged and afflicted during all the years of her widowhood, are as good as new. Purchasers can bid with perfect confidence, knowing that in every sale they will get their money's worth. For, ladies and gentlemen, sacred as these relics are, they must be sold. We have a duty not only to the dead, but to the living."

Here all eyes, following the auctioneer's, turned upon the blushing Jacob.

"The widow prized her home and her household goods," said Pinkey; "but there was one thing she prized still more. That was her nephew. He was the idol of her heart. She showed her tenderness for him, and her appreciation of his worth, by giving him everything, in the presence of witnesses, before she died. She said to him then, almost with

her parting breath, 'Sell!' If she could rise from the tomb and put in an appearance now, she would murmur 'Sell!' Ladies and gentlemen, we shall proceed to sell accordingly. I hope you will all do your duty to the widow and orphan, as I am trying, in a humble way, to do mine. I have postponed a journey of great importance, and am now giving my time and services without remuneration (I should scorn to touch a cent of the orphan's money!) in order to settle up his affairs and give him a start in life. The terms of this sale, ladies and gentlemen, will be cash and immediate delivery. We shall now proceed."

CHAPTER IV.

THE AUCTION SALE.

At the close of his speech, Alphonse wiped his forehead, thumped the barrel-head, and ordered Jacob to hold up the rocking-chair.

"We shall begin, ladies and gentlemen," said he, "with the old lady's easy-chair—her arm-chair. 'I love it! I love it! And who shall dare to chide me for loving that old arm-chair?' What am I offered? Remember all the sacred associations connected with a chair like that, and give me a bid, somebody."

"Twenty-five cents," squeaked out an old lady, turning the chair around, as Jacob held it up, and scrutinizing it through her glasses.

"Twenty-five cents I am offered. Twenty-five cents for a chair well worth two dollars. Ladies and gentlemen, look at it! Why, the cushion alone is worth more than the price bid for the whole. Twenty-five, twenty-five. Don't let me insult the memory of the dead by knocking down her fine old arm-chair at that ridiculously low figure. Going at twenty-five! Who will give me fifty?"

"I'll give thirty," said a young woman with a baby in her arms.

"Thirty I am offered. Thirty thirty thirty —"

"Thirty-five!" cried the first bidder.

"Thirty-five! You will give more than that, I know," said Alphonse to the younger woman, with a persuasive smile. "What a chair that will be to rock your baby in! Forty I am offered. Fifty! Fiftyfiftyfiftyfiftyfiftyfifty! Halfadollarhalfadollar halfadollar! Going at half-a-dollar. Shall I have any more? Half a dollar—one!" Pinkey swung his hammer. "Going—at half a dollar;" he glanced his eye about the company, and crooked his forefinger into an interrogation point at the previous bidders. "Give me fifty-five?"

Somebody nodded.

"Fifty-five I am offered; fiftyfiftyfiftyfiftyfiftyfifty-five!—going at fifty-five! Sixty! Sixtysixtysixty-

Fortunately, others who knew the value of the animal were there too; and the bids rose at once to twenty dollars.

"Twenty dollars!" said Alphonse, mounted upon a milking-stool and flourishing his hammer. "Only twenty dollars for a cow like that! Milk rich as cream, twenty-one quarts a day—not quite a dollar a quart! Who will give me twenty-one!"

He looked at Friend David, who had not yet offered to bid. Friend David winked.

"Twenty-one I am offered! Twentyonetwentyonetwentyonetwentyone—going at——"

"Twenty-two," said Deacon Jaffers.

"Only twenty-two!" exclaimed Alphonse.

"Why, gentlemen, you are not going to stand by and see a valuable cow sacrificed, I am sure! Gentle as a lamb—never known to kick or hold up the milk. What is it, Jacob?"

"I wanted to tell you," said Jacob, who had been trying for a minute or two to get in a word, "that you are mistaken about the amount of milk she gives. She *has* given twenty-one quarts; but that was earlier in the season. Now she only gives nine."

Alphonse was not a man to be 'abashed by the interruption.

"Thank you!" he cried; "I am happy to be corrected. This sale is 'pon honor, and I desire to cut all my statements by the exact pattern of the facts. But I am sure, gentlemen, you will not let the boy suffer for his honesty. I understood him to say twenty-one quarts; and it appears that it *was* twenty-one quarts all through the early part of the season. It would be an unheard-of cow that could give twenty-one quarts of rich milk the year round. And I am offered only twenty-two dollars. Twentytwotwentytwotwentytwo! Shall I have twenty-three?"

Friend David winked again.

"Twenty-three! Going now at——"

"Twenty-four," said Deacon Jaffers.

"Twentyfourtwentyfourtwentyfour! Give me another dollar?" cried Alphonse, leaning over affectionately at Friend David. "Give me a half?"

Another wink from the Quaker.

"Half I am offered! Twentyfournaf twentyfournaf twentyfournaf!—twenty-four dollars and fifty cents. Did I understand you to bid twenty-five, Mr. Jaffers?"

The deacon had not bid twenty-five; but he nodded.

"Going now at twenty-five dollars—and a half!" added Alphonse. Jacob looked on with breathless interest. "Twenty-six?"—the auctioneer crooked his finger at Jaffers. "Twentysixtwentysixtwentysix—and a half I am offered. Twenty-sixnaf twenty-sixnaf twenty-sixnaf! Will somebody

say seven? Going at twenty-six dollars and a half—one! Am I to have any more? Your last chance, gentlemen! Two! Going—going—and gone, at twenty-six dollars and a half, to our worthy friend here in the broad-brimmed hat!"—and Alphonse struck a beam with his hammer.

Friend David smiled with satisfaction. But he was n't half so tickled as Jacob was, who thought it a capital joke that the Quaker had come to the sale and there paid more than the first price asked for the cow.

"Seems I was n't so very grasping, after all!" he said to himself.

The pig and chickens were next sold. Then the garden crops, consisting chiefly of a few rows of corn and potatoes.

Then the auctioneer put up his hammer, and the sale was closed. It had been a brilliant success, and as people went away, many carrying their purchases with them, they might have been heard praising Professor Pinkey.

"What a beautiful man!" said the old ladies.

"Smart, I tell ye!" said the men.

"Aint he nice, though!" was the comment of the admiring girls.

Jacob was almost forgotten; and he was quite contented to be overlooked. Alphonse had inspired in him unbounded confidence and gratitude, and he gloried in his friend's popularity. He had also other cause for satisfaction.

When all was over, Deacon Jaffers reckoned up the proceeds of the sale, which amounted to the handsome sum of eighty-seven dollars.

"Better keep it for ye, had n't I?" said the good man, thinking there was danger of Jacob's losing it.

"A very kind and sensible suggestion," Alphonse answered for the lad. "I am sure, Jacob, your money cannot be in better hands. However, I suppose, if you go to find your uncle in Cincinnati, it will be as well for you to take it with you; indeed, you'll want some of it for the journey. If you go with me, I'll take care that you don't lose it. I always, when traveling," said the professor, turning to Jaffers, "carry large sums"—he spoke as if large sums were very common with him—"in a belt about my person; and I shall advise him to do the same."

"A good idee," said the deacon. "Have a belt, Jacob, as the professor says; and put all the money into it you don't want to use for your daily expenses. Have ye re'ly made up your mind to go and find your uncle?"

Jacob had concluded that it was the best thing he could do.

"Wal, wal; I've talked with the professor, and I don't know but 't is. I suppose, then, I'd better

give ye the money,—though it seems a good deal for a boy like you to have. I only hope you'll make a wise use on 't."

And Jaffers put the money into Jacob's hands. Wonder and pleasure sparkled in the boy's eyes;

it seemed to him a small fortune. And it added not a little to his triumphs to know that Joe Berry and the other boys with whom he had lately quarreled were standing by, regarding him with admiration and envy.

(To be continued.)

A CHRISTMAS SONG.

BY MRS. HATTIE S. RUSSELL.

THE oak is a strong and stalwart tree,
And it lifts its branches up,
And catches the dew right gallantly
In many a dainty cup.
And the world is brighter, and better made,
Because of the woodman's stroke,
Descending in sun, or falling in shade,
On the sturdy form of the oak.
But stronger, I ween, in apparel green,
And trappings so fair to see;
With its precious freight, for small and great,
Is the beautiful Christmas-tree.

The elm is a kind and goodly tree,
With its branches bending low;
The heart is glad when its form we see,
As we list to the river's flow.
Ay! the heart is glad, and the pulses bound,
And joy illumines the face,
Whenever a goodly elm is found,
Because of its beauty and grace.
But kinder, I ween, more goodly in mien,
With branches more drooping and free,
The tints of whose leaves, fidelity weaves,
Is the beautiful Christmas-tree.

The maple is supple, and lithe, and strong,
And claimeth our love anew,
When the days are listless, and quiet, and long,
And the world is fair to view.
And later,—as beauties and graces unfold,—
A monarch right regally drest,
With streamers aflame, and pennons of gold,
It seemeth of all the best.
More lissome, I ween, the brightness and sheen,
And the coloring, sunny and free,
And the banners soft, that are held aloft,
By the beautiful Christmas-tree.

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THE HORSE HOTEL.

BY CHARLES BARNARD.

THE GUESTS.

THE guests at this hotel are horses; red horses and white; fiery racers from the prairies of Illinois, and solemn dobbies from quiet farms in West Virginia. They come in squads of twenty and thirty, all the way from Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, and

sort of thing, or they find the stairs uncomfortable, and ask if the elevator is running, and otherwise exhibit a lofty spirit unbecoming in sensible horses. Or, worse still, perhaps they are quarrelsome and bite and kick their neighbors, or display other varieties of ill manners. Certainly, such silly creatures



THE ARRIVALS.

Pennsylvania, in the cars to New York. Then they go to a great stable on Second avenue, there to wait till they recover from the effects of their ride; and then they are invited to visit the great Horse Hotel on Third avenue, to see if they are fit company for the honorable residents of this palace for horses. Here are some of the guests just entering at the front door of the hotel and making the acquaintance of the manager. Perhaps when they arrive they do not take kindly to their private apartments, or they object to the bill of fare, or they express a dislike for the style of work they must do there. Perhaps they wish a private table and that

are not entitled to a residence in the Horse Hotel, and the housekeeper soon sends them away to some poorer horse residence, where they never will find half the luxuries and comforts of this popular house.

The good horses—those sensible ones who know what is good for a horse—stay in the hotel; and if they could tell what they think about it, doubtless there would be a mass meeting of the guests, with a vote of thanks to the managers, or at least a committee of three to wait on the housekeeper and chief cook, with an appropriate set of resolutions expressive of appreciation of their “kindness and

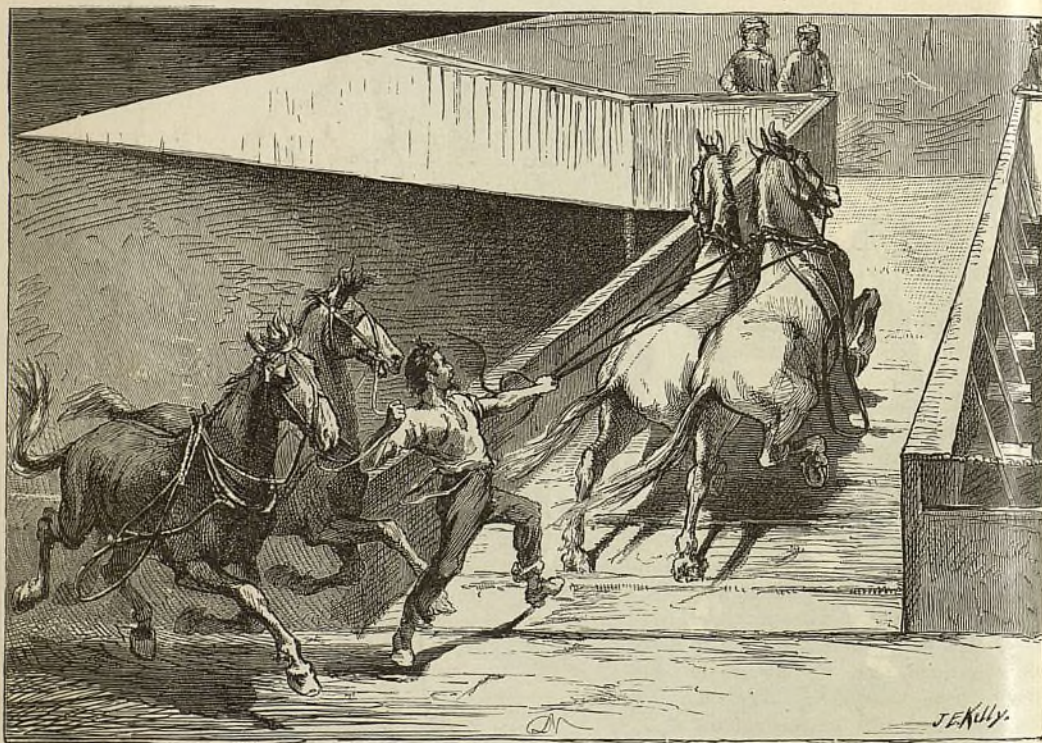
attention," and full of words like "elegant apartments," "choice viands," "politeness," "urbanity," etc., etc., etc.

THE HOTEL.

There are several large horse residences in New York. They each have beds for hundreds of horses, and the dining-tables are a hundred times larger than those of the "Fifth Avenue" and "Windsor" put together. The Horse Hotel, the largest one of all, is on Third avenue, between Sixty-fifth and Sixty-sixth streets. It is one vast iron building, six

assistants. Altogether, the hotel is unsurpassed for horse-luxury and elegance.

The guests destined to patronize the Horse Hotel come cantering up Third avenue in small companies, and with their heads loosely tied together to keep them from running away (they are strangers in the city, and are apt to be frightened at the noise and confusion of the streets), and a man rides on one, and leads the rest to show them the way to the house. When they reach Sixty-fifth street, they pause before a great iron building with eight doors, each as big as a barn-door, in the



GOING UPSTAIRS TO BED.

hundred feet long and two hundred feet wide, and covers an entire block. It is three stories high, with a basement, and two thousand horses belonging to the Third Avenue Railroad Company reside there in a style of splendor and luxury quite unknown to horses who have never traveled from their native farms. There are waiting and reception rooms, nice quarters for horses who happen to have a cold or a headache; there is a fine hospital for those who are very sick; there is a house surgeon and shoe-maker, to say nothing of a cobbler to put on new heels or otherwise repair their shoes; and there is a housekeeper and a whole army of waiters, and chamber-maids; also, a chief cook, with a dozen

front, and a fine portico in the middle. This is the Horse Hotel. One would think so, for there are dozens of fat and hearty fellows standing about the door, just exactly as men stand about the "Fifth Avenue" entrance, except that the horses do not smoke or pick their teeth in public—of course not; it is against the rules of the house. Then the manager appears, and politely invites them in, and they march through one of the great doors and enter the reception-room on the first floor. This room is a vast place, ten times as big as the largest meeting-house you ever saw. There are tracks all over the brick floor, and scores of horse-cars are coming in and going out all the time. There are horses

everywhere and some to go to space, in guests can height of and the glare and ager calls invited to shoe-maker after the dinner. C not particular stairs are course very a choice p try, thick a in this h comfortable, t that never of stairs in superior ki like those

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everywhere, some just coming in, others going out, and some standing patiently waiting for their turn to go to work. There is a great well, or open space, in the middle of the room, and here the guests can look up and down and see the whole height of the house. The place is cool and quiet, and the guests are glad to rest a moment from the glare and noise of the street. Presently the manager calls some of the waiters, and each horse is invited to go down-stairs and see the barber and shoe-maker, and to have a wash-up after the journey and get ready for dinner. Going up or down stairs is not particularly distressing. The stairs are wide and easy, and of course very properly carpeted with a choice pattern of hay-seed tapestry, thick and soft. In fact, the stairs in this house are so easy and comfortable, that even a strange horse that never walked up or down a pair of stairs in his life, thinks it only a superior kind of hill-side, very much like those on the old farm.

THE DRESSING-ROOMS.

When the new guests reach the bottom of the stairs, they find themselves in the queerest place imaginable. A vast room full of horses—rows and rows of horses, as far as you can see. The new horses think there must be horses to the right of them, horses to the left of them, and horses before and behind. Twelve hundred horses, all in one great room together. However, the new-comers have not much time to look about, for the waiters invite them to have their shoes taken off. This done, their feet are washed and dressed, and their coats are cleaned and brushed, and then they are marched off to get a new pair of shoes. After this they are taken through the long halls, and shown to their rooms. A light lunch is all ready, and when the guest has eaten it and taken a drink of water, he has a chance to look about and see what sort of company he is in.

When one goes to a hotel, one expects to receive proper attention; so at the Horse Hotel there are plenty of servants, but the queer thing about it is, that all the "maids" are men. Here is a picture of one of the pretty chamber-maids, and you cannot fail to admire the charming style in which she

puts up her back hair and the dainty gaiters she wears on her delicate feet. Every horse has a chamber-maid to wait on him, to make up his bed, to sweep out his room, and to set the table and brush his coat, and attend to all the other little horse-comforts. And excellent servants they are, for the guests look as nice and clean as possible. The coats are as glossy as silk, and every table has clean plates three times a day. Besides this, every horse can have a napkin if he asks for it politely.



THE CHAMBER-MAID.

THE CHAMBERS.

There are three sets of chambers in the Horse Hotel. One lot of over twelve hundred in the basement, and two more of over eight hundred in the third story. Those upstairs are divided into two sets. One is occupied by the horses that work in the night, and as these fellows sleep in the daytime, they have a separate place all by themselves, where the others will not disturb them by tramping

about in the corridors. The stalls or chambers are placed side by side in long rows the whole length of the great halls, and each horse stands facing another in the next row. The sides of each stall

winter, he has the best of care and all the luxuries any reasonable horse can expect. The new-comer may also amuse himself in looking about at the horses that are coming and going all the time, or



PREPARING DINNER.

are low, and the new-comer has a good chance to see what is going on. There is a broad aisle between every double row of stalls, and plenty of room for the horses to find their way about, or up and down the broad sloping stair-ways. Every set of stalls is numbered, and they do say that an old resident, if let loose in the hotel, could find his way to his own room without once asking the attendants to show him the way. Besides, all the horses belonging to one car are together, and they soon learn to know each other, and particularly the other horse in the same span. If the horse has a room in the basement, his stall is one of a short row running across the building. If he is upstairs, the rows run the other way; but in either case, there is plenty of light, and the air is sweet and comfortable, and free from bad draughts from the open windows. In the winter, every horse has a good blanket; but in summer, he does not need it; and in summer or

he may look out the window over the housetops or make friends with the sparrows. These fat and lively birds are everywhere, upstairs and down. They sit on the tops of the stalls, and fly up and down stairs, and visit all the rooms just as they please. They even help themselves to the horses' dinner, without once asking leave, and fill the whole hotel with the sound of their twittering, and no doubt the horses find a good deal of fun in watching them.

BREAKFAST, DINNER AND TEA.

The first week the country horse spends in the hotel, he tries the bill of fare to see if it agrees with him. It is a bountiful table, and the corn-steaks, the oat-puddings, and hay-dessert, are prime. Besides this, there are tip-top gravies of salt and water, and harmless coffee of pure Croton. Twenty-seven pounds of oats, hay, and corn, ground and

mixed, for divided in the fare e good fortune good relish every day. trip with t day. After the luxuri a day, and expected c supper-time hand-carts stalls, and as in this

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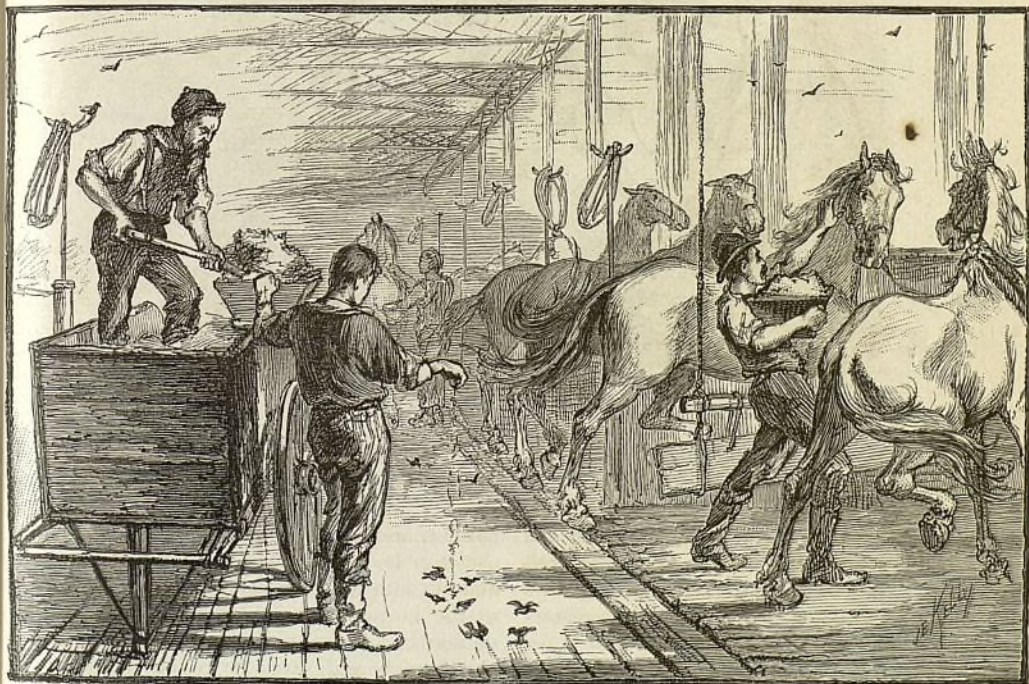
mixed, for every horse every day, and equally divided into three meals. The new guest thinks the fare excellent, and is mightily pleased with his good fortune, and eats it all up every time with a good relish. Of course he must go out for exercise every day, and for the first month he makes one trip with the cars to the Post-Office and back each day. After that, when he is well accustomed to the luxurious fare at his hotel, he makes two trips a day, and that makes his day's work,—all that is expected of him. If we visited the Horse Hotel at supper-time, we would see men dragging great hand-carts through the aisles between the rows of stalls, and giving each horse in turn his share, just as in this picture.

Everywhere the utmost neatness and care, everywhere the utmost attention, so that every member of the four-footed company be made perfectly comfortable. In one place horses are coming in from their work, warm and perspiring, and the waiters rub them down, and lead them to their places, but give

Everywhere hither and thither fly the sparrows, up and down stairs and over the horses' heads, and following the supper-carts about, to pick up a grain or two, as if they were the guests and the great house had been erected for their especial accommodation.

THE KITCHEN.

Down-stairs, in a place safe from fire, is the kitchen, where the dinners for the two thousand guests are prepared. In one room is a steam-engine turning swiftly all day, that the mills may grind the tons of corn and oats that are needed. In another room are great wooden tubs, where the corn and oats and cut hay are mixed together. The tubs are as clean as good boards and plenty of scrubbing can make them, and the horse-cooks scatter salt in them, and then pour in the good things and stir them all together till a great pudding is made, and then the waiters come with their trays-on-wheels and take it away to the hungry company up and down stairs. The picture on the



DINNER-TIME.

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them nothing to drink till they are cooled off and are perfectly rested and at ease; then they in turn have their supper. Other horses that have had an early supper are going out for a trip down town, and they look fat and hearty, as if on the whole they found the hotel comfortable and life reasonably agreeable.

opposite page shows how the cooks prepare the second course that follows the soup, and the one on this page represents the waiters attending the table. Every day the cooks must prepare breakfast, dinner and supper for two thousand horses, and a great mountain of food it makes—more hay and oats than two horses could drag in a hay-cart,

and more than enough to keep all the horses in some country villages for a whole year.

THE HOSPITAL.

Horses, like men, sometimes have their ill turns and fits of sickness; and the curious part of this is, that they take cold, and have sore throats and the rheumatism, and everything else that men are liable to have if they do not take care of themselves. So there is a doctor constantly on hand to look after the company, and to give them their pills and powders. The first sign that a car-horse exhibits of sickness is a slight lameness when at work. Do you think they whip him up and make him go

gone, the doctor's man dresses the patient's feet and wipes them dry, and the horse feels a hundred times better, and thinks he could try that long tramp down town again without misgivings. The shoemaker puts on new shoes, and the convalescent goes to his own room for a good supper and a night's rest, and to-morrow he will be all right again.

Another horse may decline his dinner, or refuse to rise early in the morning, or come home at night and droop his head and leave his supper untouched, and then the chamber-maids say the poor thing is really sick, and that the doctor must be called. The doctor comes and examines the



GIVING MEDICINE TO A REFRACTORY HORSE.

faster? No; they take him right to the hotel, and call the doctor. The medical man looks wise, feels of the poor fellow's feet, and says he is feverish and must have a warm bath. So the doctor's assistant takes off the patient's shoes, and leads him to the hospital for lame horses. This is a cool and shady room in the basement, and filled with comfortable stalls, and each having a big tub of warm water. Here the lame horse with fever in his feet has a foot-bath of warm water and hay-seed. He has tramped many a weary mile over the stones of Third avenue, and the bath is grateful and comforting, and he holds his feet in it with resignation and patience, as if he felt sure that the wise doctor knew what was best. Then, after the fever has

patient, and in a few moments he knows what is the trouble, and the horse is led away down-stairs and out into the yard to another part of the hotel, to the hospital for sick horses. Here he has a double bed given him, and the doctor writes a prescription and gives it to the nurse, and the medicine is prepared in a little apothecary shop attached to the hospital. Now, horses do not like medicines, and big doses are their particular dislike; so the wise doctor is a homeopathist, and administers his medicines in pills and powders that do not taste badly at all, and the horse takes them without knowing it. Sometimes a sick horse, like a sick boy, gets nervous and behaves in ways that are not nice, and then the nurse has to hold his

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head while the doctor gives him his medicine in a syringe. In this quiet and comfortable hospital, far away from all the noise of the street and the excitement of the hotel life, the sick horses soon recover, and then they go back to their work again; or if they are old and nearly worn out, they are placed in stalls by themselves, and offered for sale to any one who cares to buy them. They are not wholly worn out, and on a farm and at light work,

give one a better idea of the horse's brains, and show that he is often almost human in his feelings and instincts. Nearly all of the two thousand horses gathered here display a docile and amiable spirit, and actually seem interested in their work. They take the greatest interest in all that is going on in the hotel, and when it comes to real downright work in the traces, they certainly act as if they had consciences, as if they were proud and willing



A FOOT-BATH.

and with an occasional taste of green grass, they might live for years; so the farmers buy these old horses, and take them away to the country to spend the rest of their days in peace, far from noisy Third avenue and the wearisome jangle of the car-bells.

