DRAWN BY E. H. BLASHFIELD. ENGRAVED BY J. H. E. WHITNEY.

ARLA AND THE SACRISTAN.

(SEE PAGE 87.)

ST. NICHOLAS.

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THE CLOCKS OF RONDAINE.

By Frank R. Stockton.

CENTURIES ago, there stood on the banks of a river a little town called Rondaine. The river was a long and winding stream which ran through different countries, and was sometimes narrow and swift, and sometimes broad and placid; sometimes hurrying through mountain-passes, and again meandering quietly through fertile plains; in some places of a blue color and almost transparent, and in others of a dark and somber hue; and so it changed until it threw itself into a warm, far-spreading sea.

But it was quite otherwise with the little town. As far back as anybody could remember, it had always been the same that it was at the time of our story; and the people who lived there could see no reason to suppose that it would ever be different from what it was then. It was a pleasant little town, its citizens were very happy; and why there should be any change in it, the most astute old man in all Rondaine could not have told you.

If Rondaine had been famed for anything at all, it would have been for the number of its clocks. It had many churches, some little ones in dark side streets, and some larger ones in wider thoroughfares, besides here and there a very good-sized church fronting on a park or open square; and in the steeple of each of these churches there was a clock. There were town buildings, very old ones, which stood upon the great central square. Each of these had a tower, and in each tower was a clock. Then there were clocks at street corners, and two clocks in the market-place, and clocks over shop doors, a clock at each end of the bridge, and several large clocks a little way out of town. Many of these clocks were fashioned in some quaint and curious way. In one of the largest a stone man came out and struck the hours with a stone hammer, while a stone woman struck the half-hours with a stone broom; and in another an iron donkey kicked the hours on a bell behind him. It would be impossible to tell all the odd ways in which the clocks of Rondaine struck; but in one respect they were alike: they all did strike. The good people of the town would not have tolerated a clock which did not strike.

It was very interesting to lie awake in the night and hear the clocks of Rondaine strike. First would come a faint striking from one of the churches in the by-streets, a modest sound, as if the clock was not sure whether it was too early or not; then from another quarter would be heard a more confident clock striking the hour clearly and distinctly. When they were quite ready, but not a moment before, the seven bells of the large church on the square would chime the hour; after which, at a respectful interval of time, the other church clocks of the town would strike. After the lapse of three or four minutes, the sound of all these bells seemed to wake up the stone man

in the tower of the town-building, and he struck the hour with his hammer. When this had been done, the other municipal clocks felt at liberty to strike, and they did so. And when every sound had died away, so that he would be certain to be heard if there was any one awake to hear, it would be very likely that the iron donkey would kick out the hour on his bell. But there were times when he kicked before any of the clocks began to strike. One by one the clocks on the street corners struck, the uptown ones first, and afterward those near the river. These were followed by the two clocks on the bridge, the one at the country end waiting until it was quite sure that the one at the town end had finished. Somewhat later would be heard the clock of Vougereau, an old country house in the suburbs. This clock, a very large one, was on the top of a great square stone tower, and from its age it had acquired a habit of deliberation; and when it began to strike, people were very apt to think that it was one o'clock, until after a considerable interval another stroke would assure them that it was later or earlier than that, and if they really wanted to know what hour the old clock was striking, they must give themselves time enough to listen until they were entirely certain that it had finished.

The very last clock to strike in Rondaine was one belonging to a little old lady with white hair, who lived in a little white house in one of the prettiest and cleanest streets in the town. Her clock was in a little white tower at the corner of her house, and was the only strictly private clock which was in the habit of making itself publicly heard. Long after every other clock had struck, and when there was every reason to believe that for a considerable time nothing but half-hours would be heard in Rondaine, the old lady's clock would strike quickly and decisively, and with a confident tone, as if it knew it was right, and wished everybody to know that it knew.

In an unpretentious house which stood on a corner of two of the smaller streets in the town lived a young girl named Arla. For a year or more, Arla had been in the habit of waking up very early in the morning, sometimes long before daylight, and it had become a habit with her to lie and listen to the clocks. Her room was at the top of the house, and one of its windows opened to the west and another to the south, so that sounds entered from different quarters. Arla liked to leave these windows open so that the sounds of the clocks might come in.

Arla knew every clock by its tone, and she always made it a point to lie awake until she was positively sure that the last stroke of the clock at Vougereau had sounded; but it often happened that sleep overcame her before she heard the clock of the little old lady with white hair. It was so very long to wait for that!

It was not because she wanted to know the hour that Arla used to lie and listen to the clocks. She had a little clock of her own, which stood in her room and on which she depended for correct information regarding the time of day or night. This little clock, which had been given to her when she was a small girl, not only struck the hours and half-hours and quarter-hours, but there was attached to it a very pretty piece of mechanism which also indicated the time. On the front of the clock, just below the dial, was a sprig of a rosebush beautifully made of metal, and on this, just after the hour had sounded, there was a large green bud; at a quarter past the hour, this bud opened a little, so that the red petals could be seen; fifteen minutes later, it was a half-blown rose; and at a quarter of an hour more, it was nearly full blown; just before the hour, the rose opened to its fullest extent, and so remained until the clock had finished striking, when it immediately shut up into a great green bud. This clock was a great delight to Arla; for not only was it a very pleasant thing to watch the unfolding of the rose, but it was a continual satisfaction to her to think that her little clock always told her exactly what time it was, no matter what the other clocks of Rondaine might say.

Arla's father and mother were thrifty, industrious people, who were very fond of their daughter. They not only taught her how usefully to employ herself, but insisted that she should take the recreation and exercise that a young girl ought to have. All day she was so occupied with work or play that she had little opportunity of thinking for herself; but even if they had considered the matter, this fact would not have troubled her parents, as they looked upon Arla as entirely too young for that sort of thing. In the very early morning, however, listening to the clocks of Rondaine or waiting for them, Arla did a great deal of thinking; and it so happened, on the morning of the day before Christmas, when the stars were bright and the air frosty, and every outside sound very clear and distinct, that Arla began to think of something which had never entered her mind before.

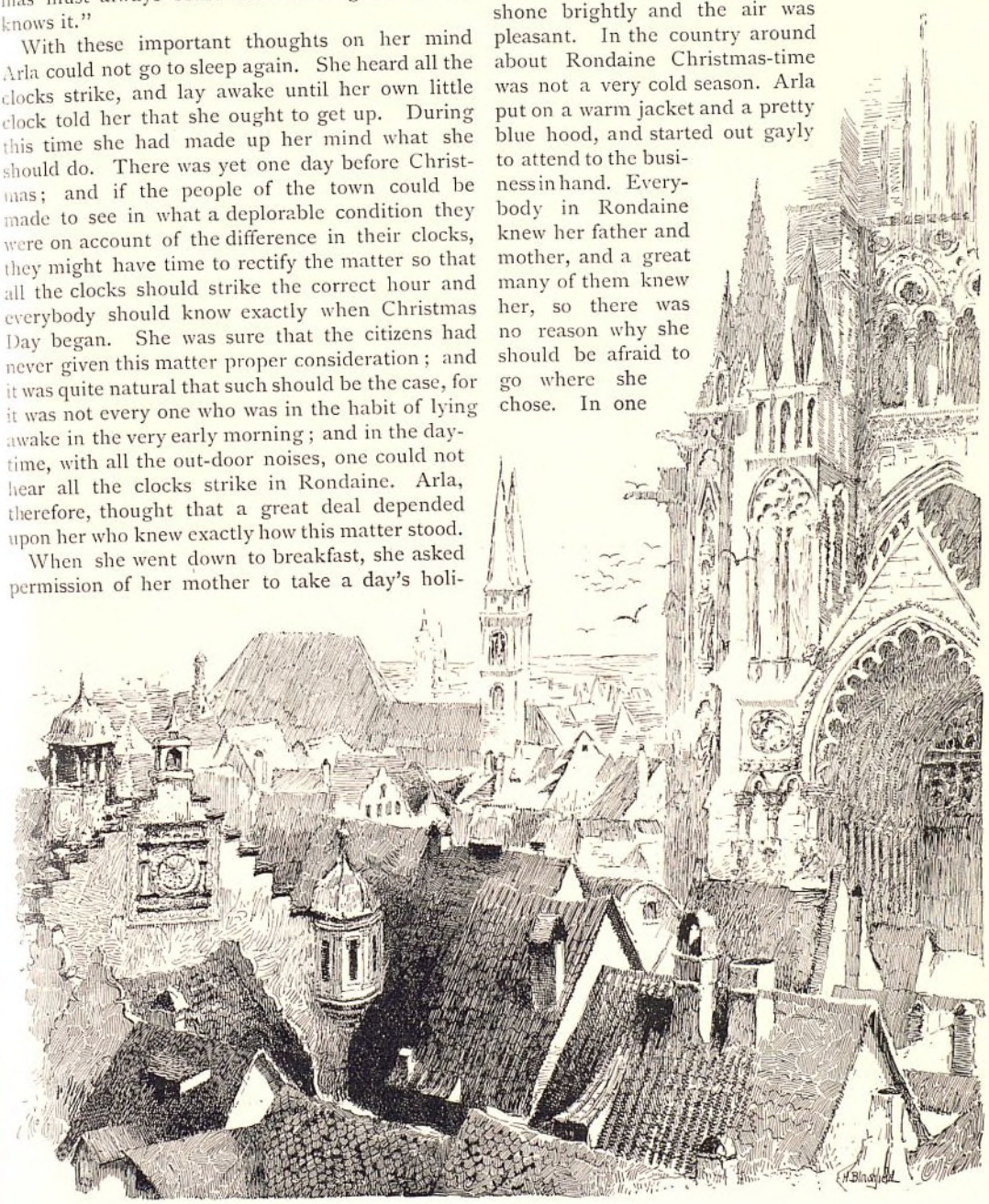
"How in the world," she said to herself, "do the people of Rondaine know when it is really Christmas? Christmas begins as soon as it is twelve o'clock on Christmas Eve; but as some of the people depend for the time upon one clock and some upon others, a great many of them can not truly know when Christmas Day has really begun. Even some of the church clocks make people think that Christmas has come, when in reality it is yet the

day before. And not one of them strikes at the right time! As for that iron donkey, I believe he kicks whenever he feels like it. And yet there are people who go by him! I know this, for they have told me so. But the little old lady with white hair is worse off than anybody else. Christmas must always come ever so long before she knows it."

With these important thoughts on her mind Arla could not go to sleep again. She heard all the clocks strike, and lay awake until her own little clock told her that she ought to get up. During this time she had made up her mind what she should do. There was yet one day before Christmas; and if the people of the town could be made to see in what a deplorable condition they were on account of the difference in their clocks, they might have time to rectify the matter so that all the clocks should strike the correct hour and everybody should know exactly when Christmas Day began. She was sure that the citizens had never given this matter proper consideration; and it was quite natural that such should be the case, for it was not every one who was in the habit of lying awake in the very early morning; and in the daytime, with all the out-door noises, one could not hear all the clocks strike in Rondaine. Arla, therefore, thought that a great deal depended upon her who knew exactly how this matter stood.

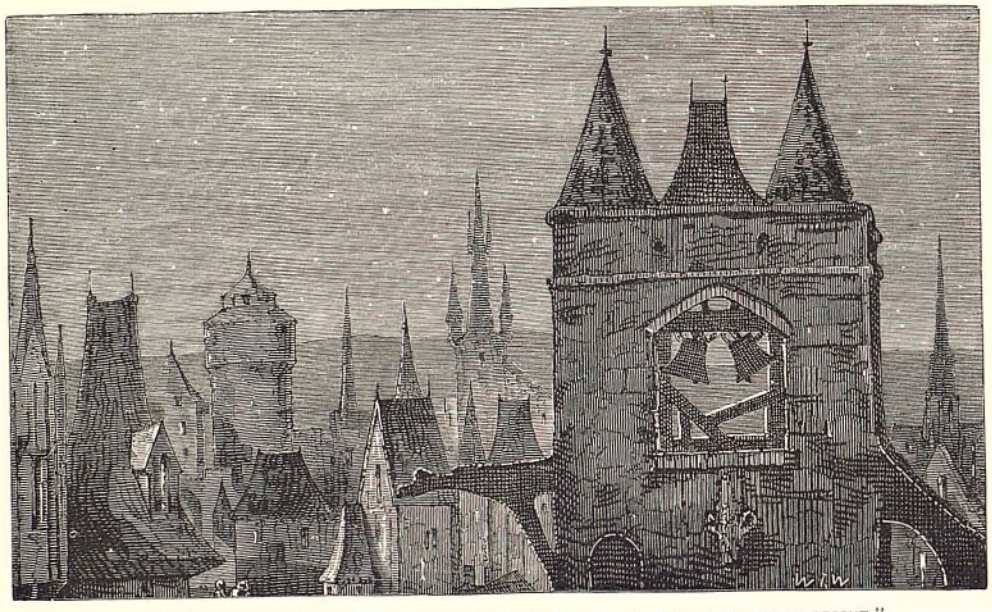
When she went down to breakfast, she asked permission of her mother to take a day's holiday. As she was a good girl, and never neglected either her lessons or her tasks, her mother was quite willing to give her the day before Christmas in which she could do as she pleased, and she did not think it necessary to ask if she intended to spend it in any particular way.

The day was cool, but the sun shone brightly and the air was pleasant. In the country around about Rondaine Christmas-time was not a very cold season. Arla put on a warm jacket and a pretty blue hood, and started out gayly to attend to the business in hand. Everybody in Rondaine knew her father and mother, and a great many of them knew her, so there was no reason why she should be afraid to go where she chose. In one



"IF RONDAINE HAD BEEN FAMED FOR ANYTHING AT ALL, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FAMED FOR THE NUMBER OF ITS CLOCKS."

hand she carried a small covered basket in which she had placed her rose clock. The works of this little clock were regulated by a balance-wheel, like those of a watch, and therefore it could be carried about without stopping it.



"ON THE MORNING OF THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS WHEN THE STARS WERE BRIGHT."

The first place she visited was the church at which she and her parents always attended service. It was a small building in a little square at the bottom of a hill, and, to reach it, one had to go down a long flight of stone steps. When she entered the dimly lighted church, Arla soon saw the sacristan, a pleasant-faced little old man whom she knew very well.

"Good-morning, sir," said she. "Do you take care of the church clock?"

"AS FOR THAT IRON DONKEY, I BELIEVE HE KICKS WHEN HE FEELS LIKE IT."

The sacristan was sweeping the stone pavements of the church, just inside the door. He stopped and leaned upon his broom. "Yes, my little friend," he said, "I take care of everything here except the souls of the people."

"Well, then," said Arla, "I think you ought to know that your clock is eleven minutes too fast. I came here to tell you that, so that you might change it, and make it strike properly."

The sacristan's eyes began to twinkle. He was a man of merry mood. "That is very good of you, little Arla; very good indeed. And, now that we are about it, is n't there something else you would like to change? What do you say to having these stone pillars put to one side, so that they may be out of the way of the people when they come in? Or those great beams in the roof—they might be turned over, and perhaps we might find that the upper side would look fresher than this lower part, which is somewhat time-stained, as you see? Or, for the matter of that, what do you say to having our clock-tower taken down and set out there in the square before the church door? Then short-sighted people could see the time much better, don't you think? Now tell me, shall we do all these things together, wise little friend?"

A tear or two came into Arla's eyes, but she made no answer.

"Good-morning, sir," she said; and went away.

"I suppose," she said to herself as she ran up the stone steps, "that he thought it would be too much trouble to climb to the top of the tower to set the clock right. But that was no reason why he should make fun of me. I don't like him as much as I used to."

The next church to which Arla went was a large one, and it was some time before she could find the

sacristan. At last she saw him in a side chapel at the upper end of the church, engaged in dusting some old books. He was a large man, with a red face, and he turned around quickly, with a stern expression, as she entered.

"Please, sir," said Arla, "I came to tell you that your church clock is wrong. It strikes from four to six minutes before it ought to; sometimes the one and sometimes the other. It should be changed so that it will be sure to strike at the right time."

The face of the sacristan grew redder, and twitched visibly at her remark.

"Do you know what I wish?" he almost shouted in reply.

"No, sir," answered Arla.

"I wish," he said, "that you were a boy, so that I might take you by the collar and soundly cuff your ears for coming here to insult an officer of the church in the midst of his duties! But, as you are a girl, I can only tell you to go away from here as rapidly and as quietly as you can, or I shall have to put you in the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities!"

ONE OF THE CLOCKS.

Arla was truly frightened, and although she did not run,—for she knew that would not be proper

"'I DON'T LIKE HIM AS MUCH AS I USED TO,' SAID ARLA."

in a church,—she walked as fast as she could into the outer air.

"What a bad man," she then said to herself "to be employed in a church! It surely is not known what sort of person he is, or he would not be allowed to stay there a day!"

Arla thought she would not go to any more churches at present, for she did not know what sort of sacristans she might find in them.

"When the other clocks in the town all strike properly," she thought, "it is most likely they will see for themselves that their clocks are wrong, and they will have them changed."

She now made her way to the great square of the town, and entered the building at the top of which stood the stone man with his hammer. She found the concierge, or door-keeper, in a little room by the side of the entrance. She knew where to go, for she had been there with her mother to ask permission to go up and see the stone man strike the hour with his hammer, and the stone woman strike the half-hour with her broom.

The concierge was a grave middle-aged man with spectacles; and, remembering what had just happened, Arla thought she would be careful how she spoke to him.

"If you please, sir," she said, with a courtesy, "I should like to say something to you. And I hope you will not be offended when I tell you that your clock is not quite right. Your stone man and your stone woman are both too slow; they sometimes strike as much as seven minutes after they ought to strike."

The grave middle-aged man looked steadily at her through his spectacles.

"I thought," continued Arla, "that if this should be made known to you, you would have the works of the stone man and the stone woman altered so that they might strike at the right time. They can be heard so far, you know, that it is very necessary they should not make mistakes."

"Child," said the man, with his spectacles still steadily fixed on her, "for one hundred and fifty-seven years the open tower on this building has stood there. For one hundred and fifty-seven years the thunder and the lightning in time of storm have roared and flashed around it, and the sun in time of fair weather has shone upon it. In that century and a half and seven years men and women have lived and have died, and their children and their grand-children and their great-grandchildren, and even the children of these, have lived and died after them. Kings and queens have

"THE STONE MAN STRUCK THE HOUR WITH HIS HAMMER, AND THE STONE WOMAN STRUCK THE HALF HOUR WITH HER BROOM."

passed away, one after another; and all things living have grown old and died, one generation after another, many times. And yet, through all these years, that stone man and that stone woman have stood there, and in storm and in fair weather by daylight or in the darkness of night, they have struck the hours and the half-hours. Of all things that one hundred and fifty-seven years ago were able to lift an arm to strike, they alone are left. And now you, a child of thirteen, or perhaps fourteen years, come to me and ask me to change that which has not been changed for a century and a half and seven years!"

Arla could answer nothing with those spectacles fixed upon her. They seemed to glare more and more as she looked at them. "Good-morning, sir," she said, dropping a courtesy as she moved backward toward the door. Reaching it, she turned and hurried into the street.

"If those stone people," she thought, "have not been altered in all these years, it is likely they would now be striking two or three hours out of the way! But I don't know. If they kept on going slow for more than a century, they must have come around to the right hour sometimes. But they will have to strike ever and ever so much longer before they come around there again!"

(To be concluded.)

A DEAR LITTLE SCHEMER.

By M. M. D.

THERE was a little daughter once, whose feet were — oh, so small!
That when the Christmas Eve came 'round, they would n't do at all.
At least she said they would n't do, and so she tried another's,
And folding her wee stocking up, she slyly took her mother's.

"I 'll pin this big one here," she said,— then sat before the fire,
Watching the supple, dancing flames, and shadows darting by her,
Till silently she drifted off to that queer land, you know,
Of "Nowhere in particular," where sleepy children go.

She never knew the tumult rare that came upon the roof!
She never heard the patter of a single reindeer hoof;
She never knew how Some One came and looked his shrewd surprise
At the wee foot and the stocking — so different in size!

She only knew, when morning dawned, that she was safe in bed.
"It 's Christmas! Ho!" and merrily she raised her pretty head;
Then, wild with glee, she saw what "dear Old Santa Claus" had done,
And ran to tell the joyful news to each and every one:

"Mamma! Papa! Please come and look! a lovely doll, and all!"
And "See how full the stocking is! Mine *would* have been too small.
I borrowed this for Santa Claus. It is n't fair, you know,
To make him wait forever for a little girl to grow."

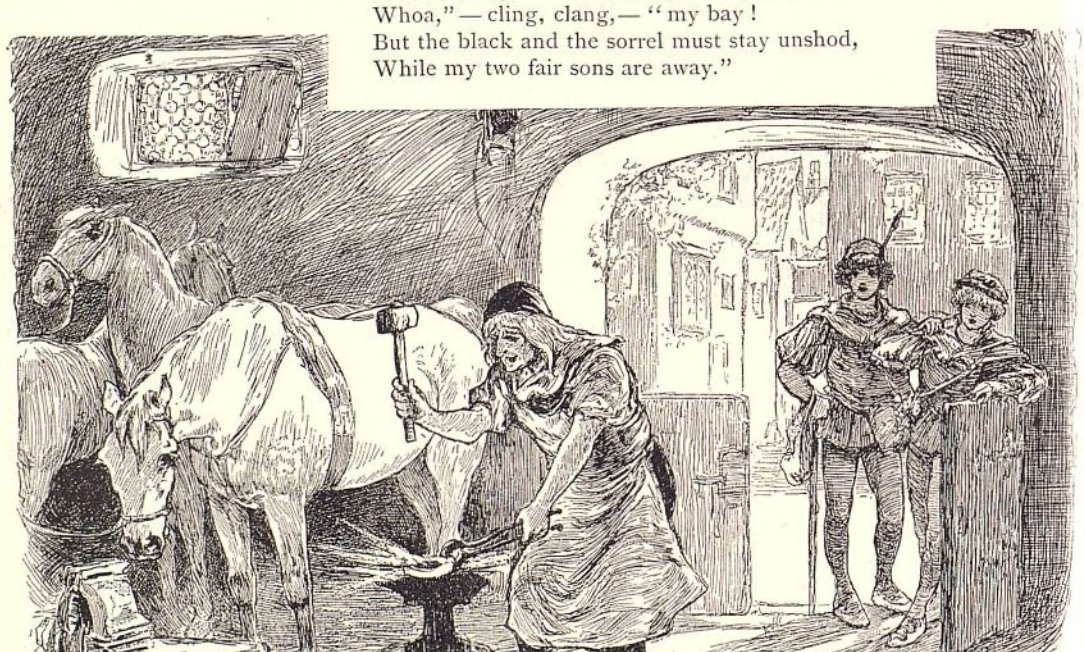
"She never knew how Some One came and looked his shrewd surprise
At the wee foot and the stocking— so different in size."

THE BALLAD of the BLACKSMITH'S SONS

By Mary E. Wilkins.

I.

Cling, clang,— "Whoa, my bonny gray mare!
Whoa,"— cling, clang,— "my bay!
But the black and the sorrel must stay unshod,
While my two fair sons are away."



II.

While the blacksmith spake, his fair sons came,
And stood in the smithy door —
"Now where have ye been, my two fair sons,
For your father has missed ye sore?"

III.

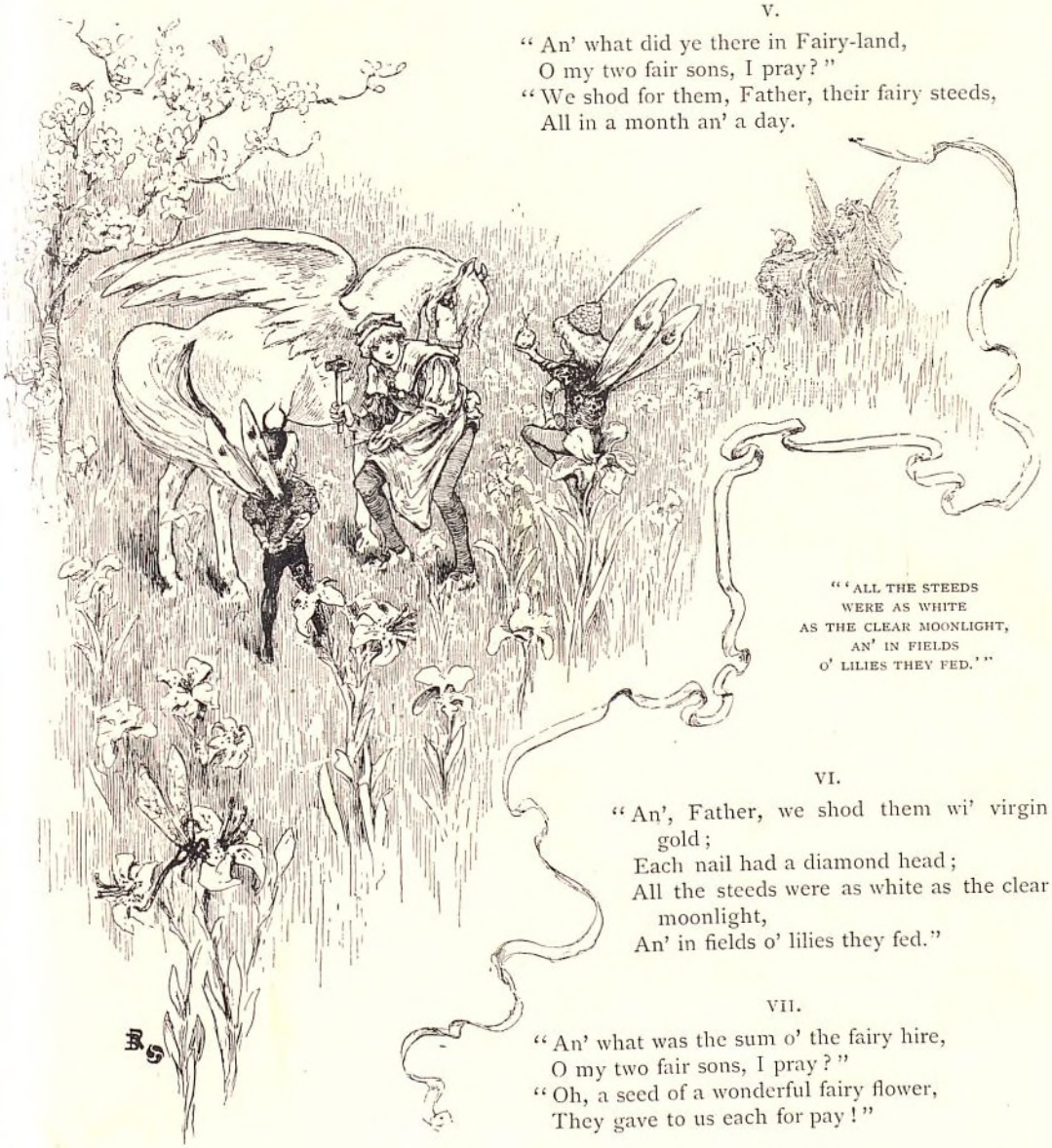
Then pleasantly spake the younger son,
With the eyes of dreamy blue:
"O Father, we 've been in a land as bright
As the glint o' the morning dew!"

IV.

Then his brother twinkled his gay black eyes,
And he spake up merry and bold:
"Hey, Father, we 've been in the fairy land,
Where the horses are shod wi' gold!"

V.

"An' what did ye there in Fairy-land,
O my two fair sons, I pray?"
"We shod for them, Father, their fairy steeds,
All in a month an' a day.



"'ALL THE STEEDS WERE AS WHITE AS THE CLEAR MOONLIGHT, AN' IN FIELDS O' LILIES THEY FED.'"

VI.

"An', Father, we shod them wi' virgin gold;
Each nail had a diamond head;
All the steeds were as white as the clear moonlight,
An' in fields o' lilies they fed."

VII.

"An' what was the sum o' the fairy hire,
O my two fair sons, I pray?"
"Oh, a seed of a wonderful fairy flower,
They gave to us each for pay!"

VIII.

"An' what will ye do wi' the seeds, fair sons?"
"We will sow i' the light, green spring,
An' may be, a golden rose will toss,
Or a silver lily will swing."

IX.

"Now," — cling, clang,— "whoa, my bonny gray mare!
Whoa," — cling, clang,— "my bay!
An' the sorrel an' black, now my sons are back,
Can be shod" — cling, clang,— "to-day."

XI.

Then the white rains wove with the long light-beams,
Till a stalk, like a slim green flame,
Pierced the garden mold; a leaf unrolled:
And another beside it came.

X.

Oh, the smith's sons planted the fairy seeds,
When the light, green spring came round,
Through the sunlit hours, 'twixt the April showers,
In the best of the garden ground!

XII.

Then the brothers tended their fairy plants
Till they shot up, brave and tall,
And the leaves grew thick. "Now soon shall we pick
A rose like a golden ball;

XIII.

"Or else, we shall see a lily, maybe,
With a bell o' bright silver cast,"
They thought; and they cried with joy and pride,
When the blossom-buds shaped at last.

XV.

"Heyday! I will buy me a brave gold chain,
An' a waistcoat o' satin fine,
A ruff o' lace, an' a pony an' chaise,
An' a bottle o' red old wine!"

XIV.

"Now, heyday!" shouted the elder son,
And he danced in the garden walk,
"A hat I will buy, as a steeple high,
An' the neighbors will stare an' talk.

XVI.

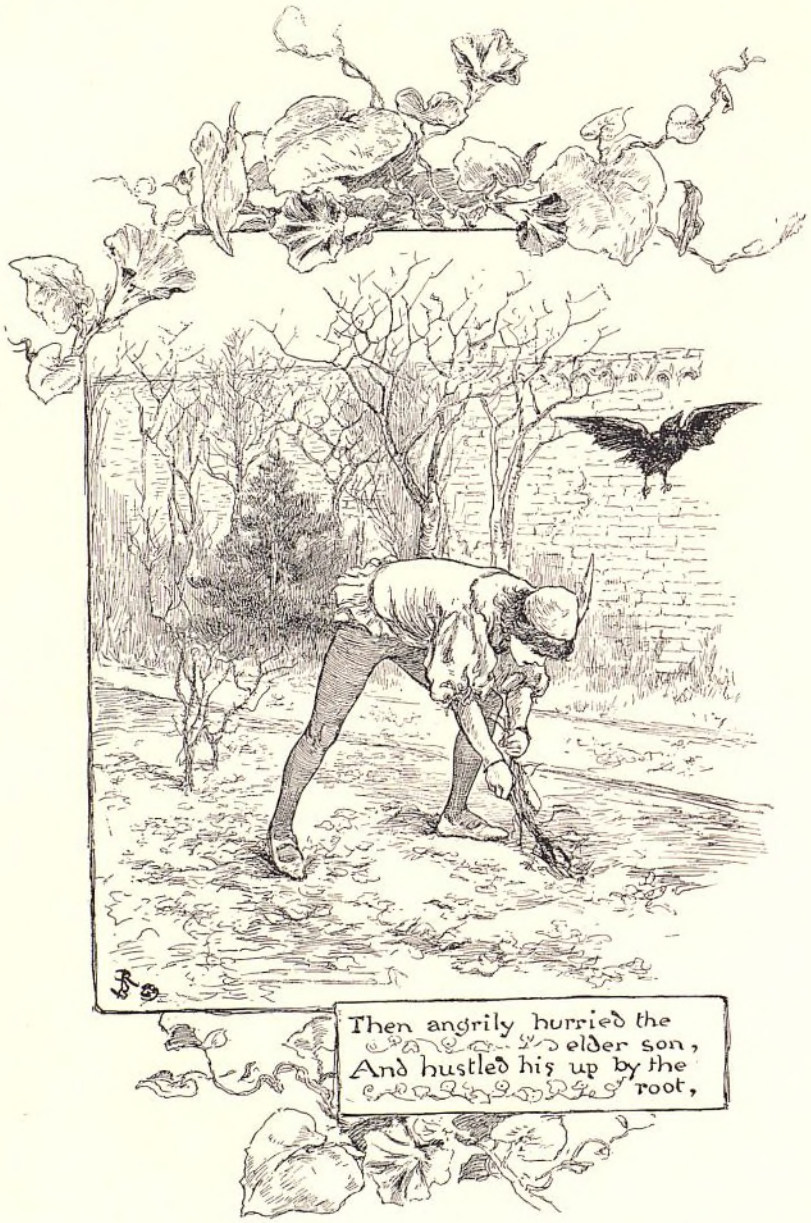
But his brother looked up in the blue spring sky,
And his yellow curls shone in the sun —
"O joy! If I hold but my fairy gold,
My father's toil is done!

