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BY
W. C. MORROW

HALE'S MAGAZINE

FOR DECEMBER



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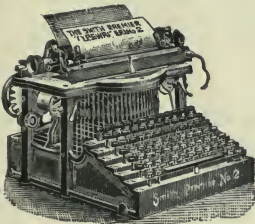
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Douglass White will contribute an article for the January number, on THE CRUISE OF THE HARTFORD, which will be followed by stories of the cruise in South American waters and among the South Sea Islands, written in Mr. White's well-known style, and profusely illustrated.

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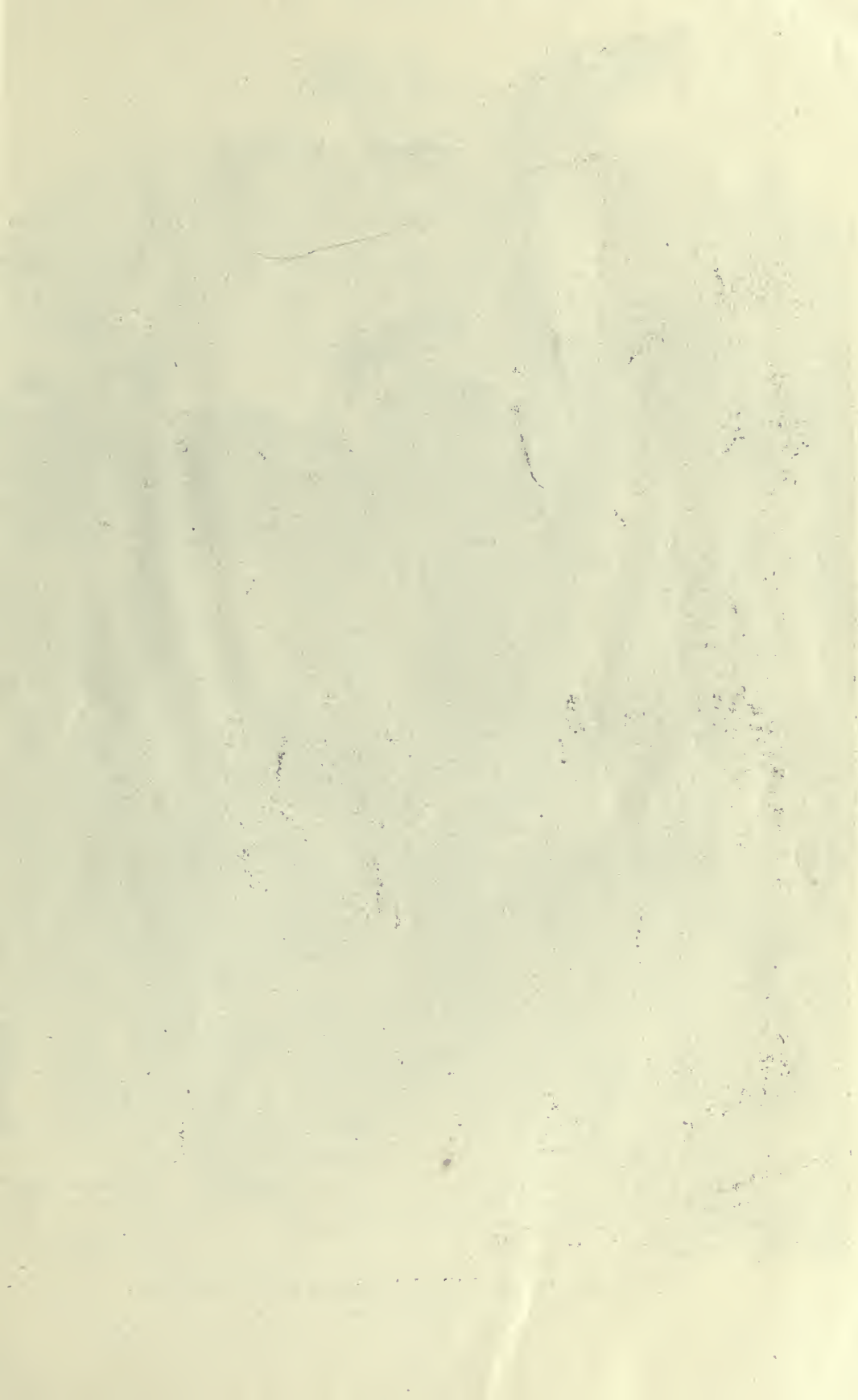
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VOLUME VI.

DECEMBER, 1899.

NUMBER 12.