Some boys and girls fancy a horse a stupid creature, without an idea above oats. A walk through this vast building, with its hundreds of horses in rows beyond rows, with its great variety of animals from every part of the Union, will soon

to work, and wished to show that they appreciated the attention and kindness that were bestowed upon them. They sometimes quarrel among themselves, and display a curious jealousy of new-comers; but they rarely attempt to kick the waiters or bite the chamber-maids. Of course, they have to work, and to work hard; but they find in their great Horse Hotel every comfort in sickness or health, plenty to eat and drink, and the sparrows for company.

THE FLOCK OF DOVES.

BY CELIA THAXTER.

THE world was like a wilderness
Of soft and downy snow;
The trees were plumed with feathery flakes,
And the ground was white below.

Came the little mother out to the gate
To watch for her children three;
Her hood was red as a poppy-flower,
And rosy and young was she.

And then she hid by the pine-tree tall,
For the children's tones rang sweet,
As home from school, through the drifts so light
They sped with merry feet.

"Oh, Nannie, Nannie! See the fence
Alive with doves so white!"
"Oh, hush! don't frighten them away!"
They whisper with delight.



THE SNOW DOVES.

She took the snow in her cunning hands,
As waiting she stood alone,
And lo! in a moment, beneath her touch,
A fair white dove had grown.

A flock she wrought, and on the fence
Set them in bright array,
With folded wings, or pinions spread,
Ready to fly away.

They crept so soft, they crept so still,
The wondrous sight to see!
The little mother pushed the gate,
And laughed out joyfully.

She clasped them close, she kissed their cheeks,
And lips so sweet and red.
"The birds are only made of snow!
You are my doves," she said.

THE BOYS OF MY BOYHOOD.

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

THE conductor of ST. NICHOLAS has asked me for a talk with the boys who read this magazine. If she had not at the same time suggested a subject, I am pretty sure that I should not have complied with the request; but when she mentioned "The Boys of My Boyhood," there was something in the words which carried my mind back to the early years of my life, and made me think that I might be able to hold the attention of the readers of the ST. NICHOLAS for a little while in discoursing of those who began life with me.

The boys of the generation to which I belonged—that is to say, who were born in the last years of the last century or the earliest of this—were brought up under a system of discipline which put a far greater distance between parents and their children than now exists. The parents seemed to think this necessary in order to secure obedience. They were believers in the old maxim that familiarity breeds contempt. My own parents lived in the house with my grandfather and grandmother on the mother's side. My grandfather was a disciplinarian of the stricter sort, and I can hardly find words to express the awe in which I stood of him—an awe so great as almost to prevent anything like affection on my part, although he was in the main kind, and, certainly, never thought of being severe beyond what was necessary to maintain a proper degree of order in the family.

The other boys in that part of the country, my school-mates and play-fellows, were educated on the same system. Yet there were at that time some indications that this very severe discipline was beginning to relax. With my father and mother I was on much easier terms than with my grandfather. If a favor was to be asked of my grandfather, it was asked with fear and trembling; the request was postponed to the last moment, and then made with hesitation and blushes and a confused utterance.

One of the means of keeping the boys of that generation in order was a little bundle of birchen rods, bound together by a small cord, and generally suspended on a nail against the wall in the kitchen. This was esteemed as much a part of the necessary furniture as the crane that hung in the kitchen fireplace, or the shovel and tongs. It sometimes happened that the boy suffered a fate similar to that of the eagle in the fable, wounded by an arrow fledged with a feather from his own wing; in other

words, the boy was made to gather the twigs intended for his own castigation.

It has never been quite clear to me why the birch was chosen above all other trees of the wood to yield its twigs for this purpose. The beech of our forests produces sprays as slender, as flexible, and as tough; and farmers, wherever the beech is common, cut its long and pliant branches for driving oxen. Yet the use of birchen rods for the correction of children is of very great antiquity. In his "Discourse on Forest Trees," written three hundred years ago, Evelyn speaks of birchen twigs as an implement of the school-master; and Loudon, in his "Arboretum," goes yet further back. He says: "The birch has been used as the instrument of correction in schools from the earliest ages." The English poets of the last century make frequent mention of this use of birchen twigs; but in Loudon's time, whose book was published thirty years since, he remarks that the use of these rods, both in schools and private families, was fast passing away,—a change on which the boys both of England and the United States may well be congratulated,—for the birchen rod was, in my time, even more freely used in the school than in the household.

The chastisement which was thought so wholesome in the case of boys, was at that time administered, for petty crimes, to grown-up persons. About a mile from where I lived stood a public whipping-post, and I remember seeing a young fellow, of about eighteen years of age, upon whose back, by direction of a justice of the peace, forty lashes had just been laid, as the punishment for a theft which he had committed. His eyes were red, like those of one who had been crying, and I well remember the feeling of curiosity, mingled with pity and fear, with which I gazed on him. That, I think, was the last example of corporal punishment inflicted by law in that neighborhood. The whipping-post stood in its place for several years afterward, the memorial of a practice which had passed away.

The awe in which the boys of that time held their parents extended to all elderly persons, toward whom our behavior was more than merely respectful, for we all observed a hushed and subdued demeanor in their presence. Toward the ministers of the gospel this behavior was particularly marked. At that time, every township in Massachusetts, the State in which I lived, had its minister, who was

settled there for life, and when he once came among his people was understood to have entered into a connection with them scarcely less lasting than the marriage tie. The community in which he lived regarded him with great veneration, and the visits which from time to time he made to the district schools seemed to the boys important occasions, for which special preparation was made. When he came to visit the school which I attended, we all had on our Sunday clothes, and were ready for him with a few answers to the questions in the "Westminster Catechism." He heard us recite our lessons, examined us in the catechism, and then began a little address, which I remember was the same on every occasion. He told us how much greater were the advantages of education which we enjoyed than those which had fallen to the lot of our parents, and exhorted us to make the best possible use of them, both for our own sakes and that of our parents, who were ready to make any sacrifice for us, even so far as to take the bread out of their own mouths to give us. I remember being disgusted with this illustration of parental kindness which I was obliged to listen to twice at least in every year.

The good man had, perhaps, less reason than he supposed to magnify the advantages of education enjoyed in the common schools at that time. Reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic, with a little grammar and a little geography, were all that was taught, and these by persons much less qualified, for the most part, than those who now give instruction. Those, however, who wished to proceed further took lessons from graduates of the colleges, who were then much more numerous in proportion to the population than they now are.

The profound respect shown to the clergy in those days had this good effect—that wherever there was a concourse of people, their presence prevented the occurrence of anything disorderly or unseemly. The minister, therefore, made it one of his duties to be present on those occasions which brought people together in any considerable numbers. His appearance had somewhat the effect which that of a policeman now has at a public assembly in one of our large towns. At that time there was, in each township, at least one company of militia, which was required to hold several meetings in the course of the year, and at these, I remember, the minister was always present. The military parade, with the drums and fifes and other musical instruments, was a powerful attraction for the boys, who came from all parts of the neighborhood to the place at which the militia mustered. But on these occasions there was one respect in which the minister's presence proved but a slight restraint upon excess. There were then no tem-

perance societies, no temperance lecturers here, nor temperance tracts were ever distributed, nor temperance pledges given. It was, to be sure, esteemed a shame to get drunk; but as long as they stopped short of this, people, almost without exception, drank grog and punch freely without much fear of a reproach from any quarter. Drunkenness, however, in that demure population was not obstreperous, and the man who was overtaken by it was generally glad to slink out of sight.

I remember an instance of this kind. There had been a muster of a militia company on a church green for the election of one of its officers, and the person elected had treated the members of the company and all who were present to sweetened rum and water, carried to the green in pails, with a tin cup to each pail for the convenience of drinking. The afternoon was far spent, and I was going home with other boys, when we overtook a young man who had taken too much of the electo-toddy, and in endeavoring to go quietly home, had got but a little way from the green, when he fell in a miry place, and was surrounded by three or four persons, who assisted in getting him on his feet again. The poor fellow seemed in great distress, and his new nankeen pantaloons, daubed with the mire of the road, and his dangling limbs, gave him a most wretched appearance. It was, I think, the first time that I had ever seen a drunken man. I approached to pass him by, some of the other boys said to me, "Do not go too near him, for you smell a drunken man it will make you drunk." Of course I kept at a good distance, but not out of hearing, for I remember hearing him lament his condition in these words: "Oh dear, I shall die." "Oh dear, I wish I had n't drunk any!" "What dear, what will my poor Betsy say?" "What will poor Betsy said I never heard, but I saw him fling off in the direction of his home, and I continued on my way with the other boys, impressed with the salutary horror of drunkenness and a fear of drunken men.

One of the entertainments of the boys of my time was what were called the "raisings," meaning the erection of the timber frames of houses or barns, to which the boards were to be afterward nailed. Here the minister made a point of being present, and hither the able-bodied men of the neighborhood, the young men especially, were summoned and took part in the work with great alacrity. It was a spectacle for us next to that of a performance on the tight-rope, to see the young men standing steadily on the narrow footing of the beams at a great height from the ground, or as they stood and catch in their hands the wooden pins and the bolts flung to them from below. They vied with each other in the dexterity and daring with which they

went through with the work, and when the skeleton of the building was put together, some one among them generally capped the climax of fearless activity by standing on the ridge-pole with his head downward and his heels in the air. At that time, even the presence of the minister was no restraint upon the flow of milk punch and grog, which in some cases was taken to excess. The practice of calling the neighbors to these "raisings" is now discontinued in the rural neighborhoods; the carpenters provide their own workmen for the business of adjusting the timbers of the new building to each other, and there is no consumption of grog.

Another of the entertainments of rustic life in the region of which I am speaking was the making of maple sugar. This was a favorite frolic of the boys. The apparatus for the sugar camp was of a much ruder kind than is now used. The sap was brought in buckets from the wounded trees and poured into a great caldron which hung over a hot fire from a stout horizontal pole supported at each end by an upright stake planted in the ground. Since that time they have built in every maple grove a sugar-house—a little building in which the process of making sugar is carried on with several ingenious contrivances unknown at that time, when everything was done in the open air.

From my father's door, in the latter part of March and the early part of April, we could see perhaps a dozen columns of smoke rising over the woods in different places where the work was going on. After the sap had been collected and boiled for three or four days, the time came when the thickening liquid was made to pass into the form of sugar. This was when the sirup had become of such a consistency that it would "feather"—that is to say, when a beechen twig, formed at the small end into a little loop, dipped into the hot sirup and blown upon by the breath, sent into the air a light, feathery film. The huge caldron was then lifted from the fire, and its contents were either dipped out and poured into molds, or stirred briskly till the sirup cooled and took the form of ordinary brown sugar in loose grains. This process was exceedingly interesting to the boys who came to watch its different stages and to try from time to time the sirup as it thickened.

In autumn, the task of stripping the husks from the ears of Indian corn was made the occasion of social meetings, in which the boys took a special part. A farmer would appoint what was called a husking, to which he invited his neighbors. The ears of maize in the husk, sometimes along with part of the stalk, were heaped on the barn floor. In the evening, lanterns were brought, and, seated on piles of dry husks, the men and boys

stripped the ears of their covering, and breaking them from the stem with a sudden jerk, threw them into baskets placed for the purpose. It was often a merry time; the gossip of the neighborhood was talked over, stories were told, jests went round, and at the proper hour the assembly adjourned to the dwelling-house and were treated to pumpkin-pie and cider, which in that season had not been so long from the press as to have parted with its sweetness.

Quite as cheerful were the "apple-parings," which on autumn evenings brought together the young people of both sexes in little circles. The fruit of the orchards was pared and quartered and the core extracted, and a supply of apples in this state provided for making what was called "apple-sauce," a kind of preserve of which every family laid in a large quantity every year.

The cider-making season in autumn was, at the time of which I am speaking, somewhat correspondent to the vintage in the wine countries of Europe. Large tracts of land in New England were overshadowed by rows of apple-trees, and in the month of May a journey through that region was a journey through a wilderness of bloom. In the month of October the whole population was busy gathering apples under the trees, from which they fell in heavy showers as the branches were shaken by the strong arms of the farmers. The creak of the cider-mill, turned by a horse moving in a circle, was heard in every neighborhood as one of the most common of rural sounds. The freshly pressed juice of the apples was most agreeable to boyish tastes, and the whole process of gathering the fruit and making the cider came in among the more laborious rural occupations in a way which diversified them pleasantly, and which made it seem a pastime. The time that was given to making cider, and the number of barrels made and stored in the cellars of the farm-houses, would now seem incredible. A hundred barrels to a single farm was no uncommon proportion, and the quantity swallowed by the men of that day led to the habits of intemperance which at length alarmed the more thoughtful part of the community, and gave occasion to the formation of temperance societies and the introduction of better habits.

From time to time, the winter evenings, and occasionally a winter afternoon, brought the young people of the parish together in attendance upon a singing-school. Some person who possessed more than common power of voice and skill in modulating it, was employed to teach psalmody, and the boys were naturally attracted to his school as a recreation. It often happened that the teacher was an enthusiast in his vocation, and thundered forth the airs set down in the music-books with a

fervor that was contagious. A few of those who attempted to learn psalmody were told that they had no aptitude for the art, and were set aside, but that did not prevent their attendance as hearers of the others. In those days a set of tunes were in fashion mostly of New England origin, which have since been laid aside in obedience to a more fastidious taste. They were in quick time, sharply accented, the words clearly articulated, and often running into fugues in which the bass, the tenor, and the treble chased each other from the middle to the end of the stanza. I recollect that some impatience was manifested when slower and graver airs of church music were introduced by the choir, and I wondered why the words should not be sung in the same time that they were pronounced in reading.

The streams which bickered through the narrow glens of the region in which I lived were much better stocked with trout in those days than now, for the country had been newly opened to settlement. The boys all were anglers. I confess to having felt a strong interest in that "sport," as I no longer call it. I have long since been weaned from the propensity of which I speak; but I have no doubt that the instinct which inclines so many to it, and some of them our grave divines, is a remnant of the original wild nature of man. Another "sport," to which the young men of the neighborhood sometimes admitted the elder boys, was the autumnal squirrel-hunt. The young men formed themselves into two parties equal in number, and fixed a day for the shooting. The party which on that day brought down the greatest number of squirrels was declared the victor, and the contest ended with some sort of festivity in the evening.

I have not mentioned other sports and games of the boys of that day,—that is to say, of seventy or eighty years since,—such as wrestling, running, leaping, base-ball, and the like, for in these there was nothing to distinguish them from the same pastimes at the present day. There were no public lectures at that time on subjects of general interest; the profession of public lecturer was then unknown, and eminent men were not solicited, as they now are, to appear before audiences in distant parts of the country, and gratify the curiosity of strangers by letting them hear the sound of their voices. But the men of those days were far more given to attendance on public worship than those who now occupy their place, and of course they took their boys with them. They were not satisfied with the morning and afternoon services, but each neighborhood held a third service of its own in the evening. Here some lay brother made a prayer, hymns were sung by those who were trained at the

singing-schools, a sermon was read from the words of some orthodox divine, and now and then a word of exhortation was addressed to the little assembly by some one who was more fluent in speech than the rest.

Every parish had its tything-men, two in number generally, whose business it was to maintain order in the church during divine service, and who sat with a stern countenance through the sermon, keeping a vigilant eye on the boys in the distant pews and in the galleries. Sometimes, when he detected two of them communicating with each other, he went to one of them, took him by the button, and leading him away, seated him beside himself. His power extended to other delinquencies. He was directed by law to see that the Sabbath was not profaned by people wandering in the fields and angling in the brooks. At that time, law, no longer in force, directed that any person who absented himself unnecessarily from public worship for a certain length of time, should pay a fine into the treasury of the county. I remember several persons of whom it was said that they had been compelled to pay this fine, but I do not remember any of them who went to church afterwards.

For the boys of the present day an immense number of books have been provided, some of them excellent, some mere trash or worse, but scarce any are now read which are not of recent date. The question is often asked, What books had they to read seventy or eighty years since? They had books, and some of great merit. There was "Sanford and Merton," and "Little Jack;" there was "Robinson Crusoe," with its variations "The Swiss Family Robinson" and "The New Robinson Crusoe;" there was Mrs. Trimmer's "Knowledge of Nature," and Berquin's lively narratives and sketches translated from the French; there was "Philip Quarll," and Watts's "Poems for Children," and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and Mrs. Barbauld's writings, and the "Miscellaneous Poems" of Cowper. Later, we had Mrs. Edgeworth's "Parent's Assistant" and "Evenings at Home." All these, if not numerous, were at least often read, and the frequent reading of a few good books is thought to be at least as improving as useful in storing the mind and teaching one to think—as the more cursory reading of many. Of elementary books there was no lack, nor, as I have already intimated, any scarcity of private instructors, principally clergymen, educated at the colleges.

I have here set down such particulars as may occur to me of the employments, the amusements, and the studies amidst which the boys of my time grew up and were trained for the duties of man-

hood. Of course, there are few now who were a young man when their aged fathers lived.

They belong to a different country, perhaps, whose institutions have grown up since the time of our fathers' labor—labor, which has brought about the change of our day. This account of our fathers' task of forming the young men of our day, an advantage of our day, distinguished by an eminent man, Greece. A man in the foot- New York,

KNOWLEDGE. It stands k lands, with beyond, and shake their though pos spoken. It you see in the picture think so?

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hood. Of those who set out with me in life there are few now remaining; they are like old trees in a young wood, waiting for a high wind to snap their aged trunks and level them with the ground.

They became dispersed to different parts of the country, particularly the new States of the West, whose institutions they have helped to form. They had grown up, in the main, a conscientious generation—laborious, enterprising, strict in the performance of duty, and obedient to the laws; and on this account they were the very men to whom the task of forming new communities might be most advantageously committed. A few of them became distinguished above their fellows. One became an eminent Orientalist, and settled at Athens, in Greece. Another, with whom I used to contend in the foot-race, became one of the millionaires of New York, and died not long since full of days,

leaving an honored memory. A third, my school-fellow in preparing for college, retired from a prosperous mercantile career to become a lecturer on political economy and the author of valuable works on that science. One with whom I had a series of written disputations, migrated to Indiana and became one of its legislators. One was afterward the founder of the American Tract Society, and now, in the calm evening of a long life, employs himself in writing its history. Two went to the East as missionaries, and in the midst of their labors laid down their lives before the approach of old age.

Whatever may have been the merits or the shortcomings of the generation to which these men belonged, they are now with the past, and it is yet to be seen whether the different system now adopted in training the youth of our country will give it a better class of citizens.

THE SECRET DOOR.

(A Christmas Story of Two Hundred Years Ago.)

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

KNOWLE, in Kent, is an ancient manor-house. It stands knee-deep in rich garden and pasture lands, with hay-fields and apple-orchards stretching beyond, and solemn oak woods which whisper and shake their wise heads when the wind blows, as though possessed of secrets which must not be spoken. It is a real place, and the room which you see in the picture is a real room. That makes the picture much more interesting; don't you think so?

Very much as it looks to-day, it looked two hundred and thirty years ago, when Charles the First was king of England. That was the Charles who had his head cut off, you may remember. Blue Christmas smokes curled from the twisted chimneys in 1645, just as they will this year if the world lasts a month longer. The same dinnery fragrance filled the air, for good cheer smells pretty much alike in all ages and the world over. A few changes there may be—thicker trees, beds of gay flowers which were not known in that day; and where once the moat—a ditch-like stream of green water covered with weeds and scum—ran round the walls, is now a trimly cut border of verdant turf. But these changes are improvements, and in all important respects the house keeps its old look, undisturbed by modern times and ways.

In the same nursery where modern boys and girls eat, sleep and learn their A, B, C to-day, two children lived. You see them in the picture—little Ralph Tresham and his sister Henrietta. Quaint, old-fashioned creatures they would look to us now; but, in spite of their formal dresses and speech, they were bright and merry and happy as any children you can find among your acquaintances. Ralph's name was pronounced "Rafe," and he always called his sister "Hexie."

Christmas did not come to Knowle in its usual bright shape in 1645. Gloom and sadness and anxiety overshadowed the house; and though the little ones did not understand what the cause of the anxiety was, they felt something wrong, and went about quietly whispering to each other in corners, instead of whooping and laughing, as had been their wont. They had eaten their Christmas beef, and toasted the king in a thimbleful of wine, as usual, but their mother cried when they did so; and Joyce, the old butler, had carried off the pudding with a face like a funeral. So, after dinner, they crept away to the nursery, and there, by the window, began a long whispering talk. Hexie had something very exciting to tell.

"Nurse thought I was asleep," she said, "but I was n't quite; and when they began to talk I woke

up. That was n't wrong, was it, Rafe? I could n't sleep when I could n't, could I?"

"I suppose not; but you need n't have listened," said Rafe, whose notions about honor were very strict.

"I did pull the pillow over my ear, but the words would get in," went on Henrietta, piteously. "And it was so interesting. Did you know that there were such creatures as Bogies, Rafe? Dorothy thinks we have got one in our house, and that its

replied Hexie. "How long is it, brother?—since Humphrey went away, I mean. Wont he ever come back?"

"I asked Winifred once, but she only said, 'God knew,' that nothing had been heard of him since the battle when the king was taken. He might be dead, or he might be escaped into foreign parts;—and then she cried, oh, so hard, Hexie! Poor Humphrey! I hope he is n't dead. But, about the Bogie, how curious it must be to meet one! Oh,

"Rafe! Rafe! Go back! Ralph, stout the dim pass- ing where sh brother.

Very softly stole in. It with cedar-w tiful light-br wood, was c coats of arm the furniture: Dutch chairs walls. The s of red light far corners a The children this hour, an strange place they came t floor, and pl new seemed

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"LET US GO BACK," SHE CRIED.

hole is in the great gallery, because once when she was there dusting the armor, she heard a queer noise in the wall, and what else could it be? It eats a great deal, does the Bogie. That's the reason nurse is sure we have got one. It ate all the cold sheep's-head yesterday, and the day before half the big pasty. No victual is safe in the larder, the Bogie has such a big appetite, nurse says."

"I remember about the sheep's-head," said Rafe, meditatively. "Almost all of it was left, and I looked to see it come in cold; but when I asked, Joyce said there was none. Cold sheep's-head is very good. Do you remember how much Humphrey used to like it?"

"I don't remember exactly, it is so long ago,"

say, let us go to the gallery now, and see if we hear any strange noises there. Will you?"

"Oh, Rafe! I'm afraid. I don't quite like —" "But you can't be afraid if I'm there," said Rafe valiantly; "besides, I'll put on Humphrey's old sword which he left behind. Then if the Bogie comes—we shall see!"

Rafe spoke like a conquering hero, Hexie thought; so, though she trembled, she made no further objection, but stood by while he lifted down the sword, helped to fasten its belt over his shoulder, and followed along the passage which led to the gallery. The heavy sword clattered and rattled as it dragged on the floor, and the sound was echoed in a ghostly way, which renewed Hexie's fears.

"Rafe! Rafe! let us go back!" she cried.
"Go back yourself if you are afraid," replied Ralph, stoutly; and as going back alone through the dim passage seemed just then worse than staying where she was, Hexie stayed with her valiant brother.

Very softly they unlatched the gallery door, and stole in. It was a long, lofty apartment, paneled with cedar-wood, to which time had given a beautiful light-brown color. The ceiling, of the same wood, was carved, here and there, with shields, coats of arms, and other devices. There was little furniture: one tall cabinet, a few high-backed Dutch chairs, and some portraits hanging on the walls. The sun, not yet quite set, poured a stream of red light across the polished floor, leaving the far corners and the empty spaces formidably dusk. The children had seldom been in the gallery at this hour, and it looked to them almost like a strange place, not at all as it did at noonday when they came to jump up and down the slippery floor, and play hide-and-seek in the corners which now seemed so dark and dismal.

Even Rafe felt the difference, and shivered in spite of his bold heart and the big sword by his side. Timidly they went forward, hushing their footsteps and peering furtively into the shadows. Suddenly Hexie stopped with a little scream.

Close to them stood a huge suit of armor, larger and taller than a man. The empty eye-holes of the helmet glared out quite like real eyes, and the whole figure was terrible enough to frighten any little girl. But it was not at the armor that Hexie screamed; the iron man was an old friend of the children's. Many a game of hide-and-seek had they played around, and behind, and even inside him; for Humphrey had contrived a cunning way by which the figure could be taken to pieces and put together again; and more than once Rafe had been popped inside, and had lain shaking with laughter while Hexie vainly searched for him through all the gallery. This had not happened lately, for Rafe was hardly strong enough to manage by himself the screws and hinges which opened the armor; but he knew the iron man too well to scream at him, and so did Hexie. The object which excited her terror was something different, and so strange and surprising that it is no wonder she screamed.

Close by the armor, half hidden by a curtain of heavy tapestry, was an open door, where never door had been known to be. It stood ajar, and dimly visible inside was a narrow staircase winding upward.

"The hole of the Bogie!" gasped Hexie, clutching at Rafe's arm. He started, and felt for the sword. It rattled fearfully, and the sound com-

pleted Hexie's terror. She burst away, flew like a scared lapwing down the gallery, along the passages, and never stopped till she reached the nursery and her own bed, where, with two pillows and the quilt drawn over her head, she lay sobbing bitterly at the thought of Ralph left behind, to be eaten perhaps by the Bogie! Poor little Hexie!

Ralph, meanwhile, stood his ground. His heart beat very fast, but he would not run away,—that was for girls. It must be owned, however, that when a moment later the sound of muffled voices became audible down the stairs, he trembled extremely, and was guilty of the unmanlike act of hiding behind the curtain. He was only ten years old, which must plead his excuse with bigger boys who are confident that they could never, under any circumstances, hide themselves or be afraid.

The voices drew nearer, steps sounded, and two figures came out of the narrow door-way. Could there be two Bogies? No wonder they ate so much. But in another minute all thought of Bogies vanished from Ralph's mind, for in one of the figures he recognized his own sister Winifred.

Her companion was a man. There was something familiar in his form. It moved forward, and Ralph jumped so that the big sword rattled again. Bogie number two was his brother Humphrey, mourned as dead ever since the summer before, when so many brave gentlemen gave up their lives for King Charles at the battle of Naseby.

"What noise was that?" whispered Winifred, fearfully.

"Some sound from below," replied Humphrey, after listening a moment. "Must you go, Winnie?"

"I must, dear Humphrey. I dare not absent myself longer lest I be missed and suspected. Oh, if to-morrow were but over, and you safe on the French lugger and over the sea! I cannot breathe while this hiding and danger go on."

"I suppose I ought to be glad also," said Humphrey, ruefully; "but to me that French lugger means exile, and loneliness, and poverty, for the rest of my life, perhaps. Better have laid down my life with the rest at Naseby, in striking one last blow for the king."

"Don't, don't speak so!" protested Winifred, tearfully. "You are alive, thank God; and once these wars are over we may rejoin you, and have a happy home somewhere, if not in the land of our fathers. Now, dear Humphrey, have you all you need for the night?"