XVII.

"He shall hammer no more with his tired old hands,
He shall shoe not the bay nor the gray;
But shall live as he please, an' sit at his ease,
A-resting the livelong day."

XIX.

Then angrily hurried the elder son,
And hustled his up by the root;
And it gave out a sound, as it left the ground,
Like the shriek of a fairy flute.



XVIII.

Alas, and alas! When it came to pass
That the bud to a flower was grown,
It was pallid and green,— no blossom so mean
In the country side was known.

XX.

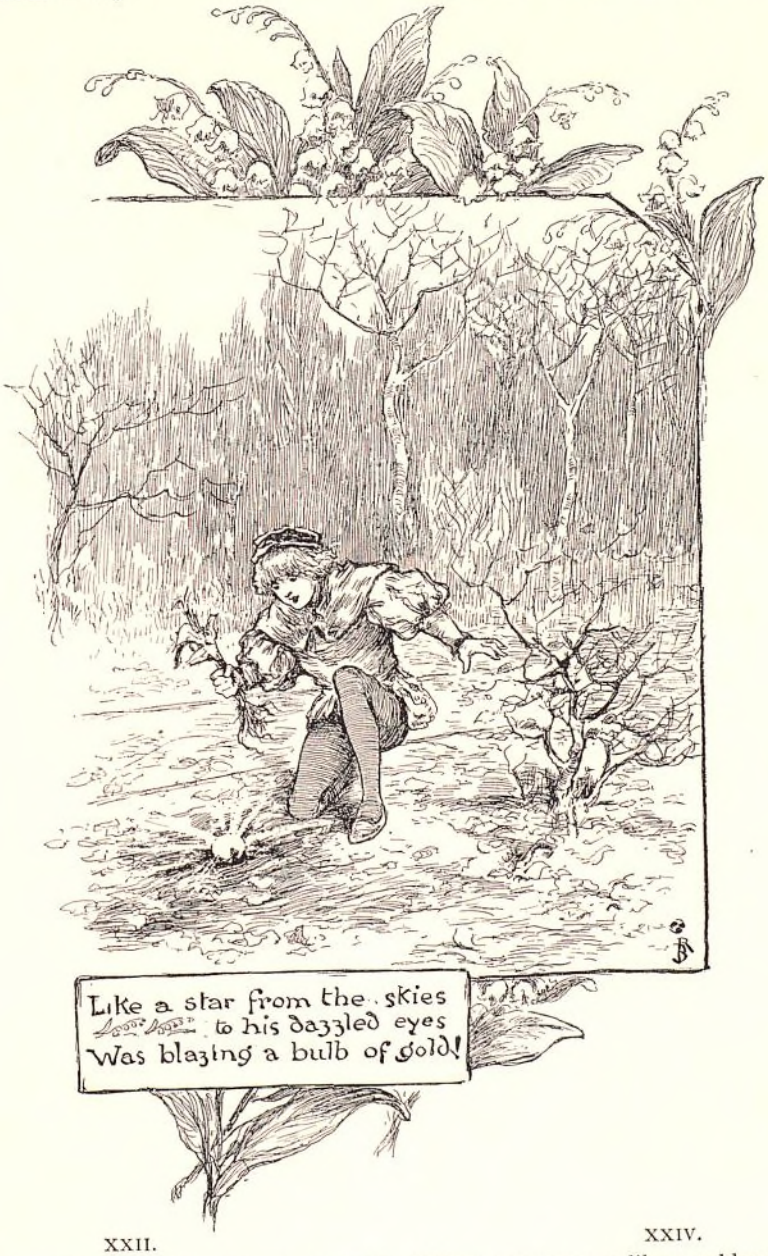
But he flung it over the garden wall,
And he cried, with a scowling brow:
"No waistcoat fine, an' no bottle o' wine—
I have labored for naught, I trow!"

XXI.

"Now," — cling, clang, — "whoa, my bonny gray mare!"
Cling, clang,—"whoa, my bay!
But the sorrel an' white must wait to-night,
For one son sulks all day."

XXIII.

But the frost came forth from the still blue North,
And one morning he found it dead;
The leaves were black in the white frost-light,
And the stalk was a shriveled shred.



XXII.

But the blue-eyed son till the summer was done
Cared well for his fairy flower;
He weeded and watered, and killed the grub
Would its delicate leaves devour.

XXIV.

"Now, never a rose like a golden ball,
Nor a silver lily shall blow;
But never I 'll mind, for I 'm sure to find
More gold, if I work, I know."

XXV.

Then he tenderly pulled up the fairy plant,
And, lo, in the frosty mold,
Like a star from the skies to his dazzled eyes,
Was blazing a bulb of gold!

XXVI.

"Now,"— cling, clang,—"whoa, my bonny gray mare!
Or gallop or trot, as ye may!
This happy old smith will shoe ye no more,
For he sits at his ease, all day!"

DECEMBER.

By Frank Dempster Sherman.

December 's come, and with her brought
A world in whitest marble wrought;
The trees and fence and all the posts
Stand motionless and white as ghosts,
And all the paths we used to know
Are hidden in the drifts of snow.
December brings the longest night
And cheats the day of half its light.
No bird-song breaks the perfect hush;
No meadow-brook with liquid gush
Runs telling tales in babbling rhyme
Of liberty and summer-time,
But frozen in its icy cell
Awaits the sun to break the spell.
Breathe once upon the window-glass
And see the mimic mists that pass,—
Fantastic shapes that go and come
Forever silvery and dumb.

December Santa Claus shall bring,—
Of happy children happy king,
Who with his sleigh and rein-deer stops
At all good people's chimney-tops.

Then let the holly red be hung,
And sweetest carols all be sung,
While we with joy remember them,—
The journeyers to Bethlehem,
Who followed trusting from afar
The guidance of that happy star
Which marked the spot where Christ was born
Long years ago one Christmas morn!

SARA CREWE;
OR,
WHAT HAPPENED AT MISS MINCHIN'S.*

By Frances Hodgson Burnett.

In the first place, Miss Minchin lived in London. Her home was a large, dull, tall one, in a large, dull square, where all the houses were alike, and all the sparrows were alike, and where all the door-knockers made the same heavy sound, and on still days — and nearly all the days were still — seemed to resound through the entire row in which the knock was knocked. On Miss Minchin's door there was a brass plate. On the brass plate there was inscribed in black letters,

> Miss Minchin's
> Select Seminary for Young Ladies.

Little Sara Crewe never went in or out of the house without reading that door-plate and reflecting upon it. By the time she was twelve, she had decided that all her trouble arose because, in the first place, she was not "Select," and in the second, she was not a "Young Lady." When she was eight years old, she had been brought to Miss Minchin as a pupil, and left with her. Her papa had brought her all the way from India. Her mamma had died when she was a baby, and her papa had kept her with him as long as he could. And then, finding the hot climate was making her very delicate, he had brought her to England and left her with Miss Minchin, to be part of the Select Seminary for Young Ladies. Sara, who had always been a sharp little child, who remembered things, recollected hearing him say that he had not a relative in the world whom he knew of, and so he was obliged to place her at a boarding-school, and he had heard Miss Minchin's establishment spoken of very highly. The same day, he took Sara out and bought her a great many beautiful clothes,— clothes so grand and rich that only a very young and inexperienced man would have bought them for a mite of a child who was to be brought up in a boarding-school. But the fact was that he was a rash, innocent young man, and very sad at the thought of parting with his little girl, who was all he had left to remind him of her beautiful mother, whom he had dearly loved. And he wished her to have everything the most fortunate little girl could have; and so, when the polite saleswomen in the shops said, "Here is our very latest thing in hats, the plumes are exactly the same as those we sold to Lady Diana Sinclair yesterday," he immediately bought what was offered to him, and paid whatever was asked. The consequence was that Sara had a most extraordinary wardrobe. Her dresses were silk and velvet and India cashmere, her hats and bonnets were covered with bows and plumes, her small undergarments were adorned with real lace, and she returned in the cab to Miss Minchin's with a doll almost as large as herself, dressed quite as grandly as herself, too.

Then her papa gave Miss Minchin some money and went away, and for several days Sara would neither touch the doll, nor her breakfast, nor her dinner, nor her tea, and would do nothing but crouch in a small corner by the window and cry. She cried so much, indeed, that she made herself ill. She was a queer little child, with old-fashioned ways and strong feelings, and she had adored her papa, and could not be made to think that India and an interesting bungalow were not better for her than London and Miss Minchin's Select Seminary. The instant she had entered the house, she had begun promptly to hate Miss Minchin, and to think little of Miss Amelia Minchin, who was smooth and dumpy, and lisped, and was evidently afraid of her older sister. Miss Minchin was tall, and had large, cold, fishy eyes, and large, cold hands, which seemed fishy, too, because they were damp and made chills run down Sara's back when they touched her, as Miss Minchin pushed her hair off her forehead and said:

"A most beautiful and promising little girl, Captain Crewe. She will be a favorite pupil; *quite* a favorite pupil, I see."

For the first year she was a favorite pupil; at least she was indulged a great deal more than was good for her. And when the Select Seminary went walking, two by two, she was always decked out in her grandest clothes, and led by the hand, at the head of the genteel procession, by Miss

Minchin herself. And when the parents of any of the pupils came, she was always dressed and called into the parlor with her doll; and she used to hear Miss Minchin say that her father was a distinguished Indian officer, and she would be heiress to a great fortune. That her father had inherited a great deal of money, Sara had heard before; and also that some day it would be hers, and that he would not remain long in the army, but would come to live in London. And every time a letter came, she hoped it would say he was coming, and they were to live together again.

But about the middle of the third year a letter came bringing very different news. Because he was not a business man himself, her papa had given his affairs into the hands of a friend he trusted. The friend had deceived and robbed him. All the money was gone, no one knew exactly where, and the shock was so great to the poor, rash young officer, that, being attacked by jungle fever shortly afterward, he had no strength to rally, and so died, leaving Sara with no one to take care of her.

Miss Minchin's cold and fishy eyes had never looked so cold and fishy as they did when Sara went into the parlor, on being sent for, a few days after the letter was received.

No one had said anything to the child about mourning, so, in her old-fashioned way, she had decided to find a black dress for herself, and had picked out a black velvet she had outgrown, and came into the room in it, looking the queerest little figure in the world, and a sad little figure, too. The dress was too short and too tight, her face was white, her eyes had dark rings around them, and her doll, wrapped in a piece of old black crape, was held under her arm. She was not a pretty child. She was thin, and had a weird, interesting little face, short black hair, and very large green-gray eyes fringed all around with heavy black lashes.

"I am the ugliest child in the school," she had said once, after staring at herself in the glass for some minutes.

But there had been a clever, good-natured little French teacher who had said to the music-master:

"Zat leetle Crewe. Vat a child! A so ogly beauty! Ze so large eyes; ze so little spirituelle face. Waid till she grow up. You shall see!"

This morning, however, in the tight, small black frock, she looked thinner and odder than ever, and her eyes were fixed on Miss Minchin with a queer steadiness as she slowly advanced into the parlor, clutching her doll.

"Put your doll down!" said Miss Minchin.

"No," said the child, "I won't put her down; I want her with me. She is all I have. She has stayed with me all the time since my papa died."

She had never been an obedient child. She had had her own way ever since she was born, and there was about her an air of silent determination under which Miss Minchin had always felt secretly uncomfortable. And that lady felt even now that perhaps it would be as well not to insist on her point. So she looked at her as severely as possible.

"You will have no time for dolls in future," she said; "you will have to work and improve yourself, and make yourself useful."

Sara kept the big odd eyes fixed on her teacher and said nothing.

"Everything will be very different now," Miss Minchin went on. "I sent for you to talk to you and make you understand. Your father is dead. You have no friends. You have no money. You have no home and no one to take care of you."

The little pale olive face twitched nervously, but the green-gray eyes did not move from Miss Minchin's, and still Sara said nothing.

"What are you staring at?" demanded Miss Minchin sharply. "Are you so stupid you don't understand what I mean? I tell you that you are quite alone in the world, and have no one to do anything for you, unless I choose to keep you here."

The truth was, Miss Minchin was in her worst mood. To be suddenly deprived of a large sum of money yearly and a show pupil, and to find herself with a little beggar on her hands, was more than she could bear with any degree of calmness.

"Now listen to me," she went on, "and remember what I say. If you work hard and prepare to make yourself useful in a few years, I shall let you stay here. You are only a child, but you are a sharp child, and you pick up things almost without being taught. You speak French very well, and in a year or so you can begin to help with the younger pupils. By the time you are fifteen you ought to be able to do that much at least."

"I can speak French better than you, now," said Sara; "I always spoke it with my papa in India." Which was not at all polite, but was painfully true; because Miss Minchin could not speak French at all, and, indeed, was not in the least a clever person. But she was a hard, grasping business woman, and, after the first shock of disappointment, had seen that at very little expense to herself she might prepare this clever, determined child to be very useful to her and save her the necessity of paying large salaries to teachers of languages.

"Don't be impudent, or you will be punished," she said. "You will have to improve your manners if you expect to earn your bread. You are not a parlor boarder now. Remember, that if you don't please me, and I send you away, you have no home but the street. You can go now."

Sara turned away.

"Stay," commanded Miss Minchin, "don't you intend to thank me?"

Sara turned toward her. The nervous twitch was to be seen again in her face, and she seemed to be trying to control it.

"What for?" she said.

"For my kindness to you," replied Miss Minchin. "For my kindness in giving you a home."

Sara went two or three steps nearer to her. Her thin little chest was heaving up and down, and she spoke in a strange, unchildish voice.

"You are not kind," she said. "You are not kind." And she turned again and went out of the room, leaving Miss Minchin staring after her strange, small figure in stony anger.

The child walked up the staircase, holding tightly to her doll; she meant to go to her bedroom, but at the door she was met by Miss Amelia.

"You are not to go in there," she said. "That is not your room now."

"Where is my room?" asked Sara.

"You are to sleep in the attic next to the cook."

Sara walked on. She mounted two flights more, and reached the door of the attic room, opened it and went in, shutting it behind her. She stood against it and looked about her. The room was slanting-roofed and whitewashed; there was a rusty grate, an iron bedstead, and some odd articles of furniture, sent up from better rooms below, where they had been used until they were considered to be worn out. Under the skylight in the roof, which showed nothing but an oblong piece of dull gray sky, there was a battered old red footstool.

Sara went to it and sat down. She was a queer child, as I have said before, and quite unlike other children. She seldom cried. She did not cry now. She laid her doll, Emily, across her knees, and put her face down upon her, and her arms around her, and sat there, her little black head resting on the black crape, not saying one word, not making one sound.

From that day her life changed entirely. Sometimes she used to feel as if it must be another life altogether, the life of some other child. She was a little drudge and outcast; she was given her lessons at odd times and expected to learn without being taught; she was sent on errands by Miss Minchin, Miss Amelia, and the cook. Nobody took any notice of her except when they ordered her about. She was often kept busy all day and then sent into the deserted school-room with a pile of books to learn her lessons or practice at night. She had never been intimate with the other pupils, and soon she became so shabby that, taking her queer clothes together with her queer little ways, they began to look upon her as a being of another world than their own. The fact was that, as a rule, Miss Minchin's pupils were rather dull, matter-of-fact young people, accustomed to being rich and comfortable; and Sara, with her elfish cleverness, her desolate life, and her odd habit of fixing her eyes upon them and staring them out of countenance, was too much for them.

"She always looks as if she was finding you out," said one girl, who was sly and given to making mischief. "I am," said Sara, promptly, when she heard of it. "That 's what I look at them for. I like to know about people. I think them over afterward."

She never made any mischief herself or interfered with any one. She talked very little, did as she was told, and thought a great deal. Nobody knew, and in fact nobody cared, whether she was unhappy or happy, unless, perhaps, it was Emily, who lived in the attic and slept on the iron bedstead at night. Sara thought Emily understood her feelings, though she was only wax and had a habit of staring herself. Sara used to talk to her at night.

"You are the only friend I have in the world," she would say to her. "Why don't you say something? Why don't you speak? Sometimes I 'm sure you could, if you would try. It ought to make you try, to know you are the only thing I have. If I were you, I should try. Why don't you try?"

It really was a very strange feeling she had about Emily. It arose from her being so desolate. She did not like to own to herself that her only friend, her only companion, could feel and hear nothing. She wanted to believe, or to pretend to believe, that Emily understood and sympathized with her, that she heard her even though she did not speak in answer. She used to put her in a chair sometimes and sit opposite to her on the old red footstool, and stare at her and think and pretend about her until her own eyes would grow large with something which was almost like fear, particularly at night, when the garret was so still, when the only sound that was to be heard was the occasional squeak and skurry of rats in the wainscot. There were rat-holes in the garret, and Sara detested rats, and was always glad Emily was with her when she heard their hateful squeak and rush and scratching. One of her "pretends" was that Emily was a kind of good witch and could protect her. Poor little Sara! everything was "pretend" with her. She had a strong imagination; there was almost more imagination than there was Sara, and her whole forlorn, uncared-for child-life was made up of imaginings. She imagined and pretended things until she almost believed them, and she would scarcely have been surprised at any remarkable thing that could have happened. So she insisted to herself

"SHE SLOWLY ADVANCED INTO THE PARLOR, CLUTCHING HER DOLL."

that Emily understood all about her troubles and was really her friend.

"As to answering," she used to say, "I don't answer very often. I never answer when I can help it. When people are insulting you, there is nothing so good for them as not to say a word—

just to look at them and *think*. Miss Minchin turns pale with rage when I do it, Miss Amelia looks frightened, so do the girls. They know you are stronger than they are, because you are strong enough to hold in your rage and they are not, and they say stupid things they wish they had n't said, afterward. There 's nothing so strong as rage, except what makes you hold it in — that 's stronger. It 's a good thing not to answer your enemies. I scarcely ever do. Perhaps Emily is more like me than I am like myself. Perhaps she would rather not answer her friends, even. She keeps it all in her heart."

But though she tried to satisfy herself with these arguments, Sara did not find it easy. When, after a long, hard day, in which she had been sent here and there, sometimes on long errands, through wind and cold and rain; and, when she came in wet and hungry, had been sent out again because nobody chose to remember that she was only a child, and that her thin little legs might be tired, and her small body, clad in its forlorn too small finery, all too short and too tight, might be chilled; when she had been given only harsh words and cold, slighting looks for thanks; when the cook had been vulgar and insolent; when Miss Minchin had been in her worst moods, and when she had seen the girls sneering at her among themselves and making fun of her poor, outgrown clothes, — then Sara did not find Emily quite all that her sore, proud, desolate little heart needed as the doll sat in her old chair and stared.

One of these nights, when she came up to the garret cold, hungry, tired, and with a tempest raging in her small breast, Emily's stare seemed so vacant, her sawdust legs and arms so limp and inexpressive, that Sara lost all control over herself.

"I shall die presently!" she said at first.

Emily stared.

"I can't bear this!" said the poor child, trembling. "I know I shall die. I 'm cold, I 'm wet, I 'm starving to death. I 've walked a thousand miles to-day, and they have done nothing but scold me from morning until night. And because I could not find that last thing they sent me for, they would not give me any supper. Some men laughed at me because my old shoes made me slip down in the mud. I 'm covered with mud now. And they laughed! Do you *hear?*"

She looked at the staring glass eyes and complacent wax face, and suddenly a sort of heart-broken rage seized her. She lifted her little savage hand and knocked Emily off the chair, bursting into a passion of sobbing.

"You are nothing but a Doll!" she cried. "Nothing but a Doll — Doll — Doll! You care for nothing. You are stuffed with sawdust. You never had a heart. Nothing could ever make you feel. You are a *Doll!*" Emily lay upon the floor, with her legs ignominiously doubled up over her head, and a new flat place on the end of her nose; but she was still calm, even dignified.

Sara hid her face on her arms and sobbed. Some rats in the wall began to fight and bite each other, and squeak and scramble. But, as I have already intimated, Sara was not in the habit of crying. After a while she stopped, and when she stopped, she looked at Emily, who seemed to be gazing at her around the side of one ankle, and actually with a kind of glassy-eyed sympathy. Sara bent and picked her up. Remorse overtook her.

"You can't help being a doll," she said, with a resigned sigh, "any more than those girls downstairs can help not having any sense. We are not all alike. Perhaps you do your sawdust best."

None of Miss Minchin's young ladies were very remarkable for being brilliant; they were Select, but some of them were very dull, and some of them were fond of applying themselves to their lessons. Sara, who snatched her lessons at all sorts of untimely hours from tattered and discarded books, and who had a hungry craving for everything readable, was often severe upon them in her small mind. They had books they never read; she had no books at all. If she had always had something to read, she would not have been so lonely. She liked romances and history and poetry; she would read anything. There was a sentimental housemaid in the establishment who bought the weekly penny papers, and subscribed to a circulating library, from which she got greasy volumes containing stories of marquises and dukes who invariably fell in love with orange-girls and gypsies and servant-maids, and made them the proud brides of coronets; and Sara often did parts of this maid's work, so that she might earn the privilege of reading these romantic histories. There was also a fat, dull pupil, whose name was Ermengarde St. John, who was one of her resources. Ermengarde had an intellectual father who, in his despairing desire to encourage his daughter, constantly sent her valuable and interesting books, which were a continual source of grief to her. Sara had once actually found her crying over a big package of them.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked her, perhaps rather disdainfully.

And it is just possible she would not have spoken to her, if she had not seen the books. The sight of books always gave Sara a hungry feeling, and she could not help drawing near to them if only to read their titles.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked.

"My papa has sent me some more books,"

answered Ermengarde wofully, "and he expects me to read them."

"Don't you like reading?" said Sara.

"I hate it!" replied Miss Ermengarde St. John. "And he will ask me questions when he sees me; he will want to know how much I remember; how would *you* like to have to read all those?"

"I'd like it better than anything else in the world," said Sara.

Ermengarde wiped her eyes to look at such a prodigy.

"Oh, gracious!" she exclaimed.

Sara returned the look with interest. A sudden plan formed itself in her sharp mind.

"Look here!" she said. "If you'll lend me those books, I'll read them and tell you everything that's in them afterward, and I'll tell it to you so that you will remember it. I know I can. The A B C children always remember what I tell them."

"Oh, goodness!" said Ermengarde. "Do you think you could?"

"I know I could," answered Sara. "I like to read, and I always remember. I'll take care of the books, too; they will look just as new as they do now, when I give them back to you."

Ermengarde put her handkerchief in her pocket.

"If you'll do that," she said, "and if you'll make me remember, I'll give you — I'll give you some money."

"I don't want your money," said Sara, "I want your books — I want them." And her eyes grew big and queer, and her chest heaved once.

"Take them, then," said Ermengarde; "I wish I wanted them, but I am not clever, and my father is, and he thinks I ought to be."

Sara picked up the books and marched off with them. But when she was at the door, she stopped and turned round.

"What are you going to tell your father?" she asked.

"Oh," said Ermengarde, "he need n't know; he 'll think I've read them."

Sara looked down at the books; her heart really began to beat fast.

"I won't do it," she said rather slowly, "if you are going to tell him lies about it — I don't like lies. Why can't you tell him I read them and then told you about them?"

"But he wants me to read them," said Ermengarde.

"He wants you to know what is in them," said Sara; "and if I can tell it to you in an easy way and make you remember, I should think he would like that."

"He would like it better if I read them myself," replied Ermengarde.

"He will like it, I dare say, if you learn anything in any way," said Sara. "I should, if I were your father."

And though this was not a flattering way of stating the case, Ermengarde was obliged to admit it was true, and, after a little more argument, gave in. And so she used afterward always to hand over her books to Sara, and Sara would carry them to her garret and devour them; and after she had read each volume, she would return it and tell Ermengarde about it in a way of her own. She had a gift for making things interesting. Her imagination helped her to make everything rather like a story, and she managed this matter so well that Miss St. John gained more information from her books than she would have gained if she had read them three times over by her poor stupid little self. When Sara sat down by her and began to tell some story of travel or history, she made the travelers and historical people seem real; and Ermengarde used to sit and regard her dramatic gesticulations, her thin little flushed cheeks and her shining odd eyes, with amazement.

"It sounds nicer than it seems in the book," she would say. I never cared about Mary, Queen of Scots, before, and I always hated the French Revolution, but you make it seem like a story."

"It is a story," Sara would answer. "They are all stories. Everything is a story — everything in this world. You are a story — I am a story — Miss Minchin is a story. You can make a story out of anything."

"I can't," said Ermengarde.

Sara stared at her a minute reflectively.

"No," she said at last. "I suppose you could n't. You are a little like Emily."

"Who is Emily?"

Sara recollected herself. She knew she was sometimes rather impolite in the candor of her remarks, and she did not want to be impolite to a girl who was not unkind — only stupid. Notwithstanding all her sharp little ways, she had the sense to wish to be just to everybody. In the hours she spent alone, she used to argue out a great many curious questions with herself. One thing she had decided upon was, that a person who was clever ought to be clever enough not to be unjust or deliberately unkind to any one. Miss Minchin was unjust and cruel, Miss Amelia was unkind and spiteful, the cook was malicious and hasty-tempered — they all were stupid, and made her despise them, and she desired to be as unlike them as possible. So she would be as polite as she could to people who in the least deserved politeness.

"Emily is — a person — I know," she replied.

"Do you like her?" asked Ermengarde.

"Yes, I do," said Sara.

Ermengarde examined her queer little face and

figure again. She did look odd. She had on, that day, a faded blue plush skirt, which barely covered her knees, a brown cloth sacque, and a pair of olive-green stockings which Miss Minchin had made her piece out with black ones, so that they would be long enough to be kept on. And yet Ermengarde was beginning slowly to admire her. Such a forlorn, thin, neglected little thing as that, who could read and read and remember and tell you things so that they did not tire you all out! A child who could speak French, and who had learned German, no one knew how! One could not help staring at her and feeling interested, particularly one to whom the simplest lesson was a trouble and a woe.

"Do you like *me?*" said Ermengarde, finally, at the end of her scrutiny.

Sara hesitated one second, then she answered: "I like you because you are not ill-natured — I like you for letting me read your books — I like you because you don't make spiteful fun of me for what I can't help. It 's not your fault that ——"

She pulled herself up quickly. She had been going to say, "that you are stupid."

"That what?" asked Ermengarde.

"That you can't learn things quickly. If you can't, you can't. If I can, why, I can — that 's all." She paused a minute, looking at the plump face before her, and then, rather slowly, one of her wise, old-fashioned thoughts came to her.

"Perhaps," she said, "to be able to learn things quickly, is n't everything. To be kind is worth a good deal to other people. If Miss Minchin knew everything on earth, which she does n't, and if she was like what she is now, she 'd still be a detestable thing, and everybody would hate her. Lots of clever people have done harm and been wicked. Look at Robespierre ——"

She stopped again, and examined her companion's countenance.

"Do you remember about him?" she demanded. "I believe you 've forgotten."

"Well, I don't remember *all* of it," admitted Ermengarde.

"Well," said Sara with courage and determination, "I 'll tell it to you over again."

And she plunged once more into the gory records of the French Revolution, and told such stories of it, and made such vivid pictures of its horrors, that Miss St. John was afraid to go to bed afterward, and hid her head under the blankets when she did go, and shivered until she fell asleep. But afterward she preserved lively recollections of the character of Robespierre, and did not even forget Marie Antoinette and the Princess de Lamballe.

"You know they put her head on a pike and danced around it," Sara had said; "and she had beautiful blonde hair; and when I think of her, I never see her head on her body, but always on a pike, with those furious people dancing and howling."

Yes, it was true, to this imaginative child everything was a story; and the more books she read, the more imaginative she became. One of her chief entertainments was to sit in her garret, or walk about it, and "suppose" things. On a cold night, when she had not had enough to eat, she would draw the red footstool up before the empty grate, and say in the most intense voice:

"Suppose there was a great, wide steel grate here, and a great glowing fire — a *glowing* fire — with beds of red-hot coal and lots of little dancing, flickering flames. Suppose there was a soft, deep rug, and this was a comfortable chair, all cushions and crimson velvet; and suppose I had a crimson velvet frock on, and a deep lace collar, like a child in a picture; and suppose all the rest of the room was furnished in lovely colors, and there were bookshelves full of books, which changed by magic as soon as you had read them; and suppose there was a little table here, with a snow-white cover on it, and little silver dishes, and in one there was hot, hot soup, and in another a roast chicken, and in another some raspberry-jam tarts with criss-cross on them, and in another some grapes; and suppose Emily could speak, and we could sit and eat our supper, and then talk and read; and then suppose there was a soft, warm bed in the corner, and when we were tired, we could go to sleep, and sleep as long as we liked."

Sometimes, after she had supposed things like these for half an hour, she would feel almost warm, and would creep into bed with Emily and fall asleep with a smile on her face.

"What large, downy pillows!" she would whisper. "What white sheets and fleecy blankets!" And she almost forgot that her real pillows had scarcely any feathers in them at all, and smelled musty, and that her blankets and coverlid were thin and full of holes.

At another time she would "suppose" she was a princess, and then she would go about the house with an expression on her face which was a source of great secret annoyance to Miss Minchin, because it seemed as if the child scarcely heard the spiteful, insulting things said to her, or, if she heard them, did not care for them at all. Sometimes, while she was in the midst of some harsh and cruel speech, Miss Minchin would find the odd, unchildish eyes fixed upon her with something like a proud smile in them. At such times she did not know that Sara was saying to herself:

"You don't know that you are saying these

"SHE LAID HER DOLL, EMILY, ACROSS HER KNEES, AND PUT HER FACE DOWN UPON HER, AND HER ARMS AROUND HER, AND SAT THERE, HER LITTLE BLACK HEAD RESTING ON THE BLACK CRAPE, NOT SAYING ONE WORD, NOT MAKING ONE SOUND."

things to a princess, and that if I chose, I could wave my hand and order you to execution. I only spare you because I *am* a princess, and you are a poor, stupid, old, vulgar thing, and don't know any better."