THE FINGER OF GOD.

BY W. C. MORROW.



The boom of the shining brass cannon that stood in front of the prison office at San Quentin warned the inside and outside guards, and all the people for a league thereabout, that a convict had escaped. Children loitering homeward from school stopped, looked apprehensively at the summit of the ridge intervening between them and the prison walls, huddled closer, and then quickly sought the safety of their homes. Many a horse jogging along the neighboring highways heard a hurrying chirrup and felt the smart touch of a whip as his driver sent the impulse of the cannonshot into his laggard legs. For not only might a hunted and desperate man at large invade all personal rights in the pursuit of his safety, but soon would come eager men on horse and afoot, and likely the singing of rifle balls in the air.

Janet, the nurse of little Elaine, the prison warden's daughter, was one whose face paled and lips parted as the heavy boom of the gun struck her heart. She, better than the people of the countryside, realized the dangers of the moment; for over and over, day after day, the warden had cautioned her; again and again had she heard terrible

accounts of these savage men, who when it came to a fight for their freedom, gave the value of human life no place in their reckoning; and more than once she had heard the boom of the cannon, seen eager men hunting their game to quarry, and listened with a still heart to the singing of rifle-balls in the air.

These two, Janet and little Elaine, had been spending a happy afternoon in the hills overlooking the great prison—all the happier that it had been so peaceful and quiet. Gentle as little Elaine always was, it seemed to Janet that never had the frail child been so lacking in manifestations of infantile animal life, so spiritual, so dainty, so exquisitely touched by what poor ignorant Janet whispered to herself was the Finger of God. For all that, it was clear that little Elaine was happy. The content that filled her young heart shone like a radiance in her wan face and her wide, patient blue eyes, and at times came forth tangible in a rare smile, which, instead of dimpling her cheeks, lent them strange, bright wrinkles. So genuine was her happiness that she had even neglected the customary primness of her hair, which, having lost its encompassing ribbon, had gone wild about her head in childish abandon, its amber

THE FINGER OF GOD.

sheen glowing like the light which ushers the rising sun. Not once during the whole shining afternoon had the watchful eyes of Janet seen in the patient face of her charge that familiar dumb picture of pain which the deformed back of the child had so often painted there.

Little Elaine had heard the boom of the cannon, and understood its meaning. Even before Janet had recovered from the fear that stilled her heart the child was struggling unaided to her feet. "We must go quickly, dear," said Janet, catching up the child's hat from the ground, while Elaine's thin fingers were bringing the wild amber sunbeams under ribboned subjection.

Elaine said not a word, and gave no sign of fear. She could walk very well, though slowly—too slowly for the terrified nurse, who unceremoniously seized the child in her arms for hasty flight down the hill-slope and through the stunted oaks to the warden's home outside the prison wall.

"Put me down, Janet!" she peremptorily demanded with the imperiousness of childhood. "I want to walk." In an instant Elaine had wriggled from her nurse's embrace and was standing defiantly before her. Her keen sense of the indignity that had been thrust upon her lent such an unwonted color to her cheeks, and such an uncanny rebuke to her eyes, staring now so widely at Janet, that the girl was dismayed. The impulse, born of the agonizing fear which beset her, to seize the child and bear her to safety, wavered before the stern and unearthly expression of the child's face; and then, before she could shape her conduct, Elaine started down the hill with deliberate steps, remarking to the world at large:

If you wish to go home with me, you may do so. I am not afraid. He will not hurt us."

The delay had been fatal; for He, panting with the exertion of his flight and with the lust of freedom, bounded up the slope and came to a halt before them. Knowing the instinct of the feminine throat in an extremity, and observing that its functions in Janet's case would give themselves instant exercise, the outlaw made a dash for her, closed his powerful fingers about her neck, and flung her unconscious to the ground. Then his gigantic form and menacing eyes faced Elaine.

They recognized each other at once. Still, and silent, and white, with a terrific awe enfolding her spirit, she gazed upward into the face of the most turbulent and dangerous of all the social flotsam that had drifted into her father's keeping. She knew him for his masterful size, his wild, hungry fanged glance, and his voice like a bull's. She knew him for his prison record, with its alternate outbursts of rage and sufferings of punishment; its blasphemies and violence; its assaults; its hatred of the authorities; its dreary weeks in the dungeon. She knew him for the man who had chiseled an oath into the stone face of the prison that he would kill her father. She knew him for the one human being who had had an unkind word for her, and that was when he cursed her one day and called her the warden's brat, and told her that she was a hunchback.