"Christmas cheer," said Humphrey, in a would-be cheerful voice. "Beef and ale,—what better fare could be? You are a gallant provider, my Winnie, and there is need, for since I have lain in that hole with nothing else to do, my appetite has ragged like a wolf. That sheep's-head was

wondrous savory. I say though, Winnie, what do the servants think of the famine I create in the larder?"

"Oh, the stupid creatures fancy that a Bogie has taken up his residence here. A very hungry Bogie, Joyce calls the creature!"

The brother and sister laughed; then they kissed each other.

"Good-night, dearest Winifred."

"Good-night, brother;" and Humphrey vanished up the stairs. Winifred lingered a moment; then, as if remembering something, opened the door again and ran after him. Ralph marked that she laid her hand on a particular boss in the carved wainscot, and pressed it in hard, whereon the door sprang open. He stole out, laid his hand on the same boss, and felt the spring give way under his touch. Some undefined idea of stealing in later, to make Humphrey a visit, was in his head; but he heard Winifred returning, and hurried out of the gallery. Putting back the sword in its place, he entered the nursery. No Hexie was visible, but a sobbing sound drew his attention to a tumbled heap on the bed.

"Is that you, Hexie? Why, what are you crying about?" pulling away the pillow which she held tight.

"Oh, Rafe! Then the Bogie did n't eat you, after all!" And Hexie buried her tear-stained face in his shoulder.

"Bogie! Nonsense! There are no such things as Bogies!"

"What was it, then, that lived up that dreadful stairs?"

"I can't tell you; only it was nothing at all dreadful. And, Hexie, don't say a word about that door to any one, will you? It might make great trouble if you did."

"I did tell Deborah, when she fetched the candle and asked why I cried, that I saw a strange door in the gallery," faltered Hexie, truthfully, though penitent.

"Oh! Hexie, how could you? I don't like Deborah, and her father is a crop-eared knave. Humphrey said so one day. How could you talk to her about the door, Hexie?"

"I—don't know. I was frightened, and she asked me," sobbed Hexie. "Will it do any harm, Rafe?"

"It may," said Rafe, gloomily. "But don't cry, Hexie. You meant no harm, at all events."

"Oh, don't speak so gravely and so like Joyce," said Hexie, much troubled. She cried herself to sleep that night. Deborah, who undressed her, asked many questions about the gallery and the door.

"It was very dark, and perhaps she mistook,"—that was all Hexie could be made to say. Ralph

was disturbed and wakeful, and slept later than usual next morning. He jumped up in a hurry and made what haste he could with dressing and breakfast, but it seemed as though they never took so much time before; and all the while he ate he was conscious of a stir and bustle in the house which excited his curiosity very much. Knocking—the sound of feet—something unusual was going on.

As soon as possible he slipped away from nurse and ran to the gallery. The door was half open. He looked in, and stood still with terror. Men, in brown uniforms and steel caps, were there sounding the walls and tapping the floor-boards with staves. The gallery seemed full of them, though when Rafe counted there were but five.

"This man of iron was, in all likelihood, a Malignant also," he heard one of them say, striking the armor with his fist.

"He is somewhat old for that. Methinks there is armor of the time of that man of blood, Harry the Eighth. Move it aside, Jotham, that we may search the farther panel."

So the heavy figure was thrust into a corner, and the men went on tapping with their wands. Rafe groaned within himself when he heard them declare that the wall sounded hollow, and saw them searching for a spring. Twenty times it seemed as though they must have lighted on the right place. Twenty times they just missed it.

"We were ill advised to come without tools," declared the man who seemed leader of the party.

"Come thou to my shop, Peter Kettle, and thou, Bartimeus and Zerrubabel, and we will fetch such things as are needful. Jotham, stay thou here, to see that no man escapeth from the concealment behind the wall."

So four of the men went away, leaving Jotham striding up and down as on guard. Presently came a shout from beneath the window:

"Jotham! our leader hath dropped his pouch in which are the keys of the smithy. Hasten and bring it to the outer door."

"Aye, aye!" answered Jotham, and, pouch in hand, he ran down the stairs. Now was Rafe's opportunity. Like a flash he was across the gallery, his hand on the boss. The door flew open, and he fell into the arms of Humphrey, who, sword in hand and teeth set, stood on the lower step of the staircase, prepared to sell his liberty as dearly as possible.

"Rafe! little Rafe!" he exclaimed.

"Hush! The man will come back," panted Rafe. "Come away—hide—oh, where?" Then with a sudden inspiration he dragged his brother toward the iron man. "Get inside," he cried. "They will never think of searching there! Oh Humphrey—make haste! Get inside!"

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There was no time to be lost. With the speed of desperation, Humphrey unscrewed, lifted, stepped inside the armor. Rafe slipped the fastenings together, whispered "shut your eyes," and flew back to his hiding-place. Just in time, for Jotham's step was on the stair, and next moment he entered the gallery, and resumed his march up and down, little dreaming that the man sought for was peeping through the helmet holes at him, not three feet away.

Presently the other soldiers came back with hammers and wrenches, and in a short time the beautiful wainscot, split into pieces, lay on the floor. Suddenly there was a shout. The secret door had flown open, and the staircase stood revealed. Four of the men, with pikes and pistols, prepared to ascend, while the fifth guarded the opening below.

At that moment Winifred entered the gallery from the farther end. She turned deadly pale when she saw the open door and the men.

"Oh! Heaven have mercy!" she cried, and dropped half fainting into a chair.

Rafe darted across the floor and seized her hand. "Hush," he whispered. "Don't say a word, sister. *He* is safe."

"He? Who?" cried the amazed Winifred.

But now voices sounded from above. The men were coming down. Winifred rallied her courage, rose, and went forward. She was very white still, but she spoke in a steady voice. Her two brothers, Humphrey in his hiding-place and little Rafe by her side, both admired her greatly.

"What is the meaning of this, Jotham Green?" she demanded. "By what warrant do you enter and spoil our house?"

"By the warrant which all true men have to search for traitors," said Jotham.

"You will find none such here," responded Winifred firmly.

"We find the lurking-place in which one such has doubtless lain," said Zerrubabel. "Where holes exist, look out for vermin."

"You are less than civil, neighbor. An old house like this has many strange nooks and corners of which the inhabitants may have neither use nor

knowledge. If your search is done, I will beg you to make good the damage you have caused as best you may, and with as little noise as possible, that my mother be not alarmed. Jotham Green, you are a good workman, I know. I recollect how deftly you once repaired that cabinet for us."

All the men knew Winifred, and her calm and decided manner made its impression. Jotham slowly picked up the fragments of the paneling and began to fit them together. The rest consulted, and at last rather sheepishly, and with a muttered half apology about "wrong information," went away, taking with them the injured woodwork, which Jotham undertook to repair. Rafe's first words after they disappeared were:

"Winifred, you must dismiss Deborah. It is she that has betrayed us."

"How do you know that, Rafe?"

Then it all came out. Winifred listened to the tale with streaming tears.

"Oh, Rafe, my darling, how brave you were! You played the man for us to-day, and have saved—I trust you have saved—our Humphrey. The men will not return to-day, and to-night the lugger sails."

And Humphrey was saved. Before morning, well disguised, he had made his way across country to a little fishing-port, embarked, and reached France without farther accident.

So that strange Christmas adventure ended happily. It was all long, long ago. Humphrey and Winifred and Rafe lived their lives out, and lay down to rest a century and a half since under the daisy-sprinkled English sod. Little Hexie died an aged woman, before any of us was born. But still the beautiful old manor-house stands amid its gardens and pasture lands, with the silvery look of time on its gray walls. Still the armed figure keeps guard beside the secret staircase, the tapestry hangs in the old heavy folds, evening reddens the cedar walls and the polished floor, and everything occupies the same place and wears the same look that it did when little Rafe played the man in that gallery, and saved his brother Humphrey, more than two hundred years ago.



THE LETTERS AT SCHOOL.

By M. M. D.



ONE day the letters went to school,
And tried to learn each other;
They got so mixed 't was really hard
To pick out one from t' other.

A went in first, and Z went last;
The rest all were between them,—
K, L and M, and N, O, P,—
I wish you could have seen them!

B, C, D, E and J, K, L,
Soon jostled well their betters;
Q, R, S, T—I grieve to say—
Were very naughty letters.

Of course, ere long, they came to words—
What else could be expected?
Till E made D, J, C and T
Decidedly dejected.

Now, through it all, the Consonants
Were rudest and uncouthest,
While all the pretty Vowel girls
Were certainly the smoothest.

And simple U kept far from Q,
With face demure and moral,
"Because," she said, "we are, we two,
So apt to start a quarrel!"

But spiteful P said, "Pooh for U!"
(Which made her feel quite bitter),
And, calling O, L, E to help,
He really tried to hit her.

Cried A, "Now E and C, come here!
If both will aid a minute,
Good P will join in making peace,
Or else the mischief's in it."

And smiling E, the ready sprite,
Said, "Yes, and count me double."
This done, sweet *peace* shone o'er the scene,
And gone was all the trouble!

Meanwhile, when U and P made up,
The Cons'nants looked about them,
And kissed the Vowels, for, you see,
They could n't do without them.

DOINGS OF THE "POLLY'S CHRISTMAS SOCIETY."

(As told by One of its Members.)

BY OLIVE THORNE.



WHAT started the thing, I don't remember. Oh, I believe Nell Taintor proposed it; anyway, it was splendid, and I'll tell you all about it.

We girls had a society, you know, and we had n't anything in particular to do; and Nell proposed that we should make something for Polly Stevens' Christmas.

Polly's a real nice girl, and used to go to our school,

but she fell on the ice last winter, and hurt her back, and she has to lie down all the time; she can't even stand up a minute.

Well, we used to go and see her as often as we could; but, of course, we had our lessons, and practicing, and other things, out of school; and so she used to get awfully lonesome, Nell said, because she could n't do much of anything, and she had read

every book Nell had,—Nell lived next door, and used to run in. And she staid alone ever so much, because her mother's a dress-maker, and has to go out, and she did n't have things very comfortable; the doctor's bills were so large, that her mother had as much as she could do to get along.

When Nell told us about her, we felt ashamed that we had n't been to see her more, and so we just got up a plan to give her a surprise. We gave our society a new name, "Polly's Christmas Society," or "P. C. Society," in public, so that every one should not know what it was, and we all went to work for her.

Kate Woodbury was president—splendid girl Kate is. She said she would make a nice wrapper for Polly, out of a blue dress of her own that she had burned a hole in; she knew her mother'd let her have it. Mattie Barker said she would give her a quilt, or spread, that she was making out of bright bits of silk. It was log-cabin pattern, and real pretty. Alice Burnett said she would make her a pretty rug to lay before her lounge; the floor was bare, and it would look so pretty. She knew how to make one out of round pieces of black and red and white woolen. You've seen them? A black one, about as big as a tea-cup, at the bottom, a red one, a little smaller, laid on that, and a quite small white one on top; all tied together with a tuft of red thread in the middle of the white one. Then, when she had lots of these made, she sewed them

all on an oval piece of old sacking, and it was real bright and pretty. You can shake the dust out of them.

Nell said Polly needed a curtain for the window at the head of her lounge; she had nothing but an old shade, and it was n't nice, so I said I would make her one like some I saw at my aunt's last summer. It was of unbleached muslin, with two wide stripes of bright red, and bright blue percale across the top and the bottom,—a little way apart, you know. It did n't cost much, and I had a dollar of my own, and it was ever so pretty. It looked like some foreign cashmere thing.

Well, we all went to work with a will. Nelly got Will, her brother, to make a lounge-frame, Polly had a horrid old hair-cloth sofa. He made it out of some timber they had in the yard. It was rough, of course, but stout I tell you; and we nailed some old bagging on it for a bottom, and made a nice soft cushion for it, and a big pillow, and covered the whole with real pretty chintz; and Mattie made a crocheted tidy for it, that could be washed. Oh, I forgot! John Burnett sawed out a lovely set of shelves, with his new jig-saw, and Kate Woodbury took an old stand out of their attic. It was good, and strong, but awfully old-fashioned; and it had two drawers, and leaves to let down. It was just the thing for Polly, because she could keep her things in the drawers, you see; and her shelves could stand on it. And I made a cover to fit it, out of Turkish toweling, the new-fashioned way, you know, with gay figures sewed on; and Alice brought a sweet little vase that she had, to hold flowers, or ferns and grasses, in winter. We knew Polly was very fond of flowers, and Nell said she had to keep them in a tea-cup.

Let me see, was that all? Oh, no; every girl collected all the nice books she could. We each gave one or two of our own, and asked the boys that knew Polly, and most all our mothers gave us one or two, so we had a real lovely library. I remember some of the books—"Undine," "Grim's Stories," "Hans Andersen's Works," a whole set (Johnny Burnett gave that; was n't he splendid!) and "Little Women," and "We Girls," and—oh, lots of others I can't remember, only all nice ones, and in good order. Mrs. Woodbury put in a lovely new Bible with clasps, and there were lots of poetry books; she's very fond of poetry.

And—let me think—Mattie's sister, who's been to Europe, gave her a most lovely photograph,—three little angels, or cherubs, or something. Oh, it was too sweet for anything! I've seen Polly look at it till she cried, and I wanted to myself, though I'm not good, like Polly.

We got a glass, and made a frame for it of cardboard, with delicate lichens glued on. You know

how? they're real pretty, are n't they? We went out in the woods to get them, and we brought home such beautiful mosses,—we tried to think of something to make of them, and at last we did. We got some of the nicest in a box, and covered it with fine pieces of glass cut the right shape to make a cover like a box, and fastened at the corners with colored paper gummed on. We found two ferns green yet, so late as that, and some partridge-berry, and Kate put in a slip of her Kenilworth ivy, and, perhaps you won't think so, but it was just lovely! and it grew all winter, and I believe Polly enjoyed more than anything, she watched it so much; she knew every leaf, she said.

Well, I believe that was all. These things took us some weeks to do, and we worked hard too, I tell you. We had hardly time to make our Christmas presents for our own folks, but I did get time to embroider that cushion for mamma; is n't it pretty? I did every stitch myself. But where was I? Oh, all this time the secret was kept nicely though a good many knew about it; and just before Christmas, one day Mrs. Stevens, Polly's mother, was cutting a dress for Mrs. Barker, and we all went over to tell her about it. Nell Taintor told her that we girls had a society, and had been making some presents for Polly.

Well, she cried! I do wonder why people cry when they're glad! She said she had been trying to get Polly something nice for Christmas, she had such a dull life, and she was so patient; but in spite of all she could do, everything she could earn was used up in doctor's bills and rent. She said she meant to make her a cake, at least, and Nell said, right off, that she could come into their house to make it, so that Polly should n't know.

We talked the thing over, and we decided that Mrs. Stevens should get Polly to bed early on Christmas Eve. There was a hall between the sitting-room and bedroom, and she thought Polly would n't hear us, and we were to go about eight o'clock to fix it all up for her, and then all meet there the next morning to see her surprise. All that day, Mrs. Stevens told us afterward, Polly was very low-spirited, though she tried to be cheerful, poor thing. She was a good girl, always; but she remembered that our school was getting ready for a festival and a Christmas-tree, and she could n't help thinking of last year, I suppose, when she was there, and had presents with the rest of us.

She did have a present on the tree, too, as well as the rest of us; and we took it with us when we went that night. It was a real nice work-box, with everything in it complete. Miss Murton made it. Polly was her pet scholar.

Well, we could hardly wait for eight o'clock, as you may imagine, and before the clock was done

thinking we were there. Polly was abed and asleep, Mrs. Stevens said, and we went right to work. The boys brought in the lounge, and put it in a pleasant corner of the room, and we girls fixed it up with its new quilt and nice big pillow; and we laid the rug down in front of it, and hung the curtain over the window; and put the stand, with its cover, and the book-shelves, at the head where she could reach it. And we put the moss-thing on it, and the vase filled with grasses, and ferns, and bitter-sweet on top of it. Then we filled the shelves with books, and hanging the picture where she could see it without moving. And then we trimmed the whole room with evergreens left from decorating our church. Over the door we put "Merry Christmas," in autumn leaves. Mrs. Taintor made it; she sewed the leaves upon white muslin, and it looked as though it was right on the wall.

We worked there, if you'll believe me, till twelve o'clock, and when we finished, it was just lovely. All the time Mrs. Stevens could hardly help a bit; she just sat in the corner and cried. I never saw such a woman.

We gave Mrs. Stevens the new blue wrapper, and told her to put it on Polly when she dressed her, and tell her the girls sent it to her so she would be all fine when we came. I was so excited I thought I should n't sleep a wink that night, but I did after all—slept like a log, and I had to hurry off before breakfast so as not to be late.

At seven o'clock we were all there—all we girls, I mean; Will and Johnny would n't go—and Mrs. Stevens went into the bedroom and dressed Polly, and brought her out. She was so thin and light that she was easily carried. Polly was so delighted with her pretty wrapper that she looked perfectly happy when she came in. The first thing she saw when her mother laid her down was us, and she began, "Oh, girls!" but at that minute she seemed to see something strange in the room. "Why, who—" she began, and stopped short, and looked around. She looked at everything—the walls, the picture, the stand and books, the mosses, the lounge itself; her chin began to quiver, and her face to work, and suddenly she just buried her face in the pillow and cried as hard as she could cry. I never thought of crying; and I'm sure I don't know why, but I found the tears running down my cheeks, and looked around, and every one of the girls was crying, too. It was the most ridiculous thing I ever saw, but I could n't help it. Soon we began to laugh, though, and make fun of our crying, and we would n't let Polly even try to say "thank you!"

Then we all went out into the hall and brought in our surprise for Mrs. Stevens. We told her we

had come to stay to breakfast, and every one of us had a basket full of good things from our own breakfasts—broiled chickens, breakfast rolls, hot coffee (Nell brought that from her mother's kitchen), cold meat, pickles, hot Saratoga potatoes (from Nell's), and ever so many things. We pulled out the table and spread it before Polly's lounge, and before long we sat down to a jolly breakfast. There was ever so much left, though.

Finally about ten o'clock we went away, and after we were gone Polly received the very best present of all from her mother. You see it worried her 'most to death that she could not help her mother. It was one thing that kept her back. And Mrs. Stevens had taken specimens of her knitting around to ladies who had little children, and had got orders for pretty bright

stockings for them; enough to keep Polly busy all winter. Each lady had furnished her own yarn, and there was a pile of lovely colored yarns for her to begin on.

Polly could knit beautifully, and I do believe the prospect of earning something to help her mother was the best present she had that day.

In the evening, when I was on my way to a Christmas party at Nell's, I passed by Polly's, and the curtain was not quite drawn. I



NELL BROUGHT THE COFFEE.

I could n't help just peeping in. There she lay half up on her elbows, a book in her hand, but not reading, looking at nothing, with the most lovely, happy look I ever saw. I've often wished I had a picture of her.

We were careful not to neglect Polly after that. From that day she was the happiest girl I ever saw, busy from morning to night, knitting or reading, or repeating poetry, which she learned by the page. She earned a good deal of money, and she knit so beautifully that she always had lots of orders ahead. Now her mother knits too, and takes in some work, but does not go out any more. I don't know any happier or nicer place to visit than Polly Stevens'.

I think that Christmas was the nicest one I ever had.

THE KINGDOM OF THE GREEDY.

(By P. J. STAHL.)

TRANSLATED BY LAURA W. JOHNSON.

PART II.

SOME of the envious or ill-tempered declared it would be impossible to cook the edifice which Mother Mitchel had built; and the doctors were,



MOTHER MITCHEL MAKES HER OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

no one knows why, the saddest of all. Mother Mitchel, smiling at the general bewilderment, mounted the summit of the tart; she waved her crutch in the air, and while her cat miowed in his

sweetest voice, suddenly there issued from the woods a vast number of masons, drawing waggons of well-baked bricks, which they had prepared in secret. This sight silenced the ill-wishers, and filled the hearts of the Greedy with hope.

In two days an enormous furnace was built around and above the colossal tart, which found itself shut up in an immense earthen pot. Thirty huge mouths, which were connected with thousands of winding pipes for conducting heat all over the building, were soon choked with fuel, by the help of two hundred charcoal burners, who, obeying a private signal, came forth in long array from the forest, each carrying his sack of coal. Behind them stood Mother Mitchel with a box of matches ready to fire each oven as it was filled. Of course the buildings had not been forgotten, and all was soon in a blaze.

When the fire was lighted in the thirty ovens, when they saw the clouds of smoke rising above the dome, that announced that the cooking had begun, the joy of the people was boundless. Poets improvised odes, and musicians sung verses without end, in honor of the superb prince who had been inspired to feed his people in so dainty a manner when other rulers could not give them enough, even of bread. The names of Mother Mitchel and of the illustrious engineer were not forgotten in this great glorification. No

to His Majesty, they were certainly the first of mankind, and their names worthy of going down with his to the remotest posterity.

All the envious ones were thunderstruck. The

tried to console themselves by saying that the work was not yet finished, and that an accident might happen at the last moment. But they did not really believe a word of this. Notwithstanding all their efforts to look cheerful, it had to be acknowledged that the cooking was possible. Their last resource was to declare the tart a bad one, but that would be biting off their own noses. As for declining to eat it, envy could never go so far as that in the country of the Greedy.

After two days, the unerring nose of Mother Mitchel discovered that the tart was cooked to perfection.

The whole country was perfumed with its delicious aroma. Nothing more remained but to take down the furnaces. Mother Mitchel made her official announcement to His Majesty, who was delighted, and complimented her upon her punctuality. One day was still wanting to complete the month. During this time the people gave their eager help to the engineer in the demolition, wishing to have a hand in the great national work, and to hasten the blessed moment. In the twinkling of an eye the thing was done. The bricks were taken down one by one, counted carefully, and carried into the forest again, to serve for another occasion.

The TART, unveiled, appeared at last in all its majesty and splendor. The dome was gilded, and reflected the rays of the sun in the most dazzling manner. The wildest excitement and rapture ran through the land of the Greedy. Each one sniffed with open nostrils the appetizing perfume. Their mouths watered, their eyes filled with tears, they embraced, pressed each other's hands, and indulged in touching pantomimes. Then the people of town and country, united by one rapturous feeling, joined hands, and danced in a ring around the grand confection.

No one dared to touch the tart before the arrival of His Majesty. Meanwhile something must be done

to allay the universal impatience, and they resolved to show Mother Mitchel the gratitude with which all hearts were filled. She was crowned with the laurel of conquerors, which is also the laurel of sauce, thus serving a double purpose. Then they placed her, with her crutch and her cat, upon a sort of throne, and carried her all round her vast work. Before her marched all the musicians of the town, dancing, drumming, fifing and tooting upon all instruments, while behind her pressed an enthusiastic crowd, who rent the air with their plaudits and filled it



THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

with a shower of caps. Her fame was complete, and a noble pride shone on her countenance.

The royal procession arrived. A grand stair-way had been built, so that the King and his Ministers

could mount to the summit of this monumental tart. Thence the King, amid a deep silence, thus addressed his people:

"My children," said he, "you adore tarts. You despise all other food. If you could, you would even eat tarts in your sleep. Very well. Eat as much as you like. Here is one big enough to satisfy you. But know this, that while there remains a single crumb of this august tart, from the height of which I am proud to look down on you, all other food is forbidden you on pain of death. While you are here, I have ordered all the pantries to be emptied, and all the butchers, bakers, pork and milk dealers, and fishmongers, to shut up their shops. Why leave them open? Why indeed? Have you not here at discretion what you love best, and enough to last you ever, *ever* so long? Devote yourselves to it with all your hearts. I do not wish you to be bored with the sight of any other food.

"Greedy ones! behold your TART!"

What enthusiastic applause, what frantic hurrahs rent the air, in answer to this eloquent speech from the throne!

"Long live the King, Mother Mitchel and her cat! Long live the tart! Down with soup! Down with bread! To the bottom of the sea with all beefsteaks, mutton-chops, and roasts!"

Such cries came from every lip. Old men gently stroked their chops, children patted their little stomachs, the crowd licked its thousand lips with eager joy. Even the babies danced in their nurses' arms, so precocious was the passion for tarts in this singular country! Grave professors, skipping like kids, declaimed Latin verses in honor of His Majesty and Mother Mitchel, and the shyest young girls opened their mouths like the beaks of little birds. As for the doctors, they felt a joy beyond expression. They had reflected. They understood. But—my friends!—

At last, the signal was given. A detachment of the engineer corps arrived, armed with pick and cutlass, and marched in good order to the assault. A breach was soon opened, and the distribution began. The King smiled at the opening in the tart; though vast, it hardly showed more than a mouse-hole in the monstrous wall. Then turning to his people, who, seated at long tables, were stuffing themselves like mad, he whispered in the ear of his Prime Minister, the first mathematician of the age:

"The train is fired. How long will it burn?"

"Six weeks, Your Majesty," replied the man of science.

At this answer, the King stroked his beard grandly. "All goes well," said he, "for him who knows how to wait."

Who can tell how long the feast would have

lasted, if the King had not given his command that it should cease? Once more they expressed their gratitude with cries so stifled that they resembled grunts, and then rushed to the river. Never had a nation been so besmeared. Some were daubed in the eyes, others had their ears and hair all sticky. As for the little ones, they were marmalade from head to foot. When they had finished their toilet the river ran all red and yellow, and was sweetened for several hours, to the great surprise of all the fishes.

Before returning home, the people presented themselves before the King, to receive his commands.

"Children!" said he, "the feast will begin again exactly at six o'clock. Give time to wash the dishes and change the table-cloths, and you may once more give yourselves over to pleasure. You shall feast twice a day, as long as the tart lasts. Do not forget. Yes! if there is not enough in this one, will even order ANOTHER from Mother Mitchel; for you know that great woman is indefatigable. Your happiness is my only aim." (Marks of universal joy and emotion.) "You understand? Noon, and six o'clock! There is no need for me to say, be punctual! Go, then, my children—be happy!"

The second feast was as gay as the first, and as long. A pleasant walk in the suburbs,—first exercise,—then a nap, had refreshed their appetites and unlimbered their jaws. But the King fancied that the breach made in the tart was a little smaller than that of the morning.

"'Tis well!" said he, "'tis well! Wait till to-morrow, my friends; yes, till day after to-morrow, and *next week*!"

The next day the feast still went on gayly; yet at the evening meal the King noticed some empty seats.

"Why is this?" said he, with pretended indifference, to the court physician.

"Your Majesty," said the great Olibriers, "a few weak stomachs; that is all."

On the next day there were larger empty spaces. The enthusiasm visibly abated. The eighth day the crowd had diminished one-half; the ninth, three-quarters; the tenth day, of the thousand who came at first, only two hundred remained; on the eleventh day, only one hundred; and on the twelfth—alas! who would have thought it?—a single one answered to the call. Truly he was big enough. His body resembled a hog'shead, his mouth an oven, and his lips—we dare not say what. He was known in the town by the name of Patapouf. They dug out a fresh lump for him from the middle of the tart. He quickly vanished in his vast interior, and he retired with great dignity, proud to maintain the honor of his name and the glory of the Greedy Kingdom.