This used to please and amuse her more than anything else; and, queer and fanciful as it was, she found comfort in it, and it was not a bad thing for her. It really kept her from being made rude and malicious by the rudeness and malice of those about her.

"A princess must be polite," she said to herself. And so when the servants, who took their tone from their mistress, were insolent and ordered her about, she would hold her head erect, and reply to them sometimes in a way which made them stare at her, it was so quaintly civil.

"I am a princess in rags and tatters," she would think, "but I am a princess, inside. It would be easy to be a princess if I were dressed in cloth-of-gold; it is a great deal more of a triumph to be one all the time when no one knows it. There was Marie Antoinette: when she was in prison, and her throne was gone, and she had only a black gown on, and her hair was white, and they insulted her and called her the Widow Capet,—she was a great deal more like a queen then than when she was so gay and had everything grand. I like her best then. Those howling mobs of people did not frighten her. She was stronger than they were, even when they cut her head off."

Once when such thoughts were passing through her mind, the look in her eyes so enraged Miss Minchin that she flew at Sara and boxed her ears.

Sara wakened from her dream, started a little, and then broke into a laugh.

"What are you laughing at, you bold, impudent child!" exclaimed Miss Minchin.

It took Sara a few seconds to remember she was a princess. Her cheeks were red and smarting from the blows she had received.

"I was thinking," she said.

"Beg my pardon immediately," said Miss Minchin.

"I will beg your pardon for laughing, if it was rude," said Sara; "but I won't beg your pardon for thinking."

"What were you thinking?" demanded Miss Minchin. "How dare you think? What were you thinking?"

This occurred in the school-room, and all the girls looked up from their books to listen. It always interested them when Miss Minchin flew at Sara, because Sara always said something queer, and never seemed in the least frightened. She was not in the least frightened now, though her boxed ears were scarlet, and her eyes were as bright as stars.

"I was thinking," she answered gravely and quite politely, "that you did not know what you were doing."

"That I did not know what I was doing!" Miss Minchin fairly gasped.

"Yes," said Sara, "and I was thinking what would happen, if I were a princess and you boxed my ears — what I should do to you. And I was thinking that if I were one, you would never dare to do it, whatever I said or did. And I was thinking how surprised and frightened you would be if you suddenly found out ——"

She had the imagined picture so clearly before her eyes, that she spoke in a manner which had an effect even on Miss Minchin. It almost seemed for the moment to her narrow unimaginative mind that there must be some real power behind this candid daring.

"What?" she exclaimed; "found out what?"

"That I really was a princess," said Sara, "and could do anything — anything I liked."

"Go to your room," cried Miss Minchin breathlessly, "this instant. Leave the school-room. Attend to your lessons, young ladies."

Sara made a little bow.

"Excuse me for laughing, if it was impolite," she said, and walked out of the room, leaving Miss Minchin in a rage and the girls whispering over their books.

"I should n't be at all surprised if she did turn out to be something," said one of them. "Suppose she should!"

(To be continued.)

By Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen.

You may not believe it, but the bear I am going to tell you about really had a bank account! He lived in the woods, as most bears do; but he had a reputation which extended over all Norway and more than half of England. Earls and baronets came every summer, with repeating guns of the latest patent, and plaids and field-glasses and portable cooking-stoves, intent upon killing him. But Mr. Bruin, whose only weapons were a pair of paws and a pair of jaws, both uncommonly good of their kind, though not patented, always managed to get away unscathed; and that was sometimes more than the earls and the baronets did.

One summer the Crown Prince of Germany came to Norway. He also heard of the famous bear that no one could kill, and made up his mind that he was the man to kill it. He trudged for two days through bogs and climbed through glens and ravines, before he came on the scent of the bear,—and a bear's scent, you may know, is strong, and quite unmistakable. Finally he discovered some tracks in the moss, like those of a barefooted man, or, I should rather say, perhaps, a man-footed bear. The Prince was just turning the corner of a projecting rock, when he saw a huge, shaggy beast standing on its hind legs, examining in a leisurely manner the inside of a hollow tree, while a swarm of bees were buzzing about its ears. It was just hauling out a handful of honey, and was smiling with a gruesome mirth, when His Royal Highness sent it a bullet right in the breast, where its heart must have been,—if it had one. But, instead of falling down flat, as it ought to have done out of deference to the Prince, it coolly turned its back, and gave its assailant a disgusted nod over its shoulder as it trudged away through the underbrush. The attendants ranged through the woods and beat the bushes in all directions, but Mr. Bruin was no more to be seen that afternoon. It was as if he had sunk into the earth; not a trace of him was to be found by either dogs or men.

From that time forth the rumor spread abroad that this Gausdale Bruin (for that was the name by which he became known) was enchanted. It was said that he shook off bullets as a duck does water; that he had the evil eye, and could bring misfortune to whomsoever he looked upon. The peasants dreaded to meet him, and ceased to hunt him. His size was described as something enormous,—his teeth, his claws, and his eyes as being diabolical beyond human conception. In the meanwhile Mr. Bruin had it all his own way in the mountains, killed a young bull or a fat heifer for his dinner every day or two, chased in pure sport a herd of sheep over a precipice; and as for Lars Moe's bay mare Stella, he nearly finished her, leaving his claw-marks on her flank in a way that spoiled her beauty forever.

Now Lars Moe himself was too old to hunt; and his nephew was—well, he was not old enough. There was, in fact, no one in the valley who was of the right age to hunt this Gausdale Bruin. It was of no use that Lars Moe egged on the young lads to try their luck, shaming them, or offering them rewards, according as his mood might happen to be. He was the wealthiest man in the valley, and his mare Stella had been the apple of his eye. He felt it as a personal insult that the bear should have dared to molest what belonged to him, especially the most precious of all his possessions. It cut him to the heart to see the poor wounded beauty, with those cruel scratches on her thigh, and one stiff, aching leg done up in oil and cotton. When he opened the stable door, and was greeted by Stella's low, friendly neighing, or when she limped forward in her box-stall and put her small, clean-shaped head on his shoulder, then Lars Moe's heart swelled until it seemed on the point of breaking. And so it came to pass that

he added a codicil to his will, setting aside five hundred dollars of his estate as a reward to the man who, within six years, should kill the Gausdale Bruin.

Soon after that, Lars Moe died, as some said, from grief and chagrin; though the physician affirmed that it was of rheumatism of the heart. At any rate, the codicil relating to the enchanted bear was duly read before the church door, and pasted, among other legal notices, in the vestibules of the judge's and the sheriff's offices. When the executors had settled up the estate, the question arose in whose name or to whose credit should be deposited the money which was to be set aside for the benefit of the bear-slayer. No one knew who would kill the bear, or if any one would kill it. It was a puzzling question.

"Why, deposit it to the credit of the bear," said a jocose executor; "then, in the absence of other heirs, his slayer will inherit it. That is good old Norwegian practice, though I don't know whether it has ever been the law."

"All right," said the other executors, "so long as it is understood who is to have the money, it does not matter."

And so an amount equal to $500 was deposited in the county bank to the credit of the Gausdale Bruin. Sir Barry Worthington, Bart., who came abroad the following summer for the shooting, heard the story, and thought it a good one. So, after having vainly tried to earn the prize himself, he added another $500 to the deposit, with the stipulation that he was to have the skin.

But his rival for parliamentary honors, Robert Stapleton, Esq., the great iron-master, who had come to Norway chiefly to outshine Sir Barry, determined that he was to have the skin of that famous bear, if any one was to have it, and that, at all events, Sir Barry should not have it. So Mr. Stapleton added $750 to the bear's bank account, with the stipulation that the skin should come to him.

Mr. Bruin, in the meanwhile, as if to resent this unseemly contention about his pelt, made worse havoc among the herds than ever, and compelled several peasants to move their dairies to other parts of the mountains, where the pastures were poorer, but where they would be free from his depredations. If the $1750 in the bank had been meant as a bribe or a stipend for good behavior, such as was formerly paid to Italian brigands, it certainly could not have been more demoralizing in its effect; for all agreed that, since Lars Moe's death, Bruin misbehaved worse than ever.

II.

THERE was an odd clause in Lars Moe's will besides the codicil relating to the bear. It read:

"I hereby give and bequeath to my daughter Unna, or, in case of her decease, to her oldest living issue, my bay mare Stella, as a token that I have forgiven her the sorrow she caused me by her marriage."

It seemed incredible that Lars Moe should wish to play a practical joke (and a bad one at that) on his only child, his daughter Unna, because she had displeased him by her marriage. Yet that was the common opinion in the valley when this singular clause became known. Unna had married Thorkel Tomlevold, a poor tenant's son, and had refused her cousin, the great lumber-dealer, Morten Janson, whom her father had selected for a son-in-law.

She dwelt now in a tenant's cottage, northward in the parish; and her husband, who was a sturdy and fine-looking fellow, eked out a living by hunting and fishing. But they surely had no accommodations for a broken-down, wounded trotting mare, which could not even draw a plow. It is true Unna in the days of her girlhood had been very fond of the mare, and it is only charitable to suppose that the clause, which was in the body of the will, was written while Stella was in her prime, and before she had suffered at the paws of the Gausdale Bruin. But even granting that, one could scarcely help suspecting malice aforethought in the curious provision. To Unna the gift was meant to say, as plainly as possible, "There, you see what you have lost by disobeying your father! If you had married according to his wishes, you would have been able to accept the gift, while now you are obliged to decline it like a beggar."

But if it was Lars Moe's intention to convey such a message to his daughter, he failed to take into account his daughter's spirit. She appeared plainly but decently dressed at the reading of the will, and carried her head not a whit less haughtily than was her wont in her maiden days. She exhibited no chagrin when she found that Janson was her father's heir and that she was disinherited. She even listened with perfect composure to the reading of the clause which bequeathed to her the broken-down mare.

It at once became a matter of pride with her to accept her girlhood's favorite, and accept it she did! And having borrowed a side-saddle, she rode home apparently quite contented. A little shed, or lean-to, was built in the rear of the house, and Stella became a member of Thorkel Tomlevold's family. Odd as it may seem, the fortunes of the family took a turn for the better from the day she arrived; Thorkel rarely came home without big game, and in his traps he caught more than any three other men in all the parish.

"The mare has brought us luck," he said to his wife. "If she can't plow, she can at all events pull

the sleigh to church; and you have as good a right as any one to put on airs, if you choose."

"Yes, she has brought us blessing," replied Unna, quietly; "and we are going to keep her till she dies of old age."

To the children Stella became a pet, as much as if she had been a dog or a cat. The little boy Lars climbed all over her, and kissed her regularly good-morning when she put her handsome head in through the kitchen door to get her lump of sugar. She was as gentle as a lamb and as intelligent as a dog. Her great brown eyes, with their soft, liquid look, spoke as plainly as words could speak, expressing pleasure when she was patted; and the low neighing with which she greeted the little boy, when she heard his footsteps in the door, was to him like the voice of a friend. He grew to love this handsome and noble animal as he had loved nothing on earth except his father and mother.

As a matter of course, he heard a hundred times the story of Stella's adventure with the terrible Gausdale bear. It was a story that never lost its interest, that seemed to grow more exciting, the oftener it was told. The deep scars of the bear's claws in Stella's thigh were curiously examined, and each time gave rise to new questions. The mare became quite a heroic character, and the suggestion was frequently discussed between Lars and his little sister Marit, whether Stella might not be an enchanted princess who was waiting for some one to cut off her head, so that she might show herself in her glory. Marit thought the experiment well worth trying, but Lars had his doubts, and was unwilling to take the risk; yet if she brought luck, as his mother said, then she certainly must be something more than an ordinary horse.

Stella had dragged little Lars out of the river when he fell overboard from the pier; and that, too, showed more sense than he had ever known a horse to have.

There could be no doubt in his mind that Stella was an enchanted princess. And instantly the thought occurred to him that the dreadful enchanted bear with the evil eye was the sorcerer, and that when he was killed, Stella would resume her human guise. It soon became clear to him that he was the boy to accomplish this heroic deed; and it was equally plain to him that he must keep his purpose secret from all except Marit, as his mother would surely discourage him from engaging in so perilous an enterprise. First of all, he had to learn to shoot; and his father, who was the best shot in the valley, was very willing to teach him. It seemed quite natural to Thorkel that a hunter's son should take readily to the rifle; and it gave him great satisfaction to see how true his boy's aim was, and how steady his hand.

"Father," said Lars one day, "you shoot so well, why have n't you ever tried to kill the Gausdale Bruin that hurt Stella so badly?"

"Hush, child! you don't know what you are talking about," answered his father; "no leaden bullet will harm that wicked beast."

"Why not?"

"I don't like to talk about it,—but it is well known that he is enchanted."

"But will he then live for ever? Is there no sort of bullet that will kill him?" asked the boy.

"I don't know. I don't want to have anything to do with witchcraft," said Thorkel.

The word "witchcraft" set the boy to thinking, and he suddenly remembered that he had been warned not to speak to an old woman named Martha Pladsen, because she was a witch. Now, she was probably the very one who could tell him what he wanted to know. Her cottage lay close up under the mountain-side, about two miles from his home. He did not deliberate long before going to seek this mysterious person, about whom the most remarkable stories were told in the valley. To his astonishment, she received him kindly, gave him a cup of coffee with rock candy, and declared that she had long expected him. The bullet which was to slay the enchanted bear had long been in her possession; and she would give it to him if he would promise to give her the beast's heart. He did not have to be asked twice for that; and off he started gayly with his prize in his pocket. It was rather an odd-looking bullet, made of silver, marked with a cross on one side and with a lot of queer illegible figures on the other. It seemed to burn in his pocket, so anxious was he to start out at once to release the beloved Stella from the cruel enchantment. But Martha had said that the bear could only be killed when the moon was full; and until the moon was full, he accordingly had to bridle his impatience.

III.

It was a bright morning in January, and, as it happened, Lars's fourteenth birthday. To his great delight, his mother had gone down to the judge's to sell some ptarmigans, and his father had gone to fell some timber up in the glen. Accordingly he could secure the rifle without being observed. He took an affectionate good-bye of Stella, who rubbed her soft nose against his own, playfully pulled at his coat-collar, and blew her sweet, warm breath into his face. Lars was a simple-hearted boy, in spite of his age, and quite a child at heart. He had lived so secluded from all society, and

breathed so long the atmosphere of fairy tales, that he could see nothing at all absurd in what he was about to undertake. The youngest son in the story-book always did just that sort of thing, and everybody praised and admired him for it. Lars meant, for once, to put the story-book hero into the shade. He engaged little Marit to watch over

"IT WAS THE MOMENT FOR WHICH THE BOY HAD WAITED."
[SEE NEXT PAGE.]

Stella while he was gone, and under no circumstances to betray him — all of which Marit solemnly promised.

With his rifle on his shoulder and his *skees** on his feet, Lars glided slowly along over the glittering surface of the snow, for the mountain was steep, and he had to zigzag in long lines before he reached the upper heights, where the bear was said to have his haunts. The place where Bruin had his winter den had once been pointed out to him, and he remembered yet how pale his father was, when he found that he had strayed by chance into so dangerous a neighborhood. Lars's heart, too, beat rather uneasily as he saw the two heaps of stones, called "The Parson," and "The Deacon," and the two huge fir-trees which marked the dreaded spot. It had been customary from

* Norwegian snowshoes.

immemorial time for each person who passed along the road to throw a large stone on the Parson's heap, and a small one on the Deacon's; but since the Gausdale Bruin had gone into winter quarters there, the stone heaps had ceased to grow.

Under the great knotted roots of the fir-trees there was a hole, which was more than half-covered with snow; and it was noticeable that there was not a track of bird or beast to be seen anywhere around it. Lars, who on the way had been buoyed up by the sense of his heroism, began now to feel strangely uncomfortable. It was so awfully hushed and still round about him; not the scream of a bird — not even the falling of a broken bough was to be heard. The pines stood in lines and in clumps, solemn, like a funeral procession, shrouded in sepulchral white. Even if a crow had cawed it would have been a relief to the frightened boy, — for it must be confessed that he was a trifle frightened, — if only a little shower of snow had fallen upon his head from the heavily-laden branches, he would have been grateful for it, for it would have broken the spell of this oppressive silence.

There could be no doubt of it; inside, under those tree-roots slept Stella's foe, — the dreaded enchanted beast who had put the boldest of hunters to flight, and set lords and baronets by the ears for the privilege of possessing his skin. Lars became suddenly aware that it was a foolhardy thing he had undertaken, and that he would better betake himself home. But then, again, had not Witch-Martha said that she had been waiting for him; that he was destined by fate to accomplish this deed, just as the youngest son had been in the story-book. Yes, to be sure, she had said that; and it was a comforting thought.

Accordingly, having again examined his rifle, which he had carefully loaded with the silver bullet before leaving home, he started boldly forward, climbed upon the little hillock between the two trees, and began to pound it lustily with the butt-end of his gun. He listened for a moment tremulously, and heard distinctly long, heavy sighs from within.

His heart stood still. The bear was awake! Soon he would have to face it! A minute more elapsed; Lars's heart shot up into his throat. He leaped down, placed himself in front of the entrance to the den, and cocked his rifle. Three long minutes passed. Bruin had evidently gone to sleep again. Wild with excitement, the boy rushed forward and drove his skee-staff straight into the den with all his might. A sullen growl was heard, like a deep and menacing thunder. There could be no doubt that now the monster would take him to task for his impertinence.

Again the boy seized his rifle; and his nerves, though tense as stretched bow-strings, seemed suddenly calm and steady. He lifted the rifle to his cheek, and resolved not to shoot until he had a clear aim at heart or brain. Bruin, though Lars could hear him rummaging within, was in no hurry to come out. But he sighed and growled uproariously, and presently showed a terrible, long-clawed paw, which he thrust out through his door and then again withdrew. But apparently it took him a long while to get his mind clear about the cause of the disturbance; for fully five minutes had elapsed when suddenly a big tuft of moss was tossed out upon the snow, followed by a cloud of dust and an angry creaking of the tree-roots.

Great masses of snow were shaken from the swaying tops of the firs, and fell with light thuds upon the ground. In the face of this unexpected shower, which entirely hid the entrance to the den, Lars was obliged to fall back a dozen paces; but, as the glittering drizzle cleared away, he saw an enormous brown beast standing upon its hind legs, with wide-distended jaws. He was conscious of no fear, but of a curious numbness in his limbs, and strange noises, as of warning shouts and cries, filling his ears. Fortunately, the great glare of the sun-smitten snow dazzled Bruin; he advanced slowly, roaring savagely, but staring rather blindly before him out of his small, evil-looking eyes. Suddenly, when he was but a few yards distant, he raised his great paw, as if to rub away the cobwebs that obscured his sight. It was the moment for which the boy had waited. Now he had a clear aim! Quickly he pulled the trigger; the shot reverberated from mountain to mountain, and in the same instant the huge brown bulk rolled in the snow, gave a gasp, and was dead! The spell was broken! The silver bullet had pierced his heart. There was a curious unreality about the whole thing to Lars. He scarcely knew whether he was really himself or the hero of the fairy-tale. All that was left for him to do now was to go home and marry Stella, the delivered princess.

The noises about him seemed to come nearer and nearer; and now they sounded like human voices. He looked about him, and to his amazement saw his father and Marit, followed by two wood-cutters, who, with raised axes, were running toward him. Then he did not know exactly what happened; but he felt himself lifted up by two strong arms, and tears fell hot and fast upon his face.

"My boy! my boy!" said the voice in his ears, "I expected to find you dead."

"No, but the bear is dead," said Lars, innocently.

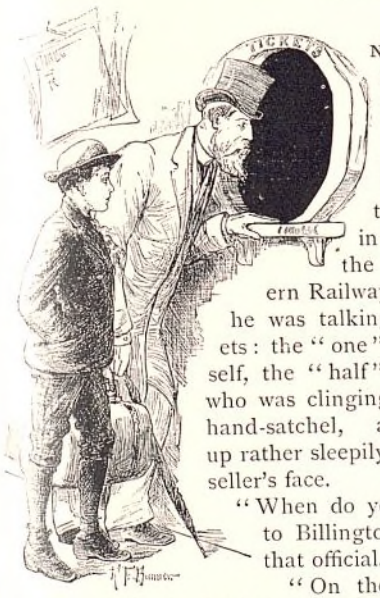
"I did n't mean to tell on you Lars," cried Marit, "but I was so afraid, and then I had to."

The rumor soon filled the whole valley that the great Gausdale Bruin was dead, and that the boy Lars Tomlevold had killed him. It is needless to say that Lars Tomlevold became the parish hero from that day. He did not dare to confess in the presence of all this praise and wonder that at heart he was bitterly disappointed; for when he came home, throbbing with wild expectancy, there stood Stella before the kitchen door, munching a piece of bread; and when she hailed him with a low whinny, he burst into tears. But he dared not tell any one why he was weeping.

This story might have ended here, but it has a little sequel. The $1750 which Bruin had to his credit in the bank had increased to $2290; and it was all paid to Lars. A few years later, Marten Janson, who had inherited the estate of Moe from old Lars, failed in consequence of his daring forest speculations, and young Lars was enabled to buy the farm at auction at less than half its value. Thus he had the happiness to bring his mother back to the place of her birth, of which she had been wrongfully deprived; and Stella, who was now twenty-one years old, occupied once more her handsome box-stall, as in the days of her glory. And although she never proved to be a princess, she was treated as if she were one, during the few years that remained to her.

SANTA CLAUS IN THE PULPIT.

By Rev. Washington Gladden.



NE and a half for Billington!"

The speaker was standing at the ticket window in the station of the Great Western Railway. Evidently he was talking about tickets: the "one" was for himself, the "half" for the boy who was clinging to the small hand-satchel, and looking up rather sleepily at the ticket-seller's face.

"When do you wish to go to Billington?" inquired that official.

"On the next train: eleven o'clock, is n't it?" asked the traveler.

"That train does not run Saturday nights; no train leaves here for Billington until to-morrow, at midnight!"

"But this train is marked 'daily' in the guide."

"It was a daily train until last month."

"Well, here 's a how-d'ye-do!" said the tall gentleman, slowly; only three hours' ride from home, on the night before Christmas; and here we are, with no help for it but to stay in Chicago all Christmas Day. How 's that, my son?"

"It 's bad luck with a vengeance," answered the lad, now thoroughly awake, and almost ready to cry. "I wish we had staid at Uncle Jack's."

"So do I," answered his father. "But there is no use in fretting. We are in for it, and we must make the best of it. Run and call that cabman who brought us over from the other station. I will send a message to your mother; and we will find a place to spend our Sunday."

This was the way it had happened: Mr. Murray had taken Mortimer with him on a short business trip to Michigan, for a visit to his cousins, and they were on their return trip; they had arrived at Chicago, Saturday evening, fully expecting to reach home during the night. The ticket-agent has explained the rest.

"Take us to the Pilgrim House," said Mr. Murray, as he shut the double door of the hansom; and they were soon jolting away over the block pavements, across the bridges, and through the gayly lighted streets. It was now only ten o'clock, and the Christmas buyers were still thronging the shops, and the streets were alive with heavily-laden pedestrians who had added their holiday purchases to the Saturday night's marketing, and were suffering from the embarrassment of riches. Soon the carriage stopped at the entrance of the hotel, and the travelers were speedily settled in a second story front room, from the windows of which the bright pageant of the street was plainly visible.

While Mortimer Murray is watching the throngs below, we will learn a little more about him. He

is a fairly good boy, as boys average; not a perfect character, but bright and capable, and reasonably industrious, with no positively mean streaks in his make-up. He will not lie; and he is never positively disobedient to his father and mother; though he sometimes does what he knows to be displeasing to them, and thinks it rather hard to be reproved for such misconduct. In short, he is somewhat self-willed, and a little too much inclined to do the things that he likes to do, no matter what pain he may give to others. The want of consideration for the wishes and feelings of others is his greatest fault. If others fail in any duty toward him, he sees it quickly and feels it keenly; if he fails in any duty toward others, he thinks it a matter of small consequence, and wonders why they are mean enough to make such a fuss about it.

This is not a very uncommon fault in a boy, I fear; and boys who, like Mortimer, are often indulged quite as much as is good for them, have great need to be on their guard against it.

Before many moments Mortimer wearied of the bewildering panorama of the street, and drew a rocker up to the grate near which his father was sitting.

"Tough luck, is n't it?" were the words with which he broke silence.

"For whom, my son?"

"For you and me."

"I was thinking of your mother and of Charley and Mabel; it is their disappointment that troubles me most."

"Yes," said Mortimer, rather dubiously. In his regret at not being able to spend his Christmas day at home, he of course had thought of the pleasure of seeing his mother and his brother and sister and the baby; but any idea of their feelings in the matter had not entered his mind. Only a few hours before, in the Murray's home, Nurse with the happy baby in her arms had said to Charley and Mabel:

"Cheer up, children, and eat your supper. Your papa and Master Mortimer will surely be here by to-morrow."

But Mortimer so many miles away had not heard this. Now he glanced up at his father and spoke again:

"When shall we have our Christmas?"

"On Monday, probably. We can reach home very early Monday morning. We should not have spent Sunday as a holiday if we had gone home to-night. Our Christmas dinner and our Christmas-tree must have waited for Monday."

"Do you suppose that Mother will have the tree ready?"

"I have no doubt of it."

"My! I 'd like to know what 's on it?"

"Don't you know of anything that will be on it?"

"N — no, sir."

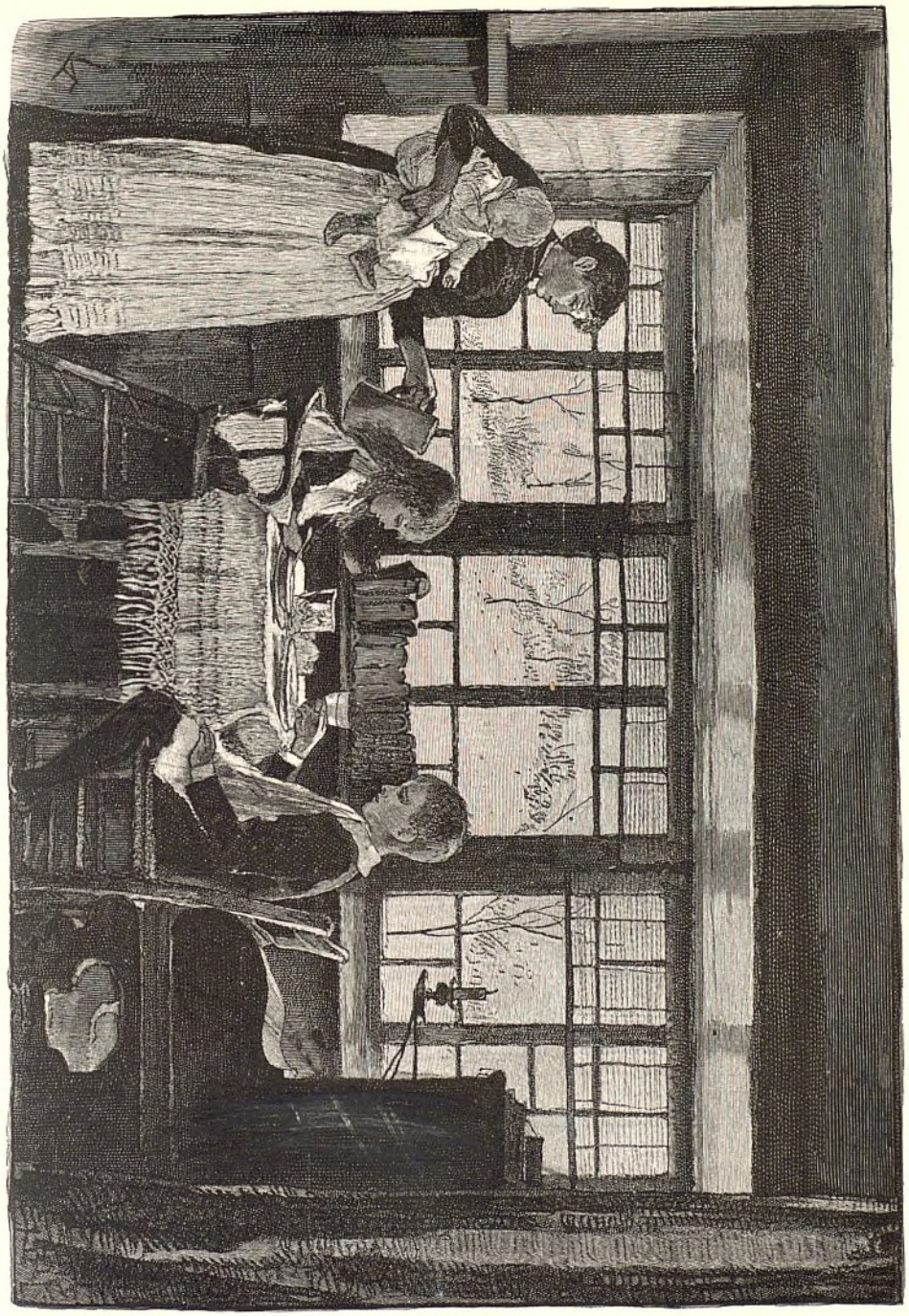
Mortimer's cheeks reddened at the questioning glance of his father. He had thus suddenly faced the fact that he had come up to the very Eve of Christmas without making any preparation to bestow gifts upon others. He had wondered much what he should receive; he had taken no thought about what he could give. Christmas, in his calendar, was a day for receiving, not for giving. Every year his father and mother had prompted him to make some little preparation, but he had not entered into the plan very heartily; this year they had determined to say nothing to him about it, and to let him find out for himself how it seemed to be only a receiver on the day when all the world finds its chief joy in giving.

Mortimer had plenty of time to think about it, for his father saw the blush upon his face, and knew that there was no need of further words. They sat there silent before the fire for some time; and the boy's face grew more and more sober and troubled.

"What a pig I have been!" he was saying to himself. "Never thought about getting anything ready to hang on the tree! Been so busy in school all last term! But then I 've had lots of time for skates and tobogganing, and all that sort of thing. Wonder why they did n't put me up to think about it! P'raps they 'd say I 'm big enough to think about it myself. Guess I am. I 'd like to kick myself, anyhow!"

With such discomforting meditations, Mortimer peered into the glowing coals; and while he mused, the fire burned not only before his feet but within his breast as well — the fire of self-reproof that gave the baser elements in his nature a wholesome scorching. At length he found his pillow, and slept, if not the sleep of the just, at least the sleep of the healthy twelve-year-old boy, which is generally quite as good.

The next morning, Mortimer and his father rose leisurely, and after a late breakfast walked slowly down the avenue. The air was clear and crisp, and the streets were almost as full of worshipers as they had been of shoppers the night before; the Christmas services in all the churches were calling out great congregations. The Minnesota Avenue Presbygational Church, which the travelers sought, welcomed them to a seat in the middle aisle; and Mortimer listened with great pleasure to the beautiful music of the choir, and the hearty singing of the congregation, and tried to follow the minister in the reading and in the prayer, though his thoughts wandered more than once to that uncomfortable subject of which he had been thinking the



"CHEER UP, CHILDREN, AND EAT YOUR SUPPER," SAID THE NURSE.

night before; and he wondered whether his father and mother and the friends who knew him best did really think him a mean and selfish fellow.