It was only for a moment that the giant and the cripple faced each other, but all those memories, and more rioted in the child's recollection, while her sharp ears caught the faint sounds of



hurried preparations for the chase, far down through the stunted oaks. The swift galloping of horses, the shouted commands of officers, the faint rattle of metal—nothing was lost.

The momentary spell was broken by her small musical voice.

"Tom," she said, "you can't get away; they will catch you." Ah, had she only not spoken!

"Bah!" growled the convict, shaking off the paralysis that had momentarily overtaken him.

"The warden's brat—the hunchback!" His hoarse voice was choked with infinite hatred. Whatever murderous intention might have warmed his blood for an instant it were idle to imagine; for at once there flashed through his mulling brain a splendid plan of safety. "You will be my shield, my bodyguard, you twisted spawn!" With that he caught her up in his arms. "The bullet that finds me will first let daylight through you!" He dashed over the hill bearing her securely.

It was a wild flight: Down the further side of the hill the convict fled, across a dangerously open ravine, and up the contiguous slope, avoiding the roads, keeping always a wholly unfrequented route, and heading for the mountains, some miles away. Nothing cared he for the strong tree branches that tore the child's clothing, snatched off her hat, and started the blood in scratches from her skin. Once or twice her flowing hair, freed from its restraining ribbon caught in the trees, but with an oath he wrenched off the limb and plunged onward, laboring, panting, never ceasing his firm hold upon her, never staying his flight except for a moment now and then as he would gain an eminence

and sweep the country in search of his pursuers. The load that he bore was small and light and it meant nothing to his superb strength. Across a shoulder and held in one arm he bore her, the other arm free to open a way through the brush and trees, now steadily growing more and more a stubborn hinderance to his progress, and more and more a torture to the living shield that he bore.

Hours had passed, and no pursuers had been seen. All through this wild flight little Elaine, though scratched by the branches till she bled, and though suffering agonies from the straining of her back, said not a word and made not a moan.

After many miles of this arduous exertion the convict began to slacken his pace. They were now well on toward temporary security in the mountains, and night was close at hand. From struggling over every foot of the ground the convict fell into a walk. The morsel on his shoulder could feel the giant chest heave painfully, and she knew by the unsteady swaying of his body that the strength of his legs had come nearly to an end. As the tension of the flight relaxed, his exertions slackened, and then she knew by his eager searching around that he was consumed with thirst.

Staggering on, the man at last found a gulch, which, though dry, gave promise of water in its higher reaches. Twilight had now come, and it imperceptibly merged into moonlight as he labored heavily up the canyon. A welcome trail made by cattle relieved the severer hardships of his progress, and this and the growing night gave him greater ease of mind. It seemed to occur to him suddenly that the burden on his

shoulder was a living thing and that it had been strangely limp and quiet. With some haste he drew her down and peered into her wide-open eyes. To his gratification he found her not only alive, but conscious.

"Hullo," he gruffly cried. "Been asleep? This has been a great lark, eh? Never had anybody to carry you so far?"

Well, well! that isn't bad and you've stood it like a brick!"

The tone and manner of the man were so different from their first expression that they sent a small thrill of comfort into the numb heart and aching body of the child.

"Oh," she exclaimed, with an approach to cheerfulness, "I didn't mind it much!"

"You didn't!" echoed the astonished man. He was so bewildered that all he could say was, "Well, well, well!" Then with something of tenderness he adjusted her more comfortably in both his arms, and thus slowly proceeded up the canyon.

The change seemed to give her great relief, for she nestled her head against his shoulder and sighed in satisfaction. This bewildered the fugitive the more; and although a vicious thirst was gnawing him and sharp cramps stung the overstrained muscles of his legs, he felt a strange pleasure in pressing the soft, frail little form closer to his chest, and feeling its warmth there, and the sweet childish breath that swept his neck. He muttered unintelligibly to himself about it all, and then, after saying, "Well, well!" a great many times, he reached the climax in one hearty exclamation—"I'll be hanged!"

He found the water at last, and so eager was he for it that he half dropped

the child in putting her down, and was in the act of throwing himself upon the ground to drink, when he suddenly checked himself, glanced at the little heap lying so still, and said:

"Well! hang me if I hadn't almost forgotten the little one. Don't you want a drink?"

"Yes," came the gentle answer from a very dry throat, but there was a smile in it.

"Of course the little one wants a drink. Come! can you lie down flat and drink?"

She tried, but when she moved she caught her breath in pain, for the ailing back had been sorely tried in the rough flight.