But the ne
no more.
cumbered, and
country, was
soon known t



MASTER PATAPOUF.

But the next day, even he, the very last, appeared no more. The unfortunate Patapouf had succumbed, and, like all the other inhabitants of the country, was in a very bad way. In short, it was soon known that the whole town had suffered agonies

that night from too much tart. Let us draw a veil over those hours of torture. Mother Mitchel was in despair. Those Ministers who had not guessed the secret dared not open their lips. All the city was one vast hospital. No one was seen in the

streets but doctors and apothecaries' boys, running from house to house in frantic haste. It was dreadful! Dr. Olibriers was nearly knocked up. As for the King, he held his tongue, and shut himself up in his palace, but a secret joy shone in his eyes, to the wonder of every one. He waited three days without a word.

The third day, the King said to his Ministers:

"What! Your Majesty, *must* we eat it all?"

"You *must*!" sternly replied the King; "you *MUST*! By the immortal beefsteaks! not one of you shall have a slice of bread, and not a loaf shall be baked in the kingdom, while there remains a crumb of that excellent tart!"

"What misery!" thought these poor people. "That tart forever!"



THE MERE SIGHT OF THE TART MADE EVERYBODY ILL.

"Let us go now and see how my poor people are doing, and feel their pulse a little."

The good King went to every house, without forgetting a single one. He visited small and great, rich and poor.

"Oh, oh! Your Majesty," said all, "the tart was good, but may we never see it again! Plague on that tart! Better were dry bread. Your Majesty, for mercy's sake, a little dry bread! Oh, a morsel of dry bread, how good it would be!"

"No, indeed," replied the King. "*There is more of that tart!*"

The sufferers were in despair. There was only one cry through all the town—"Ow! ow! ow!"—for even the strongest and most courageous were in horrible agonies. They twisted, they writhed, they lay down, they got up. Always the inexorable colic. The dogs were not happier than their masters; even they had too much tart.

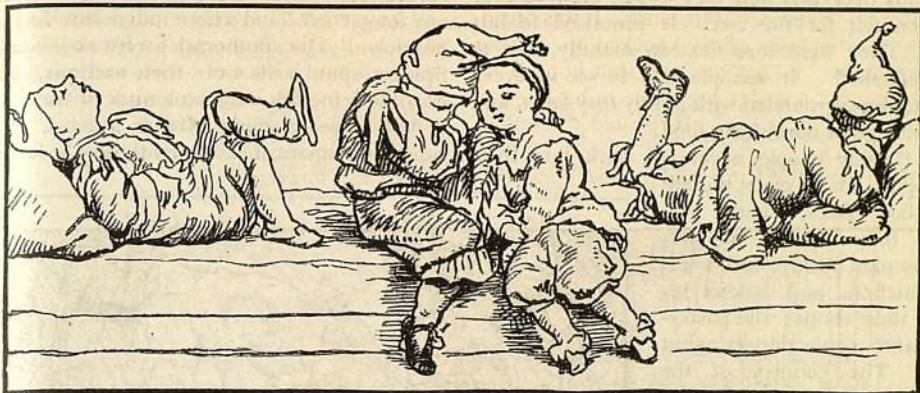
The spiteful tart looked in at all the windows. Built upon a height, it commanded the town. The mere sight of it made everybody ill, and its former admirers had nothing but curses for it now. Unhappily, nothing they could say or do made it any

smaller; still those miserable people, with their heads over their eyes, at the sight of it they felt it a terrible burden.

In the morning the King remained in his heart bled at the lesson if it were torture. When cured, little fasting alone pronounced words, "Woe the King sent with—the in—" "Ah!" cried the King, "the tart, and the tart! Better—"

A few, who wished, shut themselves to eat a bit of food; but they could not—mouthful.

At length, one day when their punishment was over enough to be forgotten, the length cure was at hand. The Mother Mitre of her color of her excellent so family. The



"ow! ow! ow!"

smaller; still formidable, it was a frightful joke for those miserable mortals. Most of them buried their heads in their pillows, drew their night-caps over their eyes, and lay in bed all day, to shut out the sight of it. But this would not do; they knew, they felt it was there. It was a nightmare, a horrible burden, a torturing anxiety.

In the midst of this terrible consternation, the King remained inexorable during eight days. His heart bled for his people, but the lesson must sink deep, if it were to bear fruit in future. When their pains were cured, little by little, through fasting alone, and his subjects pronounced these trembling words, "We are hungry!" the King sent them trays laden with—the inevitable tart.

"Ah!" cried they, with anguish, "the tart again! Always the tart, and nothing but the tart! Better were death!"

A few, who were almost famished, shut their eyes, and tried to eat a bit of the detested food; but it was all in vain—they could not swallow a mouthful.

At length came the happy day when the King, thinking their punishment had been severe enough, and could never be forgotten, believed them at length cured of their greediness. That day he ordered Mother Mitchel to make in one of her colossal pots a super-excellent soup, of which a bowl was sent to every family. They received it with as much rapture as

the Hebrews did the manna in the desert. They would gladly have had twice as much, but after their long fast it would not have been prudent. It was a proof that they had learned something already, that they understood this.

The next day, more soup. This time the King allowed slices of bread in it. How this good soup comforted all the town! The next day there was a little more bread in it, and a little soup-meat.



THE HAPPY DAY.

Then for a few days the kind Prince gave them roast beef and vegetables. The cure was complete.

The joy over this new diet was as great as ever had been felt for the tart. It promised to last longer. They were sure to sleep soundly, and to wake refreshed. It was pleasant to see in every house, tables surrounded with happy rosy faces, and laden with good nourishing food.

The Greedy people never fell back into their old ways. Their once puffed-out, sallow faces, shone with health; they became, not fat, but muscular, ruddy, and solid. The butchers and bakers reopened their shops; the pastry-cooks and confectioners shut theirs. The country of the Greedy was turned upside down, and if it kept its name, it was only from habit. As for the tart, it was forgotten. To-day, in that marvelous country there cannot be found a paper of sugar-plums or a basket of cakes.

It is charming to see their red lips and their beautiful teeth. If they have still a king, he may well be proud to be their ruler.

Does this story teach that tarts and pies should never be eaten? No; but there is reason in all things.

The doctors alone did not profit by this great

revolution. They could not afford to drink wine any longer in a land where indigestion had become unknown. The apothecaries were no less unhappy. Spiders spun webs over their windows, and their horrible remedies were no longer of use.

Ask no more about Mother Mitchel. She was ridiculed without measure by those who had adored



JOY IN THE KINGDOM.

her. To complete her misfortune, she lost her cat. Alas for Mother Mitchel!

The King received the reward of his wisdom. His grateful people called him neither Charles the Bold nor Peter the Terrible, nor Louis the Great, but always by the noble name of Prosper I., the Reasonable.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE STOCKINGS.

BY SYDNEY DAYRE.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Last Christmas we had a Christmas-tree—we always hung up our stockings before. On Christmas morning of the baby's stockings was gone, and we could n't find it anywhere. But yesterday it turned up in the funniest place. You never could guess where, so I must tell you. It was tucked into one of the pigeon-holes of grandfather's desk. He found it there on Christmas morning; and as he can't see very well, he thought it was a pen-wiper some of us had put there to surprise him. And this letter, directed to you, was in the foot of the stocking. No one can tell how it ever could have got into grandfather's desk; but you know a great many wonderful things do happen on Christmas Eve!—Yours truly,

MAY MERRIFIELD

I HAVE a piteous tale to tell,—and where, I should like to know,
But to the good ST. NICHOLAS, should a baby stocking go?
I thought if I told our family wrongs, in good old-fashioned rhyme,
You'd fix the matter up, somehow, before next Christmas-time.
Perhaps you're wondering how it is I look so very bright,
All covered up with pretty stripes of red and blue and white?
Well, when the stockings came last Fall, in brown and navy blue,
Mamma declared, for baby they would never, never do!
The sober things might answer to be worn by Will or May,

But the dimpled darling Lewie's should glow like a summer's day.
So grandma got her needles out, and began me, so I've heard;
And with every stitch she knit, wove in a smile or loving word.

And how I gather round the cunning feet you ought to see!
Why, the toes are like pink sea-shells, and dimpled is each knee!
I've hugged the dainty things with a clasp so warm and tight,
That old Jack Frost has never had a chance to take a bite.
But I must hurry on to show how, on last Christmas night,
The stockings of this family received a dreadful slight.
I'll tell you what my father said—he'll tell it best, I know,
Though I am getting old myself—(there's a big hole in my toe).

I heard him sadly groan that night—his name is Gray Lambswool;
My mother, Mrs. Fleecelined, sighed as though her heart were full.
"Ah me!" he cried, "that Christmas Eve should now be passing o'er,
And I and mine be lying here upon the bedroom floor!
I thought we'd all be hanging up along the chimney there;
How wonderful the things we held last Christmas, I declare!
Such gay embroidered slippers, done in beads and Berlin wool,
With meerschaum, studs, and smoking-cap, till every part was full.
My eldest son there, Seal Brown, ought to have his foot this minute
Pressed out of all its comely shape by treasures crowded in it,—
With ball and top, and soldiers with trumpet, sword and gun,
And everything, besides, a boy would need for Christmas fun.

"And next to him Miss Navy Blue would hang, and proudly hold
A little chain and locket, and a ring of shining gold,
A tiny, tinkling music-box, and, standing over all,
With such fine clothes, and real hair, the very loveliest doll!
And stumpy, dumpy Redstripe would lovingly embrace
A stumpy, dumpy baby, with a smiling rubber face,
A glowing coral necklace, a rattle too, methinks,
And sugar-plums among them, just to fill up all the chinks.
But ah! 't is hard for stockings to fall on times like these,
When all the world is going mad about its Christmas-trees.
We've been a faithful family; I've served my master well;
I've not a darned hole anywhere, as any eye may tell."

So now you see the reason I have spun a yarn so long—
I want to get St. NICHOLAS to right this fearful wrong;
I want his prancing reindeer to tear through all the land,
And bring him to each chimney, to fill, with liberal hand,
The stockings blue, red, brown and gray,—the stockings great and small,—
The ribbed, the striped, the plain, the plaid,—the stockings short and tall;
And if you now are weary of the grievances I sing,
Just cry, "Oh, *hang* those stockings!"—that will be the very thing.



A CLOCK IN THE SKY AT NIGHT.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

THERE are some old churches in England which have clocks showing the time with only one hand—the hour hand. I dare say that it will seem very strange to active and busy minds in America that such clocks as these should still continue in existence. A slumberous place it must be, truly, where men are content to know time by the hour, and to take no note of minutes. Or, if that is not really the way of it, still it must be a strangely backward world where such clocks, once sufficient for their purpose, have not yet been replaced by time-measures better suited to active, business-like folks. When such clocks were more common, and house-clocks and watches less used (and probably very seldom in order), it would have been useful to know what I am now going to tell you about a clock in the sky,* though at present the knowledge will help rather to teach young folks the stars, than to show them how to learn the time from the stars; for the clock I have to describe has only one hand, and not only so, but that hand goes the wrong way round, and only once round in a day.

The first step toward a knowledge of the stars should be the recognition of the pole-star, because the pole of the heavens being the point round which all the stars are seemingly carried, so soon as we know the stars around the pole, we have a center, so to speak, from which we can pass to other groups until we know them all. Once known, the pole-star can always be found by the learner, supposing he observes the heavens always from the same station; for it lies always in the same position (or so nearly so that the change can scarcely be noticed). If, for example, you have once been shown, or have found out for yourself, that from a certain spot in your garden, or from a certain window in your house, the pole-star can be seen just above a certain chimney or tree, then at any time, on any night when the sky is clear, if you betake yourself to that spot, or look through that window, you will see the pole-star over its accustomed chimney or tree. It is there, indeed, all the time, whether the sky be clear or cloudy, whether it be day or night. Not only does a knowledge of the pole-star give you a known central-point whence to proceed to others, but it gives you the means of knowing where lie the cardinal points round the

horizon; for, of course, when you face the pole-star, the north lies before you, the south behind you, the east on your right, the west on your left.

But to find the pole-star, it is well to begin with the dipper. This well-marked group includes two stars which are called the "pointers," because they point to the pole-star. The dipper is so conspicuous and well-marked a group that it is easily learned and cannot easily be forgotten. Although not very near the pole, it is yet not so far from it as to range very widely over the heavens; and if you look toward the north at any hour of any clear night you will seldom require many seconds to find the familiar set of seven bright stars, though at one time it is high above the pole, at another close to the horizon, now to the right of the pole, and anon to the left. In England the dipper never sets; in America it partly sets, but still can be recognized (except at stations in the most southern States) even when partly below the horizon.

Let us inquire, first, where the dipper is to be looked for, and in what position its stars are placed at various hours all the year round. Of course, in a general sense, the dipper lies always toward the north. The student, therefore, will not, like "Bird o' Fredum Sawin'," "w'el roun' about sou'-west' to find it. Still, it saves trouble to have some idea where and how the group will be placed, especially if the night of observation is half clouded, so that all the seven stars are perhaps not seen at once.

The dipper lies low down to the north (as shown at I in Fig. 1) at about six in the evening of December 21st. The seven stars are marked, for convenience of reference, with the Greek letters by which astronomers know them, namely: α (Alpha), β (Beta), γ (Gamma), δ (Delta), ϵ (Epsilon), ζ (Zeta), and η (Eta). The two stars α and β , which form the side of the dipper farthest from the handle, are called the pointers, because they point (as the arrow shows) toward the pole-star marked I in the picture. This star is easily distinguished in the heavens, because it is much brighter than any in its immediate neighborhood. It is not at the true pole of the heavens, which lies where the two cross-lines of the picture intersect. Consequently, the pole-star goes round the pole, though in a very

* We find traces in the writings of old times that the stars were used to show the time. For instance, the "first carrier" in Shakespeare's "King Henry IV." (part i., act ii., scene i.) says, "An 't be not four by the day, I'll be hanged; Charles' Wain is over the new chimney,"—Charles' Wain being the group of seven bright stars which is commonly called in America "the dipper."

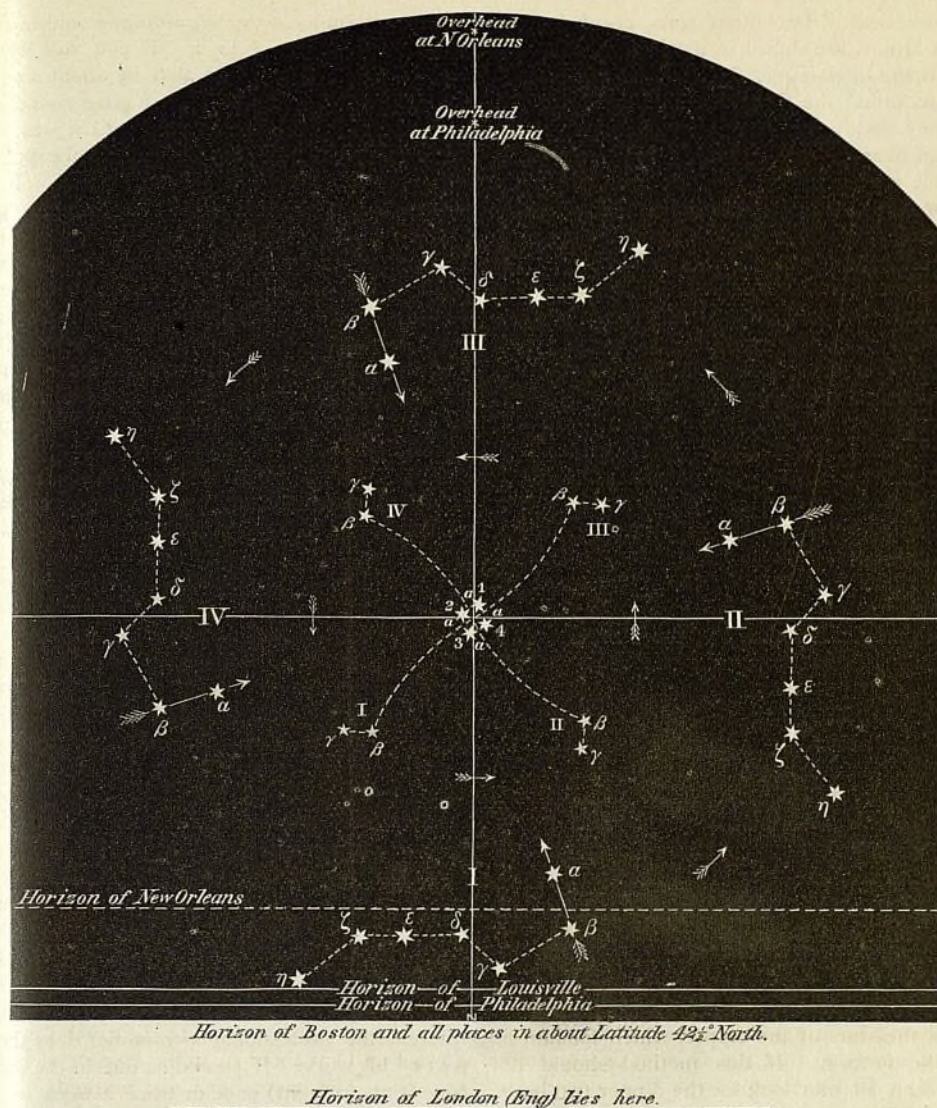


FIG. 1. SHOWING THE VARYING POSITIONS OF THE DIPPER, THE POLE-STAR, AND THE GUARDIANS OF THE POLE, VIZ. AT

I, 1, and 1, respectively,	at 8 P. M. Nov. 22; at 9 P. M. Nov. 6; at 10 P. M. Oct. 22; at 11 P. M. Oct. 6; midnight Sept. 21.
II, 2, and II, "	at 8 P. M. Feb. 19; at 9 P. M. Feb. 5; at 10 P. M. Jan. 21; at 11 P. M. Jan. 5; midnight Dec. 21.
III, 3, and III, "	at 8 P. M. May 21; at 9 P. M. May 8; at 10 P. M. April 23; at 11 P. M. April 8; midnight March 23.
IV, 4, and IV, "	at 8 P. M. Aug. 23; at 9 P. M. Aug. 7; at 10 P. M. July 22; at 11 P. M. July 7; midnight June 22.

small circle; * it is shown in four different positions, it belongs. The seven stars of the dipper belong to the constellation (or star group) called Ursa Major, or the Greater Bear; while the pole-star belongs to the constellation called Ursa Minor, or

The actual distance of the pole-star from the pole is about two and a half times the apparent diameter of the moon; so that the pole-star appears to go round in a circle having a diameter exceeding five times the apparent diameter of the moon. This is a much smaller circle, however, than most persons would suppose from this description, for the mind unconsciously overestimates the size of the moon. The three stars forming the belt of Orion will afford a very good idea of the range of the pole-star around the pole; the stars to the right and left of the middle star of the belt representing almost exactly the relative positions of the pole-star on the right and on the left of the pole of the heavens. Or the matter may be thus stated: Orion's belt just about measures the distance between 2 and 4, or between 1 and 3, in Fig. 1. A star placed at the true pole would make, with stars at 2 and 4 (Fig. 1), a set just like the belt of Orion.

the Lesser Bear. Two other stars, also belonging to Ursa Minor, are shown in the picture, at 1, with their proper Greek letters, β (Beta) and γ (Gamma). They are called the "guardians of the pole," because they circle around it as though keeping watch and ward over the axle-end of the great star-dome. The best way, perhaps, to remember where the guardians are to be looked for, is to notice that the four stars ζ , ϵ , δ , and β of the dipper are nearly in a straight line, and that if a square be supposed to be set up on this line, as shown in Fig. 2 (on the side toward the pole), the guardians lie close to that corner of the square which is opposite the pointers. You cannot easily fall into any error as to the four stars of the dipper, to be used in thus finding the guardians of the pole, for they are the only four which lie nearly in a straight line. But to make assurance doubly sure, notice that the star ζ , which lies at one end of the line of four stars, has a companion close by (as shown in Fig. 2). Thus we have at one corner of the square the pointers, at another the double star ζ , and at the next corner the guardians.

The dipper, as I have said, is in position I at about six o'clock in the evening of December 21st. The pole-star is at this time placed as at 1, a little above and to the right (or east) of the true pole. The guardians are at 1. The dipper is now at its lowest; but, as the picture shows, all the seven stars are visible at all places in the latitude of Philadelphia. The dotted line, however, which represents the horizon of New Orleans, shows that in that latitude only one star of the seven can be seen, namely α ,* the pointer nearest to the pole. This star is so bright, that even as far south as New Orleans our description of the position of the dipper will serve as a sufficient guide to find the pole, if only the Southerner who uses it notices how Fig. 1 presents the stars of the dipper, which for him lie below the horizon. If this method should not suffice, then let him look for the dipper two hours later, by which time all the other stars except ζ and η will have moved round so far toward position II as to be visible at New Orleans,— ϵ and γ lying almost on a horizontal line very near indeed to the horizon.

If on any night toward the end of December, you were to watch the northern heavens from about six o'clock, when the dipper is as at I Fig. 1, until about midnight, you would see the dipper move steadily round till it had reached the position marked II. The guardians of the pole would by that time have reached the position II; and the pole-star, though it would seem to you to be in the

same position as at the beginning, would in reality have shifted from 1 to 2. If you still went on watching, you would find that by about six in the morning the dipper would have gone round in the direction shown by the arrows until it was in the position marked III, high up above the pole and not very far from the point overhead. If your watch had begun earlier in the evening, say at about five, when the sky is already quite dark (in December), you would have seen the dipper in a position between I and IV (but nearer to I); and in the course of the entire night, that is from evening twilight until daybreak, the dipper would have gone more than half way round, from this last named position to a position somewhat farther round (in the direction shown by the short arrows) than III.

But in order to see the dipper in these different positions, and also in that portion of its course (on either side of IV) which in December it traverses

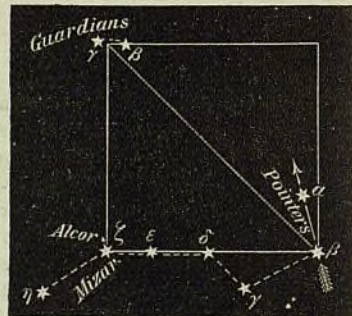


FIG. 2. SHOWING HOW THE GUARDIANS OF THE POLE MAY BE FOUND WHEN THE DIPPER IS KNOWN.

during the day-time, it is not necessary to keep long watch upon the group, or to study the heavens during those "wee sma' hours ayont the twal" wherein the professional astronomer does the best part of his work. If you come out in the evening (say at about eight) once or twice a week on clear nights, all through the winter half of the year, and a little later during the summer months, you will see the dipper and all the polar groups carried right round the pole. For though, speaking generally, it may be said that they complete a circuit once in every day, yet in reality they gain about four minutes' motion in the twenty-four hours, and thus go further on little by little night after night—gaining an hour's motion in about a fortnight, two hours' motion in a month, twelve hours' motion (or half the complete circuit) in half a year, until finally, at the end of the year, they have gained a complete circuit.

* This little star is called by country folks in England "Jack-by-the-Middle-Horse," the stars ϵ , ζ , and η representing the three horses of the "wain," or wagon. The small star was a test of eyesight among the Arabians. It is, however, very easily seen. The star ζ is called Mizar, its companion Alcor.

Thus at eight o'clock on or about November 23d, the dipper is at I, the guardians of the pole are at I, and the pole-star is at 1. At eight o'clock on or about February 19th, the dipper is at II, the guardians are at II, the pole-star is at 2. At the same hour on or about May 21st, the dipper is at III, the guardians are at III, the pole-star is at 3. And lastly, at the same hour on or about August 23d, the dipper is at IV, the guardians are at IV, the pole-star is at 4.

It is because of this steady turning motion or rotation around the pole of the heavens, that the

stars of the dipper (say, for instance, the pointers) form as it were a clock in the sky, by which the astronomers at any rate, though also any one who is willing to give a little attention to the matter, can tell the hour within a few minutes on any night in the year.

A few observations made in this way on a few nights during the course of the year, will give a clearer idea of the steady motion of the star-dome (resulting in reality from the earth's steady rotation on her axis) than any amount of description either in books or by word of mouth.

LÉON MATURIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY C. F. JACKSON.

THE snow was falling thickly and steadily, and the evening shadows were gathering so closely around the house that Léon and Annette were glad to turn from the window where they had been for the last half hour, and nestle down together in one corner of the big fire-place. There was no lamp or candle in the room, but the large fire of peat and brushwood sent forth a ruddy glow, which brightened everything immediately around it, while an occasional leaping flame would suddenly bring into view some more distant object, and send the shadows chasing each other into the farthest corner of the low kitchen.

The pot was boiling over the fire, and Mère Maturin was walking backward and forward preparing supper.

"See, Léon," whispered Annette, "how funny grandma's cap looks on the wall! When she goes over to the cupboard it is quite small, and when she comes nearer here it grows up, up, half way over the ceiling. Look, there it is now, just like one of Maître Caussin's hay-mows in July!"

"Yes, and see the spinning-wheel change and turn as if the fairies were spinning on it!"

"Do they ever, Léon? Perhaps they are doing it now. Oh, if we could see them!"

"You little silly," replied her brother. "Who ever saw fairies Christmas Eve? If it were mid-summer now! St. John's Eve is the time for them. See here, Annette, if you are very good from now till St. John's Eve,—if you do everything I want you to,—if, if," said Léon, wishing to make as good a bargain as possible, "if you always drive Blan-

chette home from pasture when I want to play with George, if you will always get grandmother the cresses when I don't want to go to the brook for them, I will show you the fairies on that night; that is," added the boy, thinking, perhaps, he had better not promise too much, "I will let you go with me to the big stones in the middle of the wood yonder, just at midnight, and there—Maître Caussin's Joseph told me so—you will be sure to see them."

"Oh, Léon, I will do anything for you if you will but let me see them! But it is so long to wait; perhaps grandmamma knows if one can see them any other time. Grandmother" (raising her voice), "do the fairies ever come Christmas Eve, and do they ever turn spinning-wheels to help people?"

"Nay, child, who ever heard of fairies then?" said Mère Maturin, "and if they did take the trouble to turn spinning-wheels, it would not be for idle folk like you! Come and put the dishes on table, for the pot is boiling, and it is time we had supper."

Annette speedily obeyed, and there was no more talk of fairies for an hour. After that, the dishes being all washed and put away, and grandmother seated in the chimney-corner with her knitting, the children took their places, side by side, on the hearth opposite to her, and began to plead with her for some legends and stories, such as they loved to hear.

Léon and Annette lived in Brittany, in a little old cottage not far from the sea, and a few miles

from the town of St. Malo. Their eldest and only brother, Louis, had gone as a soldier two years before, and was at Toulon with his regiment. Once in a great while they heard from him, and his last letter but one had told them he was married. They were looking for a letter from him now, for it was six months since the last one came, and they said: "Louis will surely send us a message for Christmas."