When the sermon began, Mortimer fully determined to hear and remember just as much of it as he could. The text was those words of the Lord Jesus that Paul remembered and reported for us, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And Doctor Burrows began by saying that everybody believed *that*, at Christmas-time; in fact, they

knew it; they found it out by experience; and that was what made Christmas the happiest day of the year. Mortimer blushed again, and glanced up at his father; but there was no answering glance; his father's eyes were fixed upon the preacher. The argument of the sermon was a little too deep for Mortimer, though he understood parts of it, and tried hard to understand it all; but there was a register in the aisle near by, and the church was very warm, and he began looking down, and after awhile the voice of the preacher ceased, and he looked up to see what was the matter, and there, in the pulpit, was — who was it? *Could it be?* It was a very small man, with long white hair and beard, and ruddy cheeks, and sparkling eyes, and brisk motions. Yes; Mortimer

had quite made up his own mind that it must be he, when a boy by his side, whom he had not noticed before, whispered:

"Santa Claus!"

This was very queer indeed. At least it seemed so at first; but when Mortimer began to reason about it, he saw at once that Santa Claus, being a saint, had a perfect right to be in the pulpit. But soon this did not seem, after all, very much like a pulpit; it had changed to a broad platform, and the rear was a white screen against the wall; and in place of a desk was a curious instrument, on a tripod, looking something like a photographer's camera and something like a stereopticon.

Santa Claus was standing by the side of this instrument, and was just beginning to speak when Mortimer looked up. This was what he heard:

"Never heard me preach before, did you? No. Talking is not my trade. But the wise man says there 's a time to speak as well as a time to keep silence. I 've kept my mouth shut tight for several hundred years; now I 'm going to open it. But my sermon will be illustrated. See this curious machine?" and he laid his hand on the instrument by his side; "it 's a wonder-box; it will show you some queer pictures — queerest you ever saw."

"Let 's see 'em!" piped out a youngster from the front seats. The congregation smiled and rustled, and Santa Claus went on:

"Wait a bit, my little man. You 'll see all you want to see very soon, and may be more. I 've been in this Christmas business now for a great many years, and I 've been watching the way people take their presents, and what they do with them, and what effect the giving and the taking has upon the givers and takers; and I have come to the conclusion that Christmas certainly is not a blessing to everybody. Of course it is n't. Nothing in the world is so pure and good that somebody does not pervert it. Here is father-love and mother-love, the best things outside of heaven; but some of you youngsters abuse it by becoming selfish and greedy, and learning to think that your fathers and mothers ought to do all the work and make all the sacrifices, and leave you nothing to do but to have a good time."

Just here Mortimer felt his cheeks reddening again, and he coughed a little, and opened a hymn-book and held it up before his face to hide his blushes.

"So the fact that Christmas proves a damage to many is nothing against Christmas," Santa Claus continued; "but the fact that some people are hurt by it more than they are helped is a fact that you all ought to know. And as Christmas came this year on Sunday, it was my chance to give the world the benefit of my observations, and there could n't be a better place to begin than Chicago, so here I am."

This last statement touched the local pride of the audience, and there was a slight movement of applause; at which the small boys in front, who had begun to grow sleepy, rubbed their eyes and pricked up their ears.

"There is one thing more," said the preacher, "that I want distinctly understood. I am *not* the bringer of all the Christmas gifts." Here a little girl over in the corner under the gallery looked up to her mother and nodded, as if to say, "I told you so!" "No; there are plenty of presents that people *say* were brought by Santa Claus, with which

Santa Claus had nothing at all to do. There are some givers whose presents I would n't touch; they would soil my fingers or burn them. There are some takers to whom I would give nothing, because they don't deserve it, and because everything that is given to them makes them a little meaner than they were before. Oh, no! You must n't believe all you hear about Santa Claus! He does n't do all the things that are laid to him. He is n't a fool.

"And now I'm going to show you on this screen some samples of different kinds of presents. I have pictures of them here, a funny kind of pictures, as you will see. Do you know how I got the pictures? Well, I have one of those little detective cameras — did you ever see one? — that will take your portrait a great deal quicker than you can pronounce the first syllable of Jack Robinson. It is a little box with a hole in it, and a slide, that is worked with a spring, covering the hole. You point the nozzle of it at anybody, or anything, and touch the spring with your thumb, and, click! you have it — the ripple of the water, the flying feet of the racer, the gesture of the talker, the puff of steam from the locomotive, the unfinished bark of the dog. I've been about with this detective, collecting my samples of presents, and now I'm going to exhibit them to you here by means of my Grand Stereoscopic Moral Tester, an instrument that brings out the good or the bad in anything, and sets it before your eyes as plain as day. You will first see on the screen the thing itself, just as it looks to ordinary eyesight; then I shall turn on my æonian light through my ethical lens, and you will see how the same thing looks when one knows all about it, where it came from, and why it was given, and how it was received.

"First, I shall show you one or two of those presents that I said I would n't touch. Here, for example, is an elegant necklace that I saw a man buying for his wife in a jewelry store yesterday; I caught it as he held it in his hands. There! is n't it a beauty? Links of solid gold, clasp set with diamonds; would you like it, girls?"

"H'm! My! Is n't it a daisy!" murmured the delighted children, as they gazed on the bright picture.

"Don't be too sure!" cried the preacher. "Things are not always what they seem. Look!"

A new light of strange brilliance now lit up the pictures, and every link of that golden chain was transformed into an iron fetter that fastened a woman's wrist, — a woman's wrist that vainly strove to release from its imprisonment a woman's hand. The chain itself was a great circle of women's hands, — wan, cramped, emaciated, pitiful hands, — each one holding a needle, each one clutching helplessly the empty air. Within this circle suddenly sprung to view a little group — a woman, bending by the dim light of a winter afternoon over a garment in her hands, and two pale children lying near her on a pallet covered with rags, while the scanty furniture of the room betokened the most bitter poverty. It was evident enough that the poor creatures were famishing; the hopeless look on the mother's face, as she plied her needle with fierce and anxious speed, glancing now and then at the sleeping children, was enough to touch the hardest heart; a low murmur of pitiful exclamation ran around the room, and there were tears in many eyes.

"She is only one of them," cried Santa Claus. "There are four hundred just like her, working for the man who bought this necklace for his wife yesterday; it is out of their life-blood that he is coining his gold. And to think that such a man should take the money that he makes in this way to buy a Christmas present. Ugh! What has such a man to do with Christmas?" And the good saint shook his fist and stamped his feet in holy wrath. Then the group faded, leaving what looked like a great blood-stain in its place; but that, in its turn, shortly disappeared, and the white screen waited for another picture.

"I have many pictures that are even more painful than this," said the preacher, "but I am not going to let you see any more of them. I only want you to know how the rewards of iniquity look in the æonian light. There are a few more pictures, less terrible to see, but some of them will be a little unpleasant for some of you, I fear. Here is a basket of fruit; it looks very tempting, at first; but let the true light strike it. There! now you see that it is all decayed and withered. It is really as bitter and disgusting as it now looks. It was given, this morning, by a young man to a politician. The young man wants an office. That was why he made this present. A great many so-called Christmas presents are made for some such reason. Not a particle of love goes with them. They are smeared all over with selfishness. Christmas presents! Bah! Is this the spirit of Christmas?

"But here is one of a different sort."

A pretty crimson toilet-case now appeared upon the screen.

"Elegant, is it not? Now see how it looks to those who live in the æonian light."

The crimson plush slowly changed to what looked like rather soiled canton flannel, and the carved ivory to clumsily whittled bass-wood.

"What is the matter with this? I shall not tell you who gave it, nor to whom it was given; it is no real wrong-doing on the part of the giver that

makes the gift poor; it is only because the gift represents no effort, no sacrifice, no thoughtful love. In fact, the one who gave it got the money to buy it with from the one who received it. There are a great many Christmas presents of this sort: with painstaking labor and self-denial. Now I 'm going to show you another, which will enable you to get the idea."

It was a little picture-frame of cherry wood rather rudely carved, that now appeared upon the screen.

"WITHIN THIS CIRCLE SUDDENLY SPRUNG TO VIEW A LITTLE GROUP."

it is n't best to say any hard words about them; but you see that they are not, really, quite so handsome as they look. Nothing is really beautiful, for a Christmas present, that does not prove a personal affection, and a readiness to express it

"The boy who made this for his mother works hard every day in school and carries the evening papers to help with the family expenses; he carved this at night, when he could gain a little time from his lessons, because he could n't afford the money

to buy anything, and because he thought his mother would be better pleased with something that he himself had made. You think it does n't amount to much, don't you? Well, now look!"

The transfiguring light flashed upon the screen, and the little cherry frame expanded to a great and richly ornamented frame of rosewood and gold, fit to hang upon the walls of a king's palace; and there, in the space that before was vacant, surrounded by all that beautiful handiwork, was the smiling face of a handsome boy.

The people, old and young, forgot that they were in church and clapped their hands vigorously, Santa Claus himself joining in the applause and moving about the platform with great glee.

"Yes!" he cried, "that 's the boy, and that 's the beauty of this little frame of his; the boy is in it; he put his love into it, he put himself into it, when he made it; and when you see it as it really is, you see him in it. And that 's what makes any Christmas present precious, you know; it comes from your heart and life, and it touches the heart and quickens the love of the one to whom it is given.

"I have a great number of presents of this sort that I should like to show you if I had time. Here, for instance, is a small glass inkstand that a little boy gave his father. It is one of half a dozen presents that he made; it cost only a dime or two, and you think it is not worth much; but now, when I turn the truth-telling light upon it, you see what it is — a vase of solid crystal, most wonderfully engraved with the richest designs. The boy did not make this with his own hands, but he gained every cent that it cost by patient, faithful, uncomplaining labor. He begged the privilege of earning his Christmas money in this way, and right honestly he earned it; leaving his play, whenever he was summoned for any service, without a word of grumbling, and taking upon himself many little labors and cares that would have burdened his father and mother. When he took his money and went out to spend it the day before Christmas, he was happy and proud, because he could fairly call it his own money; and the presents that he bought with it represented him.

"And now there is only one thing more that I shall show you, but that is a kind of thing that is common, only too common I 'm afraid. It is a present that was all beautiful and good enough till it left the hands of the giver, but was spoiled by the receiver. Here it is."

A silver cup, beautifully chased and lined with gold, now came into view.

"A boy whom I know found this in his stocking this morning. He was up bright and early; he pulled the presents out of his stocking rather greedily; he wanted to see whether they had bought for him the things he had been wishing for and hinting about. Some of them were there and some were not; he was almost inclined to scold, but concluded that he might better hold his tongue. But this boy had made no presents at all. He is one of the sort that takes all he can get, but never gives anything. This is what Christmas means to him. It is a time for getting, not for giving. And I want you to see how this dainty cup looked, as soon as it got into his greedy hands."

Again the revealing light fell upon the cup and its beauty and shapeliness disappeared, and it was nothing but a common pewter mug, all tarnished and marred, and bent out of form.

"There!" cried the preacher; "that is the kind of thing that is most hateful to me. It hurts me to see lovely things fall into the hands of selfish people, for such people can see no real loveliness in them. It is love that makes all things lovely; and he who has no love in his own heart can discern no love in anything that comes into his hands. What does Christmas mean to such a one? What good does it do him? It does him no good; it does him harm, every time. Every gift that he gets makes him a little greedier than he was before. That is the way it works with a certain kind of Sunday-school children. They come in, every year, just before Christmas, only because they hope to get something; they take what they can get, and grumble because it is n't more, and go away, and that 's the last of them till Christmas comes around again. That 's what they think of Christmas. They think it is a pig's feast. Precious little they know about it. I know them, thousands of them! But they never get anything from me,— never! They think they do, but that 's a mistake! I don't like to see my pretty things marred and spoiled like this cup. I 'm not going to give to those who are made worse by receiving.

"No! I can do better. I can find people enough to whom it is worth while to give Christmas gifts because there is love in their hearts; and the gift of love awakens more love. Those who know the joy of giving are made better by receiving. And there are hosts of them, too, millions of them; tens of millions, I believe; more this Christmas than ever before since the Babe was born in Bethlehem; people whose pleasure it is to give pleasure to others; good-willers, cheerful workers, loving helpers, generous hearts, who have learned and remembered the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Through all this part of Santa Claus's sermon Mortimer had known that his face was growing redder and redder; he was sure that the eyes of

all the people in the church were being fixed on him; he felt that he could not endure it another moment, and he caught up his hat and was going to rush out of the building, when suddenly the voice was silent, and he looked up to see what it meant—and Santa Claus was not there; it was Doctor Burrows again, and he was just closing the Bible and taking up the hymn-book. Mortimer glanced about him and drew a long breath of relief.

As they walked back to the hotel, Mr. Murray asked Mortimer how he liked the sermon.

"Which sermon?" asked Mortimer.

"Why, Dr. Burrows's sermon, of course."

"Oh, yes; I forgot. It was a good sermon, was n't it?"

"Excellent. What was the text?"

"'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Was n't that the way he ended up?" asked Mortimer, brightening.

"It was."

"I thought so."

"Thought so; did n't you hear it?"

"Yes, I heard that. But — I was hearing — something else about that time, and I was n't sure."

"What else did you hear?"

"Lots. P'raps I 'll tell you some time," replied the lad.

Mr. Murray did not press the question, and Mortimer was silent. All that day and the next Mortimer seemed to have much serious thinking to do; he was a little reluctant to take his Christmas presents, and he received them at last with a tender gratitude that he had never shown before.

"It must have been Dr. Burrows's sermon," said Mr. Murray to his wife as they were talking it over the next night. "I did n't think Mortimer could get much out of it; in fact I thought he was asleep part of the time, but it seems to have taken hold of him in the right way. It was a good sermon and a practical one. I 'm going to ask our minister to exchange some time with Dr. Burrows."

"I wish he would," said Mrs. Murray.

That was the way Mr. and Mrs. Murray looked at it. But I think that if they had asked Mortimer, Mortimer could have told them that it would be a much better idea to suggest to their minister that he exchange some time with the Reverend Doctor Santa Claus.

"INNOCENCE."

(Verses sent with bluets to a little girl.)

BY EDITH M. THOMAS.

AFIELD I met a darling crowd
  Of blossom-children sweet;
(Dear Mother Nature must be proud,
  These children keep so neat,)
So thick they stood, I cried aloud,
  "I dare not move my feet!"

Their dresses all were like the sky
  When light clouds film the blue;
And each one had a sunny eye,
  And Heaven-secrets knew;
But some, not wide awake, or shy,
  Their heads bent down from view.

I touched the tallest in a row:
  "Dear heart! your name I 'd call,
If you your name would please to show."
  A voice came faint and small:
"My name I truly do not know;
  I 'm Innocence,— that 's all!"

Now, there 's a child-flower soft and bright,
  And Innocence is she;
I thought these blossom-children might
  Her very sisters be;
And so I sent them, blue and white,
  To Dorothea G.

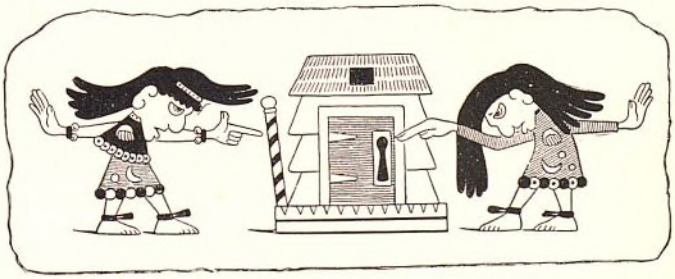
The Belated Barber

an Aztec Fragment

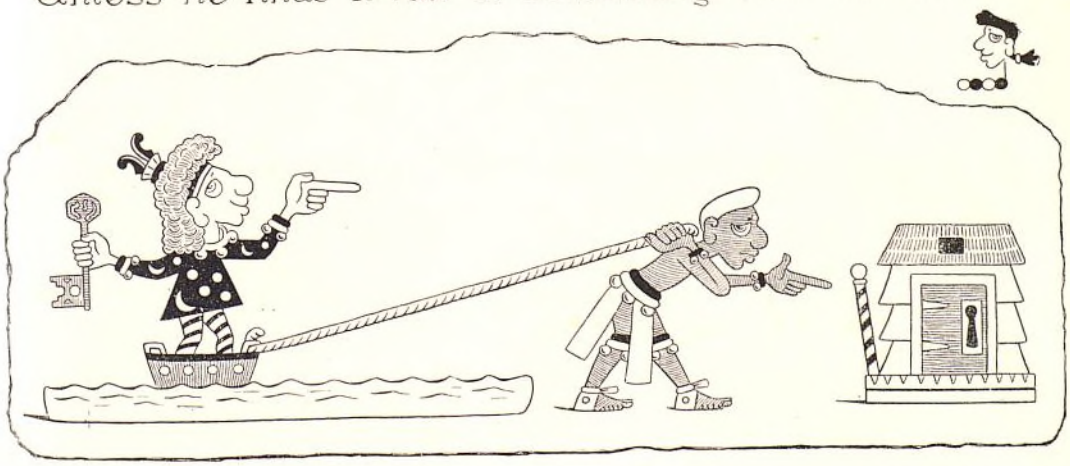
by J. G. Francis.

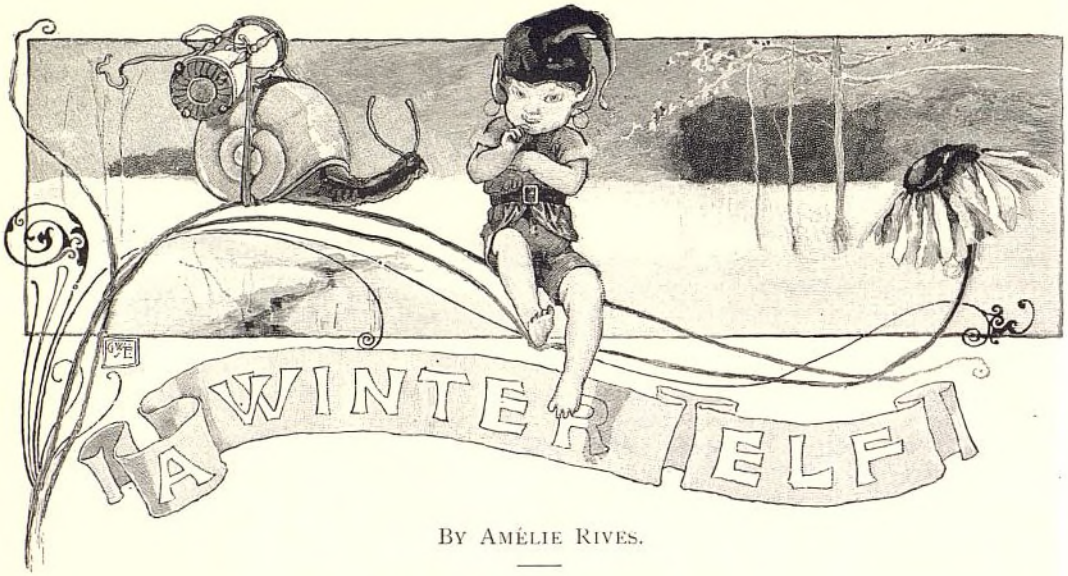
This Barber with the planetary coat
Has just missed the 7:30 morning boat.

Now the Aztecs
will despair;
For he cannot cut
their hair,



Unless he finds a tub or something that will float.





By Amélie Rives.

Too cold it was to ride or walk;
A little elf swung on a marigold stalk,
The marigold flowers were fallen and dead,
The marigold flowers were shrouded in snow,
A bitter wind rushed to and fro,
And all the violets were a-bed.

The little elf's nose was sorry and blue,
But the little elf's self was jolly all through;

And as he swung from side to side,
He sang this song with an air of pride:

"Out o' the wool o' the chestnut-buds
My Minnie spun my hose and jerkin;
Of a bat's wing made my cloak,
Warm enough to wrap a Turk in;
Lined them all with thistle-down,
Gathered when the pods were brown;
Trimmed them with a rabbit's fur,
Left upon a cockle-bur;

"Yet, in spite o' everything,
Much I fear that cold I be.
Ha! ha! the Spring! Ho! ho! the Spring!
The merry, merry Spring for me!"

HOW THE HART BOYS SAW GREAT SALT LAKE.

By J. T. Trowbridge.

IGHT had set in when the Hart boys arrived with their tutor at Salt Lake City, and they went to their beds immediately — in an old, rambling and rather dilapidated hotel, — with anything but agreeable first impressions of the famous Mormon town of Utah.

Their opinion of it changed, however, when the light, shining in at their windows, awoke them the next morning; and they looked out from the midst of the beautiful valley in which the city rests, over the roofs, and the rows of trees that shade its streets, and saw the sunshine on the glittering peaks of the snow-capped mountains around.

"I had no idea that the Mormons could get up anything so fine as this!" exclaimed Roland, breathing the fresh air at the open casement, and gazing with delight at the thin, vapory clouds floating along the mountain-sides, the gorges full of purple mists, and the snowy summits gleaming over all.

"The Mormons know a good thing when they see it," replied his cousin Dean, as he slipped his suspenders upon his shoulders. "When the old leaders discovered this valley in the desert, I don't know how many years ago, at the time when they were looking for a new seat of empire, where they could build up a great nation, outside of our civilization— "

"Bah! don't be eloquent now!" Roland laughed. "Or is it poetry you 're making?

'Where they could build up a nation
Outside of our civilization!'

Why, I did n't think you were capable of that."

"I felt that I was wading in rather deep language," said Dean. "If I made a rhyme, put it in your note-book; for I shall probably never make another. To tell the truth, I was thinking what the Duke would say on the occasion; I was speaking as his proxy."

"The Duke" was the title, or nickname which the boys had bestowed in boy-fashion upon their tutor, "plain Mr." Wellington, whom they now heard stirring in the next room.

In five minutes they were knocking at his door, before which the hotel porter had lately set down a pair of dapper boots in the highest state of polish.

"Well, young gentlemen," the tutor said, as they entered, speaking under the flapping folds of a damp towel, with which he was making the bald top of his head shine, "you 're stirring early; what are you going to do with yourselves before breakfast?"

"We thought we would go out and take a little stroll," replied Roland.

"See the town," his cousin Dean added, "and perhaps chuck a stone or two into the famous Great Salt Lake."

The Duke stopped polishing his head, with his thin side-locks straggling all over it, and the towel in his two hands, and looked at the boy with a sort of mournful astonishment.

"Permit me to ask," he said, with a smile of sad humor, in which he was apt to indulge when either of his pupils blundered, "about how far can you 'chuck' a stone,— as you term the simple act, I suppose, of throwing?"

Dean knew at once that he had said something ridiculous, but could n't conceive what. He laughed as he looked around in a questioning way for a hint from Roland; but his cousin's ruddy face gave no sign.

"I don't know; I never measured the distance," he replied.

"Eighteen yards?" inquired the tutor.

"Oh, more than that!"

"Eighteen miles?"

"Well! hardly so far," Dean answered, blushing and laughing.

"I thought not," remarked the tutor quietly. "But allow me to say that you will have to throw a stone that distance if you expect to make a plash with it in the lake before breakfast this morning."

"What!" said Roland, with a disappointed look, "I thought the lake was one of the things we came here to see."

"That is true," the tutor replied. "But to visit it we have to take a little journey of something like eighteen miles. Though I suppose it is n't so far as that to the nearest shore, as a bird flies."

"Or as you chuck a stone," said Roland merrily, nudging his cousin. "When shall we take the little journey to the lake, sir?" he inquired.

"Not before breakfast this morning," replied the tutor. "Go and enjoy your walk now, and get an appetite. You may stroll on the banks of the Jordan, if not on the shores of this Mormon Dead Sea."

"The Jordan?" queried Dean.

"That is the name the saints have given to the river which flows from Utah Lake into Great Salt Lake from the south. You 'd better read up about it in the guide-books. Bear River flows into it from the north, and other streams contribute their fresh waters to this great inland sea."

"How about those that flow out of it?" Dean asked, turning the pages of a little railroad guide-book which he picked up from the table.

"The lake has no outlet; the waters of the mountain streams fall into that great basin and are at rest; they sleep the sleep of death," said the tutor, "or ascend to heaven by evaporation," he added with a touch of poetry, with which he sometimes liked to adorn his discourse. "There's a thought for you, boys; consider it."

"DEAN PICKED UP THE BOOTS, AND TRIED TO ATONE FOR HIS CARELESSNESS BY DUSTING THEM WITH A TOWEL."
(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

"The lake must be very much larger than I thought, to take in the rivers without overflowing its banks," observed Roland.

"In spring, when the mountain snows are melting, the lake sometimes spreads over the plains that border its shores. But it is a large lake at any time; about ninety miles in length, I believe, and forty miles wide. An immense sheet of water! And no living thing can exist in it. Not a fish in all that silent sea! It is the heaviest sort of brine, charged with salt and other mineral substances. Leave a stick in it a few hours, and when you take it out it will appear covered with crystals. Put a live trout in it, and it will turn over on its back and die in about three or four gasps. It is a wonderful lake," added the tutor, before the glass, arranging his hair so as to conceal the bald spot on his crown.

"I should say so," cried Dean, with his eyes fixed with keen interest on the pages of the guide-book. And he read aloud:

"'And the lake itself! Always mysterious, it appeals to the imagination of every traveler. It sleeps forever. No waves dance over it, no surf ever breaks the stillness of its melancholy shores.' I am going to have a bath in that lake!" he exclaimed, giving the page an enthusiastic slap.

"They say a person can't sink in it, owing to the heaviness of the water," said Roland, who was not a good swimmer. "So there's no danger of drowning."

"Danger there is, nevertheless," said the tutor. "The water is so buoyant that it is hard to keep the limbs submerged. Up they come to the surface, in spite of you, and down go your features into the brine, if you are not careful. Then strangulation — the liquid (you can hardly call it water), taken into the throat or nostrils, produces most painful results. A friend of mine, a lady, nearly perished in it once, and was distressingly ill for several days from the effect of an involuntary plunge."

"We'll have a bath in the mysterious lake, anyhow!" exclaimed Dean. And going out with his cousin, he kicked over something at the door.

"Is that my boots?" called out the usually quiet Mr. Wellington, in sudden alarm. "Oh!" he growled, seeing that his foot-gear had been upset upon the dusty floor; "just after they had been beautifully polished!"

If there was anything he was extremely particular about, it was those slender, dainty, dapper little French boots; and if the Hart boys ever had any fun at his expense, it was chiefly on account of them.

Dean picked up the boots, and tried to atone for his carelessness by dusting them with a towel.

"Don't, for the world!" ejaculated the Duke, springing to the rescue. "That towel is damp!" he added in a sort of horror. He took the boots with as much tenderness as if they had been a pair of human twins, and carefully removed the dust with a soft hat-brush, while the boys smothered their laughter as they hurried from the room.

"There were actually five specks of dust on one of His Grace's boots!" said Dean, "and three specks, besides a small dog's hair, on the other!"

"A small hair, or the hair of a small dog?" asked Roland. "Dean, do express yourself with clearness and precision," he added, very much in the tone of the worthy tutor.

The boys returned in about half an hour with radiant faces. They had not seen the River Jordan, but they had strolled through the shady streets, by the banks of irrigating streams of clear, cold water brought from the mountains; they had rambled about the renowned Mormon Tabernacle and the great unfinished Temple; and they had picked up a pleasant bit of news.

There was to be a great excursion to the lake in the afternoon; and they named a noted swimmer who was to give an exhibition of his skill, free to all spectators at six o'clock.

"We will go out in time to have our bath first," said Dean, "and then see the Captain's performance."

"And enjoy the fine sunset on the lake," added Roland.

To this the tutor agreed. This was on Saturday, the twelfth day of June, 1886; a day which will long be remembered at Salt Lake City, and especially by those tourists who went to witness the Captain's feats of swimming.

The morning was bright and full of promise; the boys passed the forenoon very pleasantly in riding about the city and visiting the principal places of interest with their tutor. Then a wind arose, the sky became overcast, and Mr. Wellington, looking down anxiously at his boots, predicted a storm.

After dinner the weather became still more threatening, and the tutor said the trip to the lake would have to be postponed. At this the boys set up a cry of disappointment.

"How can we postpone it?" said Dean. "To-morrow is Sunday; and we leave here Monday morning. I am going to see Salt Lake, storm or no storm."

The tutor, however, persuaded them to wait over one train, and see how the weather looked afterward. The wind continued to increase, but there were no more decided indications of rain an hour later than there had been since noon. And the boys, who had been interviewing some of the oldest

inhabitants, returned to the hotel with happy faces.

"They say the wind is sure to go down before night; and there 's never rain here to amount to anything, at this time of year. This, you know, is their dry season."

"Yes, I know," the tutor reluctantly admitted; "but the lake will be too rough for you to take a bath in it, or for the Captain to give his performance."

"Rough?" echoed Dean. "What does your little guide-book say? 'It sleeps forever; no waves dance over it, no surf ever —' and all that. It will be all the more interesting to see a lake — almost half as long as the State of Massachusetts — that sleeps forever, no matter how the wind blows."

"Yes," added Roland, "a lake that never gets its back up, even when it is stroked the wrong way by a heavy gale!"

Mr. Wellington allowed himself to be persuaded, and set out with the boys to walk to the station of the Western & Nevada Railroad, where the excursion trains to the lake were made up. But they had not gone far, when he looked up again at the sky, and down at his boots, and paused.

"Boys!" said he, "I lack faith in this Utah weather. I am going back for my overcoat, and I advise you to take yours."

They scoffed at the idea, and proposed to walk on to the station, and wait for him there. So he returned to the hotel alone, to find that Dean, whom he had sent to the office with their door-keys, had not left them there, but probably still had them in his pocket. The result was that the tutor was so long finding any one who could unlock the door for him, and in getting his overcoat, that the boys at the station became exasperated with impatience when they saw the train about to start without them.

But the train was a remarkably long one, heavily laden with passengers; and though it was hauled by two locomotives, it was not easily put in motion. The engines were panting and struggling, when the boys, who had jumped upon the platform of a car, having determined to make the trip whether their tutor joined them or not, saw him coming down the street in full chase, with his overcoat and umbrella under his arm.

It was great fun for them to see "His Grace, the Duke of Wellington," running for a train in his tight boots; and they waved their handkerchiefs at him cheeringly. The cars, even after they had made a start, moved so slowly that they were easily overtaken; and the tutor was soon on the platform with the boys.

The car was crowded, however, and not a seat in it was to be had. The boys proposed that they should go back to one of the long string of open cars, which made up the rear of the train. But Mr. Wellington declared that nothing would tempt him to do that, in such a wind as was blowing; beyond the sheltering limits of the city it was almost a gale, and it was growing cold.

The car was crowded, mostly with Mormons, a rather rough and outlandish-looking company, with a few tourists or other Gentiles mixed in. But everybody was good-natured, nobody seemed to heed the unfavorable weather, and soon the car was filled with the loud talk and laughter of the many excursionists.