"It hurts, Little One?"—and yet she had tried hard not to let him see that it did. "Well, well! now, you lie still, and I'll make you a cup."

With that he dexterously shaped a cup from a leaf, rinsed it carefully, filled it, and placed it to her lips. She drank with a dainty eagerness, and her wide eyes asked for more; which the outlaw gave to her, and then another, and another, as her eyes asked for more, until the fugitive began to exhibit alarm.

"Little One!" he cried, "where in thunder are you putting all that water? Why, you must have been dying for it, and you never said a word and I never thought of it!"

She smiled amusedly at him, and the wrinkling of her face as she did so, brought a strange look into his. He gazed at her so steadily that she became uneasy and reminded him that he had not drunk.

"Oh, bless my soul, I had forgotten all about it!"

Thereupon he flung himself down and

drank so long, and eagerly, and deeply that a thin childish voice cried in mock alarm:

"Tom! where in thunder are you putting all that water?"

He straightened up instantly, and as soon as he could get his breath his mighty chest and wide throat gave issue to a hearty laugh that rang up and down through the canyon as never laughter had done in that wilderness before.

But there were graver things to consider—among them the danger of the vast laugh that had gone ringing up and down through the canyon; for the man knew with his every thinking faculty that the pursuit of him, since he had stolen the child,

would be relentless and desperate, and that his hunters would count their lives as nothing so long as he retained possession of her. Confused plans raced through his turbulent brain. Now that the immediate danger of attack was past, he no longer had need of her, and it had been his plan to abandon her when night should come so that he might continue his flight unhampered and under cover of darkness. But now he seemed to have forgotten that—at

least, he thought it might be just as well to find shelter for her, as the night was growing cold and the child was dressed for a summer day. It was out of the question to make a fire to warm her. He took her hands. They felt so cold, and thin, and soft in his great hot palms that the softness, and smallness, and coldness of them seemed to hurt him in

some way that he could not understand. He roused himself out of that.

"I'm terribly hungry, Little One," he said.

"Are you? And you have nothing to eat. I am very sorry."

He looked down at her quickly as she still lay on the ground.

"You must be hungry too, Little One," he said.

"Oh, I don't

mind that!" she protested.

That dazed him. He gazed at her a full minute in silent astonishment, and then, speaking low to himself, half reverently, he said:

"Well, well—I'll be hanged!"

A certain indefinable wretchedness, a certain aching that he could in no way understand, weighed upon his breast. All his strained mental alertness, all the capabilities of his tremendous muscles, fell into awkwardness and he



floundered miserably.

"Do you feel the cold, Little One?" he asked foolishly.

"Oh, not much!"

"Get up and run about; that will warm you."

Her small face wrinkled into a smile at this gruff but thoughtful command, and she tried to obey, but sank again.

"Let me help you," he said, lifting her gingerly to her feet, as though he feared that she would break under his rough touch. But her thin face betrayed the pain that she suffered, and her legs seemed incapable; so she sank to the ground. Then a strange, wild look of alarm entered her face.

"Tom!" she called in unspeakable fear, looking up as he bent over her. "Tom!"

"I won't hurt you, Little One."

"I know, I know, but where are my legs, Tom?"

"Why, here they are, Little One—don't you see?"

She put out her hand with a strange hesitation, felt them, pinched them, and then, with added terror, she said sobbing:

"Those are not mine, Tom! I don't feel them. It doesn't hurt to pinch them. I can't feel anything there, and just now, when I tried to stand they were gone, Tom!"

Thus was the brave little spirit broken at last, and the hulking giant, who understood it all, lurched back upon his feet, and gazed speechless down upon the wreck that he had made, lying before him sobbing, her eyes all terror-filled, and her thin arms held out beseechingly toward him. And then the weight that he had felt in his chest, and the strange pain that had gnawed him there, became the one a mountain and

the other a tiger, smothering and devouring the wildness in him, the desperation, the splendid ferocity. With infinite awkwardness, which his tenderness concealed, he seated himself beside her, took off his convict's coat, wrapped her snugly in it, smoothed back her wild hair and placed his convict's cap upon her head and drew it down over her ears, took her gently in his arms, and held her snugly and comfortably there. No word had he spoken, for his power of speech was choked back within him. The thin little face lay upon his shoulder close to his cheek.

The giant holding her thus, and saying nothing, swayed his body to and fro, as a mother might, and gradually the Little One's sobbing ceased, and he thought she had gone to sleep; but presently she shrank a little and quietly said:

"Tom, you will get wet out here."

"How, Little One?"—but his voice was thick.