This Christmas Eve, the father and mother had gone into St. Malo, to be present at the midnight mass and Christmas morning service, after which they were to come home, and the children had been left with their grandmother. Since sunset, the snow, which had been gathering overhead all day, had begun to fall, and was rapidly covering up the well-beaten road, on which for many weeks no fresh snow had fallen.

"Tales, tales," said the old woman, "you have heard them all many times, my children. I have no new stories for you."

"Then tell us old ones, dear grandmamma!"

"They say, then, little ones, and I have heard it ever since I was but half your size, that on the holy Christmas Eve, when the hour of midnight strikes, all the oxen and cows and asses can speak like us human creatures, because they stood by when the Blessed Mary laid the Holy Babe in the manger," and the old woman made the sign of the cross devoutly.

"But is it true, grandma?" said little Annette, eagerly.

"I cannot say for myself, as I never heard them speak, child; but why should not poor brutes have a voice given them for once for sake of that blessed night, and that they may praise God? There was Antoine," the old woman went on, murmuring to herself, "sat up on purpose to hear them one night, and at twelve he went out to the stable, but the poor fool made such a clattering in undoing the door, that the beasts in St. Malo might have heard him through their sleep, so the ass and the cow were well warned, and never a word would they speak before him; and they were wiser than some folk if they had secrets to talk about, for everything Antoine heard he went straight and told it; and, indeed, I believe he could not have helped it, if he knew he was to swing for it the next minute; but he is dead now, like many a one I once knew. May he rest in peace!"

"But did you ever know any one else who tried it," cried both the children at once.

"Only Pierre. Pretty Madeline, old Jacques the miller's daughter, waited up one Christmas Eve, and, when midnight drew near, she was too afraid all at once to stir out in the dark alone for anything so strange and wonderful, so she sent Pierre, her

cousin. He had heard nothing, he said when he came back; but nobody thought that counted for much, for though Pierre was a clever fellow enough, and could even read in the newspapers all by himself, without the priest to help him, everybody knew he would n't have heard the church bells, if they had all rung at once and he in the tower, if he were thinking of Madeline; and that same evening did n't the miller—Jacques was lame then—ask him to give him his crutch, and put a stick on the fire, and did n't Pierre put the crutch on the fire and give Jacques the stick, and Madeline was but just in time to pull the crutch out of the flames, and it was scorched ever after. So you see he was not much to be depended on, till he married Madeline and settled down.

"Madeline was only a goose-girl, but she was a stout, comely maid, with cheeks like roses, and Pierre from a boy had always been fond of her. He taught her to read while she was minding the geese, and there never was a storm so bitter that Pierre was n't glad to face it if he could only help Madeline home with her geese. Ah, they've risen a bit since that day, for Pierre turned out a thrifty fellow, and — The saints shield us! Léon, what was that?"

"I heard nothing but the night-wind blowing," said Léon, gravely. But Annette clung to her grandmother, and the grandmother laughed lightly to think how slight a thing startled her in her old days.

The little girl listened for some time longer, while Mère Maturin wandered on, telling old stories of the people she had known in her youth, but Léon was strangely silent. A thought was working in his brain. Why should not he, that very night, find out with his own ears if this were true? He would not tell Annette, for she might be afraid and cry or make a noise, and spoil all, and he would succeed no better than did Antoine, whom his grandmother knew. So when Mère Maturin said it was time to go to bed, he undressed, and said his prayers, and climbed up to his little mattress in the loft. He had grown too big for it, but it was the best he had, and his sleep was always sound. Grandmother and Annette would soon be asleep in the room off the kitchen, and Léon lay in bed watching the faint glimmers and shadows that fell on the loft stairs from the remains of the fire that burned low in the wide kitchen chimney. They had had a larger fire than usual, for it was very cold weather and Christmas Eve, and Mère Maturin had said, "We must be warm to-night, if we are cold all the rest of the winter." He kept his eyes open for some time, but fell asleep at last, and started awake again in a sudden fright, lest the magic hour had slipped away from him in

his sleep, and he would have a whole year to wait before he could try his chance again. The clouds had all cleared away, and the moon was shining brightly in through the diamond-shaped panes in the little window. Léon slipped out of bed and into his clothes, and then softly crept down the stairs. He could just see the face of the old

covered by several inches of snow, and in a few minutes he was at the door.

Very softly now, Léon, or Blanchette will lift her head and look at you out of her large, gentle brown eyes, and old Jeanette will move her long ears and snuff danger near, and you will spoil it all.

So gently he undid the door, so quietly he stole in and stood in the shadow, that neither cow nor ass could be disturbed, yet surely something has aroused and affrighted them both. Léon listened breathlessly. Suddenly both the animals beside him moved uneasily. Presently, from outside the stable, came clearly and distinctly on the night air the bray of an ass. It made Léon start more than when Jeanette answered it from within the stable with another bray.

He was only frightened for a moment, however, and then he turned and went out of the door to see who this midnight visitor could be. There was nothing in the yard; but he crept along by the fence, and when he reached the gate, there, standing in the moonlight, was an ass, her head pushed far over the gate, and her long ears bent forward, listening for some answer to her summons. There was a saddle on her back, but no one on it.

For a moment, Léon paused. He knew she had not come there all alone, but that probably somewhere along that lonely country road she had parted from her burden. The nearest house was four miles off, and

clock in the corner, and he was in time. It wanted five minutes of twelve. He crossed the kitchen so softly that he did not disturb his grandmother and sister, and, unfastening the door, stood alone out in the night. Léon was a brave boy, so no thought of fear came to him, but he shivered in the nipping winter air, and pulled his cap further down over his ears. He could easily see by the moonlight where the path to the stable ought to be, although it was

in a different direction from that by which the ass had come, for Léon saw her footprints in the snow. He might have to walk far ere he should find those whom she had carried, but if he did not go—if he waited till daylight—it might be too late for help to reach those whom cold and snow had perhaps overcome. He opened the gate, then fastened it securely behind him, and gently turned the ass around. To his surprise she made no



PIERRE HELPING MADELINE HOME WITH HER GEES.

objection, but somewhat wearily retraced her footsteps in the snow.

They did not have to go far, however. A few yards from the house the road turned, and crossed a little stream where was a bridge; beyond this was a hollow, and then came woods. At the entrance to these woods was one of those way-side shrines which you often see in France, where was an image of the Virgin with the infant Saviour in her arms; beneath this, on the white snow, lay something dark, and when she reached it, the ass stood perfectly still. Léon came up to her, and stooping down by this dark mass upon the snow, saw lying there a young woman, unconscious, with a baby in her arms.

What was the boy to do? His stout arms could not lift the inanimate form. There was no one but his grandmother and Annette within call, and they would be but little help to him. Yet something must be done. Léon felt her. She was not quite cold, and the baby, wrapped in the mother's cloak and clasped to her breast, was still warm. Léon tried to make the ass kneel down. She did it readily enough, as if she were accustomed to it, and understood the need now. Then he laid his warm cheek against the girl's and breathed into her lips and called to her, and strove in every way to rouse her.

She stirred, but did not open her eyes. The baby, however, awoke and cried. That cry did more to fully arouse the mother's consciousness than anything else, and to Léon's joy she murmured, "Hush, my darling!" Then he called aloud to her, and at last tried to take the baby from her arms. She opened her eyes then, but half understandingly, and with great difficulty obeyed Léon's words when he told her to rise. She could not stand, but Léon got her upon the saddle, and putting one arm around her to hold her firmly there, he guided the ass down the road and over the bridge to the gate. They arrived there safely, though many times on the way Léon thought they would not.

He ran into the house and woke Annette and his grandmother. It was some time before he could make them understand, but at last they did. Fortunately there were still hot embers on the hearth, and Annette heated a little milk, which they poured down the poor woman's throat. This brought her to herself enough for them to lead her into the house, where the warmth soon revived her. Léon put more wood on the fire, which soon gave out a good heat, while Annette and the grandmother warmed blankets and put about the woman and child, and rubbed the mother's cold limbs. When they had quite recovered, and had partaken of bread and milk, Mère Maturin would not allow

them to speak, but put them in her own bed and left them to sleep.

The first red streaks of dawn were seen in the eastern sky before Léon had quite satisfied his grandmother and sister on this wonderful adventure. Then he went back to bed, and did not wake till the Christmas sun streamed in at his window, and he heard Annette calling out her greeting to him from the foot of the stairs.

Their strange visitors slept till quite late in the morning, and had not yet appeared when the father and mother came home. You may be sure there was much to tell and hear about this odd adventure of Léon's, and then Père Maturin held up a letter from Louis, a Christmas letter, which made the children dance with joy. In the midst of it all, their visitor came into the kitchen from the inner room, her baby in her arms, and looking quite bright again after her rest. She was very small, so tiny that Léon wondered that such a stout boy as he was should have had so much trouble in lifting her on to the ass, and she looked very young indeed. Then she told them her story.

Her husband was a soldier. He had met her at Toulon, her native place, and married her there. She had continued to live at her father's till he died, leaving her a little money. Her husband's regiment was ordered to Algeria soon after, and as she had no relations in Toulon or anywhere else, he thought it best to send her and her child to his mother in Brittany. He had written home some time before he left, and said he knew his father would meet her at St. Malo, as he had requested in his letter. But when she reached there after her long journey, she did not find him, and, being a stranger in the place, she thought the best thing she could do would be to hire an ass, and take the straight road to her husband's home. The landlord at the inn in the town where she had stopped to inquire the way, had told her that she could not fail to find the house; but the snow had come on and hidden the path, and she grew wearied. They wandered out of the way many times, sometimes finding the road, and then losing it again, till, worn out, she had fallen from the ass right below the shrine in the road. "When I looked up, and saw the gentle face smiling down upon me, I thought," said she, "Heaven would have pity on me and my baby, and I said my prayers, and had just fallen asleep, when the good God sent you, Léon, to wake me. And now, dear friends, I will not trouble you more; if you will kindly tell me where the Père Maturin lives I will go and find him, and my Louis and I will bless you always in our prayers."

"Père Maturin! Louis!" they all exclaimed; and then followed such explaining, and laughing,

and crying, and kissing as never was known before. At last, when all was quiet, the father read Louis' letter to them, and it was the one they ought to have received long before, telling them his Marie was coming to them, and would they love and care for her and the baby for his sake?

Oh, how happy they all were together, and how pleasant that the joy should come to them on Christmas Day!

When dinner was over, and they had said everything they could think of about this wonderful adventure, and had admired little Marguerite, Annette suddenly exclaimed:

"Léon! did the ass and the cow speak?"

"I did n't hear them," said Léon, shaking his head ruefully; "but the ass did everything but speak when she looked at me over the gate, and then took me to Marie."

"Yes," said his mother, "and though there is nothing in the idle tale to speak of, you may be sure God led the ass to you, Léon, and taught her how to make her wants known to you, though it was not by speech; and He cared for Marie and her babe, for the sake of the Holy Child, laid in His mother's arms in the stable among oxen and asses that first Christmas Night."

SOME ORIENTAL SPORTS THAT I SAW.

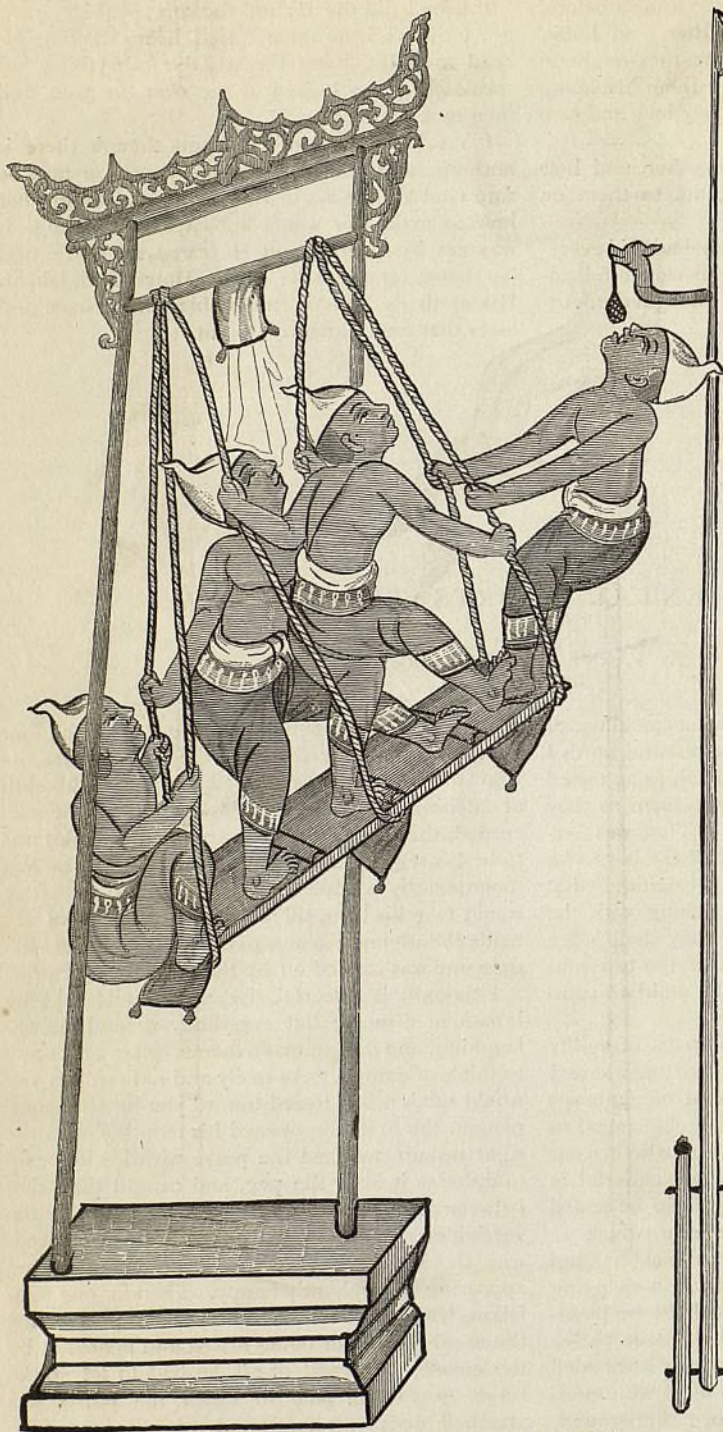
BY FANNY ROPER FEUDGE.

"I SHOULD like to see a boy beat *me* at catching; or a man either, as for that," were the boastful words I heard uttered by a twelve-year old lad, as he tossed aloft two balls at once, and caught them as they descended, one with each hand. That was certainly very well done; but let me tell the boys who read the ST. NICHOLAS of some "catching" that I have seen in far-off lands,—catching with the mouth instead of the hands,—and they shall judge whether my boastful young friend of the two balls would be likely to carry off the palm amid *all* competitors.

The first time I witnessed these feats of agility was at the palace of the King of Siam, where I had been dining. His favorite band of gymnasts were in attendance that day, and he challenged us to see their exploits, and then tell him whether our countrymen could do anything more wonderful in the way of climbing and catching. So he seated our little party on an elevated platform, where we could see readily the movements of the actors, and the first thing that met our view was a swinging stage attached to two slender poles that were planted perpendicularly in the ground. About twelve paces off was another pole, to which was suspended by a funny hook a silk net purse filled with gold. The purse was full forty feet above the ground, while the stage swung about five feet lower, and was kept swaying to and from the pole that held the purse, by the action of a long rope pulled by men

standing on the ground. On the stage stood four men, and as it veered toward the money purse, he who stood nearest was allowed one trial of his skill at catching the purse with his mouth. If he succeeded, the money (about sixty dollars in gold) was to be his reward, and he might descend, as he had mounted, by a rope ladder; when the next one would take his turn, till all who wished to do so had made the attempt; a new purse being supplied each time one was carried off by the teeth of a victor.

I thought it a fearful risk, and almost held my breath in dismay; but everybody around me was laughing, and the gymnasts themselves did not seem to think of danger. As easily and naturally as you would catch a ball tossed toward you by your companion, the first man opened his mouth just at the right instant, touched the purse with his lower lip to dislodge it from the peg, and caught the string between his teeth, just as his time was up, by the veering away of the stage. Several others followed, with the same success, each loudly cheered, and appearing triumphantly happy. Then for one poor fellow, who failed to catch the coveted prize, came the usual penalty of being hissed and hooted at by the crowd; but worst of all, he had to let go the stage, grasp the pole to which the purse was attached, and, with hands and legs entwined, slide down as best he could to the ground. I thought, of course, he would fall; but he let himself down as readily as a monkey or a squirrel could have done,



CATCHING THE PURSE. (DRAWN BY A SIAMESE ARTIST.)

and appeared too crestfallen at the disgrace he had incurred to care about the loss of the money,

and sometimes four others. These walked, jumped and danced upon the body of their prostrate com-

or even the danger of a descent by that bare pole. Of course there were only a few seconds of time for him to seize the pole as the stage swung away and had he halted or hesitated at all, he must inevitably have been dashed to pieces.

A native artist drew the scene for me, but failed in giving an idea of the great height of the poles.

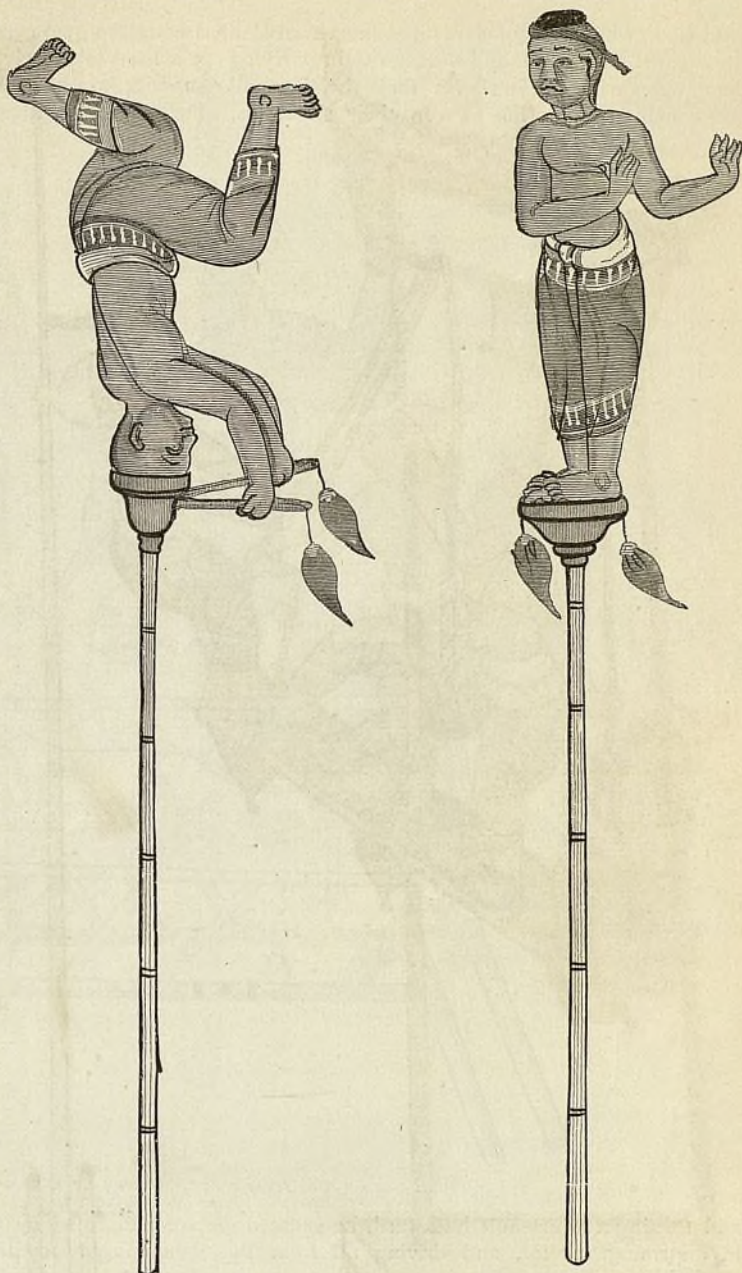
In another game, two poles forty feet high were erected five feet apart. On the top of each was a small platform sufficient to afford standing-room for a single man. When the performance began, a man stood on one platform with his feet upward, and on the other stood one in his natural position. As soon as the signal was given, the two actors changed places and positions at the same time; so that the one who had stood on his head on the platform nearest to me, passed his comrade and came down on his feet on the platform farther off. This exchange was repeated some twenty times or more, without the pause of a single moment; and when these retired, the same feat was repeated by other gymnasts.

Then came a game in which four lances or spears were placed points upward at the four corners of a bench or table, sixteen inches wide and about four feet long. At regular intervals along the center, were eight or ten shorter spears, immediately over which, with the points touching his bare back, lay a man, who in this position supported the weight of two,

grade. Some somersault coolly sea his head a tea and dr cheroots one of the struck in prostrate jumped o man, as over the s to feel an jarring m was told wound wa weight wa the heels backward, gravity m fectly main ally, sword of spears, done, they zontally, w ward towa Some o dancing v The danc metallic w about his wire one e was attach of the strin an iron r this was p on which t his various somersault and put hi ner of ludic finally ast leaping fr floating ab a huge f shallow w cord prev touching t he threw l rope, and himself wi each hand down, and as if runn and then t est to him leaped from

rade. Sometimes they turned somersaults, and at last they coolly seated themselves on his head and knees, called for tea and drank it, then lighted cheroots from a brand which one of them reached over and stuck in the mouth of the prostrate man, as they all jumped off together. The man, as he lay motionless over the spears, seemed not to feel any pain from these jarring movements, and I was told that no sign of a wound was ever left. The weight was borne mainly by the heels and palms bent backward, and the center of gravity must have been perfectly maintained. Occasionally, swords were used instead of spears, and when this was done, they were placed horizontally, with the edges upward toward the actor's body.

Some of the feats in rope-dancing were odd enough. The dancer always had a metallic wire fastened firmly about his waist, and to this wire one end of a strong cord was attached. The other end of the string was made fast to an iron ring, and through this was passed the rope upon which the actor performed his various feats. He turned somersaults, danced, fenced, and put his body into all manner of ludicrous attitudes; and finally astonished us all by leaping from the rope and floating about in mid-air, like a huge fish floundering in shallow water, the ring and cord preventing him from touching the ground. Then he threw himself back on the rope, and walked up and down, carelessly fanning himself with a bunch of feathers which he held in each hand. Presently the feathers were thrown down, and the actor rushed up and down the rope as if running for a wager, but pausing every now and then to toss a joke or a bon-bon at those nearest to him; and, when we least expected it, he leaped from his rope and disappeared with a bound.

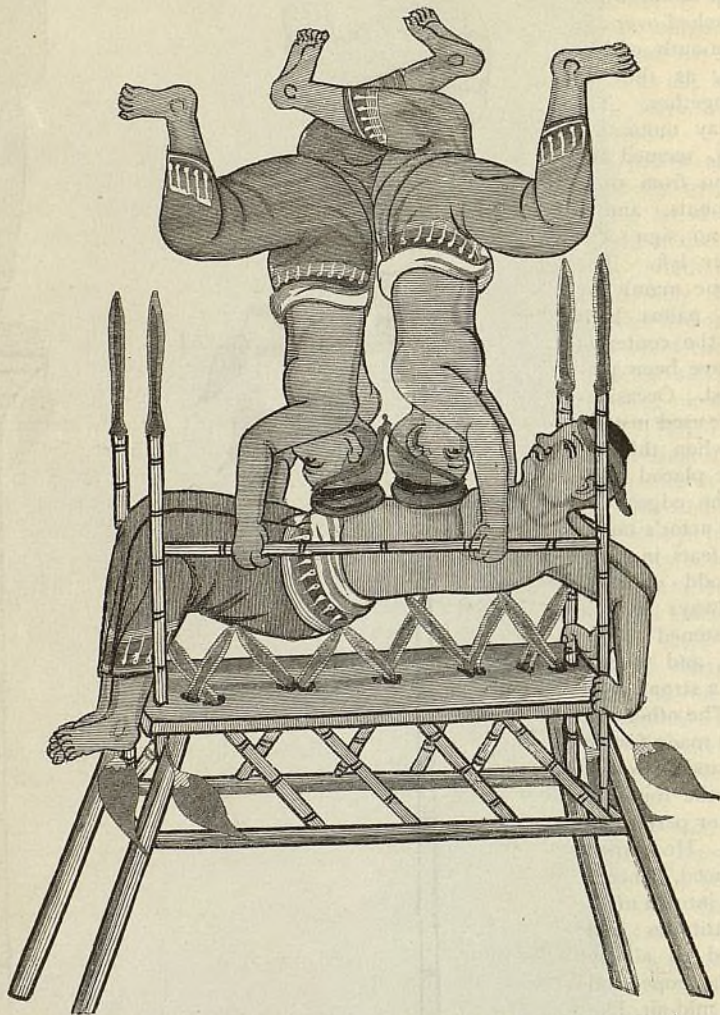


THE PERFORMERS ON THE POLES. (DRAWN BY A SIAMESE ARTIST.)

Next, feats in tumbling and fencing were performed with great dexterity. Some walked on their hands, others on their elbows, and all were capable of putting their limbs into attitudes that seemed, to our Western eyes, equally ludicrous and impossible. One man defended himself against half a dozen others, though his only weapon was a staff about as long and as thick as an ordinary

yard-stick, while his opponents had short swords to use against him. But by his dexterity in parrying their weapons, jumping over their heads, and occasionally putting his feet on their shoulders,

among the gymnasts of our own country. Indeed it is hard to conceive of gymnastic skill and daring superior to that shown on this occasion. All of the feats I have mentioned, and many similar ones



THE PERFORMANCE ON THE SPEAR-POINTS. (DRAWN BY A SIAMESE ARTIST.)

and turning a somersault backward, he succeeded in disarming several, and driving all from the stage.

You may judge that after witnessing these exploits, we had to admit to the king that we had never seen the equals of these Siamese performers

are performed by the bands of trained gymnasts belonging to royal and noble Siamese households. But these performers are never seen elsewhere. They are regarded as a necessary part of a gentleman's household, but as not suitable for the entertainment of the laboring class.

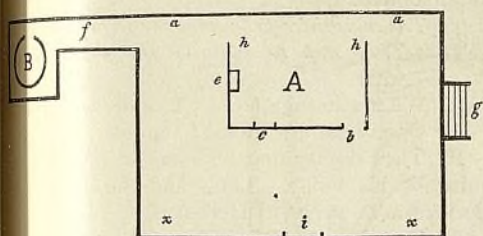
THE HOUSE OF SANTA CLAUS.

(A Christmas Fairy Show for Sunday-schools.)

BY EDWARD EGGLESTON.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE STAGE.

THE stage, shown in the diagram, is about fifteen feet deep by twenty in width in its main portions. It may vary considerably from these dimensions, according to the size of the hall or Sunday-



Front of Stage.