"This is a mortifying position for a gentleman!" murmured the tutor, crowding into the aisle to get out of the wind, and trying to keep his boots from coming in contact with those of his fellow-travelers. And for a moment he contemplated jumping from the slow-running train and walking back to the hotel.

A stout Mormon woman, who occupied a seat with a little girl, kindly took the child in her lap and made room for him; and after that he was more comfortable. But the sky grew blacker as they advanced, the wind increased, and, in spite of closed doors and windows, circulated through the loosely constructed car.

"And these people fondly imagine they are enjoying themselves!" said the tutor, with a melancholy smile. He even seemed inclined to pity his pupils standing in the aisle beside him, because they were still able to keep up their courage and take a cheerful view of things.

The journey itself was uninteresting as possible. Soon after the River Jordan was crossed (a stream with low, flat shores), they came to desolate plains where not much else grew besides clumps of sage-bush; and afterward they passed long, level, absolutely barren tracts, covered with a whitish scum. These were alkali plains. Then, after what seemed an interminable while to our tourists, the slowly moving train ran by a stretch of half-overflowed land which proved to be the borders of the lake shore.

Approached by the Central Pacific Railroad from the northwest, Great Salt Lake, with its distant hazy levels broken by mountainous islands and blue promontories, is singularly beautiful. But seen as our boys saw it, from the railroad that skirts its southeast shore, particularly on such a day as that memorable Saturday, it is dreary in the extreme.

"What is that white, out there?" asked Dean, stooping to look through the car window across the half-submerged plain.

"That 's the lake itself," said the Mormon woman with the child in her lap.

"Breakers!" exclaimed Roland in astonishment.

"It can't be!" said Dean. "But it is! Whitecaps, as far as you can see!"

"The lake that 'sleeps forever'!" cried Dean excitedly. "'No waves dance over it, no surf ever breaks the stillness —'! Where 's your 'Journey Across the Continent by the Scenic Route'?" he asked, calling upon the tutor for his little railroad guide-book in which that highly romantic description had been found.

"I don't believe the writer of that ever saw the lake!" Roland declared.

"I am sure he never did in a gale of wind," said the tutor. "But he may have seen it in calm weather. This shows you, boys, how careful we must be in accepting the testimony of the traveler who has seen only one phase of natural objects which he attempts to describe. There 's a thought for your consideration."

Passing the wet lands, the train ran slowly beside the actual shore of the lake, and the boys could see better what that dense and inert mass of water was in a storm. Its surface was lashed into foam as far as the eye could reach. Not simply whitecaps tumbled, but regular breakers formed at least half a mile out, much farther from shore, the tutor said, than he had ever seen breakers form, except on shoals or reefs. They swept in slow, heavily rolling surges, one after another, like breakers of white cream, to dash high upon the shore, which there rose eight or ten feet above the level of the lake.

Black Rock, a solitary, wave-worn ledge which rises steeply from the water a little way out from the beach, was enveloped in spray from the billows dashing about it. Not far beyond was the station at Garfield, where the Captain's swimming exhibition was to take place. It was almost time for it now.

The cars stopped near a large open shed or pavilion; this was the railroad station, which appeared crowded with excursionists who had gone out on previous trains. The cold tempestuous wind from the lake swept through it, and a flight of steps that led down from it to the beach was buffeted by the breaking waves.

"We shall have to give up our bath," said Roland, ruefully, seeing that even the descent of the stairs would be dangerous. "But I am going to see what the Captain will do."

"The Captain, if he is wise, will do nothing," said the tutor. "It would be the height of folly for him to undertake to give an exhibition in so mad a sea. It is beginning to rain."

A fine, swift drizzle was in fact flying horizontally into the pavilion, and spattering the car windows. The clouds over the lake were thick and dark, the whitened waves were veiled in mist, and a night of furious storm was about shutting down.

"Boys!" said the tutor, as his companions were leaving the car with the crowd of passengers, "take my advice, and stay where you are. This will be the first train back to the city, and, don't you see, there are hundreds of people waiting to crowd into it, and take the places of those who are foolish enough to vacate them. That open shed affords no one any protection. The wind and even the rain sweep through it. I am going to remain just where I am."

"What! come to see Salt Lake, and never leave your seat in the car?" said Roland. "That is too absurd.".

"Absurd or not, that is the only rational thing to do. Many others, you see, are doing the same."

Indeed, many who had started to leave the car were now rushing back with the incoming crowd, and scrambling to regain their seats.

"Be quick, or you will lose your chance!" called the tutor. "I can see all I want to of the lake through a pane of glass!"

But the windows were becoming misty with the drizzle; and, determined to see more, even if they had to stand in the aisle again all the way to town, the boys pressed forward to the platform of the car.

Cries from the lake shore attracted them,—"There he is! there he goes!"—and Roland eagerly asked, "Who goes?"

"The Captain! he is in the water."

The two boys waited to hear no more, but leaped from the car, and, running along the level bank above the beach, among the scattered spectators, did not stop until they had reached a good spot "to see the show," as Dean said.

Below them, a few rods out from the shore, was moored a small excursion steamboat, which was to have made two or three pleasure trips on the lake that afternoon. But pleasure trips in such weather were out of the question. Indeed, the little steamboat appeared to be in imminent danger of being swamped by the waves, or of parting its cable and dashing upon the beach. It was tossing and plunging fearfully, and no sooner was its stern lifted high by one breaker, than the bow plunged into the next, which half-buried it, and swept the deck.

What added intense interest to the scene was the sight of two men standing on the stern, now heaved high by a wave, and then dropped suddenly by the receding surf.

"Why don't they come ashore?" cried Roland, excitedly.

"My dear sir," answered a gray-headed spectator, who stood with his hat pulled over his face, and his coat-collar turned up against the rain, "they would thankfully come ashore if they could."

"Who are they?" Dean inquired.

"The captain of the boat, and, I believe, his

son. They were getting ready for a trip; but as the weather grew bad, they waited for it to grow better. But it grew worse so fast, they could n't get ashore at all. They had a small boat fastened to the stern, and as a last resort they were to use that; but it broke loose, and there they are."

"If the storm increases, or continues all night, what will they do?" said Roland.

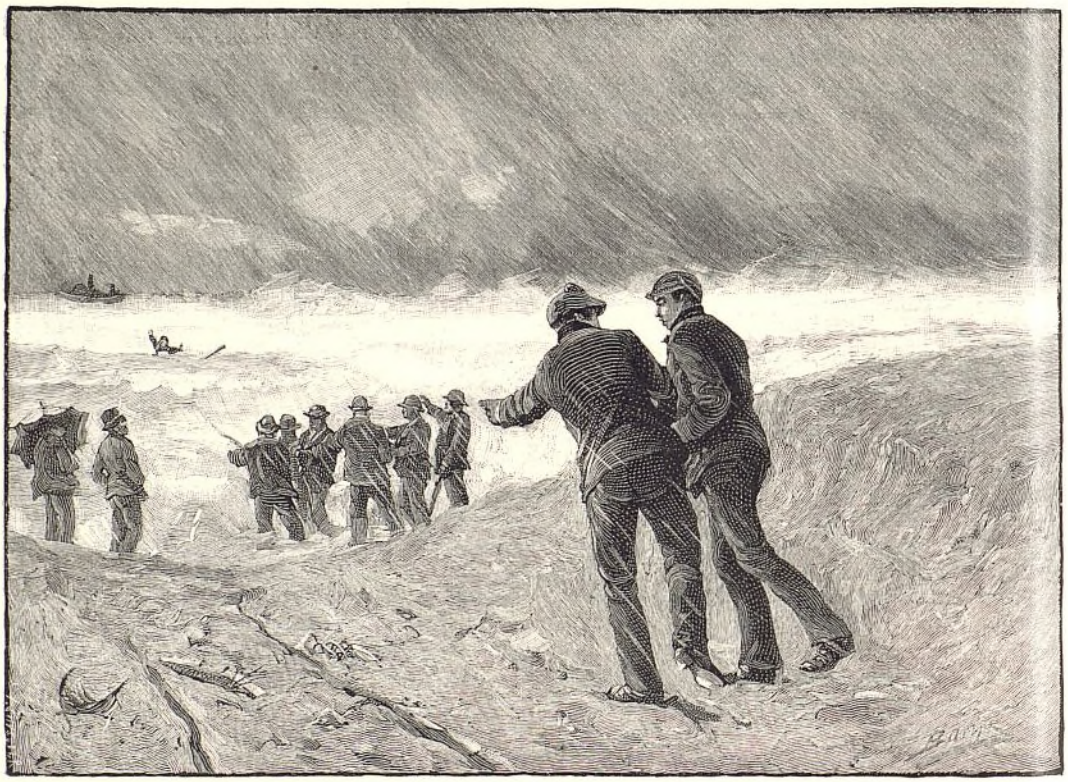
"That is more than man can say," replied the stranger. "The steamer has no cabin. They are where there is n't much danger of the

"Did n't he succeed?" the boys inquired.

"Succeed? No! A wave tumbled him over and brought him ashore, as if he had been made of cork. He started into the water again a minute ago, as if he were going to make another attempt, but there was something wrong about the rope he had tied to his waist, and he went back to arrange it."

"Is n't such a storm on this lake something unusual?" Dean innocently wished to know.

"Unusual!" exclaimed the man. "There has been nothing like it known here for twenty years!"



"HE WAS SEEN TUMBLING LIKE A RUBBER BALL IN THE MIDST OF THE SURGE."

waves washing them off; but the spray, you see, is flying over them, and anybody who ever got any of that into his eyes or nostrils can judge something of what those poor fellows must suffer."

The boys had been so much absorbed in watching the endangered steamboat and her small crew of two, that they had not noticed some movements taking place on the beach. Dean now asked what they meant.

"Don't you know?" replied the man. "The chap in a rubber suit is the great swimming captain, who was to have given an exhibition here this afternoon. He has just made an attempt to carry a line out to the men on the steamer."

As the rain was coming in hurried volleys, dashing into the boys' faces, they regretted not having borrowed the Duke's umbrella; yet they noticed that the few spectators who had umbrellas were unable to hold them in the face of the tempest; more than one was wrecked and had to be furled. So they, like their gray-headed acquaintance on the bank, turned up the collars of their tightly buttoned coats and pulled their hats over their eyes. And this is the way they saw Great Salt Lake.

But how was His Grace the Duke seeing it? The train had started again, and his car, with its storm-pelted windows, was running off with the

rest on a side track, at a distance from the shore and half a mile farther on. There it was left in the midst of a desolate plain, and enveloped by a blinding storm!

"He is going to try it again!" Dean cried, and he and Roland winked the water from their eyes, the better to see the famous swimmer put his art to a practical use by carrying a line to the distressed men on the steamboat.

He waded out, cased from head to foot in his rubber suit, but unfortunately with his features exposed. He passed the tumbling surf of the first breaker without being taken off his feet. He encountered the second with a brave leap at its crest, and, strongly swimming, using his paddle, passed that successfully also. Then came the third roller, tossing, toppling forward, already crushing into foam with its own weight.

This the Captain took valiantly, making a plunge to dive through it, which he could have done easily enough had the wave been any ordinary sea-water. But its extraordinary buoying power and great momentum were too much even for the great swimmer. Besides, the poisonous brine got into his eyes and nostrils. He was scarcely visible for a moment, then he was seen tumbling like a rubber ball, as light and almost as helpless, in the midst of the breaking surge. He had lost his paddle, and he seemed also to have lost all power of governing his motions, in the dashing waves.

"Merciful heavens! the man will drown!" exclaimed the gray-headed spectator.

With one impulse the cousins rushed down to the beach, in order to assist in the rescue of the gallant Captain. Fortunately his friends on the shore had hold of the rope he was carrying to the steamer; and, seeing it was impossible for him to proceed, they hauled him back to land. He was taken out and lifted upon his feet, blinded for the moment, coughing and strangling terribly, and even unable to stand without support. The boys scrambled back up the bank, with wet feet and a taste of spray from the lake on their lips. There they remained a while longer, watching with great anxiety the two men on the plunging steamboat, and waiting to see if the Captain would make another attempt to rescue them. He was soon taken by his friends to the bathing-house, where his drooping attitude, as he stood on the platform, did not give promise of further efforts on his part.

"There 's no hope for those men, except in the wind's going down," said Dean. "We can't wait to see that."

And the two boys hastened to find what poor shelter they could at the open shed of the station. Their feet were splashed with the brine of the lake, and the rain was fast drenching them.

"What a lovely sunset!" laughed Roland.

"We shall have had our bath anyhow," replied Dean; "though not just as we anticipated."

"And we have seen the Captain's performance," added Roland.

The situation under the pavilion roof was not comfortable, but the huddled crowd afforded them a slight protection from the driving storm. Though chilled and wet, waiting for the train, they kept up their spirits by an exchange of jokes, by listening to the talk of their fellow-sufferers, or, when their patience was nearly exhausted, by thinking how much better off they were, at the worst, than the two men whom they could still see tossing on the stern of the little steamboat.

Meanwhile the tutor adhered to his resolution to remain in his seat, whatever happened, until something happened which caused even him to spring up and rush out of the car. The train had run on to Lake Point, where the conductor, passing through, announced that passengers for Salt Lake City must take another set of cars, standing on an adjacent track.

A distance of only two or three rods intervened between the two trains; but the wet grass and bushes, bowing to the storm, caused the Duke, after he had reached the platform of his car, to recoil in dismay, and look at his precious boots. There was no time to hesitate, however; if he wished to get a seat in the returning train, the plunge must be made, and made at once. With his umbrella spread, taking long strides, and stepping high, he crossed from one car to another, and succeeded in getting a place as good as the one he had left. But his boots!

The newly made-up train, after many hitches and delays, moved slowly back to Garfield, where there was a final rush for the few places left in the close car, and for the long string of open cars which were the last to be filled. The boys were fortunate enough to get into the same car with their tutor, but again they had to stand, which they did without complaint, resolutely declining his repeated offers to them of his seat. They were very jolly, as healthy and good-tempered boys have the gift of being under adverse circumstances; and while their teeth almost chattered with the cold, they assured His Grace that they were having a "splendid time."

It took the heavily laden train a long time to start, the driving-wheels of the two engines whirling on the wet and slippery rails. Night had closed in, when at last it moved; and the boys took their last look at the plunging steamer and the two solitary men standing on the stern, in the rain and tempest and gloom.

For some time longer they could see the white

breakers, through the darkness and storm; and Roland, nudging his cousin, remarked:

"Rather lively for a dead sea, is n't it?"

And again Dean quoted the misleading guide-book:

"'It sleeps forever! No waves dance over it, no surf ever breaks the stillness —' and I suppose no rain ever falls here either!" he added, stepping aside to avoid the drip from a leak in the roof of the car.

The night ride back to the city was exceedingly dismal. The little rickety, narrow-gauge car was dimly lighted, the hurricane howled about it and drove into it, the rain fell upon it in torrents and beat in at every crevice. The Duke spread his umbrella to protect himself from a leak directly over his head; and others, who were lucky enough to have umbrellas, followed his example. Clouds buried the mountains, and the darkness outside the car windows became intense.

It was half-past nine when the train approached the city, and to the great joy of the chilled, weary, and hungry boys, came to a stop. They supposed it had reached the station, and were not pleased to learn that it had stopped on an up-grade two blocks away, from the utter failure of the engines to haul it farther. Five, ten minutes elapsed, and no progress was made, the locomotives puffing and jerking in vain. The rain was still pouring, and the streets were but dimly lighted by far-away lamps. Suddenly Dean exclaimed:

"Only two blocks away! I am going to walk to the station."

The tutor remonstrated in vain; any adventure seemed better to the boys than standing there on their weary feet, in their damp clothes. Roland followed Dean, and stepping from the car went with a splash into a pool of water that covered the ground beside the track.

A brisk run through wind and rain and mud and water brought them to the station, where long lines of coaches, horse-cars, and omnibuses were waiting. Into one of these last the boys threw themselves, along with a number of other dripping excursionists; and, the vehicle being nearly full, called upon the conductor to start.

But he said he could n't start until the train arrived; and now the boys seemed worse off than if they had remained in the car. There was no knowing how long they would have to wait. They were already about as wet as they could be; but the run had warmed them, and a longer run might warm them still more.

"Come on!" cried Dean. And once more leaping out into the storm and flood, they started for the hotel.

They were the first of the excursionists to reach it. All in a glow from their exercise, they hurried to their rooms, put on dry clothes and slippers, and walked comfortably and cheerfully down into the dining-room, just as the coaches and omnibuses began to arrive.

It was twenty minutes later when His Grace the Duke walked into the hotel, almost as wet as the boys had been, notwithstanding his overcoat and umbrella. He had been one of the last to leave his place in the car, and when he did so, not a seat in coach, horse-car or omnibus was to be had; and he had been obliged to walk through the flooded streets in those boots!

The next day the boys saw the Captain at the hotel; and walking up to him with a polite "I beg your pardon, Captain!" Dean inquired what became of the two men on the little storm-tossed steamer.

"They staid there all night," replied the Captain; "and I was one of those who remained to encourage them by keeping lights burning on the shore. Fortunately for them, the storm lulled, but the lake continued so rough that we could n't get to them in a boat and take them off before this morning. They were more dead than alive."

"And, Captain," said Roland, "allow me to ask you how you like Salt Lake to swim in?"

With a grim smile the Captain turned and walked away.

NOTHING IS EASIER.

VERY soon the candy slips
In between your open lips —
Let sweet thoughts into your mind
Just such ready entrance find.

BEST OF ALL

By H. C. Bunner.

The baby grasps at the empty air,
And sees a wonderful sight;
For the great old sideboard over there
Is shining with silver bright.

The grandfather dangles his watch of gold,
And she hears the wheels go *click*,
And she tries in her pincushion hands to hold
That "bull's-eye" round and thick.

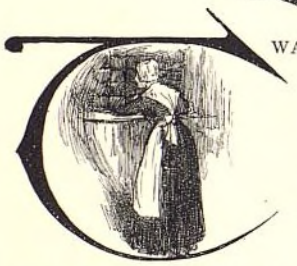
They are wonderful things that the baby sees;
But, when she is tired of all,
And they wrap her up from the evening breeze,
When the shadows begin to fall,

She is tired of the noisy and busy world,
Too tired to go to sleep,
And she won't sit up, and she won't stay curled,
And she only wakes to weep;

And she 's suddenly caught in a tender hold
Where she even forgets to stir —
And what to baby are silver and gold,
When her mother smiles down at her?

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE IN NEW ENGLAND

by Sarah J. Pritchard



'T WAS in the year 1635. On a November afternoon Mrs. Rachel Olcott was spinning flax in the cheerful kitchen of a small house not far from Plymouth Rock, in Massachusetts. Eastward from the house, the ocean broke with a sullen roar on the rocks of the coast below; northward lay the few homes of the few Pilgrims who were Mrs. Olcott's neighbors.

Captain Olcott's ship had sailed from Boston for England, in the year 1632, and had not been heard from.

The little band of Pilgrims had ceased to look for news from the captain or his ship.

Mrs. Olcott kept up a brave heart and a cheerful face for the sake of her four children, Robert, Rupert, Lucy, and poor, crippled little Roger; but this November afternoon anxiety filled her heart. Day by day her little store of provisions had lessened under the stress of hunger until even the corn-meal had vanished, and it became necessary to send corn to be ground at the only mill in all that region. Early in the day, Robert and Rupert with their sister Lucy had been sent to the miller's, for it was well understood that each comer must await his turn at the mill. This grinding in those early days was slow work, and much of the day had passed before Mrs. Olcott expected them to return.

But when the sky grew dark and the snow began to fall, the loving mother grew anxious. She drew the great arm-chair, in the cushioned depths of which poor, pale-faced little Roger lay curled, far into the fireplace; and then, when anxiety grew to fear, she threw over her head the hooded red cloak that all the Puritan matrons wore, and hurried over the hill, as fast as the drifting snow would permit, to the house of her nearest neighbor, Master John Hawley.

As she drew the latch and walked in with impetuous haste, up sprung John Hawley and stalked to the corner, where, ever ready, stood his trusty musket.

"Indians, Rachel?" shrieked Mrs. Hawley, springing to drop the curtain that hung above the one window of the room.

"Put up your musket, friend," gasped Mrs. Olcott. "It is my boys who are in danger. They went to the mill with grist. Lucy is with them. Oh, save them!" she pleaded.

"They 're young and tough; they 'll weather it through, and be home by supper-time," said John Hawley, the stanch Puritan, dropping his musket to its corner. "I 'll step over after supper and see. Go home, and don't worry."

To him, nothing less than Indians seemed worth a moment's uneasiness.

When he turned, Rachel Olcott was gone, and his wife was at the door, watching the red cloak as its wearer urged it through the snow.

"A woman has no business to look as she does," exclaimed Mrs. Hawley, closing the door.

"She 's had trouble enough in Plymouth, goodness knows!—her husband lost, and that crippled child to care for night and day, those boys to bring up, and hardly enough money to keep soul and body together. And there she goes this minute with a face like a sweet-brier rose"; and John Hawley demanded his supper at once.

He had it, his wife looking as stern as any Puritan of them all, as he put on his greatcoat and went out, saying:

"If those youngsters have come home, I 'll be right back."

But he was not "right back." Midnight came down on all the Atlantic coast, and he had not returned.

The supper for the young Olcotts was baked at the hearth, and set back to await their coming. The blazing logs filled the long, low kitchen with light. There was no need of a candle, as the mother sat, to sing her poor boy to sleep. But Roger could not sleep.

"Tell me something more about England, to sleep, while I tell you something about Christmas — the way we used to keep it — before Mamma was a Puritan, you know."

Then she told the boy of old-time customs in her native land; of her father's house, and the great rejoicings that came at Christmas-time, and lastly, with a vague feeling of regret in her heart, she came to the story of the great green bough that was lighted with tapers and hung with gifts for the good children.

"'TELL ME SOMETHING MORE ABOUT ENGLAND, MOTHER,' HE PLEADED."

Mother," he pleaded, again and again. "It keeps me from thinking of Lucy and the boys, when you talk."

The firelight illumined the white face and made the blue eyes of the boy more pitiful than ever in their plaintive asking that night.

The mother's thoughts and her heart were out in the snowdrifts searching with her neighbors for her bright, rosy darlings, but her words and her hands were ministering to this child, bereft of almost everything belonging to the outside world of work and endeavor.

"Well, then, Roger, shut your eyes and try to go

"What made you be a Puritan, Mother? Why did n't you stay at home," asked Roger.

"Don't ask me, my boy," she said, touching the shining face with a kiss. "Remember that heaven is a much finer place than England."

"Do they have any Christmas-boughs there, Mother?"

"Something better than boughs, my boy!"

"Mother, I 'd like it, if God would let me, to go to heaven around by the way of dear England, so that I could see a Christmas-bough just for once before I die."

At that moment the door was thrust in, and the

boys, Robert and Rupert, clad in snow, entered the room. The mother, dropping Roger's mite of a hand, sprung to meet them with untold gladness in her eyes, that still looked beyond them in search of something more.

"Lucy 's all right, Mother!" cried Robert. "If it had n't been for Mr. Hawley, though, and Richard Cooper, and the rest, we 'd have had a night of it in the old cedar-tree. We could n't get a bit farther with the meal and Lucy; so we scooped out the snow in the big hollow, put Lucy in first, when we had made sure there was n't a fox or any thing inside; crawled in ourselves, with a big stick apiece to keep off enemies, and were getting very hungry and sleepy, when a light flashed in our eyes."

"But where is Lucy?" interrupted Mrs. Olcott.

"Oh, they are bringing her! And Mother, Mr. Hawley has been scolding us half the way home for going to mill on such a day. And we never told him that we had n't meal enough in the house to last till to-morrow. We took it brave."

"That 's right, my good boys; but how did they find you?" Mrs. Olcott demanded.

"They did n't; we found them," cried Rupert. "They had a lantern, and we saw it; and then we made a dash after the light, and brought them back to the hollow. When they drew Lucy out, she was fast asleep, and as warm as toast, 'cause Robert gave her his jacket, and I tied my muffler on her, too."

"And she 's fast asleep this minute, I do believe!" added Robert, as two vigorous young men entered,—one drawing the sled-load of meal and the other bearing Lucy in his arms.

From that night in November little Roger grew more and more away from the bleak New England life. It was evident to every one who saw the lad that he was going to the Shining Shore,—although the little Puritan boy had never heard much of its being a shining shore,—and I think that was the reason he fell to thinking so much of the beautiful Christmas-bough. He talked of it when awake, he dreamed of it when he slept; and he told his dreams and said, with tears on his cheeks, how sorry he was to awake and find that he had n't seen it after all—and, oh, he wanted to so much!

The time of Christmas in that far, far-away year drew near, and in all the land there was not a Christmas-bell, a Christmas-tree, nor even a Christmas-gift.

Beautiful Mrs. Olcott felt that her little Roger was getting very near to the heavenly land. A physician from Boston had come down, and told her that the lad must die. This bright little mother wished, oh, so much! to make her child happy, and his little heart was set on seeing a Christmas-bough before he died. She could not withstand his wishes, and she said to herself, "If I am punished for it as long as I live, Roger shall see a Christmas-bough." So she took her boys, Robert and Rupert, and little Lucy, outside the house one day, just a week before Christmas, and told them what she was going to do.

"O Mother!" exclaimed Robert, the eldest son, "They 'll persecute you to death; they 'll drive us into the wilderness; we shall lose our home and everything!"

"Remember, boys, your mother has been into the wilderness once, and she is n't afraid of that. We shall have the Christmas-bough! I am going up to Boston to-morrow, if the day is fine, and I 'll fetch back some nice little trinkets for poor Roger. May be a ship has come in lately; one is expected."

On the morrow, clad in the scarlet cloak, Mrs. Olcott set forth for Boston. She had not been there since the day she went up to see the ship sail, with her husband on it—the ship that never had been heard from. But that was more than three years before, and it was in going home from Boston that Roger had been so hurt and maimed that his little life was spoiled.

Great was the astonishment in Plymouth when it was learned that the Widow Olcott had gone to Boston. Why had she to go to Boston? She had no folk living there to go to see; and what had she been buying, they wondered, when she came back. Mrs. Hawley went down the hill that same day to make inquiry, and found out very little.

As soon as Mrs. Olcott was well rid of Mrs. Hawley, she called her boys, and bade them go to the pine-woods and get the finest, handsomest young hemlock-tree that they could find.

"Get one that is straight and tall, with well-boughed branches on it, and put it where you can draw it under the wood-shed, after dark," she added.

The boys went to Pine Hill, and there they picked out the finest young tree on all the hill, and said, "We will take this one." So, with their hatchets they hewed it down and brought it safely home the next night when all was dark. And when Roger was quietly sleeping in the adjoining room, they dragged the tree into the kitchen. It was too tall, so they took it out again and cut off two or three feet at the base. Then they propped it up, and the curtains being down over the windows, and blankets being fastened over the curtains to prevent any one looking in, and the door being doubly barred to prevent any one coming in, they all went to bed.

Very early the next morning, while the stars shone on the snow-covered hills,—the same stars that shone sixteen hundred years before on the hills

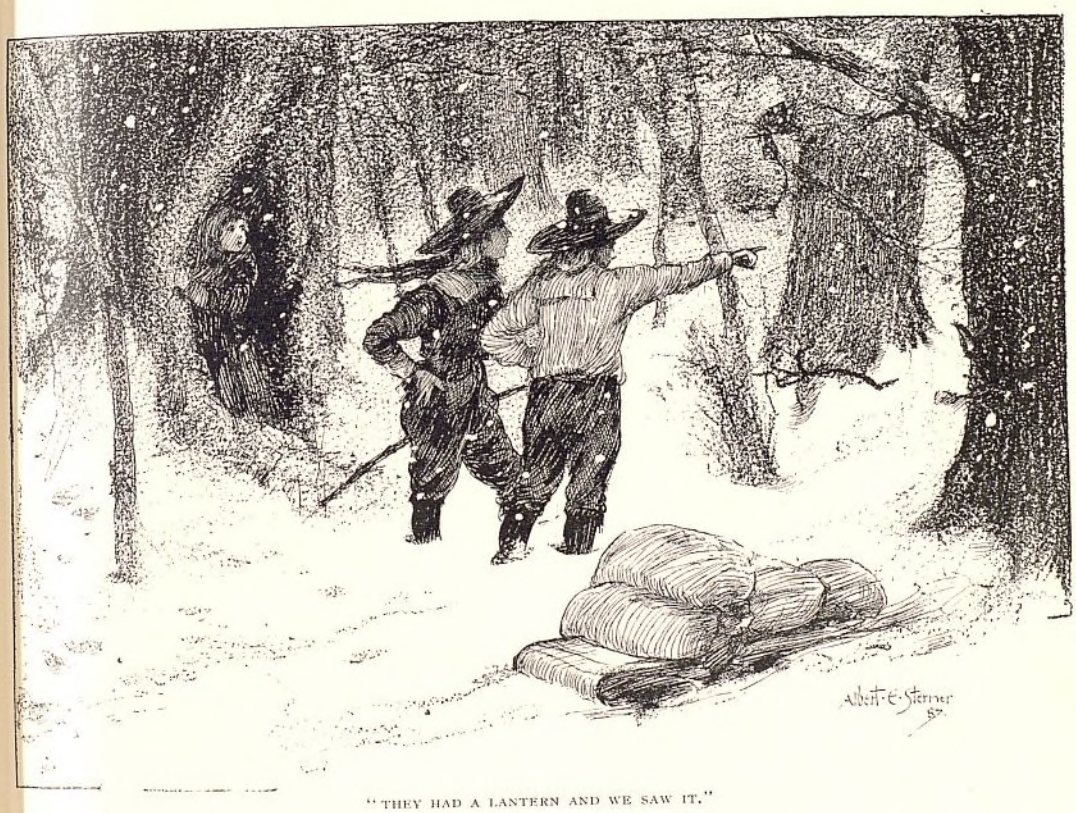
when Christ was born in Bethlehem,—the little Puritan mother in New England arose very softly. She went out and lit the kitchen fire anew from the ash-covered embers. She fastened upon the twigs of the tree the gifts she had bought in Boston for her boys and girl. Then she took as many as twenty pieces of candle and fixed them upon the branches. After that, she softly called Rupert, Robert, and Lucy, and told them to get up and dress and come into the kitchen.

Hurrying back, she began, with a bit of a burning stick, to light the candles. Just as the last one was set aflame, in trooped the three children.

"O Mother!" he cried. "O Lucy! Is it really, really true, and no dream at all? Yes, I see! I see! O Mother! it *is* so beautiful! Were all the trees on all the hills lighted up that way when Christ was born? And, Mother," he added, clapping his little hands with joy at the thought, "why yes, the stars did sing when Christ was born! They must be glad, then, and keep Christmas, too, in Heaven. I *know* they must, and there will be good times there."

"Yes," said his mother; "there will be good times there, Roger."

"Then," said the boy, "I shan't mind going,



"THEY HAD A LANTERN AND WE SAW IT."

Before they had time to say a word, they were silenced by their mother's warning.

"I wish to fetch Roger in and wake him up before it," she said. "Keep still until I come back!"

The little lad, fast asleep, was lifted in a blanket and gently carried by his mother into the beautiful presence.