PLAN OF THE STAGE.

school room. The room in this diagram is supposed to be forty feet wide. The stage should not be less than twelve feet in depth nor less than fifteen in width. The portions of the stage represented at B and f may be on the same level of the main platform, or B may be higher or lower, and f an incline. The beauty of the stage is greatly enhanced by surrounding it with a fence of pop-corn. The upright posts should be bits of lath eighteen inches high, the lower end nailed to the edge of the platform, and the whole wrapped with strings of pop-corn. Then draw two strands of the corn from post to post, to represent the horizontal rails. At i there should be a gate with a pointed arch over the top. This should also be of lath, wrapped with pop-corn. There should be three strands in the gate and a diagonal brace. The pop-corn fence is not essential, but it is a great addition to the beauty of the scene, giving the stage a weird and fairy-like appearance, and contrasting finely with the dark green behind. At x, x, two small Christmas-trees may be planted.

The house, A, is nine feet in length and six in depth. It should be about six feet high at the eaves. The frame is of studding, and it is first covered with lath nailed six inches or more apart. Cedar boughs are then so interwoven as to entirely cover it. The roof is thatched in the same way. At e there is a chimney made by knocking out both ends of a packing-box, such as is used for shoes. The box is kalsomined or

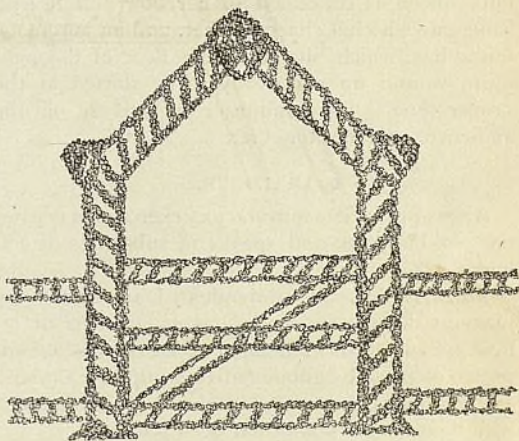
painted to look like stone;* cleats are nailed around this chimney near the top, to imitate ornamental stone-work. The box is securely nailed to the timbers of the house, and there is a ladder inside the house, so arranged that the lad who represents Santa Claus can put his head and shoulders out at the top. At b there is a door-way two feet wide, in which is a door on hinges. Make it an open frame covered with pink tissue paper. The window, c, is two feet square and made like the door, but intersected with strings of pop-corn for sashes. Over the door-way, b, is a transparency like a transom. It reads "Santa Claus," and is lighted by a lantern behind. The house should be provided with a door-bell. Every precaution must be taken against fire. The house should stand about two feet from the wall, and the back may be left open.

At a, a, two pumpkin faces illuminated are suspended or put upon any support that may be found convenient.

At B there should be either a miniature tent or a dense arbor of evergreens. If the tent is used, a Chinese lantern may be suspended on the top outside.

CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, ETC.

SANTA CLAUS should be a boy of fourteen or sixteen years of age, with good acting qualities,



THE GATE.

especially a sense of drollery. He should have any appropriate costume, wig, mask, etc. He carries a

* See "Letter-Box."—Ed.

snuff-box, and a red or yellow handkerchief. He is also provided with a whistle.

THE DWARFS are boys of ten or twelve years of age. They wear masks and a red tunic of paper-muslin, stuffed, to give them a hunchback appearance. They carry staffs, little tin trumpets, stoop as they walk, and speak in a squeaky falsetto. Their stations are just inside the house, at *h, h*. They appear from behind the house in every case except the very last.

THE FAIRY QUEEN should be a little girl of from six to nine years of age, dressed in gauze, with wings of the same material. Stripes or stars, or spangles of gold paper, add to the effect of her dress. She wears a coronet and carries a wand.

THE COMMITTEE should consist of three girls in ordinary dress. They are represented by X., Y. and Z. in the following dialogue, but their real names should be used instead of the letters. Z. should be a rather small girl.

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS.

The superintendent or pastor conducts the introductory exercises from some point in front of the stage. No one must be seen on the stage until the dialogue begins.

At the time of beginning, the house, A, conceals Santa Claus and his two dwarfs, and a grown person who has charge of the lights and who acts as prompter. There is no light on the stage except that in the transparency over the door, and that in the pumpkin faces. There are a large number of tapers or lamps inside the house, carefully arranged to avoid the danger of fire. These are not lighted until the signal is given in the dialogue. The fairy queen is concealed in her bower at B, with some one who has charge of her, and an automatic music-box, which sits upon the floor of the platform, wound up and ready to be started at the proper time. The committee of girls sit in the audience, and not together.

DIALOGUE.

After appropriate introductory exercises, a teacher rises in his place and speaks in substance as follows:

Teacher. Mr. Superintendent, I see some very pleasant decorations here, but no presents or refreshments for the scholars. I move that a committee of three be appointed to go up to Fairyland and inquire of Santa Claus. I would like to know why this Sunday-school has been left out.

Another teacher. I second that motion.

[Superintendent puts this question to vote, and declares it carried, in due form.]

Superintendent. I would appoint—let me see—girls are better at coaxing than boys, I think—I will

appoint X., Y. and Z. *[calling the girls by their real names]*, who will please come forward.

[X., Y. and Z. rise from their places in the several classes, and come forward to the superintendent.]

Superintendent. Girls, you see we are without any candy or anything of the sort for our school. Old Santa Claus has forgotten us. He never has so before. Now I want you three to proceed to Fairyland and see if you can find him. Tell him we must have something. Don't come down without something. We can't have all these children disappointed.

[The committee proceed by the steps to the stage. They stop to examine the first pumpkin face.]

Z. What a strange face! Wonder who it is.

Y. One of Santa's tricks, I suppose.

X. They do say that he's full of fun. But he must be his house. Let's find the door. *[They proceed to the front.]* Here it is.

Y. Is n't it 'cute? I'd like to live here.

Z. And play dolly-house?

X. Here's a door-bell. Santa Claus has all the latest improvements, I declare.

Y. Ring it.

Z. No, don't; I'm afraid.

X. Pshaw! Santa never hurts anybody. Don't you see his name over the door? *[Rings.]* *[A pause.]* I wonder he don't answer. Maybe he isn't at home.

Y. Gone sleigh-riding, as sure as I live!

Z. I guess he's gone to bed. Maybe his mamma would n't let him sit up late.

X. Let's look around, and see what we can find. You two go around that side, and I'll go around this. See if you can't find him in behind the door—that's hanging up there.

[X. goes to the left, around the house, and Y. and Z. go around to the right. They proceed timidly to the back of the house, out of sight of the audience, whereupon the dwarfs blow sharp blasts upon their horns, and the girls all rush back to the front of the house.]

X. I'm so scared!

Y. and Z. Oh, dear! I'm so scared!

X. What could it be? Guess old Santa Claus made that noise just for fun. I wish the superintendent had come himself, or sent some of the boys.

Y. I'll bet the boys would run from that noise. Don't you?

X. Yes. Boys never are as brave as girls, anyhow. But let's go back again, and see what the superintendent is there.

Z. I'm afraid.

X. Well, you stay here, and Y. will go that way, and I will go this way.

X. again goes to the right, Y. to the left. They proceed more timidly than before to the rear of the house, disappearing behind it. The dwarfs blow their horns, the girls re-appear, crying out in alarm, and the dwarfs run out after them. The girls hurry back to the front of the house, followed by the dwarfs—one coming round one end of the house, the other round the other. They speak in high, squeaky tones.

First Dwarf. What do you want?

Second Dwarf. What are you doing here?

X. We want Santa Claus. But we did not know there were two Santa Clauses.

[The dwarfs laugh long and loud.]

First Dwarf. We are not Santa Clauses. We are the dwarfs that take care of Santa Claus's store-rooms, full of goodies and presents.

Second Dwarf. But there's nothing left to take of now. Santa's given away all he had this Christmas.

X. But we must see old Santa. Our Sunday-school has been left without anything, and we want the good old Claus himself.

First Dwarf. But you can't. He's asleep.

Second Dwarf. He was out all night last night, now he's tired to death and sleeping like a top. He'd never wake him.

X. But we must see him.

Y. and Z. Yes, we must.

Second Dwarf. If you'd been riding over roofs all night —

First Dwarf. And climbing down chimneys —

Second Dwarf. And filling stockings —

First Dwarf. And Christmas-trees —

Second Dwarf. And climbing up chimneys all night —

First Dwarf. And getting your hands and face all over soot —

Second Dwarf. And driving reindeer,—they do all night —

Y. and Z. I guess you'd be sleepy too.

X. But we must have something for the children.

Y. and Z. We must have something.

First Dwarf. There is n't a thing left.

Second Dwarf. Not a thing.

X. What will the superintendent say?

Y. What will the children say?

X. What will the infant class say?

Y. And what will the deacons say?

Y. and Z. Yes, what will the deacons say?

Y. and Z. Deacons! Oh, my! Ha! ha!

[The dwarfs now give a blast apiece, and retreat into their hiding-places.]

X. Well, I'm going to wake up old Santa Claus. May be he'll be cross.

X. But we must have something. [Rings.] I wonder he does n't answer.

Z. Ring louder.

X. Well, here goes. [Rings three or four times.]

[Santa Claus, appearing at the top of the chimney, blows his whistle.]

X. Y. and Z. Oh, dear!

Santa Claus. Who's there? Who rang my bell, I'd like to know? Pity if I can't sleep Christmas Night, when I'm tired to death. Who's there, I say?

X. Oh, you dear old Santa Claus! Don't be angry. Some of your little friends have come to Fairyland to see you. Come down.

Santa Claus. Ha! ha! ha! Some of my little friends come to see me! Well, well! [Blows his whistle.] Light up the house, fairies, light up the house. [Whistles again, and then descends the chimney and re-appears at the front door. The house is lighted within.] How do you do, girls? how do you do? [Shakes hands all round, and then, with great deliberation, takes a pinch of snuff.] Well, I'm glad to see you. What can I do for you?

X. Why, you see, Santa Claus, our Sunday-school is left without anything this Christmas.

Santa Claus [sneezes and uses his bandana]. What? You don't tell me so? What's the name of your school?

X. The — Sunday-school.

Santa Claus. Oh, yes! and your superintendent is Mr. —? I know him, like a book. I've filled his stockings many a time when he was a little fellow. I don't know how I came to miss that school. But you see I'm getting old and forgetful.

Y. How old are you, Santa?

Santa Claus. O, now! Do you think I'd tell you that?

Z. You must be as old as the Centennial.

Santa Claus. Pshaw! I used to fill George Washington's stockings when he was a little boy.

Y. No! Now, did you?

Santa Claus. Of course I did.

Y. What did you put in them?

Santa Claus. What did I put in little Georgie Washington's stockings? Well, now, that's more than a hundred years ago, and an old man's memory is n't strong. I can't remember but one thing.

X. What's that?

Santa Claus. A hatchet.

Y. Oh, my!

Z. That same little hatchet?

Santa Claus. The very same little hatchet. [Laughs.] But I did not give him the cherry-tree.

X. Yes, but we must have something for our school, good Santa Claus.

Santa Claus. But you can't. I've given away all

I had, and turned the reindeer out on the mountains to pasture, and the times are so hard that I can't afford to hire a livery team.

X. Yes, but we must have something.

Y. Yes, we must, dear old Santa.

Z. Yes, indeed.

Santa Claus [takes snuff and sneezes]. Well, what *is* to be done? How many scholars have you got this year?

X. About —.

Santa Claus. So many? Why, you must be growing. I hope you have n't any Christmas bummers among them—folks that come to Sunday-school to get something to eat. I hate that kind.

Y. I don't think we have many of that sort.

Santa Claus. Well, I always did like that school, and now I've gone and forgotten it. I wish something could be done. [*Blows his whistle long and loud, and shouts:*] Dwarfs! here! Drako, where are you? Krako, come! Wake up! [*Whistles again.*] [*Enter dwarfs, each blowing his horn.*]

Santa Claus. Now, my little rascals, what have you got for the — Sunday-school?

Both dwarfs [bowing very low]. Nothing, my lord.

Santa Claus [takes snuff and sneezes]. I don't see that I can do anything for you.

X. But we cannot go back without something. The children will cry.

Santa Claus. Dwarfs, go and look again.

[*They go back behind the house as before.*]

After a time they re-appear.

First dwarf. We cannot find a thing.

Second dwarf. Not one thing.

Santa Claus [takes snuff]. Well, my little friends, this is very embarrassing—very—but I have n't a thing left.

X. But we can't go back. What will the superintendent say? We must have something.

Y. Something or other.

Z. Yes, something.

Santa Claus. I'll go and see myself. [*Exit into house. After a considerable delay re-enters.*] Yes, I find a box of candy, nuts, and pop-corn in the closet.

X., Y. and Z. Candy, nuts, and pop-corn! Good!

Santa Claus. What have you got to put the things in?

X. Why we have n't got anything.

Santa Claus. Well, then, the children will have to take off their stockings and let me fill them.

X., Y. and Z. Oh, Santa Claus! we could n't, such a cold night as this.

Santa Claus [takes snuff, looks perplexed, walks about the stage]. Well, I don't know what to do.

X. Oh dear!

Y. Oh dear!

Z. Oh dear! dear! dear!

Santa Claus [starting up]. Now I have it.

X. Have what?

Santa Claus. An idea.

Z. An idea? [*Addressing X.*] What's an idea? Can you put candy into an idea?

X. Be still, Z. Let's hear what Santa Claus's idea may be.

Santa Claus. I know who will help me out this trouble. There's my friend the Fairy Queen.

X. The Fairy Queen!

Y. Oh, my!

Z. Goody! goody! goody!

[*Santa Claus blows three blasts on his whistle and listens. The music-box in the jester's bower begins to play.*]

Santa Claus. Listen! She's coming!

X. Fairy music.

Y. and Z. Sh-h!

[*The fairy comes down from B, skipping and reciting or singing:*]

In the secret rocky dell,

There the fairies love to dwell;

Where the stars on dew-drops glance,

There the fairies love to dance.

Both dwarfs [bowing to Santa Claus].

Fairy Queen, my lord!

Santa Claus [bowing]. Hail, Queen of the Fairies!

X., Y. and Z. [*bowing*]. Hail, Queen of the Fairies!

Fairy Queen [bowing]. Hail, Santa Claus! Hail, little friends!

Oh, stocking-filler, Santa Claus,

I heard you whistle—what's the cause?

You rough and shaggy children's friend,

Why did you for a fairy send?

Santa Claus [taking snuff]. Why, you see, here a Sunday-school forgotten, — hundred children I want to give them something: But they have got anything to put it in.

Fairy Queen. How would fairy stockings do? White or black or pink or blue?

X. Fairy stockings!

Y. Oh, my!

Z. Goody! goody! goody!

Fairy Queen [waving her hand toward B].

Whatever Santa Claus shall say,

That let Fairyland obey.

Santa Claus [entering the house and blowing his whistle.] Fill up the stockings, fairies; fill up the stockings.

[*The dwarfs enter, this time by the front door, and return carrying between them a large bag full of little pink tarlatan stockings, each with candy, nuts, etc., which are then distributed to the children.*]

THE GOOD-NATURED BEAR.

BY ISABELLA VALANCY CRAWFORD.



TITTLE Nona and her mother were walking together through the wood on their way home from market. The wood was a wild, lonely place enough, but that was not the reason why Nona suddenly turned, ran back to her mother's side, and clutched her gown with a frightened air. No, it was because Gerstein, the huntsman, had become visible in a side-path.

cropping the grass close to the bough on which the elf sat astride, swinging to and fro.

"At the folly of a mortal child," responded the elf. "Not the first one I have laughed at either. Mortal children are uncommonly silly. This little fool now, because she happens to be pretty herself, imagines that every one who is not pretty must be wicked. Ho! ho! ho!"

"Dear me," sighed the doe, raising her beautiful head with a sniff. "Lightfoot," turning to the fawn, "I hope, dear, you have more sense than that, young as you are."

"Oh, yes, mamma," said the fawn. "I thought the wild cat we saw was so pretty, you remember, till you told me what a cruel beast it is. Now I am wiser."

"I'll teach her a lesson," said the chuckling elf, balancing himself on his thumbs, and flourishing his legs. Then he nodded to the doe, and with a rapid movement vanished into a crack in the ground.

Nona had no idea that the creatures of the forest were discussing her thus. She was a good, helpful child in spite of the small flaws of character which we have seen; and having many things to do about the house, it was several days after this conversation with her mother before she again walked in the wood. This time she went alone. The forest had a bad reputation among the country people, who considered it the home of sprites, dwarfs, goblins, and other unearthly beings. But Nona had lived close to it all her life, and was not in the least afraid. She had never seen a goblin, and did not believe there were any in the wood. So she tripped gayly along the shady paths, gathering flowers, and singing a little song so sweetly that the birds flew after, perching on way-side trees, and joining their shrill pipes to the melody of her voice till the leafy aisles rang with the noisy concert.

Thus Nona wandered on. Hour after hour passed; more birds, more flowers, more distance measured by the busy feet, till suddenly the sun dropped out of sight, the shadows of the trees mingled into one, and Nona aroused as from a dream, to find herself in a new and strange place which she did not recognize at all.

She was not frightened at first; it seemed as though it must be easy to return to the accustomed path, but when moment after moment went by, each bringing fresh bewilderment, deeper twilight, she lost courage. To and fro she ran; searched this

"Why do you always run away from Gerstein? He is a good, kind fellow," said the mother.

"Oh, no, mother! he cannot be good, he is so dreadfully ugly, and has a hump on his back," answered Nona, shuddering.

"His hump is not his fault; the good God gave it him," said the mother severely. "And do you suppose that only handsome and straight people are virtuous and respectable?"

Nona felt ashamed, but she nodded her little head.

"That shows what a silly child you are," went on the mother, "silly and thoughtless, too. When you are older and wiser, you will see your mistake, and discover that ugly forms often cover kind hearts, and that a beautiful person is sometimes the cloak to a bad nature. Now you are but a child and we must forgive you for being foolish."

Nona shook her short golden curls and looked unconvinced. Gerstein had now disappeared, so she ran forward gayly and without fear, till the woods were passed, and they neared the brook and the mill, close to which was her home, for Nona was the miller's little daughter.

"Ho, ho!" cried an elf as the mother and child passed out of view. "So you don't believe in ugly people, fraulein Nona? And you think all pretty people are good, do you? Just give me the chance, and I'll show you the difference." And the elf twisted his legs together, and doubled himself up in a long fit of chuckling laughter which sounded through the wood like the clink of tiny castanets.

"What are you laughing at, friend Greenjacket?" asked a doe who, with her fawn beside her, was

way, that. All was of no use. At last she sat down on a moss-covered log, and began to cry. The wind rose and made strange sounds in the boughs above; her sobs echoed through the lonely wood, and every now and then a queer noise as of soft chuckling laughter mingled with these echoes, and perplexed her. Her eyes were too dim with tears to see where, not far off, an odd little sharp face, surmounted by a pointed cap, was poked from beneath a grass tuft to watch her movements. It was naughty Green-jacket, who, having led Nona into this trap, was enjoying his success.

Presently the moon rose, and Greenjacket drew in his head, afraid of detection. The stars came out in the sky, and twinkled in a friendly manner, which was cheering. Then the moon reached down a long ray like a hand, touched Nona's hand, and seemed to draw her along. She went for a few paces, then paused affrighted, for a small figure stopped the way, and a keen little voice said, "This is the path, Nona, I'll guide you."

"Oh, dear, what is it?" she gasped.

"This way," repeated the voice; and Nona following quite bewildered, Greenjacket led her down a narrow path beset with brambles, which plucked and caught at her dress as though they wished to detain her. Suddenly the path ended in a great rock in which was a black, gaping cave-mouth.

"Oh, what is that? Why did you bring me here?" cried Nona.

"It is the cave of Bruin the bear. He is the ugliest bear in the wood, so you can fancy how bad he must be," replied the mocking sprite. "Ho, Bruin! Come out of your house and see what a nice little tidbit I've brought you."

With these words, the fairy vanished, while Nona, with a moan of despair, sank on the ground, sobbing to herself, "What shall I do? what shall I do?"

"Ugh! ugh!" growled a deep voice from the depths inside. "Who is that? Ugh! ugh!"

Nona's heart stood still with fear as she heard a heavy footstep approaching, and saw the red glare of a torch. Presently out of the cave-mouth came a huge black bear, lumbering on his clumsy toes, and growling dreadfully. Another bear followed, carrying in his paws a torch which he held respectfully to light the big bear along.

"Ho, ho!" said the big bear. "Who have we got here, I should like to know?" and he put his nose so close that Nona thought he was going to eat her at once, and shivered with fright.

"You are cold," said the bear, misunderstanding this motion. "It is a chilly night, but inside my house you'll find it nice and warm. Come in, come in, you're just in time for supper."

"Oh dear! he means me. I am the supper,"

thought Nona, and she began to cry bitterly, much to the surprise of the kind old bear.

"Heyday!" he exclaimed. "What's all this? I never saw such a child for crying. Come in and warm yourself, and let me see if I can't find something you can fancy to eat."

"Don't you eat little girls ever?" inquired Nona, still drawing back.

"Little girls! Nonsense! They're not good to eat. We like potatoes and ground-nuts much better," said Bruin, and Nona, quite re-assured at his tone, resisted no longer, but took his paw, which he offered politely, and let him lead her into the cave. It was light inside. A big fire burned on the ground, over which hung pots and kettles, from which issued all sorts of savory smells. But Nona shuddered a little as she perceived, seated round the crimson fire, a number of strange and ugly creatures, who all rose and saluted as she entered with the bear.

There were brown elves no bigger than a man's thumb, with spindle legs and green, shining eyes. There were dwarfs with heads like pumpkins, and bodies as thin and wiry as that of a daddy-long-legs; hairy creatures who carried brooms in their hands; moon-faced goblins, sprites, wrapped in green little sheets; and tiny men in green, armed with canes tipped with bee-stings. All of these bowed and smiled pleasantly as they made room for Nona beside the fire, and after a few minutes she ceased to be afraid, so easily do we accustom ourselves to what is amiable and harmless even when it takes a hideous form.

The pots and pans held some odd food which looked unlike anything Nona was used to eat, but one of the bears supplied her with a bowl of nice milk and a honey-comb, both of which articles she knew all about. So the supper passed off merrily with her as with the rest.

Supper ended, the company remained by the fire conversing pleasantly. Not a cross word was spoken by any one. The very ugliest of the goblins seemed to have the wish to be agreeable. Nona saw an elf with spider-claws get up to offer his seat to a little dwarf whose corner was chilly, and noticed that in spite of his gruff voice and clumsy movements, the big bear was the life of the party, and seemed to have but one wish, that of making all about him comfortable and at home. She began quite to love the old fellow with his shaggy head and blunt muzzle, and when he asked her to sing them a song, she made no objections, but lifted her voice and sang even more sweetly than when that afternoon she had charmed the birds. The bears and all the assemblage were delighted, and begged for another and another, till Nona had finished all the songs she knew.

After that the big bear himself volunteered a song, which ran as follows :

"Though I'm a rough old fellow,
With a shaggy coat,
With a voice which comes like thunder
From my wide, red throat,
With little eyes and fishy,
And a pair of great brown paws
Finished and ornamented
By strong, sharp claws.
Although I'm very ugly

allowed to light Nona home, so they trimmed their glow-worm lamps, and the good old bear, placing her on his back, trotted through the woods in the direction of the mill. The elves flew beside, amusing themselves with all sorts of droll pranks, pinching the squirrels as they lay asleep in their nests, wakening the birds, and rousing the dreaming owl on the bough by a crack and a loud whoop in his ear. Some of the gentler ones filled Nona's basket with wood-flowers wet with dew ; and one



BRUIN LEADS NONA INTO THE CAVE.

If you judge me by my shell,
Still my heart is kind and tender,
And I love all things well.
And there's a good old saying,
Admit it friends and foes,
That only he is handsome
Who always handsome does."

little darling brought her a rose-cup in which were cuddled two tiny butterflies, side by side. So they went along.

As they gained the edge of the forest, a horn was sounded close to them, and Bruin set Nona hastily down on the ground.

"Here we part," he said, "for that is the horn of Gerstein. the huntsman. And a wise bear will keep out of his way, though he's a good fellow and a kind one. Good-bye, dear Nona. Don't forget your friends, the bears, and remember [here

Though Bruin's voice was rough as his coat, this song was much applauded by the company, and he was begged to favor them with another, which he did. Then a great clock struck, and it was time for the party to break up. The elves begged to be

Bruin's voice grew impressive], remember that an ugly creature may have as kind a heart, and be as worthy of regard, as a handsome one."

Nona blushed deeply and felt abashed, for she now understood that her foolish words had been overheard, and that the bear wished to give her a lesson.

"Good-bye. You've all been so good," she faltered; and even as she spoke, Bruin and the elves vanished, and she stood alone in the forest.

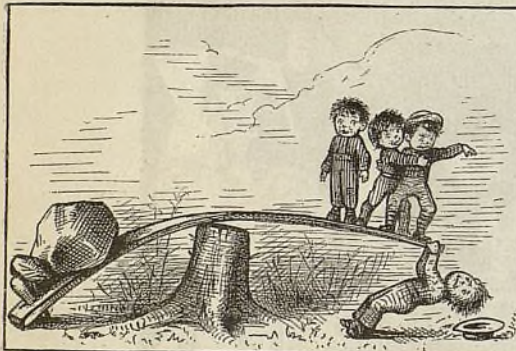
Not alone for long, however. In another moment Gerstein broke through the boughs, and the joyful smile which lit his face when he saw her, made him seem almost beautiful.

"Here is the dear little maiden," he cried.

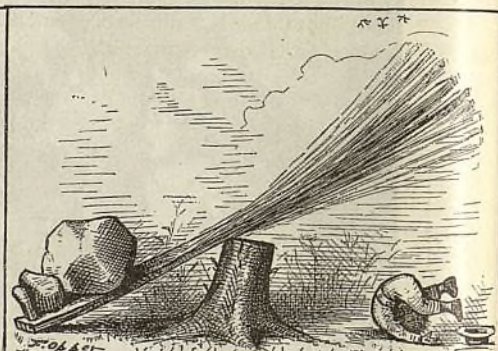
"Well, there will be joy at the mill. Thy mother has wept much, Nona; thy father has searched all night, but now all will be forgotten, for thou art safe, praise be to God." Then he lifted Nona in his strong arms, and as she clung to his rough shoulder she thought of the good bear, and it seemed to her that Gerstein was of kin to him, strong and ugly but kind of deed and tender of heart.

Ever after that day she loved Gerstein. And when her mother saw her run to meet him, and jump for joy at the sound of the horn which told of his coming, she would smile and say:

"Thou art grown wiser, Nona. I told thee one day that so it would be. Dost thou not remember? It was the day we walked together in the wood."