"See! Roger, my boy, see!" she said, arousing him. "It is Christmas morning now! In England they only have Christmas-boughs, but here in New England we have a whole Christmas-tree."

now that I 've seen the Christmas-bough. I— *What is that, Mother?*"

What *was* it that they heard? The little Olcott home had never before seemed to tremble so. There were taps at the window, there were knocks at the door — and it was as yet scarcely the break of day! There were voices also, shouting something to somebody.

"Shall I put out the candles, Mother?" whispered Robert.

"What will they do to us for having the tree? I wish we had n't it," regretted Rupert; while Lucy

clung to her mother's gown and shrieked with all her strength, "It 's Indians!"

Pale and white and still, ready to meet her fate, stood Mrs. Olcott, until, out of the knocking and the tapping at her door, her heart caught a sound. It was a voice calling, "Rachel! Rachel! Rachel!"

"Unbar the door!" she cried back to her boys; "It 's your father calling!" Down came the blankets; up went the curtain; open flew the door, and in walked Captain Olcott, followed by every man and woman in Plymouth who had heard at break of day the glorious news that the expected ship had arrived at Boston, and with it the long-lost Captain Olcott. For an instant nothing was thought of except the joyous welcoming of the captain in his own home.

"What 's this? What is it? What *does* this mean?" was asked again and again, when the first excitement was past, as the tall young pine stood aloft, its candles ablaze, its gifts still hanging.

"It 's welcome home to Father!" said Lucy, her only thought to screen her mother.

"No, child, *no!*" sternly spoke Mrs. Olcott. "Tell the truth!"

"It 's—a—Christmas-tree!" faltered poor Lucy.

One and another and another, Pilgrims and Puritans all, drew near with faces stern and forbidding, and gazed and gazed, until one and another and yet another softened slowly into a smile as little Roger's piping voice sung out:

"She made it for me, Mother did. But *you* may have it now, and all the pretty things that are on it, too, because you 've brought my father back again; if Mother will let you," he added.

Neither Pilgrim nor Puritan frowned at the gift. One man, the sternest there, broke off a little twig and said:

"I 'll take it for the sake of the good old times at home."

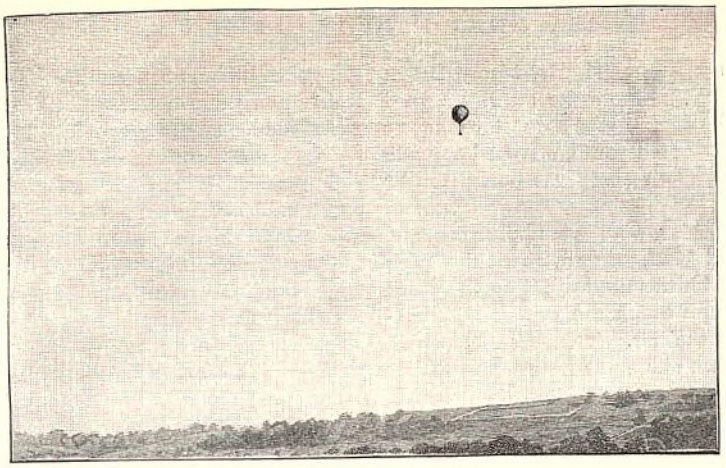
Then every one wanted to take a bit for the same sweet sake, until the young pine was bereft of half its branches. But still it stood, like a hero at his post, candles burning and gifts hanging, until all but the little household had departed; and even then, the last candle was permitted to burn low and flicker out before a gift was distributed, so glad were the Olcotts in the presence of the one great gift of that Christmas morn; so eager were they to be told every bit of the story, the wonderful story, of their father's long, long voyage in a poor, little, storm-beaten and disabled ship which, at last, he had been able to guide safely into port. His return voyage had been made in the very ship that Mrs. Olcott had hoped would arrive in time for her Christmas-tree.

That morning brought to Roger something better than Chrismas-trees, better, if such a thing were possible, than the home-coming of the hero-captain — renewed life. It may have been the glad surprise, the sudden awaking in the bright presence of a real, live Christmas-tree; it may have been the shock of joy that followed the knocking and the shouts at door and window, or the more generous living that came into the little house near Plymouth. Certain it was, that Roger began to mend in many ways, to grow satisfied with bleak New England wind and weather, and to rejoice the heart of all the Olcotts by his glad presence with them.

GOING! GOING!

By A. R. Wells.

ATTENTION, good people! A baby I 'm selling.
His folks are all tired of his crowing and yelling.
If a price that 's at all within reason you 'll pay,
You may have the young rascal, and take him away.
The Mountains have bid every gem in their store;
The Ocean has bid every pearl on its floor;
By the Land we are offered ten million of sheep,—
But we have no intention of selling so cheap!
Compared with his value our price is not high —
How much for a baby? what offer? who 'll buy?



THREE MILES HIGH IN A BALLOON.

By Edward Duffy.

Let me tell the readers of St. Nicholas what I may recall of a trip into the sky, last summer, on board the big New-York *World* air-ship.

There were four of us.

Alfred E. Moore, of Winsted, Conn., who built the balloon, had charge of it during our voyage; John G. Doughty, a photographer, also of Winsted, took views of the earth and the clouds. Prof. H. Allen Hazen, of the United States Signal Service Station at Washington, made records of moisture and temperature, and other phenomena of the upper regions, which have most value to those who study that special branch of science. I was one of the party simply as a reporter. The *World* balloon was the fruit of a plan whereby it was hoped to attain two objects. One was to enable the Government Signal Service to obtain certain facts about the upper currents of air which might be of value to the Weather Bureau. The other object was to excel the greatest balloon voyage ever made.

Prof. John Wise, a world-famed aëronaut, sailed through the air in July, 1859, from St. Louis, Mo., to Henderson, Jefferson County, N. Y.—a distance in a straight line of 835 miles. He laid claim to 1050 miles, by reason of the many turns taken during the trip, which took his balloon out of a direct course into circles and curves. This voyage is the longest recorded in balloon history.

The balloon was in the air over night—a period of about twenty hours. Prof. Wise tried more than once, but without success, to equal or exceed the famous trip mentioned. Finally, a few years ago, he left St. Louis in a balloon on a long trip, for the last time. He has never been heard from. A reporter who went with him was found dead some weeks later on the shore of Lake Michigan. By reason of this and other disasters, the suggestion of a long air-voyage gives rise in the public mind to a keen sense of the perils which attend every attempt to stay in the sky over night.

It is only about one hundred and four years since balloons were first thought of, or first used to convey man into the upper air. But I can not here spare the space wherein to speak of any air-ship other than that which is the topic of this paper.

Now, let me, if I can, give you an idea of the shape and great size of the *World* balloon.

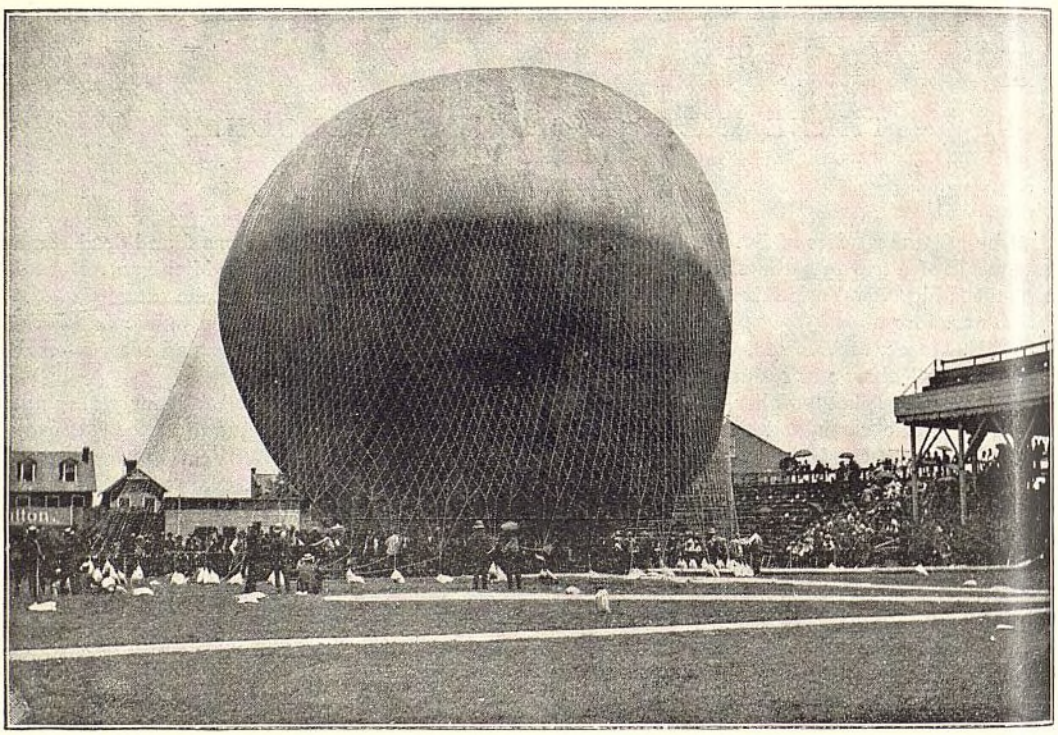
Fancy, if you please, a ripe Bartlett pear which exceeds the usual size millions of times; think of it floating in the air, stem down, with its top 124 feet high and its bulb 65 feet wide. Or, imagine a giant plum-pudding rising into the air higher than many a church-steeple, and occupying as great a space as does a large city store or a country hotel. Then you may have a fair notion of the size of our great air-ship. Mr. Moore, who built it, had made nearly a dozen air-trips, and was able, from a special study of the science of ballooning, to draw exact plans for the weight to be borne, which was, in all, more than two tons. In order to exceed Prof. Wise's record, our balloon would need to stay in the air longer than a day and a night, or nearly thirty hours. Prof. Wise, by chance, rose into a rapid current of air, which took his balloon feather-like along at the rate of a mile a minute. But the usual speed of balloons is less than thirty miles an hour, except when they happen to be caught in a strong gale.

As early as November, 1886, Mr. Moore began work upon his plans. Fine white muslin, a yard wide, and in a strip a mile and a quarter long, or about twenty-two hundred yards, was used to make the gas-bag. This cloth alone was half a ton or more in weight.

Over it, on both sides, were spread four coats of varnish of a special kind,— in all, about three full barrels. This varnish was used to fill up the pores of the cloth, through which the gas would otherwise escape into the air. The big net which covered the vast bulb was made from a fine quality of shoe-thread.

the gas-dome was fastened to a large hickory hoop which hung above the car, so near that the voyagers' hands might grasp it. To this hoop were fixed the cords which held the car.

Set into the top of the balloon was a valve, two and a half feet across the center. The cord from this hung down the inside of the bag, and through the open neck into the car, so that our captain might open the valve when he wished to descend. Another rope, called the rip-cord, was also at hand. This, with a strong pull, would tear the gas-bag from top to bottom almost in an instant, and would bring the balloon to the ground in a jiffy. But



INFLATING THE GAS-BAG OF THE BIG BALLOON. (SEE PAGE 138.)

Of this, four hundred pounds were used.

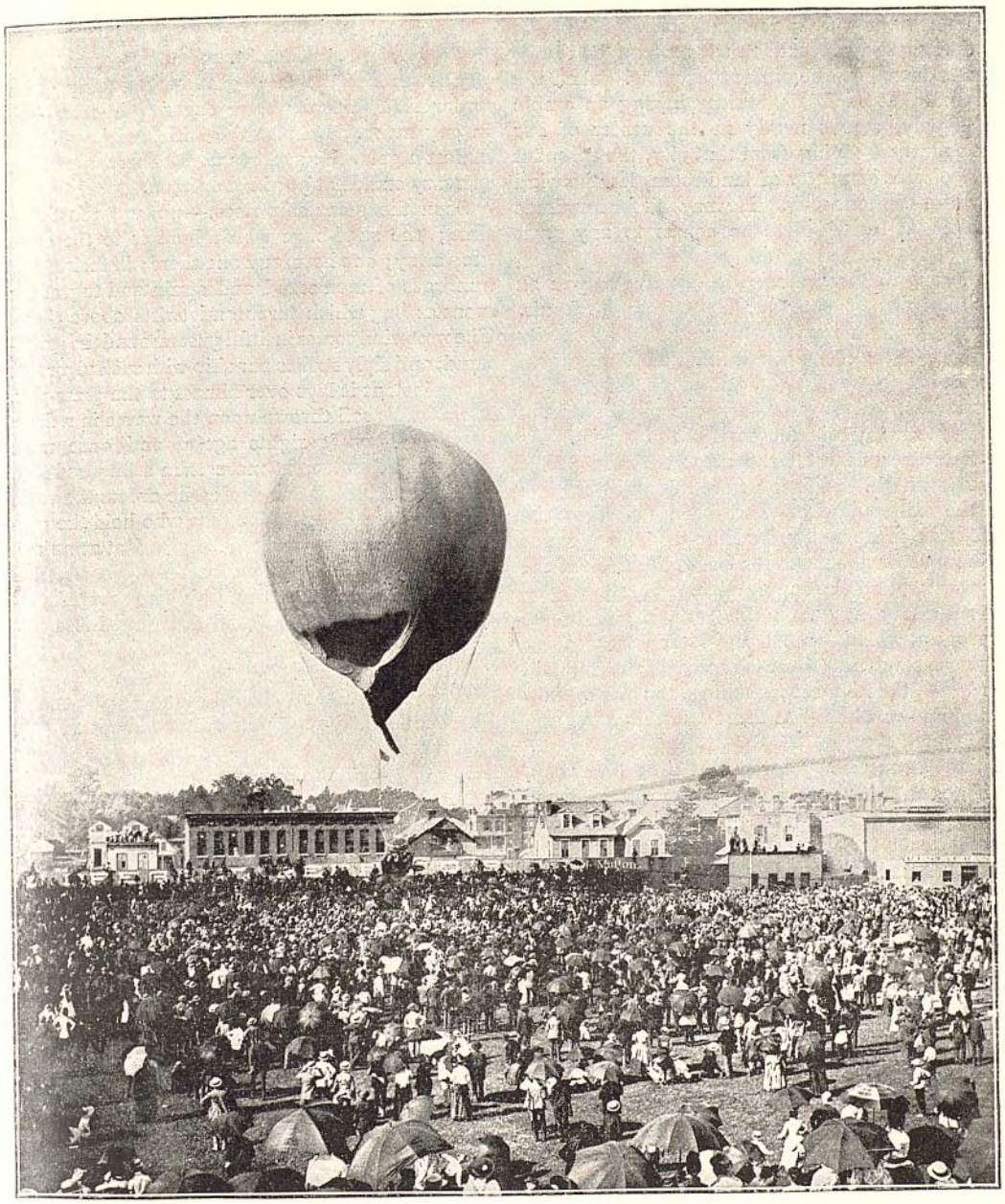
Next the car was made.

Most balloons have baskets of willow, wherein to carry voyagers and ballast. But ours was a strong, large car, made of matched pine and water-tight. It was nine feet long, six feet wide, and a trifle more than four feet deep. On each side was a cushioned seat; and on the bottom of the car lay a rug. This car was hung from the balloon by thirty slender cords,— each about as thick as a lead pencil. To the eye these were far too slight to be safe; yet they were very strong, and in a test each cord had held up a greater weight than would ever again be fixed to it. The net which covered

this was only as a last resort, to be used when about to come down in water, or in a storm.

Now, let us consider the weight:

As I have said, the strength of the balloon was made equal to three tons. The gas-bag, and its ropes, and the car,— in short, the whole air-ship,— when ready, made up a ton in weight of itself. Its four passengers weighed about 600 pounds; there were 200 pounds of provisions, and fully three-quarters of a ton of paper and sand; also camera and plate cases, and other traps,— making a total weight of two and a quarter tons! Now, I hope you have a nearly correct idea of the size and power of the big *World* balloon, which, by the



THE START.

way, was next to the largest, if it was not actually the largest, air-ship ever made. After several delays, we made a start from Sportsman's Park, St. Louis, at 4:28 P. M., on the 17th of June, 1887. The date first set was the 11th of June, but it was thought best to wait for a strong air-current from the west which might waft us to the Atlantic coast or some part of New England or Canada. Prior to the 17th, the wind had been from east to west, or from south to north. The latter course would have taken us to Lake Michigan or Lake Superior. This would have rendered the chance of the success of our trip very slight; and would have added thereto the extreme peril of our being blown about at night like a mere straw over one of those vast bodies of water.

You may wonder why St. Louis was chosen as the point from which to make a start. All of the great long-distance balloon trips attempted in this country have been begun at that place. And the reason is that St. Louis, besides having an ample gas supply, stands nearly in the center of our vast country. Going from that city, the aëronaut may be sure of plenty of land-room, let the wind bear him where it may. He may sail for hundreds of miles, at least, before he comes to any great sheet of water.

There is no need for me to describe to you all that took place before our flight from St. Louis. The big balloon lay in Armory Hall in that city for more than a week, half filled with air, which was forced in by a hand-pump. During these days it was, you may be sure, the chief object of interest to many mixed crowds of sight-seers. As the time drew near for the great trip, the public pulse ran high. A little before midnight of June 16, the balloon, which had been taken to the Park, was made ready for filling. The gas was let in; and for about sixteen hours the neck of the bag was kept on the supply-pipe.

At about 7 A. M. on the 17th, a stiff breeze sprang up, which some hours later was a source of serious trouble to those in charge of the balloon. At 1 P. M., the hour set for sailing, the huge yellow cloth dome was less than three-quarters full.

It inflated slowly.

In the strong wind, it now and then tore away, as if about to fly to cloud-land without its crew. It was a constant menace to the nervous ladies present; even men of stout heart did not repress a shudder as they thought of the perils of a trip among the clouds, at the mercy of so ugly and restive an ogre. Pitch and roll and twist and sway and tug; this it did all through the day. To the netting were fixed a hundred bags of sand,—some of them more than eighty pounds in weight. And added thereto were hundreds of stout men; yet the gusty wind caught our giant under the arms, as it were, and despite all the weight he bore, jerked him off his feet. The bags swung in the air like mere tassels; and the men were often brought upon tip-toe, as they grimly held on. At last the gas was shut off; the car was hitched on. The car had been made ready for its voyage, and was fairly full of the ballast and the various other things to be taken by the voyagers. I had on board big envelopes wherewith to drop dispatches from the sky; also twelve carrier-pigeons to bear messages to their homes during our flight above the clouds. I had also put on board my winter overcoat; but my comrades had donned instead some extra under-flannels to protect them from the chill air of the upper regions.

Now, behold us, ready for the start!

It is 4 P. M.

Crowds and crowds of people are present.

The seats of the large grand-stand fairly groan under their overweight of eager sight-seers—all in gay attire. Despite the stiff breeze, which is almost a gale, the sun beams with fervor, and the mercury stands at 96° in the shade.

Soon the giant ship rises,—up, up, a foot at a time; the sand-bags which held it to the earth drop away; one here, and one there; in their places hundreds of men stand and strain and tug at the monster bag which turns and twists above them. The west wind comes in fitful gusts around the grand-stand, and slyly strikes our ship with such vigor that for an instant it lays over almost to the grass-plat, like a boat's sail thrown upon the waves in a fierce squall. Then it rights again, and once more towers aloft and erect more than a hundred feet. Now Moore directs the work; he orders the voyagers aboard the car. The men who hold the guy-ropes walk in toward the balloon a foot at a time, and the circle grows smaller. Up, up stretches the huge dome; higher and higher it ascends, till at last all hands let go, and every cord is drawn taut.

But we do not stir.

There is more sand aboard than the balloon can lift. And so Doughty puts out one bag, then two, then three.

The car begins to quiver.

Out goes the fourth bag; a crowd of men hold the car, with all their strength, until they get the word from Moore. They hold the car to the turf, and drag us by dint of severe labor back into the center of the park. Here, just as Moore is about to give the word, a seventy-pound sand-bag slips over the edge of the car; its sharp hook catches the middle finger of Moore's right hand, and lays it open to the bone, and severs an artery.

It is an ugly wound.

But a doctor quickly binds a wet handkerchief about the cut finger, and once again Moore, our captain, bends his thoughts to the work at hand. The last bag is set upon the edge of the car. Over it goes.

"Now! Let go!"

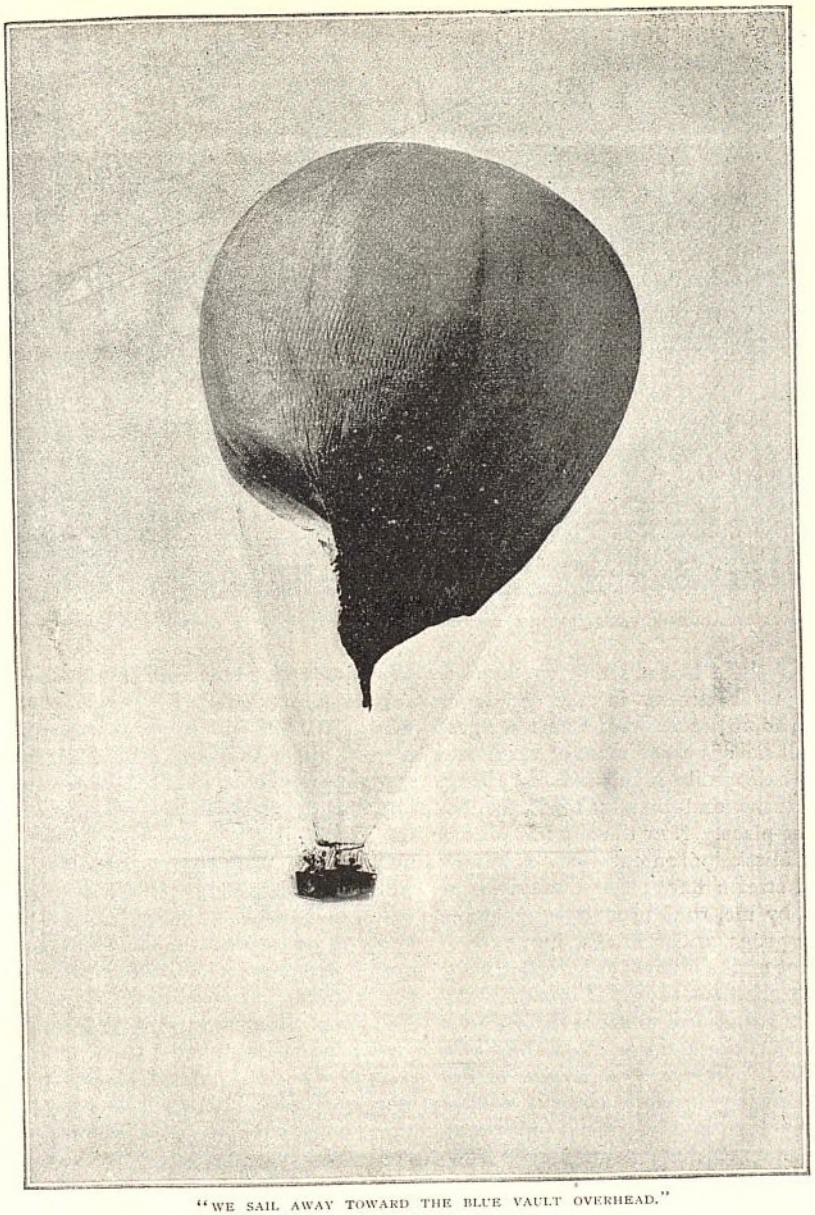
As Moore shouts this, the men release the car. Like a huge bird, our ship, at 4.28 P. M., rises from the ground,—so quickly, indeed, that amid the tumult about us, I do not clearly recall the exact moment.

As we clear the park fence our ship dips before the strong wind.

There is, for the instant, extreme peril.

Moore shouts, "Throw out sand! Quick!"

Hazen and Doughty, each dumps over what he



"WE SAIL AWAY TOWARD THE BLUE VAULT OVERHEAD."

may. Our ship at once rights itself; the car springs under the gas-bag, and the leafy tops of some trees brush its sides as we glide over them. We clear a brick house by a few feet only, then sail away toward the blue vault overhead.

The park begins to sink away beneath us. We have no sense of going up — no, not at all.

All things else go down, down.

The crowds as they cheer, and swing their hats, and wave handkerchiefs and parasols — it is they who fall away below us, and fast fade into a mass of tiny specks of life and color, until ere long the whole city is but a spot upon the wide view of the earth.

This is my first flight.

Moore has been aloft nearly a dozen times, Doughty twice, and Hazen once. My head begins to pain me; my ears ring, and my thoughts grow as thick as in a trip through a boiler-shop or other noisy place. I stand and gaze over the edge of the car at the unique picture below, which slowly changes its forms and tints. The big smoky city

VIEW ABOVE THE CLOUDS, TAKEN FROM A BALLOON AT AN ALTITUDE OF A LITTLE MORE THAN A MILE.

of St. Louis lies there like a set of toy houses, with tiny strings for streets, in the shade of trees that seem mere weeds from where we gaze at them. On all sides is a flat mass of earth and tree. We are half a mile high, and fast rising. Slowly the car turns, and thereby tends to confuse our sense of place. Now the city lies on our left,— the great Mississippi on our right. A minute later, town and stream have shifted sides. Now Doughty, aided by me, runs over the edge of the car the long drag-rope, which hangs, hundreds of feet below us, not unlike a straw or thread from a robin's nest. We approach the great, broad, murky stream that flows from north to south through our country into the Gulf of Mexico. You know of it as "The Father of Waters." It is now in full view for many miles — its dark, sinuous surface dotted with busy tugs and steamers. We soon come to it; now we move across it; now we leave it to the rear.

A mile and a half high — and still going up.

Hazen is busy with his records; and Doughty, with seventy-five photographic plates on board, holds his camera in hand, and turns it — first upon the earth, then upon the white clouds that, like a mass of snow, lie off to the east. With pad and pencil in hand I rapidly jot down what I may about our voyage, hoping to send my messages by the pigeons, which under a seat near by rustle uneasily in their cages.

I glance up.

Moore sits in his corner, a mere heap — his face a waxy white, his lips blue, his eyes half shut. We hastily give him some brandy and water; this revives him a little. His wound has made him faint. We get him into my overcoat; for the air is now quite thin and cool. Our ship, with no captain to guide it, goes softly on its way — higher and higher, the earth seems bigger and bigger, as the circular line it makes with the sky grows larger and larger. With two and a quarter tons' weight, still our bird mounts rapidly upward,— now two miles, now two and a half. We sail far above the fields of yellow wheat and dark green corn of Illinois. Rivers are mere white threads; and lakes are patches of silver set into a carpet of many hues. The forest trees are bushes, that look as if a small scythe might easily mow them down. The thin air and our rapid upward flight make my head roar, as if with the sounds of noisy drums; I feel dizzy — like one about to faint away.

Now we are 15,000 feet high—nearly three miles.

Our ship has not yet come to the extreme top of her flight. We are far above the clouds. Over the edges of the thick white vapor we gaze at the earth, spread out below like a map, with green and gray, and brown and yellow spots thereon. From the discomforts of ninety-six degrees of heat in the shade when we left the earth, we have come to the chilly comfort of thirty-seven — a drop of nearly sixty degrees in less than an hour. This is a quick turn — one that never comes to man or beast below. Yet up here, where we are sailing softly, the air is so dry that the cold affects us much less than would the same temperature on the earth's surface.

Now we are 15,840 feet high.

At last we are more than three miles above the great ball of dried mud which rolls below, from west to east, for days, and years, and ages. Over head the huge pear-shaped bag stands erect; its neck and mouth wide open, through which the gas escapes into the car, where it assails our nostrils with its vile odor.

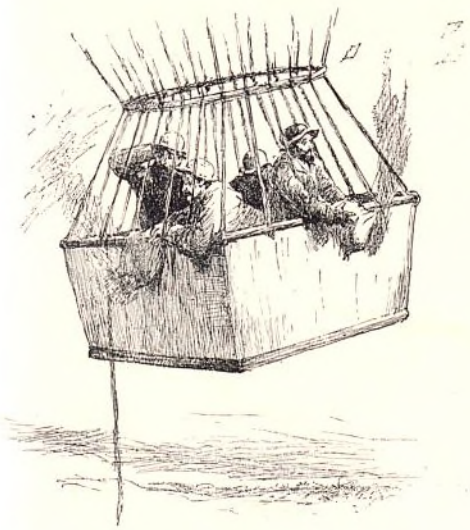
Very soon our ship touches nearly 16,000 feet, a point which is said to be above that ever made by any other balloon this side of Europe.

Then we come to a pause. An instant later the balloon begins to descend at the rate of fifteen feet per second, which is only one foot less than the distance a heavy stone falls the first second. A few seconds more, and our ship drops so fast that the car seems to fall away from us.

Moore, sick and faint though he is, springs to his feet.

"Over with ballast, boys! Quick!"

Doughty drops his camera and Hazen his instruments; each dumps over the sand as he grabs it — bag and all. But the sand shoots up instead of down; it hits the bag above, then settles like a



"THE SAND SHOOTS UP INSTEAD OF DOWN; THE PAPER 'DODGERS' FLY INTO THE SKY ABOVE US WITH A SPEED WHICH SHOWS HOW RAPID IS OUR FALL."

cloud into the car, so that it nearly stifles us. I throw out paper "dodgers" which fly into the sky above us with a speed which shows how rapid is our fall.

Down, down we go! We are in extreme peril.

We all but tumble through the air.

I gaze over the car. The earth seems to fly toward us — up, up it comes; the fields and woods grow large, and hamlets and cities spring into sight on every hand. At last, after nearly a quarter of a ton of weight is thrown out, our rate of descent slows a little; a third of our drag-rope trails among the tall forest trees, and we are distant from the earth but 400 feet! And now our balloon comes at last to a pause, and we are safe! It goes up again lazily, a mile high; then descends to less than half a mile, and rises again above 6000 feet — falling always as the gas escapes, and rising as a part of the weight is thrown over the side of the car. Moore shouts to a farm-hand at work in a field with horse and plow, when we are half a mile up:

"How-far-are-we-from-St.-Louis?"

The reply faintly rises at last to where we are:

"Twenty-five miles!"

We now see that our trip must come to an end before dark. We have been but an hour upon the wing. Our gas has spent its strength, our sand has almost run out. We dare not, if we may, stay in the sky at night and run the risk of death among the giant forest trees. And so while the sun is yet more than an hour high, Moore casts out the anchor, or grapnel; with its four sharp prongs of bright steel, it truly has an ugly, hungry look. As we come to a wide stretch of open prairie land, our ship, left to itself, slyly sinks lower and lower, and nearer and nearer, to the bright green and yellow fields, over which we float as gently as a piece of thistle-down. About this time I let fly two pigeons with notes of tissue-paper tied to their legs, and also cast over a big envelope with a heavy buckshot inside to quicken its fall.

Before long we come so close to the earth that all objects thereon take on their true shape. We perceive farmers at labor in the fields of golden wheat; we catch the hoarse shouts of men, and the sharp treble voices of excited boys who watch us now with open mouth and eager eyes. We are yet half a mile from earth; but each mile we pass brings us lower down. Now we are down to two thousand feet; now down to less than the half of that. By and by, the end of the long cable, or drag-rope, touches the ground at intervals as we gently float along at fifteen miles an hour. Now it trails a few feet, then fifty, then a hundred. At last half of it, like a huge reptile, crawls over meadow, and fence, and field of corn and wheat. It leaves behind, to mark its swift course, a deep crease, two inches wide in soil and grain.

Now look out!

The sharp anchor catches hold for the first time. With its greedy prongs it grips the turf, lets go, bounds twenty feet in the air, and lands again; it once more tries its teeth in the fresh ground. Again the dirt flies, and the anchor bounds ahead

and takes another bite. Moore shouts: "Steady, boys; here 's a stout fence and a stone wall."

The anchor comes to it and takes hold greedily. For an instant only does it hold; it jerks our car upon its end, so that water-keg, pigeons, food-cans, and passengers tumble together in one corner. But then away come twenty feet of the rail-fence, and the stones scatter; and we sail on as before.

Horrors!

A house lies straight in our path! As we come to the little story and a half cottage, our anchor bounds around a corner, grazes the pump in the front yard, then springs at the fancy fence, and comes away with its teeth full of palings. An old man and woman who stand in the front door stare at us, with terror in their eyes. They see how close they were just now to death and ruin, had their cozy home been pulled about their ears.

"A DOZEN FARM-HANDS CHASE US FOR THE LAST MILE."

Our anchor keeps to its work, and though it lets go, as it snatches this thing and that, it yet lessens the speed of our air-ship. For more than ten miles we go on in this way. We are now but a few hundred feet high, and our speed has lessened to eight miles, or less, an hour. A dozen farm-hands chase us for the last mile. They seize the anchor rope, are lifted off their feet, but eagerly take hold again. At last a German farmer's wife, as we sail past her house, gives the long drag-rope a quick turn about the trunk of a stout apple-tree in her dooryard. This fetches us up with a vicious jerk, and nearly spills us out of the car. Here, tied fast to the tree, we are still two hours in coming to the ground, although aided by a crowd of strong active men.

Moore pulls the valve-cord.

As the gas escapes, the sides of the bag come together, and form a big kite, which catches the stiff breeze; then we sail aloft nearly over the tree. Down settles the car to within fifty feet of the corn-field under us; then the wind sends us aloft again. Doughty seizes the rip-cord to split the bag at the top, so that it may the faster lose its power to ascend. With surprise he finds that our balloon is already torn, and rips at the merest touch! This is a clew to the strange and sudden loss of gas while on our way.

It is about 9:20 P. M. when we again set foot upon the ground outside our car.

We find the place to be Hoffman, Illinois, fifty-five miles east of St. Louis.

Next day the balloon is sent back to that city by rail, and we plan to start again within a week.

BROUGHT TO A STOP, AT LAST.

But the severe injury to Moore's finger, and the many repairs and changes which it is thought best to make in the balloon, lead us to delay our second trip until later in the season.

Expecting a long trip, we had taken food and water for three days. We had chicken, corned beef, beans, bread, crackers, hard-tack, salmon, lobsters, pickles, salt, vinegar, mixed nuts, oranges, and bananas. So you see that we were not likely to starve, had we gone, as we thought we might, into the deep wilds of Michigan or Canada. We also had hooks and lines for fish, and a keen ax, to aid us in the woods, or wherewith to chop our way out of the wreck had we been cast away on one of the great lakes. And we had an electric light for use at night. Our plans had been well laid; and had not Moore been hurt, or had not the balloon been torn at the start, our voyage would perhaps have been more to our liking.

A few final details may interest you.

The last and first sound to reach us, while we were above a mile high, was the sharp shriek of a locomotive. I saw one express train as we soared above its tiny track; and it looked like a mere toy train a few inches long, which did not seem to move faster than a snail. Yet we knew that it was on its way with all its usual speed — thirty miles an hour at least.

During our voyage we ate and drank just as we might have done at a picnic.

Truly, we lived "high." A luncheon above the clouds was to me a very novel affair. I threw over the peel of an orange. Down, straight down, it shot, a flash of gold in the sun, a hundred feet — a thousand feet — a mile. Long before it struck the earth, it had gone out of sight. But, before it disappeared, it came to a point where it seemed to still stand in mid-air.

I dropped a big *World* envelope.

It went down at first upon its edge; then it began to turn, and now and again the sun's rays caught it full upon its broad side. It became at last as small as a postage-stamp, or the nail of your thumb.

I wish I had the space to tell you more.

From my mind's eye our *World* balloon trip will never fade. I may truly say that I then saw more of the earth than I am likely to see until I go aloft again. Within a few hours, more novel sounds and scenes met my senses with surprise and delight than in years of prosy life upon the ground.

By Edith M. Thomas.

I.

Oh, the child a poet is!
Poet's pleasures too are his:
Would he had the art to tell
What he sees and hears so well,—
How the hills so love the sky
In its tender haze they lie;
How the sky so loves the streams,
Every pool has heavenly dreams.
He can guess what says the breeze,
Sighing, singing, through the trees;
What the sunbeam, what the rain,
Or the smoke's slow-mounting train;
All the meaning of the birds,
Which they will not put in words;
And the tree-toad's mystic trill
Heard from far at evening still;
And the beckoning ways and looks
Of the flowers in dewy nooks—
Yes! and of the dewdrops fine,
In the early morning-shine!
He has friends where ye have none;
Fellows in a rush or stone;
Palace-royal in the clouds,
Sunset barge with sails and shrouds.
Oh, the child a poet is,
Though unskilled in harmonies;
Would he had the art to tell
What he hears and sees so well,

Ere his senses, grown less keen,
Say they have not heard nor seen.
(Let him not too quickly lose
These rare pleasures, gracious Muse.)

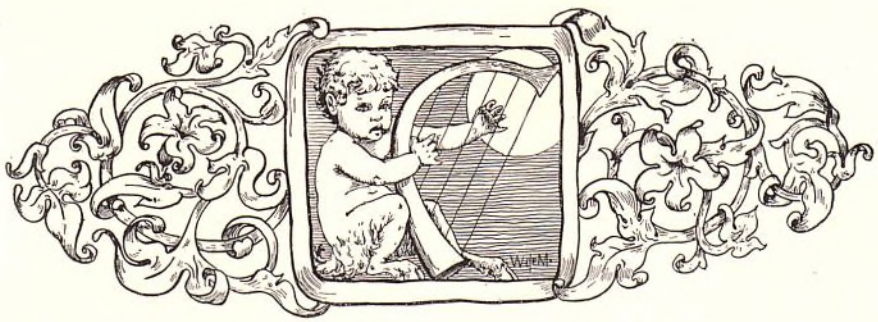
II.

Now the poet is a child,
Whom the years have not beguiled
To forget the magic lore
That is childhood's careless store.

Oh, the poet is a child!
And he loves the new and wild;
But the old to him is new,
And what seems but tame to you
He with kind delight can see
Laugh in its sweet liberty!
He is foiled and cheated never,—
Poet's truth is truth forever!

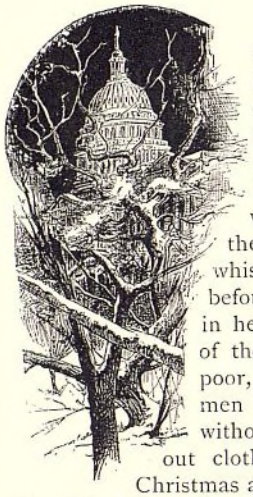
Though his song you may not heed,
Though his rhyme you will not read,
Song and rhyme true records hold
Of your morning age of gold.
What you saw in that fair time,
Wild, or lovely, or sublime
In the mountains, groves, or streams,
Clear upon his vision gleams.
What you heard of strange report
Throughout Nature's fields and court,
Told of man or dreamt of God,
Still he hears spread all abroad.

If you do not see and hear,
'T is for time-worn eye and ear:
Child and poet shall not sever —
Poet's truth is truth forever!



THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS CLUB OF WASHINGTON CITY.

By Edmund Alton.



A cold December day, five years ago, marks the beginning of the story I am asked to write. It was Sunday morning, just two weeks and a day before Christmas. The wintry wind was scudding through the streets of Portland, Maine, whistling and whirling the snow before it as it went. A lady sat in her pleasant room thinking of the cheerless houses of the poor, of pale women and weak men and delicate little ones, without food, without fire, without clothing. She thought of Christmas and the homes of the rich, of stockings distending with their loads, of fair faces rosy with delight, of turkeys and plum puddings, and mistletoe boughs and holly, and blazing logs and ringing laughter. And as she thought of these happy things her heart went out in pity to those hungry little faces and shivering little frames, to whom Christmas was but a day of want and misery — and Santa Claus unknown. And then a noble impulse seized her: "Oh! they must, they shall know Santa Claus! Christmas shall be to them a day of gladness!" But it was more easily said than done. Alone she could do but little. Hundreds of hands would be needed. In this dilemma a beautiful thought came to her: "The hands of children! The happy, loving boys and girls of Portland — they will do it!"

Before the end of the week a host of children, in answer to her written call, assembled at the lady's house. The result of that meeting, as recorded in history, was: To form a club which should last "forever"; to call it "The Children's Christmas Club"; to have for its motto: "Freely ye have received, freely give"; to place the membership fee at ten cents, so that no child should be prevented from joining because he was not "rich"; to make no distinctions in regard to sect or nationality; to permit to join the club any girl or boy under eighteen years of age who accepted its principles, which were: To be ready at all times with kind words to assist children less fortunate than themselves; to make every year, in Christmas week, a festival of some kind for them; to save through the year toys, books, and games, instead of carelessly destroying them; to save, and, whenever practicable, put in good repair all out-grown clothing; to beg nothing from any source, but to keep as the key-stone of the club the word "GIVE"; to pay every year a tax of ten cents; and to make their first festival in the City Hall on Thursday, December 28, 1882.

Officers were chosen and the day's session came to an end. The news spread over the town. At the hour and place of re-assembling three hundred children were on hand, all eager to be enrolled as members of the club. Old folk, also, came along to give encouragement and advice. The organization was perfected; the enthusiastic children entered upon their work; and, true to the programme which they had arranged, when Holy Innocents' Day appeared, they served a Christmas dinner to six hundred little guests, and introduced to Santa Claus six hundred grateful, joyful little souls.

About eleven months after this banquet in the City Hall, at Portland, ST. NICHOLAS put forth its Christmas number for 1883. The entire contents of that number none of you may now remember, but one feature you can scarcely forget. It was an open letter to yourselves — to all the boys and girls in the world. It told in tender, loving words, the story of the Portland club; and the writer of the letter — a lady, of course — closed with an appeal to ST. NICHOLAS to ask its readers if there should not be other Christmas clubs that year? if all the children in every city, every town, and every village, should not have one good dinner, one happy day, every year? And then, down at the end of the letter, in large capital letters, appeared the command of the Master, added by good ST. NICHOLAS: "GO THOU AND DO LIKEWISE."

And so ST. NICHOLAS, faithful courier that it is, carried that open letter to the girls and boys of "North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia," just as it was asked; nor did it neglect, in its great continental trip, the islands of the sea. Exactly what was done by the young folk of New Zealand when they read that letter and the injunction of ST. NICHOLAS, I have not yet heard, and I also await

full particulars of its effect upon young people in other parts of the two hemispheres.

But that communication reached the city of Washington, in the District of Columbia, on or about the 25th day of November. Furthermore, it was read. It was read by the young folk to whom it was addressed; it was read by the mothers and fathers to whom it was not addressed, but who exercised the right, as guardians, of overlooking the correspondence of the young folk; and it was read by other grown-up people who claimed that privilege as lovers of good literature and good deeds. And when that letter had been read the mothers and the fathers and the other grown-up folk thus answered for the boys and girls: "The City of Washington shall have a Christmas Club this year!"

The letter was published in full in one of the evening papers of the city, and the editor, in vigorous lines of his own, aroused the community to action. Two days after that a call for gentlemen volunteers appeared in the same journal; the gentlemen promptly came forward, they united with the ladies who were assisting the young folk, and soon the "Children's Christmas Club of Washington" became an institution and a fact.

The principles and methods of the original Christmas Club, as described in ST. NICHOLAS, were closely adhered to, only minor departures, or those demanded by the situation, being made. Owing to its large population the city was divided into four districts; one, known as District II., embraced the central and northern part of Washington, and the other districts were located to the east, to the south, and to the west. Each district had a separate organization of children, with separate officers and committees. In District II., for instance, the President of the club was Miss Nellie Arthur, the daughter of the President of the United States; and the older folk formed themselves into a Ladies' Committee and a Gentlemen's Committee, and good-naturedly stood in the background prepared to help when needed, but not to interfere. And thus it came to pass that on Holy Innocents' Day, in 1883, the Portland scene of 1882 was reproduced, and eighteen hundred children, gathered in four different sections of the Federal City, enjoyed the hospitality of their more prosperous friends. To the banquet hall of District II. came plants and evergreens from the White House, and from the same old mansion came the small President of the club escorting the big President of the Republic; and to that hall came also the Chief Justice of the United States, and Washington's white-haired philanthropist; and thither came also the Marine Band, and Punch and Judy, and Santa Claus, and a number of other important personages anxious to see five hundred little people eat, and to hear five hundred little people laugh. And they were not disappointed. For it was a scene of fullness and a day of joy.

"THE FEAST OF 1886 WAS HELD AT THE NATIONAL RIFLES' ARMORY."

But the children of Washington, like their comrades of Portland, were resolved that their club should last "forever"; and so, the following year, a second festival was made. The number of district clubs, by a misfortune to one of them, had been reduced to three, but the number of guests was undiminished. In District II. 750 were entertained, and, as before, came the little and the big Presidents, the Chief Justice and the Philanthropist, and the Marine Band with its big bass drum and clashing cymbals, and Santa Claus with his jingling bells. And the children in the other districts did their part of the noble work, and swelled the number of the entertained to nearly two thousand.

As concerns the number of beneficiaries in the three districts, the festival of 1885 did not differ from that of 1884. President Arthur had, however, surrendered the White House to another gentleman, and had taken to her home in New York the little President of District. II. But the residents of Washington would not allow so good an institution as the Christmas Club to perish, and the new Administration was only too glad to lend a hand. So, in the choice of new officers, caused by the turn in political affairs, Miss Mollie Vilas, the daughter of the Postmaster-General of the United States, was elected President of the club, in place of Miss Nellie Arthur, who was made a Vice-President; the sister of the President of the United States became President of the Ladies' Committee, and the President of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia became President of the Gentlemen's Committee. With the prestige of all these Presidents, the club spread out its feast of '85; and, in the presence of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and of the wife of the Secretary of State, and of the venerable philanthropist, and of the Marine Band, and of all the rest, the guests of that club demolished the feast.

With the advent of December, 1886, came again the sound of preparations. The club got itself together, and the members paid in their fees of ten cents each. The advisory board of ladies and gentlemen took charge of administrative details. The donations began to pour in — money, clothing, toys, picture-cards, and offers of omnibuses to carry guests too small to walk.

The feast given by District II. was held on the 28th day of December, at the National Rifles' armory, and began at two o'clock in the afternoon. The club had sent out six hundred cards of invitation, and these had been judiciously distributed among the children of the poor. Long before the hour, the guests began to arrive. Those who came armed with invitations, formed in line on the pavement facing east; those without cards formed an opposing line facing west. Both lines rapidly grew in length, and by two o'clock, when the last omnibus discharged its numerous freight, the lines extended an entire block, two, three, and four children deep. It required the efforts of several stalwart lieutenants and sergeants of police, and of about a dozen privates, to prevent those lines from blending into a great and shapeless mob.

Within the drill-room on the entrance floor, six long tables had been spread, each with a hundred

READY FOR THE FRAY.

plates. Turkey, cranberry sauce, apples, oranges, graced each plate; and back in the distance stood the caterer, with his ice-cream freezers and stores of cake. At the various tables, twenty boys with pretty badges, and twenty girls with natty caps and aprons,—all members of the club,—were stationed as waiters; while the ladies and gentlemen stood, some at tables, others about the room, to render general assistance.

Everything being ready, the doors were opened, and the guests were admitted in single file, a little girl on crutches leading. Around and about the great wide room the long procession passed, leaving a child at every plate. When every plate had been accommodated with a child, silence was requested. Every little tongue was stilled, every little head bent low, and a minister offered prayer. Then the gentleman in charge took the floor. The guests looked eagerly at their plates and imploringly at the gentleman. His speech was practical and brief: "Now, children, eat your Christmas dinner."

The opening shout, the rattle of knives and forks, the hum of children talking between the bites, the exclamations, the laughter, and all the other little details which punctuated the scene, the imagination must supply. The dinner lasted nearly an hour — an hour of bliss to those within the room, and an hour of terrible suspense to those who still stood on the pavement without, a remnant of the "uninvited" line, and late arrivals, waiting for their turn. Of course it came.

The dinner was only the first and substantial part of the exercises. Above the drill-room was the armory hall. Upon the floor hundreds of empty chairs awaited the guests below; in the gallery were gathered the Marine Band and members of the club. The noise of ascending footsteps reached the leader; he waved his baton, and to the majestic air of "Three Blind Mice," the children, replete and beaming, marched in and down the center aisle, and took their seats. The spokesman of the club arose and clapped his hands. The children thought he was cheering something, so they did the same. Finally, he got a chance to make his second speech: "All that I have to do is, in the name of the Children's Christmas Club of this district, to wish you all a very happy Christmas!"

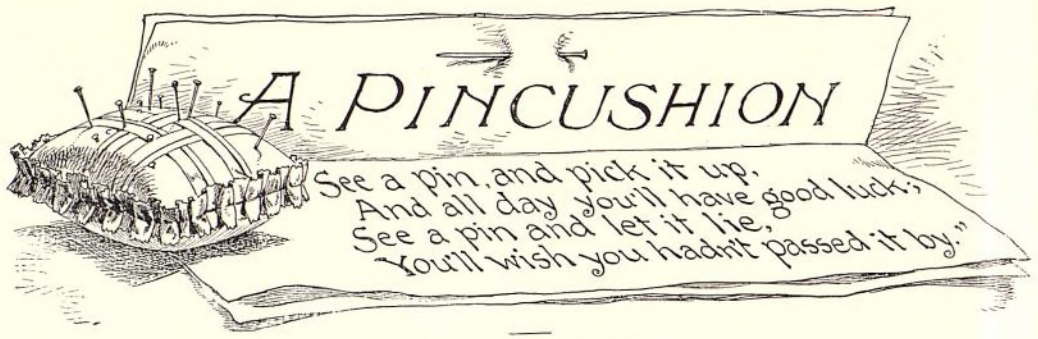
The "first thing on the programme" was the magic lantern. The lights were turned down, and a white disk was shot upon the canvas. Then came a magnified spider. It was greeted with an "oh!" that lasted, if I mistake not, a full minute. Then came the head of the same spider, as a second picture; the claw, as a third. It was difficult for the spectators to understand the vagaries of the microscope. They took the word of the "magic-lanternman," as far as possible, but when he showed them a great, big bird that looked like a crane, and said that it was a "flea," and then another "chunkier" bird, and called it a "mosquito," and then presented a large honey-comb, the cells of which he said were but a few of two thousand eyes owned by the common house-fly, the spectators broke into a laugh. It was a severe tax on their faith. So the lanterner abandoned science, and regained their confidence by pictures of rivers and steamboats, and dogs, and humorous people and things.

Following the magic lantern, came "Old Joe," who got upon the stage and did some funny acting; and then — I forget what the band played when he entered, for I was watching the door — in from the street came Santa Claus. The distribution of gifts was to follow. I knew that no one would be forgotten. So, while Miss Mollie Vilas and her companion, Miss May Huddlestone, and the assisting ladies and gentlemen, were giving to each child an appropriate present, in addition to a bag of candy and a picture, I went below to view the field of carnage and gather some statistics. The drill-room was deserted. Seven hundred and sixteen little mortals had gone to battle with sixty-four big turkeys, weighing five hundred and fifty pounds. The mortals were alive and, at that moment, well and in the hall above. I looked around to see what they had left. The plates were there and so were the knives and forks.

"Does anything else remain?" I asked.

The caterer shook his head, and answered: "Nothing but the bones!"

So ends my sketch — a fragment of unfinished, universal history. For even as I write, thousands of miles from home, and Christmas,'87, scarcely yet in sight, I picture to myself the clubs of Portland and of Washington re-assembling for their annual work, and hosts of other busy, emulous little bodies organizing in our own and foreign lands, vieing to outdo the past. Let the national and international rivalries of old folk be what they may — the historian of the young shall recount their rivalry only in good deeds.



By Emma Kail Parrish.

THE sentiment of the above lines, like a great many others, handed down to us from that venerated school-ma'am, Mother Goose, is in the last degree sensible, and it has a fine point, as pins and sentiments ought to have. It means, in a wide sense, "strike while the iron is hot," which is a homely version of "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

Did you ever live through a pin famine? I did, once. It was during the war. The head of our family, kind provider and sympathizer, was "at the front," and ways and means of living were sometimes precarious. Pins cost a great deal in those days — I don't remember how much. Our family's stock of pins was reduced to two; those were carried by Mother, who lent them to us when imperatively needed. Naturally, our thoughts dwelt much upon the subject of pins, and we felt many vague and useless longings for a good supply. How were we to get any? There was no money to spare for such luxuries. I often wondered, in those days, how the stately and gracefully looped ancients managed without those very useful little articles, and I decided that they either used thorns and fish-hooks or glued their clothes together.

While the famine was at its height, my mother devised a plan. Mother declared there must be thousands of lost pins lying about the streets, if in our little household we had made way with upward of five hundred within the year. Acting upon this idea, she made two little cushions, which she gathered daintily upon the tops of two empty spools, finishing them with a tiny valance with pinked edges. Mother gave one of these to each of us, telling us to use our eyes, and see which of us could first fill her cushion.

It is surprising how many pins you can see when you have pins in your eye. John Burroughs tells how to find rare plants, the walking fern, nests of shy birds, and many other hidden things. He says we must go abroad with these things in our eye, determined to find them. My sister declared that she saw pins in her sleep; that if there was one on the street, a block away, she caught its glitter. Straight pins, crooked pins, shawl-pins, needles, all were found, in surprising numbers,— on the stairs at school, on the floor of the recitation-room, on the sidewalk, in the yard, and even in our own pin-famished house.

In a few days we had over a hundred pins on each of our little cushions, and we might have rolled in pins, if we had so wished, all of them "nobody's pins" until we discovered and captured them.

Don't imagine that you 're going to be let off without a moral. I pointed one for myself from this episode, a long time ago. It was on this wise: Sometimes, while washing the dishes or sweeping a floor, a thought would strike me,— that event is likely to happen to people. A great many persons speak out their thought, and then forget all about it. But being reticent, and, moreover, having an idea that my thoughts might at some time be of literary value, I wished to save them. So, when some fancied bright idea would occur to me, I would say, "Ha! I 'll jot that down; it will be useful some day." But alas! I never jotted, or very rarely, because I was sweeping the front hall, or mixing the dough, or sewing on a button; and by the time those things were done, and my pen was in my hand, my idea was gone. Sometimes, with hard trying, I could recall it; but more often it had joined the forces of the invisible. This caused some bitterness of heart, and repinings at enforced labor, also repeated admonitions to myself to be more careful. But I seldom *was* more careful, and it grew to be my opinion that I was letting my not too powerful faculties run to waste. Perhaps, like the study of Greek, it was good mental discipline. Still, one can't help feeling that *to remember* Greek is a long way ahead of merely studying it; and to have preserved those little "thinks" would have pleased me much better than only to have thought them.

About that time I read somewhere of a "commonplace book," and knew at once it was the

thing I needed. I procured a blank book, and waited for an idea. The first idea that came trotting into the trap of my brain was such a foolish little one, that it seemed silly to set it down; but I thought, "If I don't make a beginning, when will I begin?" So I took the little stray and fastened it into my book. Well, that little idea was the herd-leader, so to speak; and so many ideas ambled along after it, that I was quite busy for a little while jotting them down.

Not all of those thoughts, as written then, were directly useful in a literary way; but there is no doubt that the mere writing of them helped me to think. If you are going to walk a mile, you can never do it unless you put your foot down and go! If you want bodily strength, you must use your muscles often and systematically. If you want mental strength, you must use the "muscles" of your mind.

When we were children, it pleased us to be told that we were growing. The mind should grow every day of its life.

A commonplace book is very like the pincushion my mother gave me. Before I owned the cushion, I saw very few pins. After I set it up for use, pins appeared at every corner. Before my book was opened, ideas were scarce; afterward they were abundant. It is true, they were not great and lofty thoughts; but I do not lay claim to a great and lofty order of mind, and they were decent, wholesome, nourishing thoughts, and much better than no thoughts at all. Not that one would wish to put his or her every thought into a book to be printed, or into an essay to be read before a literary club. You don't make every new dress or buy every new suit with the intention of having your photograph taken in it. Your intention with most of them, I hope, is to please yourself, your parents, your friends, to be neat and comfortable. And you do not care most of all, I hope, to be great, or famous; but to grow and improve and elevate your minds till you can appreciate the thoughts of the great, improve and elevate the thoughts of the little, and enjoy the thoughts of the "middle-sized."

Keen, bright, thoughtful girls and boys who can say bright, kind and thoughtful things, on any occasion, and to all classes of people, and can appreciate everything good that is said, are most desirable members of society. They can perpetuate sunshine and music in their own homes, and can lend a ray to brighten and beautify all other homes into which they enter.

THE CAT'S ANSWER TO THE DOLL'S STORY

DEAR CHILDREN: My mistress's name is Daisy, too, and I think it must have been her doll that wrote the letter to you in ST. NICHOLAS, last March. She is a very selfish doll, for she never wants Daisy to pet me at all.

Cats can't help being cats, 'cause they are born kittens, and then grow to be cats. If I could have been born a doll, I think I would be a better doll than Lucy. Cats catch mice and rats, but dolls don't do anything. Daisy is good to me and I am good to Daisy. I never scratched her or bit her in my life. Isn't that a sign of a good cat?

You can see Lucy is a bad doll. If she was good she would n't say that her mother doesn't know any better than to like me. I don't believe your dolls talk about you in that way.

My name is Tillie. Is n't that a pretty name for a cat? I like children and I like good dolls; but I don't like Lucy, and you would n't like her either, if you knew her. I can purr poetry and Lucy can't. Here is some poetry that Daisy made for me.

I'm a little kitten cat.
Tillie is my name;
Mistress Daisy called me that,
'Cause I'm very tame.

Little children with me play,
And they love me, too;
This is all I have to say,
Good-bye, now, to you.

To the Very Little Folk,
Care of ST. NICHOLAS.

Yours purringly,
TILLIE.

"HELD IN BONDAGE."

[COPIED BY PERMISSION, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT FAULKNER, 21 BAKER STREET, LONDON, ENGLAND.]

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

BEFORE long, my friends, the very air will be blithe with "Merry Christmas!" brisk young hemlocks will rustle their way into the sunny homes of Christendom, and millions of tiny flames will bud on the branches, and all because the best and holiest of holidays has come. Peace, joy and gratitude be with you, my happy ones! And may your hearts be full of kindness, and your hands busy with good deeds!

Now you shall hear about

SOME FAMOUS CHRISTMAS PIES.

DEAR JACK: I suppose all of your boys and girls have read the old ditty, telling how once four and twenty blackbirds were baked in a pie, and how, when the pie was opened, the birds began to sing,—and they have wisely considered the story a very impossible one, but it is not without some foundation, after all. A common dish on Queen Elizabeth's table, at Christmas and other great festivities, was, we are told, a monster pie, from which, when opened, there flew a number of birds that, lighting in various parts of the dining-room, used to sing sweetly to the guests at table.

Another famous pie made its appearance at an entertainment given by the Duke of Buckingham to Queen Henrietta, the wife of Charles the First, of England. When the crust was removed, one Geoffrey Hudson, a tiny dwarf dressed to represent Santa Claus, stood revealed to the astonished company.

Still another celebrated Christmas pie was made in 1769, for Sir Henry Grey. It was "composed of two bushels of flour, twenty pounds of butter, four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, two wild ducks, two woodcocks, six snipes, four partridges, two neats' tongues, two curlews, seven blackbirds, and seven pigeons."

This culinary marvel, as one may well call it, was about nine feet in circumference; it weighed two hundred pounds, and several strong men were required to bear it safely to the table. E. M. C.

TO THE KIND-HEARTED.

I AM requested by my birds to say that during the winter season their favorite brands of crumb are the bread and cracker varieties.

REALLY, IT IS QUEER.

DON'T you think so, girls? Your Jack knows very little about it, but he thinks it must be queer or the little girl would n't say so; or, at least our friend Maria I. Hammond would n't say in these verses that the little girl says so.

I HEARD a little girl say, "Well, really, it is queer,
But making Christmas presents keeps me busy all the year!
In January I begin, and long before I 'm through
Here comes December, round again, and Christmas with it, too!
It was the last of February, I remember well,
When I finished Mother's scarlet shawl in crazy stitch and shell;
In March I made a skate-bag, and Tot's reins of macremé;
In April worked a cushion bright, with here and there a spray!
In May, it was, I made a plaque of gay and glittering brass —
I'll never make another, for it hurt my eyes, alas!
In June I worked a splasher full of blue wild roses, which
Was very much admired — it was done in outline stitch.
In July (the heat was frightful!) let me see — what did I do?
Oh, I tied a gilt scrap-basket with bows of peacock blue!
And in August, at Bar Harbor I collected pine enough
To make two lovely pillows of this what-d'-you-call-it stuff!
In September I was painting on a set of dessert plates:
The first one had a seckel pear — the last a bunch of dates;
In October they were finished, and when November came,
I made of daintiest cretonne a sort of album frame!
And in December, quickly flew the short and busy hours
With making newsboys candy bags, and paper bonbon flowers.
So really," said this little girl, "I must say, though 't is queer,
This making Christmas presents keeps me busy all the year."

A LITTLE GIRL'S COMPOSITION.

SHOULD you like to hear a true story, written by a little city girl as a composition? The dear Little School-ma'am sends it to you with her compliments.

MY THANKSGIVING DAY ADVENTURE.

I WAS two years younger two years ago than I am now. This makes me seven years old when I had an adventure.

I went with my father and mother to a nice farm-house in the country to spend Thanksgiving. It had n't come yet when we got there, for it was two days off. I had great fun, and I learned to ride a pretty little donkey. He was named Saffo, and he was so gentle that he would let you pull his ears. Well, the farmer was a kind man, and

I asked him if he was going to get a turkey for Thanksgiving dinner. He said: "Now I 'll tell you what I 'll do, little Miss. If you will take Saffo and ride over the bridge to the barn-yard, and if you can count the turkeys you see there, I'll give you one on purpose for Thanksgiving, but you must count every turkey there is."

So Mamma said I might try; and Papa put me on Saffo, and I started to count all the turkeys over in the barn-yard. I knew then how to count up as high as a hundred. But when we came to the bridge Saffo and I got such a fright! A monstrous bird, making more noise than he could, came running to meet us, and he stopped right on the bridge as mad as he could be, and his tail and all his feathers stuck out, and he would n't let us pass him at all. He was awful! So we had to turn back and gallop as fast as we could. I knew what he was, because his noise sounded like "gobble, gobble, gobble!"