THREE LITTLE BOYS ON A SPRING-BOARD,
JUST GETTING READY TO FLY;



ONE, TWO, THREE! AND NOW YOU CAN SEE
THOSE THREE LITTLE SPECKS IN THE SKY.

THE TRUE STORY OF A DOLL.

BY REBECCA HARDING DAVIS.

IT is a single little doll, laid away by itself in a box—a cheap china doll, such as you buy for a few cents, but dressed in a gay slip, with lace; the sewing on the dress very bad indeed—in some places the stitches long and gaping. I want to tell the readers of ST. NICHOLAS the story of the doll and the sewing on it.

A year ago, a young girl, one of the teachers in a school in a great city, bade good-bye to the children and went home. The children laughed a

great deal, and the story went about how that Miss Nelly was going to be married soon, and was going home to learn to keep house.

Nelly was one of the merriest girls in the world. In school or at home, everybody tried to sit near to her, to hear her laugh. Nobody was ever so friendly or so full of life, they said. But she was not strong; and when she went home, instead of learning to keep house, she grew thinner and weaker day by day, while the doctors stood help-

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lessly looking on. The marriage was put off again and again. At last she could not leave her room. Yet still people tried to come close to her; the laugh was always ready on her lips, and the big blue eyes grew more friendly with each fading day. The valley of the shadow of death was sunnier to her than life is to most people. She held the hands of all her friends as she went through it, and the best Friend of all was close beside her.

It began to be noticed, however, that she was anxious to sew or knit all the time, to make something for little children—soft, white little shirts, or baby's socks. It may be that the thought of a little child which never should rest on her own bosom was the tenderest memory in the world she was leaving. In the city where she lived there is a hospital for sick children, in which there are many "memorial beds" given as legacies by dying women, or in remembrance of them by their friends. Nelly had no money to endow a memorial bed, but her thoughts were busy with the sick babies.

"I will dress a box of dolls," she said, "so that each can have one on Christmas morning."

They gave her the doll, and scraps of silk and lace, and she worked faithfully at it with her trembling fingers.

"I will have them ready," she would say.

But it seemed as if she would not have even one ready, she was forced so often to lay it down. One September night she was awake all night, and by dawn made them wash and dress her and give her her work-box and scissors.

By noon the doll was dressed, and she laid it down, smiling.

An hour or two later, they told her that the end was near. She kissed them all good-bye. Her face was that of one who goes upon a pleasant journey; and, holding her mother's hand, she closed her eyes and went away.

There is the little doll, alone in its box. I thought if each little girl who reads this story in ST. NICHOLAS would dress a doll and send it to a poor child in some asylum or hospital on Christmas morning, that Nelly would surely know of it, and be glad that she and her loving fancy had not been forgotten.

THE PETERKINS' CHRISTMAS-TREE.

BY LUCRETIA P. HALE.

PRETTY early in the autumn the Peterkins began to prepare for their Christmas-tree. Everything was done in great privacy, as it was to be a surprise to the neighbors, as well as to the rest of the family. Mr. Peterkin had been up to Mr. Bromwich's woodlot, and, with his consent, selected the tree. Agamemnon went to look at it occasionally after dark, and Solomon John made frequent visits to it, mornings, just after sunrise. Mr. Peterkin drove Elizabeth Eliza and her mother that way, and pointed furtively to it with his whip, but none of them ever spoke of it aloud to each other. It was suspected that the little boys had been to see it Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. But they came home with their pockets full of chestnuts, and said nothing about it.

At length Mr. Peterkin had it cut down, and brought secretly into the Larkins's barn. A week or two before Christmas, a measurement was made of it, with Elizabeth Eliza's yard-measure. To Mr. Peterkin's great dismay, it was discovered that it was too high to stand in the back parlor. This fact was brought out at a secret council of Mr.

and Mrs. Peterkin, Elizabeth Eliza, and Agamemnon.

Agamemnon suggested that it might be set up slanting, but Mrs. Peterkin was very sure it would make her dizzy, and the candles would drip.

But a brilliant idea came to Mr. Peterkin. He proposed that the ceiling of the parlor should be raised to make room for the top of the tree.

Elizabeth Eliza thought the space would need to be quite large. It must not be like a small box, or you could not see the tree.

"Yes," said Mr. Peterkin, "I should have the ceiling lifted all across the room; the effect would be finer."

Elizabeth Eliza objected to having the whole ceiling raised, because her room was over the back parlor, and she would have no floor while the alteration was going on, which would be very awkward. Besides, her room was not very high now, and if the floor were raised, perhaps she could not walk in it upright.

Mr. Peterkin explained that he did not propose altering the whole ceiling, but to lift up a ridge

across the room at the back part where the tree was to stand. This would make a hump, to be sure, in Elizabeth Eliza's room; but it would go across the whole room.

Elizabeth Eliza said she would not mind that. It would be like the cuddly thing that comes up on the deck of a ship, that you sit against, only here you would not have the seasickness. She thought she should like it for a rarity. She might use it for a divan.

Mrs. Peterkin thought it would come in the worn place of the carpet, and might be a convenience in making the carpet over.

Agamemnon was afraid there would be trouble in keeping the matter secret, for it would be a long piece of work for a carpenter; but Mr. Peterkin proposed having the carpenter for a day or two, for a number of other jobs.

One of them was to make all the chairs in the house of the same height, for Mrs. Peterkin had nearly broken her spine, by sitting down in a chair that she had supposed was her own rocking-chair, and it had proved to be two inches lower. The little boys were now large enough to sit in any chair; so a medium was fixed upon to satisfy all the family, and the chairs were made uniformly of the same height.

On consulting the carpenter, however, he insisted that the tree could be cut off at the lower end to suit the height of the parlor, and demurred at so great a change as altering the ceiling. But Mr. Peterkin had set his mind upon the improvement, and Elizabeth Eliza had cut her carpet in preparation for it.

So the folding-doors into the back parlor were closed, and for nearly a fortnight before Christmas there was great litter of fallen plastering, and laths, and chips, and shavings; and Elizabeth Eliza's carpet was taken up, and the furniture had to be changed, and one night she had to sleep at the Bromwichs', for there was a long hole in her floor that might be dangerous.

All this delighted the little boys. They could not understand what was going on. Perhaps they suspected a Christmas-tree, but they did not know why a Christmas-tree should have so many chips, and were still more astonished at the hump that appeared in Elizabeth Eliza's room. It must be a Christmas present, or else the tree in a box.

Some aunts and uncles, too, arrived a day or two before Christmas, with some small cousins. These cousins occupied the attention of the little boys, and there was a great deal of whispering and mystery, behind doors, and under the stairs, and in the corners of the entry.

Solomon John was busy, privately making some candles for the tree. He had been collecting some

bayberries, as he understood they made very nice candles, so that it would not be necessary to buy any.

The elders of the family never all went into the back parlor together, and all tried not to see what was going on. Mrs. Peterkin would go in with Solomon John, or Mr. Peterkin with Elizabeth Eliza, or Elizabeth Eliza and Agamemnon and Solomon John. The little boys and the small cousins were never allowed even to look inside the room.

Elizabeth Eliza meanwhile went into town a number of times. She wanted to consult Amanda as to how much ice-cream they should need, and whether they could make it at home, as they had cream and ice. She was pretty busy in her own room; the furniture had to be changed, and the carpet altered. The "hump" was higher than she had expected. There was danger of bumping her own head whenever she crossed it. She had to nail some padding on the ceiling for fear of accidents.

The afternoon before Christmas, Elizabeth Eliza, Solomon John, and their father, collected in the back parlor for a council. The carpenters had done their work, and the tree stood at its full height at the back of the room, the top stretching up into the space arranged for it. All the chips and shavings were cleared away, and it stood on a neat box.

But what were they to put upon the tree?

Solomon John had brought in his supply of candles, but they proved to be very "stringy," and very few of them. It was strange how many bayberries it took to make a few candles! The little boys had helped him, and he had gathered as much as a bushel of bayberries. He had put them in water, and skimmed off the wax, according to the directions, but there was so little wax!

Solomon John had given the little boys some of the bits sawed off from the legs of the chairs. He had suggested they should cover them with gilt paper, to answer for gilt apples, without telling them what they were for.

These apples, a little blunt at the end, and the candles, were all they had for the tree.

After all her trips into town, Elizabeth Eliza had forgotten to bring anything for it.

"I thought of candies and sugar-plums," she said, "but I concluded if we made caramels ourselves we should not need them. But, then, we have not made caramels. The fact is, that day my head was full of my carpet. I had bumped it pretty badly, too."

Mr. Peterkin wished he had taken, instead of a fir-tree, an apple-tree he had seen in October, full of red fruit.

"But the leaves would have fallen off by this time," said Elizabeth Eliza.

"And the apples too," said Solomon John.

"It is odd I should have forgotten, that day I went in on purpose to get the things," said Elizabeth Eliza, musingly. "But I went from shop to shop, and did n't know exactly what to get. I saw a great many gilt things for Christmas-trees, but I knew the little boys were making the gilt apples; there were plenty of candles in the shops, but I knew Solomon John was making the candles."

Mr. Peterkin thought it was quite natural.

Solomon John wondered if it were too late for them to go into town now.

Elizabeth Eliza could not go in the next morning, for there was to be a grand Christmas dinner, and Mr. Peterkin could not be spared, and Solomon John was sure he and Agamemnon would not know what to buy. Besides, they would want to try the candles to-night.

Mr. Peterkin asked if the presents everybody had been preparing would not answer? But Elizabeth Eliza knew they would be too heavy.

A gloom came over the room. There was only a flickering gleam from one of Solomon John's candles that he had lighted by way of trial.

Solomon John again proposed going into town. He lighted a match to examine the newspaper about the trains. There were plenty of trains coming out at that hour, but none going in except a very late one. That would not leave time to do anything and come back.

"We could go in, Elizabeth Eliza and I," said Solomon John, "but we should not have time to buy anything."

Agamemnon was summoned in. Mrs. Peterkin was entertaining the uncles and aunts in the front parlor. Agamemnon wished there was time to study up something about electric lights. If they could only have a calcium light! Solomon John's candle sputtered and went out.

At this moment there was a loud knocking at the front door. The little boys, and the small cousins,

and the uncles and aunts, and Mrs. Peterkin, hastened to see what was the matter.

The uncles and aunts thought somebody's house must be on fire. The door was opened, and there was a man, white with flakes, for it was beginning to snow, and he was pulling in a large box.

Mrs. Peterkin supposed it contained some of Elizabeth Eliza's purchases, so she ordered it to be pushed into the back parlor, and hastily called back her guests and the little boys into the other room. The little boys and the small cousins were sure they had seen Santa Claus himself.

Mr. Peterkin lighted the gas. The box was addressed to Elizabeth Eliza. It was from the lady from Philadelphia! She had gathered a hint from Elizabeth Eliza's letters that there was to be a Christmas-tree, and had filled this box with all that would be needed.

It was opened directly. There was every kind of gilt hanging thing, from gilt pea-pods to butterflies on springs. There were shining flags and lanterns, and bird-cages, and nests with birds sitting on them, baskets of fruit, gilt apples and bunches of grapes, and, at the bottom of the whole, a large box of candles and a box of Philadelphia bonbons!

Elizabeth Eliza and Solomon John could scarcely keep from screaming. The little boys and the small cousins knocked on the folding-doors to ask what was the matter.

Hastily Mr. Peterkin and the rest took out the things and hung them on the tree, and put on the candles.

When all was done, it looked so well that Mr. Peterkin exclaimed:

"Let us light the candles now, and send to invite all the neighbors to-night, and have the tree on Christmas Eve!"

And so it was that the Peterkins had their Christmas-tree the day before, and on Christmas night could go and visit their neighbors.

A RIDDLE.

JOHNNY looked down in the spring, one night,

And what did he see but a dipper!

The handle crooked, the bottom out,

Yet floating as trim as a clipper.

It was n't broken; 't was good as new;

Yes, fit for a monarch's daughter.

"Ho! you're a funny old dipper!" said John;

"You can't hold a drop of water."



JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

A BUSY December to you, my youngsters! A busy December, full of plans for making other people happy; and then a merry Christmas! The holiday ST. NICHOLAS, I'm told, will reach you this year before Christmas Day. If that's the case, why Christmas, too, will come in ahead of time, that's all.

The fact is, Christmas is n't a golden flash in the children's sky. No, it's a sort of goldy way, bright, beautiful, and holy, that shimmers into view early in December, grows brightest on The Day, and then fades slowly into the New Year. Christmas shines in some hearts as soon as they know it is coming.

Let's see. We must start off with a holiday subject this time. Ha! I have it!

A BIG PLUM-PUDDING.

Now and then, the Little Schoolma'am reads things to the children that make your Jack almost jump out of his pulpit. Now what do you think of this account which the little lady lately read out of an old book to a hungry group of youngsters who had crowded about her because they had seen her "laughing at something in the book?" She said the June referred to was the summer of 1819.

"On June 8th, at Paignton fair, near Exeter, the ancient custom of drawing through the town a plum-pudding of an immense size, and afterward distributing it to the populace, was revived. The ingredients which composed this enormous pudding were 400 pounds of flour, 170 pounds of beef suet, 140 pounds of raisins, and 240 eggs. It was kept constantly boiling in a brewer's copper from Saturday morning to Tuesday, when it was placed on a car, decorated with ribbons, evergreens, &c., and drawn along the street by eight oxen."

There was a pudding for you, almost as grand as Mother Mitchel's! But they should have saved it for Christmas.

THE CHRISTMAS PUTZ AT BETHLEHEM.

MY DEAR JACK: Will you please let me tell the other girls, and their brothers, how to make something pretty for Christmas?

In Bethlehem, Pa., where mother and I passed considerable time, there is a large Moravian settlement, and some of their customs are very interesting, particularly during the Christmas season. At that time, the Moravians make what they call a Putz, not only for the amusement of their children, but for all who may come to see it.

A Putz is a miniature landscape, with whatever figures you may like to put in it. Some of these scenes are made on a grand scale; but smaller ones, equally pretty, and not so difficult to manage, are made at the foot of the Christmas-tree. The tree is placed on a table, or, better still, it is set in a large dry-goods box, and then boards are put across the top of the box, as a foundation for the Putz.

If you wish to make one, girls, you have only to go into the woods for your materials. Pieces of rock, large and small, mosses, ferns, lichens, vines, and whatever you may think pretty, will answer the purpose. The large rocks, you use for mountains, interspersed with small branches of cedar and pine for trees. A narrow piece of tin-foil, bent into various shapes, will do for a water-fall, across which a card-board bridge can be laid. Lower down, you can have a looking-glass lake, or, better still, a tin pan, filled with water, on which artificial ducks, geese, fish, boats, etc., can float. Conceal the edge of the glass or pan with moss, and put gravel at the bottom of your real lake, as well as gravel walks around it.

With card-board houses, and fences, and miniature sheep, houses, etc., you can make very pretty scenes. Or you can represent the birth of the Christ-child, with small toy figures that come expressly for such scenes. You will find it easy to make a pretty design for Christmas with very little material.

The Moravians at Bethlehem welcome all visitors, whether strangers or not, who choose to go into any of the houses to examine the Putz, and it certainly is a very interesting sight.

I am your sincere young friend,

MAMIE H.

EAST OR WEST?

"DEACON GREEN, please sir, Tom Scott says Aspinwall is west of Panama, and I say it is n't."

"Well, my man, what are your grounds for disputing him?" said the Deacon, mildly, seeing that some reply was expected.

"Why, good grounds enough, sir. He admits that Aspinwall is on the Atlantic Ocean side of the isthmus, and Panama is on the Pacific Ocean, or that part of it known as Panama Bay. Humph! I guess 'most anybody ought to know that the Pacific Ocean is west of this continent, and the Atlantic is east of it; and yet he sticks to it that Panama is east of Aspinwall!"

"Well, Thomas is generally pretty sure of a statement before he makes it," put in the Deacon.

"But, sir," proceeded the boy, growing redder as he began to suspect that the Deacon might be on Tom's side, "I don't see any sense in going right against geography. He need n't try to make out that the Pacific Ocean is east of the Atlantic—not on *this* side of the world, sir."

"That's true," said the Deacon. "And now, Joe, I'll tell you what I'll do. You just run home, and examine the map closely, and then if you find, on careful inspection, that Thomas is wrong, come to me and I'll fill your hat with the finest apples you ever tasted in your life."

Joe *did* run home; he *did* examine the map closely—and to this day he never has said a word to the Deacon about those apples.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

DEAR JACK: I wish to tell you a little story about a canary and a sparrow. One morning, while my little brother and myself were sitting on the piazza, a sparrow came and perched on my canary's cage, and began eating the seed it found on the outside. My little brother was very glad to see a friend, and immediately began singing.

Germantown, August 10th, 1876.

little brother happened to be eating a piece of bread, and he threw a few crumbs to the sparrow, which it soon picked up and carried to the canary. It was very funny to see it put the crumbs in the canary's beak. I think it gave them to the canary because it was thankful for the seed my bird had given him.—Yours truly,

EDITH M. DARRACH.

A LITTLE HOLLANDER'S BIRD-CAGE.

New York, Oct. 12, 1876.

DEAR JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT: Once, when I was in Holland, waiting in an Amsterdam railroad station for the train to come along, I saw something so very pretty that I made a drawing of it on purpose for you, knowing you would like to show it to your boys and girls. Here it is—a bird-cage, and the very finest bird-cage I ever saw in my life. There is no need of describing it. The children will see the beautiful stand embellished with moss and flowers, the two houses set in the midst of the green, the connecting gallery covered with fine wire gauze, and the birds skipping to and fro enjoying every inch of it. They can see, too, the bell in the pagoda tower which rings sweetly whenever the little inmates choose to pull the string. In fact, while I was looking, one of the birds *did* pull the string, so I sketched him in the act.

I did not draw the railroad station, you see, Jack, because the person who was taking the cage home

Warren, the ST. NICHOLAS artist. He has done it so beautifully and accurately that if ever I make any more drawings I shall ask him to copy them for the credit of the family.

I am, dear Mr. Jack, yours very truly,

JOEL STACY.

THE SAFETY LAMP.

Philadelphia, Sept. 25, 1876.

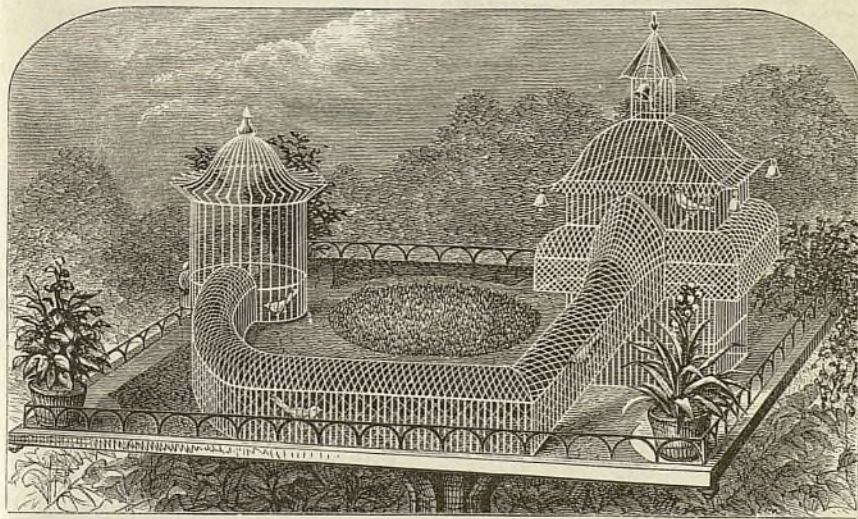
DEAR LITTLE SCHOOLMA'AM: I think the omission in C. A. D.'s letter, page 798, of the October ST. NICHOLAS, is the safety lamp that Sir Humphrey Davy invented, by means of which many lives have been saved. In May, 1812, an explosion of gas took place in the Felling Colliery, near Newcastle, which caused the death of ninety-two persons. This prompted a committee of proprietors of mines to wait upon Davy to see if he could devise any way of preventing similar accidents.

Davy had observed that combustion was not communicated through tubes of small dimensions, and, by experimenting, he gradually reduced the size of the tubes till he found that a metallic gauge, with apertures not exceeding one twenty-second part of an inch, was sufficient to prevent the flame inside of the lamp from igniting the explosive gas on the outside. He therefore devised a lamp with a wire screen, which the miners could use with safety.

Your friend,

FRANCIS H. JACKSON, JR.

The Little Schoolma'am wishes Jack to thank Master Jackson, Nelly M. Sherwin, Martie S. D., "Ned," R. S. S., and all other young friends who have correctly given the important fact omitted by C. A. D. She wishes you also to know that a new

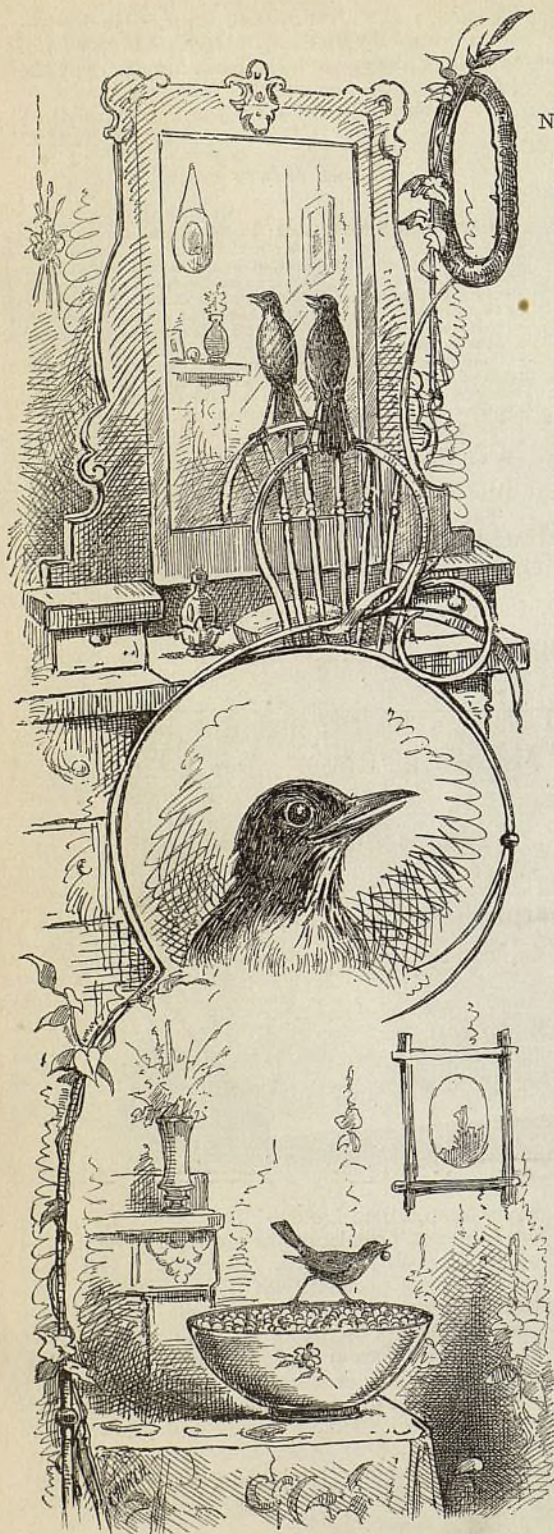


as a birthday present to his little daughter, said it was to be set upon a pedestal in the garden. I could n't help thinking how delighted the little girl would be with his beautiful gift, and how easily the thing could be copied (from the drawing) by some American cage-maker in case I ever should want to give my little girl a superb Christmas present.

Then I thought of your thousands of young folks, and how some of their fathers, who could spare the requisite money, might like to have such cages made for them. The wire-work can be so delicate that the birds inside will almost think they are not caged at all. Perhaps I ought to tell you that the drawing I send was made from my sketch by Mr.

safety lamp, called Landau's New Safety Lamp, for use in mines, promises to be an improvement even on Sir Humphrey Davy's. She says, "Tell them that the chief peculiarity of the invention is that, by an ingenious arrangement, the admission of gas extinguishes the flame, so that it cannot under any circumstances be exploded by the lamp."

Humph! The dear Little Schoolma'am does n't tell us how the miners will feel when they are left in the dark. I should n't like that part of the invention; still, it is better than being blown up. Any intelligent miner would rather have a whole body in the dark, than to be scattered about in fragments in a good light.



THE ROBIN'S VISIT.

ONCE a robin flew into a pretty room; and just as he went in, the wind banged the window-blinds shut, so he could not get out again.

At first he did not mind, but flew about and lit on the bright picture-frames, and wished his pretty wife were with him to enjoy the pleasant place. Then he rested on the back of a small chair, and then he saw another robin!

"O-ho!" sang he to himself,— "here is some one else. I must speak to him: 'Whew! Mr. Robin, glad to meet you. My name is Cock Robin. What do they call this place?'"

But the other robin did not answer. He only opened his mouth and jerked his head from side to side just as Mr. Cock Robin did. You see the other robin lived in the looking-glass, and could not speak.

"A rude fellow!" chirped Mr. Cock Robin to himself. "Not worth talking to! Ah! yonder are some fine cherries! I'll eat some."

The cherries were in a bowl on the table. Mr. Cock Robin helped himself. Then he decided to try the other bird once more.

"My friend," sang he softly, as he caught the stem of a fine cherry in his beak and flew to the chair again, "here is a fine cherry for you — Oh! oh!"

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Well might Mr. Cock Robin say "Oh!" for there stood the other robin on just such a chair, offering him a cherry in the most polite manner!

"Thanks!" said Mr. Cock Robin. "But, my deaf and dumb friend, as we each have one, we need not stand on cer-e-mo-ny."

So both began to eat.

"He is a fine, sociable fellow, after all," said Mr. Cock Robin.

The door opened, and in came a little girl.

"What's that?" cried Mr. Cock Robin faintly to himself.

The girl clapped her hands for joy, and ran toward him.

Up flew Mr. Cock Robin in a great fright. He whisked past the looking-glass and saw that the other robin was badly scared also. Then he tried to fly out of a closed window where there were no blinds; but he only dashed against some very hard kind of air that hurt his sides. If he had been like you, he would have known that it was window-glass, and not hard air.

"Poor birdie!" said the little girl, as she threw open the window.

"You shall go out if you want to."

In an instant, Mr. Cock Robin was flying through the sunlight to his little wife.

"Where *have* you been?" chirped she, as he reached the nest.

"Oh, I've been on a visit," said Mr. Cock Robin—and he told her all about it.

Soon Mrs. Cock Robin said, softly: "I *should* like to see that other one. Was he very handsome, my dear?"

"Handsome!" cried Mr. Robin, sharply. "Handsome! Not at all, my dear—a *very* homely bird, indeed! Yes, ma'am—very homely, and as deaf as a post."

"How dreadful!" sighed Mrs. Cock Robin.