Well, the farmer would have laughed at us for being afraid to cross the bridge to the barn-yard, so I told him I only counted one, and he need n't mind about having turkey for Thanksgiving. But he said he would see about it. And what do you think? We *did* have one, all the same, when the day came, and doughnuts and mince pie afterward.

I was sorry for any poor bird to be roasted; but I think that turkeys are a great deal too fierce when they are not cooked.

"HE WOULD N'T LET US PASS HIM AT ALL."

THE LETTER-BOX.

HENNEMONT, ST. GERMAIN, SEINE ET OISE, FRANCE.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a little girl, ten years old. I live in a beautiful castle near the River Seine. I have a pet dog called Mahdi. We sit together under the trees, and I read your nice magazine quite alone. I like "The Brownies" best.

I hope very, very much you will print this letter. And I remain, your constant reader and faithful admirator,

AGLAÉ ZOÉ CALOTHI, OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

P. S.—Mamma says this letter is badly written, but I don't want to copy it.

NEW LONDON, CONN.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have never written you before. I hope you will print this. The stories I like best are "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and "The Story of Prince Fairyfoot." I will not write much more, for I know some other little boy or girl is just as eager to have his or her letter printed. I just wish to say, I think your stories are lovely (which is very mild praise), and I hope you will never stop them. So, good-bye, BESSIE S——.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: A friend gave me, a short time ago, some Korean stamps for some little boy at home; and as I know of no one who is making a collection, it occurs to me that among your many little subscribers there must be a few who would be glad of these stamps; since, because of their rarity, they bring a dollar a stamp at home. As the Korean post-office existed but a day,— its projectors being killed or exiled in the riot of '86,— the stamps are no longer in print. If you will not consider it a trouble, please let the little fellows know this, and bid them send their names and addresses to me, and I will send each, one Korean and perhaps a Japanese stamp. They need not, of course, send a "stamp for reply."

We all, young and old, enjoy your very delightful magazine; and when my little daughter reaches the letter-writing age, she will send Jack-in-the-Pulpit a letter about this queer country.

Sincerely yours, LOULIE SCRANTON.

P.S.— The boys may address, Mrs. Wm. B. Scranton, Söul, Korea.

PEORIA, ILL.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am ten years old, and five feet two inches tall. My older sister, Edie, or rather Edith, takes ST. NICHOLAS, and I like "Juan and Juanita." Very many things the writer speaks about in the last chapter I know about, as we lived six years in San Antonio, Texas, and I have seen the old missions, San José and Concepcion, and have tasted tortillas. The Mexicans are mostly all "half-breeds." When they have a "norther," the Mexican men go to bed and stay there, and their wives stay up and cook the food, and do all the work. When it is fair weather, the women cook candy with nuts in it, called *pepetoria*, and a sort of molasses candy called *malecoche*, and the men go out and sell it. I have seen the old Alamo. There is a man there who says he can show you the exact place where Davy Crockett fell.

I have a brother who is sixteen years old, and six feet tall.

I am, your interested reader, AMY B——.

CARLSBAD, BOHEMIA.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Ever since I was six years old (and now I am more than twelve) I have looked forward with pleasure, every month, to the coming of your delightful magazine. We have been in Europe for a year and more, and it has always reached me safely, although we have been traveling about in a great many different countries. Just now we are in Carlsbad, and in a few days we expect to go to Prague; it is in the palace there that the two imperial counselors were thrown out of the window, which was the immediate cause of the thirty years' war. There are a great many curious customs here, which I suppose might be called Bohemian.

Several bands play every morning at the different springs, from six o'clock to eight, and then all the world goes to drink the waters. As soon as the music stops, the people all disperse in different directions to the numerous cafés for their breakfast, and stop on the way to buy their bread, which they carry in red paper bags; and it really looks very odd to see all the people walking with these red paper bags.

The principal street here is called the "Alte Wiese," and it is lined with attractive shops.

There are nineteen springs in all; the oldest and hottest of which is the Sprudel, which is 167 degrees Fahrenheit.

Baskets of flowers are often put in the Sprudel, and left there for ten days; and when they are taken out again, they are changed into stone of a very ugly color.

I am very much interested in "Historic Girls." I have been reading Carlyle's "History of Frederick the Great"; and I think Frederick's sister Wilhelmina would make a very interesting subject.

Your devoted reader, S. C. C——.

LOS ANGELES, CAL.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Having just returned from Greenland, I thought I would write to you about it. I spent the winter there with my cousin, and had a very nice time.

The morning just before I went away, the snow was far above our door. Whenever I went out, I always wore snow-shoes. I felt very queer when I first put them on. I could hardly walk. I like it in Los Angeles better than in Greenland, because it is not so cold. It is just like a cool summer here in winter, with all the flowers blooming, and everything green.

Your loving reader, HELEN S——.

DUBLIN, IRELAND.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: We have been taking you for about four years, and we like you very much. I am very much interested in the paper canoes and Nantucket sinks. They are rather hard to make at first, but we have made them both. I hope you will have some more.

We like the "Brownies" very much, and we have great fun with each new number of the magazine, in finding the Chinaman and several others, especially the Irishman. I will be sixteen years old on the 21st of October, and my sister Kathleen will be fifteen on the 4th of October.

We spent last summer in County Wicklow, which is one of the prettiest counties in Ireland. The scenery is beautiful. We had a little pony and phaeton, and we drove out every day.

With best wishes for ST. NICHOLAS, yours,

M. A. D——.

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have been in Brussels only three days, but have seen a great deal, as there is not so much to see as one finds in most European cities.

Yesterday we went to the famous field of Waterloo. A great many people go out in four-horse stage-coaches, but it takes about two hours, so we decided to go in the train to a small town where we got on a stage, and rode to the field; they have built a large monument of earth, like a pyramid (which took four years to build, with the Belgian lion on top), where the Duke of Wellington held his army. There were steps to the top of the monument,—two hundred and twenty-five; I was ready to drop when I reached the top. We had a splendid view of the surrounding country. The guide pointed out the different places of interest,— where Napoleon held his army, and how he had nearly made Wellington surrender when those bothersome Prussians came up.

At the little hotel at the foot of the monument called the Musée, we saw the different things picked up after the battle. I bought one of the bullets that were found; they had swords and cannon-balls, and skulls pierced by bullets, etc.

We were told that when Wellington went there some years after the battle, he said he would not come again, for the monument had spoiled his battle-field.

Brussels is considered a small Paris; but what I hate are the hills: the carriages tear down hill and around corners in (to me) a horrible way. I would rather have Rome with its seven hills. As for the stores, they can not be compared with Paris; on a tight squeeze you could *see* Brussels, Waterloo, and all in about two days, but for me it is two too many. Papa says I am a very hard judge, so you must make allowances. Some of the street-cars run by electricity here; it looks too funny to see them going along without horses.

We came here from Homburg, where we have spent the month of August. The place is crowded in that month with English and Americans; it is half an hour in the train from Frankfort-on-the-Main; there are five springs, and between half-past six and nine, before

breakfast, every morning, you will find the Elizabeth-brunnen and the park surrounding the spring, crowded with people, a band playing, and people walking up and down the long avenue of trees, after taking the waters; it is a pretty sight. English is spoken on every side. I like it much better than either Wiesbaden or Baden Baden. In the afternoon the people flock to the music; after that to the tennis, where in the season I have seen twenty-five courts going at once; two days before I came away, they had a tournament, and the Prince of Wales gave the winners gold scarf-pins. I sat right behind the Prince and his sister, the Princess Christian. I was introduced to Mr. Blaine, while I was there; and often saw the Empress of Germany.

We are going to Egypt this winter, and I will write you from among the pyramids.

LOUIE C——.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: We wrote to you once before, but our letter was not printed, so Mamma said we might try again and perhaps it would be this time. We told you how much we enjoyed all the nice stories, especially "Juan and Juanita."

We both take lessons on the violin, and the other evening we played a duet at some private theatricals given by a friend. At first we felt rather frightened, but when it was over, every one said we had played it very well.

Our uncle gave Mamma a parrot that talks French, and whenever a stranger comes into the room, he always says, "*Bonjour*" and "*Parlez vous français?*" in such a funny tone of voice that he makes us all laugh. His name is Jacquot, and he is awfully pretty, with green, white and scarlet feathers, and a funny top-knot.

Mamma says we would better close now, as she is afraid you won't print such a long letter. With love from your little friends,

CLARENCE AND CLIFFORD.

PEMBURY, KENT, ENGLAND.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have taken you for a great many years, but have never written you a letter before.

I go to school in New York in the winter, for I am an American girl. I take French, Latin, and all English subjects. In the summer I learn Latin and arithmetic with my father, and this summer I have commenced Greek.

In your September number there is an article on "The First Paper Canoe," by H. E., who said that he (or she) had never seen an American child who could fold it all the way through to the end. My brothers and I used to make them, but we always called them "Chinese Junks," so I thought perhaps H. E. would like to know about it. Of your stories, I like "Juan and Juanita" and "Jenny's Boarding-house" the best, although "Fiddle-John's Family" is very nice. Yours sincerely,

SHEILA W——. (Aged 12.)

P. S.—When I am sufficiently proficient in Greek, I will write you a letter in that language.

PATERSON, N. J.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: As you are known by reputation to be a jolly old Saint, interested in the pleasures and occupations of the children all over the globe, and, as from your age I should suppose you to be stuffed with knowledge on every subject, I should like to ask you a few questions upon a subject in which I am deeply interested, but which nobody seems to know anything about.

My brother and I think we should like to try amateur photography, but prefer trying tintyping first, as the process is more simple and easier to understand.

I have read the articles on photography in ST. NICHOLAS and other magazines, but they say nothing about tintyping, and the catalogue of prices I sent for did not mention such a thing as a tintype camera.

Now, dear ST. NICHOLAS, can you enlighten me on the subject? I should like to know where I can get an apparatus for taking tintypes, how much it is likely to cost, whether the baths can be obtained ready mixed, and if directions for taking the pictures come with the camera. Yours respectfully, H. W. T——.

The apparatus required for making tintypes, or ferrotypes, need be little different from the apparatus required for making dry-plate photographs, and may be procured through any dealer in photographic materials. If "H. W. T." wishes to make ferrotypes by the old method, common until within a few years, he will require a special plate-holder; but any camera will answer. This process is rather "mussy" for an amateur working at home, and the silver from the silver bath is certain to blacken the fingers in an annoying manner. The plate of japanned iron (for it is not tin, but the iron from which sheet tin is made) must be flowed with collodion, which is sold in bottles, ready for use. When the collodion has set, or dried, to a certain degree—which occurs very shortly after flowing—the plate is immersed in a silver bath which has been rendered slightly acid. The exposure must be made while the plate is wet, yet not too soon after the immersion. After the exposure has been made, the plate is flowed with a developing solution, the main ingredient of which is sulphate of iron; when, if the exposure has been correctly made, the image will gradually appear. At the moment when the image has reached a proper degree of clearness, the development is "checked" by placing the plate under the water-tap. The plate is then to be "fixed" with cyanide of potassium, after which it may at once be dried and varnished.

Ferrotype plates are, however, now to be had ready prepared, like glass dry-plates for negatives. This does away with the collodion and the silver bath, and renders the hurry, and the nearness to the dark-room unnecessary. The Argentic Dry Plates may be had from the Phœnix Plate Company of Worcester, Mass., together with instructions for developing. These plates work quicker than the "wet" plates, and are developed with a "pyro" developer. They can be used in an ordinary plate-holder with a piece of glass of the same size behind them; so that "H. W. T." may begin his "tintyping" with any photographic camera outfit.

ALEXANDER R. BLACK.

DUNDALK, IRELAND.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am a little girl twelve years old; I have never written to you before. I used to live in America, and now I live in Ireland. I do not think it is so nice as it is in America, but there are pretty mountains here. They are called the Carlingford Hills, and are right across Dundalk bay. The little houses are very funny; they are thatched, and very small and dark. There is a market every Monday, and the town is crowded with country people. They come in with their pigs and cattle, and send them away to Liverpool in a boat. Father sends the ST. NICHOLAS every month to us, and we like it because there is not such a nice book over here. There are five of us altogether, and we all look forward to the ST. NICHOLAS coming. Nelly was only three when she came over and soon she will be four. There is a place called a cromlech near here; it is three large stones standing on the ground about three or four yards apart, and one immense one on the top. They say these stones were placed thus by men to mark where the dead were buried, and those men lived long, long ago, before the Druids. There are other curious things around here,—an old grave-yard where William Bruce is buried,—(he was Robert Bruce's brother),—and there are also some old towers.

Good-bye, dear ST. NICHOLAS. Your little friend,

UNA STUART P——.

TYLERTOWN, PIKE CO., MISS.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Although I have been a constant and devoted reader of ST. NICHOLAS ever since I have been a reader of anything, I think, I have never made so bold as to contribute to the Letter-box my "mite." Now that I have done so, I hope it will be regarded with a benignant "she hath done what she could," and allowed to pass the "dread waste-basket."

ST. NICHOLAS has been sent to our family by some dear cousins in Illinois, ever since it was first published. It has descended from one member of the family to the next younger until it has reached me. I do not think I shall ever outgrow it.

I think I will be ranked among the older children. I have just passed my sixteenth birthday, but I am a "school-ma'am" with three months' experience.

I read the Letter-box with the deepest interest, especially those letters from "far-away lands." I read books of travel and am very fond of them, but I think that it would be more like seeing things myself to have them written of to me.

Thanking you many times for what you have been to me, and with my best wishes for your future success, I remain,

Yours devotedly, ANNIE S——.

FONTANA PARK, GENEVA LAKE, WIS.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am very much interested in "Juan and Juanita." We camp here all the summer vacation. We have a very nice tent with three rooms in it. There are many other boys and girls in the camp. We have very nice times. My little brother and the other children and I go in bathing. I can swim a few strokes. We have a row-boat, and I go out on the lake very often. I have a baby mud-turtle, and it is just as cunning as it can be. He is a little larger than a silver half dollar. He has a pointed tail, and his head is yellow and black. He has very small eyes. I made him a nice home in a wooden pail.—This is a very beautiful lake, nine miles long and three and a half miles wide. There are many parks around the lake. There are sixteen private steamers and four public ones. This used to be a great resort for Indians. Black Hawk used to have his council-house here. Some of the cedar pole is still in the ground where the council-house stood. There have been many Indian arrow-heads picked up around here. I think the Indians must have felt very badly to have left their beautiful hunting-grounds.

BESSIE L. N——.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

DEAREST OF SAINTS: I have taken you for four years for a Christmas present from mamma and papa, and I am not willing to give you up yet. Mamma thought I was getting too old for ST. NICHOLAS, and would enjoy an older magazine better; but nothing could induce me to give you up. I like all of your stories, especially those written by Frank Stockton; but "Historic Boys and Girls," and the articles that have a bit of history or travels in them, are my favorites.

A few summers ago I spent a few weeks at Barnegat, N. J., which is famous for its lighthouse. It is indeed wonderful; and its light is so large that it can be seen for many miles around. At the base the wall is four feet thick, but gradually grows thinner as you ascend. I believe there are two hundred and seventy-four winding steps, and when you get to the top you are indeed ready to sit down; but it is still harder to go down. While I was there it was a very warm day, but a heavy gale came up and shook the top so that it swayed, and I was very glad to go down. After visiting the light, we went out in a small yacht to see the steamer Guadaloupe, which had been wrecked the previous winter. On the way our skipper told us the story of the wreck, for he helped save the lives of the people.

I am fourteen years old, and papa calls me Brownie for a pet name. (I wonder if any of Palmer Cox's brownies ever reach that age.)

Your fascinated reader, GRACE OR "BROWNIE."

OUR thanks are due to the young friends named below, for pleasant letters which we have not space to print:

James Fay, Willie L. Taver, Louise Clawson, Claire Herrick, Eunice Stivers, Peggy and Kitty, M. G. H., Lulu Gulliver, Ethel Crocker, Kate H. R., Cornelia M. T., Winifred Reed, Fennimore R., Jack Wilson, Ella M. Fischer, Daisy V. W., Marion Clothier, Susie Inloes, Lucy M. D., Alma St. C. S., Grace S., Mina L., L. S. C., M. A. and M. O. P., Annie and Kathleen, Frederick W., Annie M., Margaret Dabney, Bessie and Hettie R., Alston Deas, Ida, Hulda and Rheta, Bertha E. W., Hattie Rose, Wenefride and Rosalie Kelly, Burt Harrison, Mary L. C., Rose and Daisy, Elsie Wilson, Marcia Lee, Flossy B., Frances D. L., M. O. W., A. C. M., Blanche C., Rene Carrillo, Daisy McDowell, Lyda M., Helene M. K., Helen R. B., "Gray Eyes and Blue Eyes," Lizzie Willey, Mamie S. B., Abba Kellogg, Louise F. H., Sybil B., Maud O., Florence L. B., Josie S., Edna L. Erwin, John Warren, Emma G., Mac. Douglas, Leon A. P., Alta V., Robert L. N., Edith C. and Ada B., Ivy, Ruth and Hallie H., Lolo K., Lily G., A. L. R., Ada A. H., Bertha and Elsie, Claire and Lavinia, Louise R., Stella Wood, R. Marion Cameron, Bertha L. S., Eleanor B. E., Hugh Barr, Annie Graves, Michael and Frank, Avis M. M., Queen G., Delia H., Minnie F., Alva E. P., Julia C. G., Annette A. G., "The Bookworm," M. W., M. A. W., and Julia B. H.

PICTURES FOR LITTLE GERMAN READERS. No. 1.

THE RIDDLE-BOX.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE NOVEMBER NUMBER.

NUMERICAL ENIGMA. "Every man is the architect of his own fortune."

CUBE. From 1 to 2, quintette; 2 to 4, earthling; 3 to 4, Easter-egg; 1 to 3, quadruple; 5 to 6, rearguard; 6 to 8, dictation; 7 to 8, elocution; 5 to 7, reanimate; 1 to 5, quaver; 2 to 6, erased; 4 to 8, gammon; 3 to 7, enable.

PI.

Gone hath the Spring, with all its flowers,
And gone the Summer's pomp and show,
And Autumn, in his leafless bowers,
Is waiting for the Winter's snow.

Autumn Thoughts, by J. G. Whittier.

NOVEL ACROSTICS. Third row, Heartfelt thanks; sixth row, Thanksgiving Day. Cross-words: 1. Athletic. 2. Wreathed. 3. Standard. 4. Strained. 5. Attacked. 6. Diffuses. 7. Presages. 8. Religion. 9. Outlives. 10. Catering. 11. Schooner. 12. Analogue. 13. Consider. 14. Inkstand. 15. Unstayed.

A LETTER PUZZLE. "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just." *King Henry VI. Part II. Act 3. Scene 2.*

OCTAGONS. I. 1. Sad. 2. Strip. 3. Stripes. 4. Ariette. 5. Diptera. 6. Petre. 7. Sea. II. 1. Did. 2. Homer. 3. Domical. 4. Imitate. 5. Decades. 6. Rates. 7. Les(sen).

GREEK CROSS. I. 1. Scans. 2. Carol. 3. Arise. 4. Nosle. 5. Sleep. II. 1. Press. 2. Ravel. 3. Evade. 4. Sedge. 5. Sleep. III. 1. Sleep. 2. Larva. 3. Ernes. 4. Event. 5. Pasty. IV. 1. Pasty. 2. Afire. 3. Sires. 4. Treat. 5 Yesty. V. 1. Pasty. 2. Adore. 3. Solar. 4. Train. 5. Yerns.

WORD-SQUARE. 1. Katie. 2. Abhor. 3. Thane. 4. Ionic. 5. Erect.

A CLASSICAL SQUARE. From 1 to 2, Argiva; 2 to 4, Albula; 1 to 3, Apulia; 3 to 4, Athena; 1 to 4; Atossa; 2 to 3, Attica.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC. Primals, Richard; finals, Blondel. Cross-words: 1. RoB (Roy). 2. IdoL. 3. ComO. 4. HeleN. 5. AlfreD. 6. RhymE. 7. DulL.

HOUR-GLASS. Central letters, Lilliputian. Cross-words: 1. Cisatlantic. 2. Stability. 3. Phyllis. 4. Valid. 5. Big. 6. P. 7. Dun. 8. Mitre. 9. Ionians. 10. Imitation. 11. Nationality.

TO OUR PUZZLERS: Answers, to be acknowledged in the magazine, must be received not later than the 15th of each month, and should be addressed to ST. NICHOLAS "Riddle-box," care of THE CENTURY CO., 33 East Seventeenth St., New-York City.

ANSWERS TO ALL THE PUZZLES IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER were received, before September 15th, from K. G. S.— Grace Kupfer — Maud E. Palmer — Katie, Jamie, and Mamma — Nellie and Reggie — "Blithedale"— "Kanuck and Yank"— "Hikeydum"— Maggie T. Turrill — Sadie Mabelle Sherman — Francis W. Islip.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER were received, before September 15th, from K. P. Ward, 1 — Alice Hirsch, 4 — "I. Dot," 2 — "Rufa" and "Brownie," 4 — Bertha, 1 — S. C. P., 1 — F. F. W., 1 — "Kitty Clover," 3 — "Cricket," 1 — "The Three Graces," 1 — Edward E. Jungerich," 1 — J. A., 10 — "Puss," 2 — "Calamity Jane and Cliptknockky," 3 — Grace and Bertha, 1 — Adeline and Agnes, 3 — Bacon and Tarr, 1 — Bertie Brush, 1 — "St. Olaf's Kirk," 10 — "Skipper," 1 — "Sphinx," 1 — Hattie Taylor and Mary Dexter, 1 — "A Yachting Party," 5 — "Giddy Sinclair," 4 — "Dombey and Son," 3 — "Rose," 3 — "Annie L. A.'s Admirer," 4 — H. H. C., 2 — B. and M. Dixon, 1 — Nellie B. McCarter, 1 — Anastatia, Celestine, and Marie Kane, 4 — M. Angela Diller, 2 — Mary M. Rittrich, 1 — D. D. and M. M., 4 — No Name, Gardner, 7 — Sadie and Bessie Rhodes, 6 — Annie M. and Susie R. Bingham, 2 — "Martin Chuzzlewit," 2 — Grace Scoville, 1 — A. and M. Fries, 10 — Elsie A. Patchen, 1 — Rudolph G. Ward, 1 — M. Flurscheim, 1 — Paul Reese, 13 — Papa and Mary Farr, 3 — May W. Elmslie, 1 — Peace and Happiness, 10 — L. M., 1 — Marion Strong, 1 — Midge, 1 — "Mooney," 8 — Shumway Hen and Chickens, 13 — "The Oaks," 1 — Florence L. Beeckman, 2 — "Tommy Traddles," 2 — Louise F. H., 1 — "Three Graces," Newark, 3 — "Pokey," 8 — Edith Woodward, 6 — N. L. Howes, 10 — "Jo and I," 12 — Effie K. Talboys, 8 — Alpha Alpha, B. C., 8 — W. K. C., 2 — Lou and Bert, 4 — Mona and Euna, 4 — Jennie S. Liebmann, 8 — A. H. R. and M. G. R., 13 — Margaret C. Maule, 1 — Polly, 1 — Buttercup and Daisy, 2 — "We Two," 7 — Jennie, 7 — "Aliena," 6 — W. R. M., 12 — "?," 7 — May Shaughnessy, 1 — "Juan and Juanita," 5 — Annie Floyd, 7 — "Beth and Amy," 6 — Laura, 10 — "No Name, Newport, 6 — "Emerald Green," 4 — "Solomon Quill," 10 — "Fanatic," 11 — "May and 79," 5 — "Teddy," 1 — "Fox and Geese," 9 — "Junket," 4 — R. A. M., 11 — Kate L. Oglebay, 1 — "Idle Bee," 1 — E. Muriel Grundy, 13.

THIS puzzle is based upon one of the Mother Goose rhymes. The pictures represent the last word of the six lines of the verse. What is the verse?

A DOUBLE DIAMOND.

ACROSS: In Diogenes. 2. To perform. 3. A name of the daughter of Proserpina. 4. Consumed. 5. In Diogenes.

DOWNWARD: 1. In Diogenes. 2. Another name for Colchis. 3. An ancient people of Scotland. 4. To knot. 5. In Diogenes.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

In *game* so jolly;
In *bunch* of holly;
In *sprig* of green;
In *water* clean;
In *faces* bright:
In *darkest* night;
In *sleigh* so fine;
In *figure* nine;
In *boot* and shoe;
In *zebra* too.

What am I? You surely will remember
A famous battle fought in bleak December.

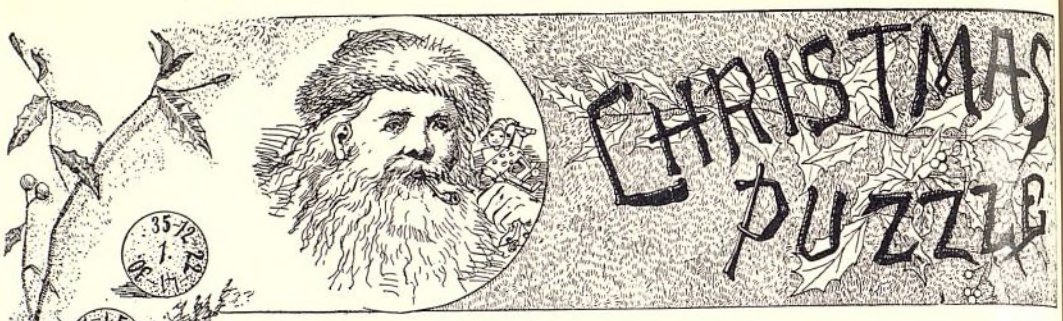
TWO DOUBLE ACROSTICS.

I. EACH of the cross-words contains seven letters. The primals and finals each name a festal time which occurs in December.

CROSS-WORDS: 1. A mean, despicable person. 2. A character in Shakspere's play of "Hamlet." 3. A historian. 4. To infuse into. 5. The title of the chief magistrate of Mecca. 6. A fine smooth stuff of silk. 7. A plant now used in the manufacture of sapsago cheese. 8. Agony. 9. To shut out. 10. One who nettles. 11. Twists. 12. Coveted. 13. An invocation of blessings. 14. A dramatic poem having a fatal issue.

II. Each of the cross-words contains ten letters. The primals name articles pleasant to give or to receive; the finals name a pleasant song to listen to.

CROSS-WORDS: 1. Pertaining to the cabala. 2. The picture-writing of the ancient Egyptian priests. 3. A combat. 4. A name given to persons in the early church who had received baptism. 5. Whippings. 6. Equivalent in value or signification. 7. A narration of mere fable. 8. A city in Egypt. 9. Insensibility. 10. Geological. 11. A class of plants. 12. One who constructs or makes. 13. A place in Bolivia. 14. Pertaining to a seraph. F. S. F.



ILLUSTRATED PUZZLE.

THE numbers on ball number 1 represent certain letters which form a boy's name; number 2, to use with effort; number 3, one given in pledge as security for the performance of certain conditions; number 4, a relative; number 5, the circumference of anything; number 6, obsequious; number 7, interlaced; number 8, an exploit; number 9, a morsel; number 10, to wander.

The answer, consisting of fifty-one letters, is what the Rabbi Jechiel says all should do.

PI.

BREDMECE clesos no eth ceens
Dan hwta prapea het mothsn noge stap?
Stagmerfn fo meti wichh cone heav bene!
Desucingce lowlys, lfed oto fats!
Thire mienuts, shour, dan sayd pareap
Livewess ni hatt malls tinop, *a ryea.*

WORD-SQUARE.

1. EFFICACIOUS. 2. Apart. 3. To lampoon. 4. Imaginary. 5. Ravines.

G. A. S.

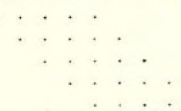
MYTHOLOGICAL HOUR-GLASS.

THE central letters, reading downward, spell the name of the rider of Pegasus.

CROSS-WORDS: 1. Pertaining to a very northern region. 2. The brother of Menelaus. 3. The most celebrated of Grecian painters. 4. One of the Harpies. 5. A name for Colchis. 6. In Harpy. 7. A personification of night. 8. The father of Anchises. 9. The husband of Niobe. 10. Pertaining to an Amazon. 11. A name for Polydorus.

"LITTLE ONE."

NOVEL RHOMBOID.



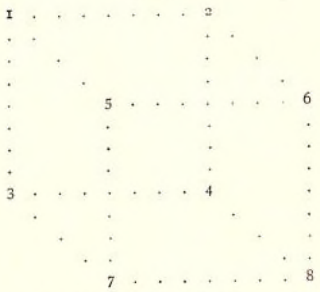
ACROSS: 1. Depressed with fear. 2. A city in Massachusetts. 3. A masculine name. 4. A city in Italy. 5. A fruit.

DOWNWARD: 1. In accent. 2. A bone. 3. To stuff. 4. A Scriptural name. 5. An evil spirit. 6. A measure of length. 7. A bank to confine water. 8. A negative answer. 9. In accent.

UPWARD: 1. In accent. 2. In this manner. 3. A bird. 4. Masculine. 5. Existed. 6. A Scriptural name. 7. Enraged. 8. Forward. 9. In accent.

CYRIL DEANE.

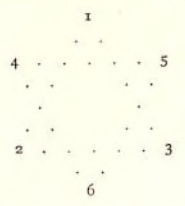
CUBE.



FROM 1 to 2, a President of the United States; from 2 to 4, leaving; from 1 to 3, a Roman emperor whose real name was Bassianus; from 3 to 4, affirming positively; from 5 to 6, the act of painting or drawing the likeness of; from 6 to 8, generously; from 5 to 7, fatherhood; from 7 to 8, what Shakspere tells us King Richard II. wished to call back; from 1 to 5, to move slowly; from 2 to 6, comical; from 3 to 7, to quiet; from 4 to 8, fame.

W. H. STEVENSON.

STAR PUZZLE.



FROM 1 to 2, to distinguish; from 1 to 3, traced; from 2 to 3, knotted; from 3 to 4, longed for; from 4 to 6, feared; from 5 to 6, addicted.

JOHN PERRYBINGLE.

CENTRAL ACROSTIC.

EACH of the words described contains the same number of letters. When these are rightly guessed and placed one below another, in the order here given, the central row of letters will spell the name of a party which took place on the 16th of a certain December, to which no reader of ST. NICHOLAS was invited.

1. A wooden shoe worn by peasants. 2. A declivity. 3. A wild animal. 4. A pretty fabric. 5. A color. 6. A musical instrument. 7. Measure. 8. A hard outside covering. 9. To invent. 10. More mature. 11. A series of things linked together. 12. Pale. 13. Complete. 14. Magnificent.

"LOU C. LEE."

THE DE VINNE PRESS, PRINTERS, NEW YORK.

6. A meas-
ive answer.

rd. 4. Mas-
ed. 8. For-
L. DEANE.

2 to 4, leav-
Bas-ianus:
painting or
to 7, father-
Richard II.
2 to 6, com-

EVENSON.

rom 2 to 3,
from 5 to 6,
RYBINGLE.

ber of letters
ed and placed
er here given,
will spell the
place on the
to which no
invited.
by peasants.
nimal. 4. A
5. A musical
A hard out-
t. 10. More
gs linked to-
mplete. 14
U C. LEE."