WHAT MY LITTLE BROTHER THINKS.

My little brother is—oh, so funny!

He thinks that a king is made of money;

He thinks little cherubs, overhead,

Hold up the stars to light us to bed.

He thinks that near those cherubs, but under,

Are other cherubs who cause the thunder;

They roll great tables and chairs around,
And growl and roar with an awful sound.

He thinks some quick little cherub scratches,
To make the lightning, a million matches;
Another carries a watering-pot
To wet the earth when it gets too hot.

He thinks—my brother is, oh, so knowing!—
A feather-bed cherub does all the snowing;
He thinks the feathers come sailing down,
And make the snow that whitens the town.

He thinks that a painted mask can eat him;
Or pull his hair; or chase and beat him.
Yes, really thinks a mask is alive!
But my little brother is only five.

He thinks little fairies make the clamor
In grandpa's watch, with a tiny hammer.
He thinks *some* fairies can live in a book;
Or dance in kettles, to frighten cook.

He thinks the grasshoppers bring molasses;
That a fairy over the bright moon passes;
He thinks my Jack-in-the-box is alive,
Like witches who go to the sky for a drive.

He thinks our "sis" is her dolly's mother—
My dear, absurd little baby brother!
Yes, thinks he is UNCLE, and feels quite grand
To lead his niece about by the hand!

But, the best of all, he is really certain
He once saw Santa Claus through the curtain;
And he thinks Old Santy 'll come by and by,
On Christmas Eve—and so do I.



WHAT MY LITTLE BROTHER THINKS.

CHRISTMAS CAROL.*

Words by MARY MAPES DODGE.

Music by F. BOOTT.

S. SOP. SOLO. *Allegro Moderato.*

1. Good news on Christ-mas morn - ing, Good news, O child - ren dear! For Christ, once born in
 2. Good news on Christ-mas morn - ing, Good news, O child - ren sweet! The way to find the

TENOR OR BARITONE SOLO, *ad lib.*

3. Good news on Christ-mas morn - ing, Good news, O child - ren glad! Rare gifts are yours to
 4. Good news on Christ-mas morn - ing, Good news, O child - ren fair! Still doth the one Good

mf *cres.*

Beth - le - hem, Is liv - ing now and here. Good news on Christmas morn - ing, Good news, O child - ren
 Ho - ly Child, Is light - ed for your feet. Good news on Christmas morn - ing, Good news, O child - ren

give the Lord, As ev - er wise men had. Good news on Christmas morn - ing, Good news, O child - ren
 Shep - herd hold, The feeb - lest in his care. Good news on Christmas morn - ing, Good news, O child - ren

f *dim.* *mf*

dear! For Christ, for Christ, once born in Beth - le - hem, Is liv - ing now and here.... For Christ, once born in
 sweet! The way, the way to find the Ho - ly Child, Is light - ed for your feet.... The way to find the

glad! Rare gifts, rare gifts are yours to give the Lord. As ev - er wise men had.... Rare gifts are yours to
 fair! Still doth, still doth the one Good Shep - herd hold The feeb - lest in his care.... Still doth the one Good

CHORUS. *f* *ff*

Good news, good news, good news, good news. *divisi.*

Beth - le - hem, Is liv - ing now and here. Good news, good news, good news, good news, good news.
 Ho - ly Child, Is light - ed for your feet.

give the Lord, As ev - er wise men had. Good news, good news, good news, good news, good news, good news.
 Shep - herd hold, The feeb - lest In his care.

dim. *a tempo.* *f* *ff* *sf* *sf* *sf* *sf*

rall.

* Words from St. NICHOLAS for January, 1876.

THE best
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CHRISTMAS
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we do not fe
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THE LETTER-BOX.

HOME-MADE CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

The best response we can make to correspondents who ask us for help in devising Christmas presents that they can make with their own hands, is to refer them to the article called "ONE HUNDRED CHRISTMAS PRESENTS, AND HOW TO MAKE THEM," in ST. NICHOLAS for December, 1875. A new supply of this back number is ready, and any one, by inclosing twenty-five cents with full post-office address to the publishers, will receive a copy of the article by return mail. It is so full, so clear, and so copiously illustrated, that we do not feel able to improve upon it. Our "Letter-Box" in last month's ST. NICHOLAS contains directions for making a few articles for Christmas gifts. In fact, suggestions for pretty handiwork abound in ST. NICHOLAS, and we always are glad when correspondents kindly add to our stock.

Berlin, Mass., August 29, 1876.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I saw in your March number an account of a doll claimed to be the oldest in America.

A friend of mine, Mary L. Whitcomb, has in her possession a doll which is much older. This, the first doll brought to America, was presented, in 1733, by Captain George Girdler to his daughter, Hannah Girdler, then two years of age.

The doll's body is of wood, to which the legs and arms are tacked with small nails. The doll's head is of wood, painted or coated with something giving it an appearance not so much unlike that of those of our day as might be expected.

It was last dressed about thirty-five years ago, and now wears a white lace cap, dress of brown satin, white stockings, and velvet slippers, and looks very like the little old lady it is. I intended writing long before now on this subject, but have neglected to do so. I think ST. NICHOLAS is a splendid magazine.—Very truly yours,

CLARA L. SHATTUCK.

New York, Oct. 16, 1876.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I cut this out of the newspaper, and I do wish you would put it in the "Letter-Box." It is so nice, and it makes me feel as if Cinderella, and Jack-the-Giant-Killer, and all those old stories might be true:

"Two exceedingly tall people are Captain Bates and wife, the giant and giantess, who were married in London some years ago. The captain and spouse have retired from public life, and built a house near Rochester, New York. He is seven and a half feet high, and she is an inch taller, and each weighs more than four hundred pounds. The rooms of their house are eighteen feet high, and the doors twelve feet high. Their bedstead is ten feet long, and all the furniture is proportionately large."

Just to think of it! I should n't be surprised if there were a great big knocker on the street-door, made like a man's face, and if it snapped its teeth at people when they went to knock.—Yours truly,

SALLY G. CLARK.

Orange, N. J., August 29, 1876.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have seen a great many things about girls improving themselves and learning to be housekeepers, and so on; but not a word about boys. Now I think that somebody ought to write something for us fellows.—Yours truly,

ARTHUR ROPES.

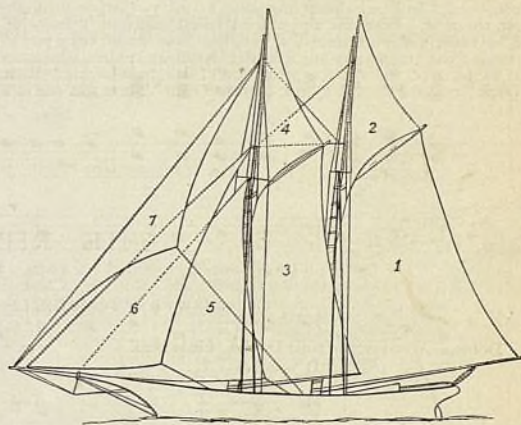
Arthur, and hundreds of other boys, will be glad to know that his hint has been anticipated. There are to be nine familiar and friendly "Talks with Boys" during the present volume of ST. NICHOLAS, and all of them from men who know just what the boys ought to hear. Mr. Bryant tells you this month of the ways of boys when he was a boy himself, and beneath his pleasant narrative you will find many a lesson of true manliness. Every word of Mr. Bryant's has value for you, boys, because it comes from one who, by an upright, noble life, and the worthy cultivation of fine gifts, has proved an honor to his time and his country. Soon you shall hear from the others. Your own Trowbridge has a hearty word to say, and friends from the other side of the Atlantic are coming to have a friendly talk with you. George MacDonald, who wrote that wonderful fairy tale, "The Princess and the Goblin," and the rhyme beginning "Where did you come from, baby dear?" will soon be heard from, and before long you shall have a word from the school-boy's friend, Tom Hughes, author of "Tom Brown at Oxford" and "School-days at Rugby."

St. Louis, Mo.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I live in St. Louis, and get your Magazine every month. I have got the hull of a boat, about two feet long, with places for two masts: and I have rigged her like a schooner and have great fun sailing her on a pond near where I live. But I never saw a vessel; only pictures, and don't know how to rig her right. I wish some boy, who lives on the sea-coast, would tell me how to rig her like a yacht. I saw a picture of the "Countess of Dufferin," but I can't make it all out. My father has been to sea, and tries to explain it to me; but he has forgotten, it was so long ago. Do yachts have fore-top-masts, and top-sails? and how is the top-sail hoisted? And do they have ratlines? and do the stays come down over the ends of the cross-trees to the side of the vessel, or are they made fast to the mast? I don't see how they can be made fast to the mast, for then you can't raise the gaff; and I don't see how there can be a foretop-sail, because it would foul the maintop-stay. I am going to take my schooner to pieces, and rig it up right after school hours, and if you would like, I will tell you more about it some other time.—

LEWIS G. CONANT.

Miniature yachts, when rigged as schooners, have foretop-masts and maintop-masts, and foretop-sails, and maintop-sails. Both top-sails are secured to short "sprits" or poles, and are hoisted from deck. The stay from the foremast to the mainmast is called the



"spring-stay," and in changing the vessel's course, the foretop-sail is lowered till it can pass under the spring-stay, and then it is brought up on the other side. Ratlines are never used on the shrouds. Only the larger vessels use cross-trees, or "spreaders" as they are called; and in every case the top-mast back-stays always come to the deck, and are fastened just abaft (to the rear) of the shroud. Such schooners also have a stay from the top of the maintop-mast to the top of the mainmast.

This outline drawing gives the position of the sails commonly used in miniature yachts; 1 is the mainsail, 2 the maintop-sail, 3 the fore-sail, 4 the foretop-sail, 5 the staysail, 6 the jib, 7 the flying-jib. The first mast is called the foremast; the short mast above, the foretop-mast. The second mast is the mainmast, and the one above it is the maintop-mast. Two shrouds are given to each mast, and one back-stay to each topmast. The dotted lines show how the foretop-sail passes the spring-stay, and the top of the foresails, and shows how the jibs pass each other, one lapping over the other. This is an outline of the sails and standing rigging only, the running rigging being omitted to save room.

Providence, R. I., October 23d, 1876.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: The lady with the cold in her head, mentioned in the last number of ST. NICHOLAS, called to the person who was coming, "Caduceus"—Can you see us?

The Caduceus was the rod of Mercury, the messenger of the gods,

and God of Trade, and also of thieves. It consisted of a short staff, around which two snakes twined, and which bore a pair of wings.—
Yours truly,
CHARLES HART PAYNE.

Annie Manning also answers the question correctly.

We are sure that all our readers who admire a fine dialogue, or parlor-play, will heartily welcome Mr. Eggleston's "fairy show" in the present number, entitled "The House of Santa Claus." The play has been publicly tried in Brooklyn, and has proven a complete success. With only slight changes, it can be readily adapted to home or parlor representation. In its present form, therefore, it commends itself equally to those who are seeking an effective and lively composition for school or public exhibition, and to those who may desire an aid of this sort in the entertainment of a social or family gathering.

Boys and girls wishing to imitate stone, when making scenery such as is described in the "House of Santa Claus," or when making card-houses, etc., can do so by covering the object which is to represent stone with a coating of glue, or mucilage, and then throwing common sand upon it, before the glue has dried. If the sand is applied liberally, a very close resemblance to stone may thus be produced.

Buckland.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I've meant to write to you for ever so long, and to join with the rest of the girls and boys in telling how I love you,—yes, I believe I almost love you. I think you're just the freshest, cheeriest, jolliest, and altogether loveliest magazine I know of. I've taken you ever since you were born, and we all enjoy you so much, from grandma to my little three-year-old brother, who looks at the pictures, and takes a great deal of delight in having "Sister Lizzie" read the short, big-print stories to him. There was one in a

previous number—I think the May one—which especially pleased him, and which he is never tired of hearing read. I can't remember its name; but it's about some little chickens, whose mother told them to fly, but, as their wings were not grown, could n't; and none of them tried, except one, who did his best, although he did n't succeed, and was afterward rewarded because he really tried. "Brave Tim, our Centennial Cat," also delighted him very much. For my part, I liked "The Queen of the Moles," and Miss Thaxter's bear story as well as any, though I don't know but Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney's "Spinning and Weaving," "Midsummer and the Poets," and—well, I keep thinking of more and more of them,—and all I can say is to repeat what I said before, and that is, that I think the whole number is just as nice as it could possibly be.—Yours always,
L. W. S.

St. Albans.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I will tell you a story about my uncle who he was a little boy. He told his mother he was sick, and didn't want to go to school. She said he could take some castor-oil and go to bed. He went to school.
FRANKIE WEBBER.

"The Boy Emigrants," which has so delighted our readers during the past year, is soon to be published in book form by Scribner, Armstrong & Co. Mr. Brooks knows a boy's heart through and through, and his fine story, with its wealth of strong narrative, exciting scenes and incidents, and true lessons of self-reliance, ought to be read by every boy in the land. No better picture of the gold-seeker's life can be found anywhere in literature than this stirring, straightforward, manly story of "The Boy Emigrants." We know, young friends, that all of you will rejoice at its publication in separate form, and we heartily congratulate Mr. Brooks, and the host of boys who will be eager to own it, on the handsome appearance of the volume. The binding is neat and tasteful, and the pictures are the same that have appeared in ST. NICHOLAS. For you who read the magazine, the book needs no word of praise or introduction, but we feel it both a pleasure and a duty to commend it earnestly to all.

THE RIDDLE-BOX.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NOVEMBER NUMBER.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—Dame Durden, Little Nell.

D —affodi— L
A —lkal— I
M —in— T
E —lephan— T
D —amse— L
U —sag— E
R —ave— N
D —im— E
E —l— L
N —icke— L

ANAGRAMS.—1. Boston. 2. New York. 3. Rochester. 4. Washington. 5. Charleston. 6. Mobile. 7. St. Paul.

EASY SYNCOPATIONS.—1. Marry, Mary. 2. Lucky, Lucy. 3. Norma, Nora.

REVERSALS.—1. Brag, garb. 2. Room, moor. 3. Flow, wolf. 4. Mode, Edom. 5. Note, Eton. 6. Strop, ports. 7. Animal, lamina.

ABBREVIATIONS.—1. Bread, red. 2. Cedar, ear. 3. Dirge, ire. 4. Iliad, lad. 5. Jewel, eel. 6. Maple, ale. 7. Niece, ice. 8. Olive, lie. 9. Spire, pie. 10. Wheat, hat.

DIAGONAL PUZZLE.—Baronet, Coronet.

B A A L B E C
B A L L O O N
B A R T R A M
B E D O U I N
C A N O N R Y
L E A F L E T
T A B O R E T

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.—London.

CHARADE, No. 1.—Chimney-piece.

SQUARE-WORD.—
I R O N
R O M E
O M I T
N E T S

GRAMMATICAL COMPARISONS.—1. Bee, beer, beast. 2. Bow, boat, boast. 3. Fee, fear, feast. 4. Row, roar, roast.

RIDDLE.—Cricket.

APOCOPES.—1. Cockade, cock. 2. Hamper, ham. 3. Rattle, rat. 4. Rushlight, rush. 5. Rueful, rue.

REBUS.—"Great expectations bring great disappointments."

PICTORIAL DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—Table, Easel.

T —un— E
A —mmóni— A
B —ook— S
L —y— E
E —l— L

EASY ENIGMA.—Man, hat, tan—Manhattan.

CHARADE, No. 2.—Eye-lash.

DIAMOND PUZZLE.—

R
N O T
R O M E O
T E N
O

NUMERICAL ENIGMA.—The Aurora Borealis.

PICTORIAL ENIGMA.—Stream: Star, arm, ram, aster, mast, mat, tar, mat, rat, rest, meat, ear.

Clarence M. Trowbridge and Robert L. Groendycke answered correctly all the puzzles in the October number.

ANSWERS TO SPECIAL PUZZLES IN OCTOBER NUMBER were received, previous to October 18, from Walter Raymond Spalding, Hilda Mosman, Brainerd P. Emery, Lou L. Richards, John B. Greiner, Emma Elliott, "Ajax and Alex," Bessie T. B. Benedict, Virginia Davage, A. Carter, Sheldon Emery, Mary P. Johnson, Howard Steel Rodgers, Lena Devereux, Willie Dibblee, C. H. Delaney, W. C. Delaney, Allie Bertram, Ella M. Kirkendall, Leila Allen, Millie Thompson, Charles N. Wilkinson, Mary N. Wadsworth, "Juno," Mamie B. Balmann, Howard Steel Rodgers, Osman Abbott, Nessie E. Stevens, Charles F. Cook, C. A. Montague, A. G. Cameron, "Scarsdale," Susie F. Collins, Eleanor N. Hughes, Frank P. Nagel, Bessie McLaren, Helen Green.

REBUS.



EASY ENIGMA STORY.

FOURTEEN letters. My whole is a fragrant flower. I went to pick wild 1, 5, 7, 9, 2, 6, 14, 11, 10, 8, 3, 13, and found it blooming in the field where they grew. The 7, 12, 1, 3, 1 made the 8, 7, very 13, 2, 14, 3, 5; and I did not care if the 6, 11, 8, 9, 7, 1 pricked my fingers. 1 13, 5, 2 a sheep or 5, 2, 12 come and 6, 11, 12, 2, 1, 14 some of 8, 5, 1 leaves. A boy with a sly look (who 11, 12, 6, 1 birds' nests) came by, trundling a 6, 9, 11, 7, 12, 2. He had also a 6, 12, 2 and 9, 11, 10, 12, 2, and aimed at the 6, 11, 4, 9, 13, 5 of a robin, through the 6, 9, 7, 13. I was 13, 12, 7, 10, 8, 14, 11 than I can tell that he hit 8, 5. Then I took my 10, 12, 13, 4, 1 and 6, 14, 7, 11, 8, 4, 1, and went home. B.

CHARADE.

My first is never out;
My second 's but a letter;
My third will waste your ink,—
Or, if you like it better,
My third will hold your sheep;
My last is impress deep.

My whole is free and bold,
And will not be controlled.

L. W. H.

DOUBLE DIAGONAL PUZZLE.

NINE letters. Diagonals—From left to right: A sportive insect. From right to left: A genus of plants which one handsome species of this insect lives upon.

1. An ancient kingdom. 2. A very useful household article. 3. A yellow flower. 4. Small fleets. 5. To attract strongly. 6. Making comparisons. 7. Gay. 8. A small flag on a vessel's mast. 9. A useful piece of furniture. P.

HIDDEN WORD-SQUARE.

1. My sister Rebecca detests both pickles and pears. 2. Then are naughty children not allowed to go? 3. We made bark frames and baskets for the fair. 4. The great door is broken, actually broken in pieces. 5. Those were the first arts that we learned.

Concealed in the above are five words having the following significations: 1. A student at a military school. 2. A place of public contest. 3. To shut out or exclude. 4. To decree or establish as law. 5. Specimens of a kind of pastry.

The five words, when found and properly arranged, will form a square-word. J. J. T.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

(The whole is a word dear to all Americans.)

My first is in flour, but not in wheat;
My second is in dine, but not in eat;
My third is in bench, but not in seat;
My fourth is in fence, and also in gate;
My fifth is in number, but not in date,
My sixth is in stop, but not in go;
My seventh is in yes, but not in no.

L. P.

TRANSPPOSITIONS.

1. SHE — her assertion that among all her pets the one valued most was —. 2. The tired Arab joyfully exclaimed, " — — — — —, and I shall be released from my —." 3. The Indian said of himself, " — — — — — through tangled bushes, and — the thorniest thickets. 4. Her — found vent — of tears. 5. He could not — propensity for writing —. B.

SQUARE-WORD.

FILL the blanks in their order with words making sense, and which, placed under each other in the same order, will form the square-word. I saw a violet and gold — growing beside a wild — on a little — in the river, and wondered if birds carried the — there. J.

WORD SYNCOPATIONS.

TAKE one word from out another without changing the order of the letters, and find a complete word remaining.

1. Take to sin from a small dog and leave a row. 2. Take always from a young hare and leave to allow. 3. Take a shoemaker's instrument from unrestrained by law and leave smaller. 4. Take a tree from showy and leave an insect. 5. Take an era from a show and leave a short breath. 6. Take cunning from a checked cloth and leave to brown. 7. Take the last from a cord and leave a weight. 8. Take part of a bird from vibrating and leave to utter melodious sounds. C. D.

ANAGRAM PROVERBS.

MAKE a proverb from each sentence. Thus the letters of "Earns sage's rags" may be transposed into "As green as grass."

1. Earns sage's rags. 2. A bub says, "Ease!" 3. Scold a shy cat, Ira. 4. Asa has a dream charm. 5. Again Sam blows a nice ace. CYRIL DEANE.

RIDDLE.

FIVE of a party of seven are we—

With our respects to you.

Now, a part of each of our names we'll tell,

In a tale both new and true:

Two friends who longed to wed, would fry

Some fish—so down they sat:

By set of sun the fish were done,—

Now what do you make of that?

EASY DECAPITATIONS.

1. BEHEAD a small hound and leave a large American bird. 2. Behead a North American beast of prey and leave a part of his head. 3. Behead a sly, thievish animal and leave a common beast of burden. 4. Behead a common, lively, horned quadruped and leave a grain. 5. Behead common farm animals and leave a beverage. 6. Behead a small, spry animal and leave part of an artist's outfit. 7. Behead an early bird and leave a ship mentioned in the Bible. 8. Behead a wild aquatic game bird and leave one who is in love. S.

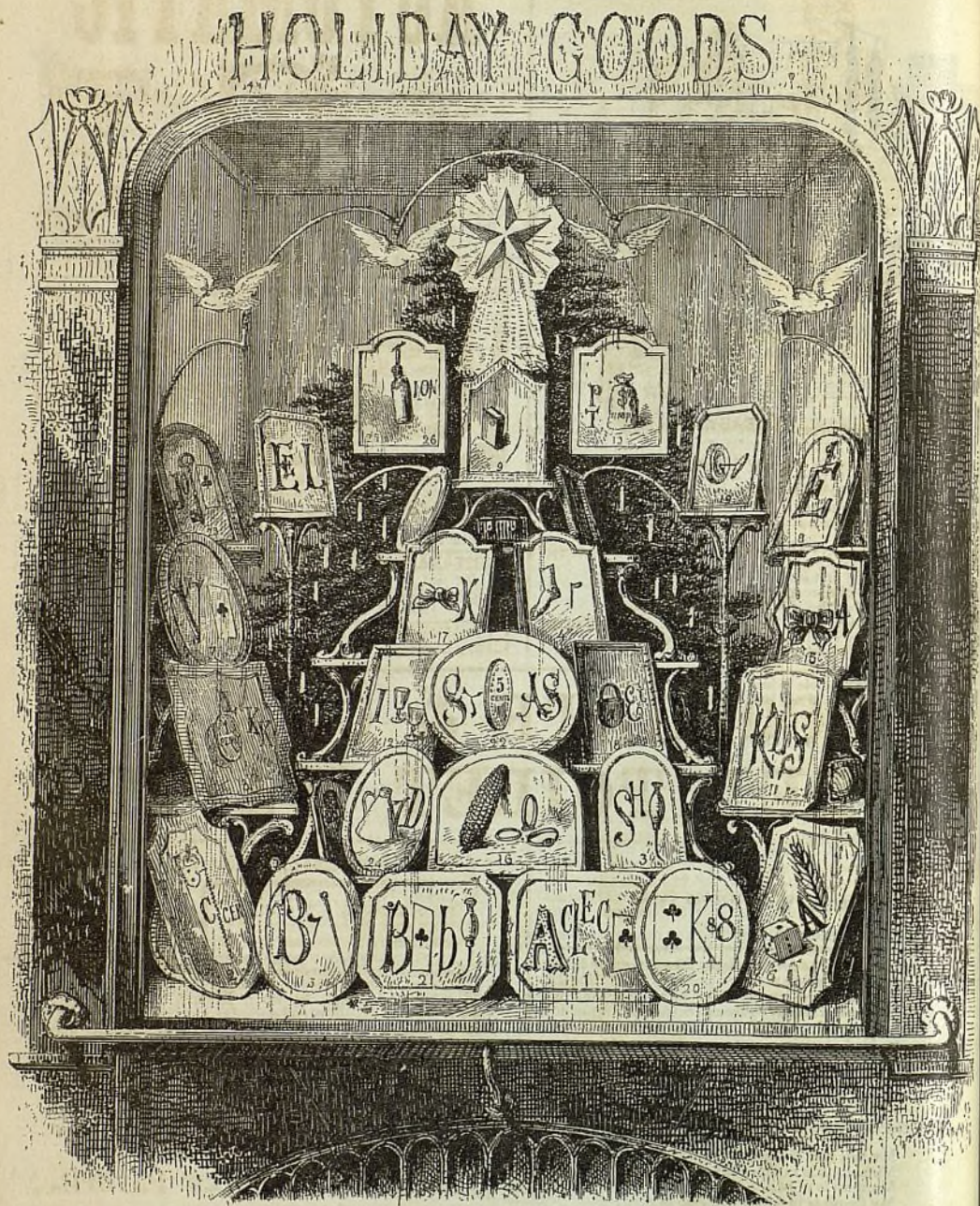
EASY DIAMOND PUZZLE.

1. A CONSONANT. 2. A domestic animal. 3. Glossy silk. 4. A metal. 5. A consonant. C. N. W.

CLASSICAL DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

1. A BEAUTIFUL Roman girl, whose father slew her rather than have her made a slave. 2. The Grecian Goddess of Peace. 3. A dramatic poet of Syracuse, who flourished during the reign of Ptolemy I. 4. A daughter of King Creon of Corinth, whom Jason married after deserting Medea. 5. A name given to Pluto, Persephone, the Erinnyes, and others. 6. A contracted form of the name of the king to whose court Thetis sent Achilles in disguise. The initials form the name of a celebrated Roman poet, and the finals his masterpiece. SEDGWICK.

A CHRISTMAS PUZZLE.



THE twenty-six numbered designs in the show-window represent as many articles suitable for Christmas gifts, including one or more for each member of the family. Nos. 1 and 2 are for grandfather; 3, 4, 6, 12 for grandmother; 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 for mother; 11, 13, 14 for father; 15, 16, 17, 18, 23 for sister; 19, 20, 21, 22 for brother; 24 for baby; 25, 26 for the one who is most fond of music. What are the gifts?

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

THE initials and finals name two bays in the western part of Europe.
1. A title of nobility. 2. One of the United States. 3. Part of a saddle. 4. A monk's hood. 5. A fruit. 6. An affirmative.

F. L. O.

MATHEMATICAL PUZZLE.

I AM a word of five letters, the sum of which is 157.

My 1, \div (my 2, + my 4), = my 5; my 5, + my 3, = $\frac{1}{2}$ of my 1; my 3, - my 2, \times my 5, = my 1, \times (my 2 + my 4).

SEDGWICK.