"From the rain. I felt some drops on my cheek. They were hot."

The convict made no reply, but he drew her closer and held his head further back.

After a time he knew that she had gone to sleep. Then the mysteries of the night, the wonderful silence of the moon, the dangers that hunted him, the gently heaving morsel that he held in his arms, all these worked unceasingly upon him, bewildering him, deadening him, filling him with strange and unaccountable agonies. Hardly did he realize that he should have been many miles away, that every moment was bringing nearer to him those terrible hounds of the law that no doubt must be finding his trail

as often as they lost it, and, aided by the telegraph, were drawing in upon him from many directions. Numbly he pictured them in his imagination as they picked their way in the darkness, silently, eagerly, with unfailing alertness, and with rifles always cocked and ready for instant use. And back of all that he saw the huddled form of a woman lying where his good strong hands had tossed her, and a strange, small, white vision of calm and unterrified dignity standing before him as though it were the warning Finger of God.

Toward morning the Little One stirred. He soothed her into slumber again, but presently he looked down into her face, and in the gray light of morning he beheld her wide blue eyes looking calmly up into the sky.

"Are you ready to go now, Little One?" he asked.

She sighed wearily and answered, "Yes." One awful question he had not the courage to ask, one awful test he had not the courage to make—he would not let her feet touch the ground. He gave her some water, and still holding her gently in both arms, and keeping her wrapped in his convict's coat, strode rapidly down the canyon, though escape lay the other way.

"You shall have something to eat very soon, Little One," he said, "and a good place to rest."

He swung along at a free gait, quite different from the crouching, stealthy, hunted flight of the day before. With his head thrown back he faced the daylight and the open world, and instead of the wild and desperate ferocity which the child had seen before in his face, was the calmness of serene and satisfied manhood.

Presently he turned out of the canyon into a trail for which he had been evidently searching, ascended the slope, found a road, and followed it openly and unafraid. Before long he arrived at a rude cabin and there found a few rough men preparing their breakfast. He entered without ceremony.

The men were speechless, but the convict paid no attention to their surprise.

"Are you woodchoppers?"

One of them stammered an affirmative answer.

"Well," said the fugitive, "that means that you are honest men. You see what I am. There is no sense in standing there like fools—I won't eat you. Give me something for the Little One to eat. Do you hear? That bread, that milk—hurry, you fools!" But not waiting for their dazed obedience, he seated himself at their table, propped the child up against his left arm, and brought the food to her lips. She began to eat ravenously, but the convict interrupted:

"Slow, Little One, slow—there is time. Here—try a little of this coffee; it is good and warm, and woodchoppers have honest victuals."

"But, Tom," she protested, "you are hungrier than I am. You eat first."

He looked around the men in a bewildered, foolish way, glancing at each in turn as they stood awkwardly looking on, and there was a certain air of pride and triumph in his manner, as though it meant to say, "Did you ever see anything like that?" But they were so astonished at the spectacle of a man in convict dress—evidently an escape—huge, savage, bareheaded, having in charge so small and dainty and elegant a little morsel of childhood, and tending and feeding her as if that were the one

thing in life remaining for him to do, instead of thinking first that they were his possible captors, eager for the price that would surely be set upon his head, that they could only stand and wonder in stupid silence.

The hunger of the fugitive and his charge was satisfied at last, and when the Little One thanked the choppers the convict declared in astonishment that he would be hanged.

"Why, Little One," he declared, "these men are proud to do that for you!" And they promptly said that they were.

The convict then put the Little One to bed in one of the bunks of the cabin, sat down beside her, and without giving any further heed to the men, said reassuringly:

"You will soon be home again."

She started, and a quick bright flush came into her pallid cheeks; then she smiled as she looked gratefully at him, extended a small hand to be grasped by his, settled herself comfortably, closed her eyes, and soon was asleep.

The convict gently released the child's hand, rose, and wearily stretched his prodigious frame. Up to this time he had paid no attention to the men. He had not observed that one by one they had quietly slipped outside, but he seemed to feel no apprehension when he discovered on tiptoeing to the door and looking out that they had all disappeared.

A quick glance backward into the cabin revealed the evil glint of a rifle that leaned against the wall. It fascinated the man. Though he had been made of iron, his pose could not have been more rigid as he stood while the shimmer of the rifle found its way into

the ultimate depths of his nature and kindled life and stimulation there.

He walked back as one in a trance, looking neither to right nor left; picked up the weapon, examined it critically, found that it was in perfect order and of large caliber, and that its magazine was full, laid it across his arm, and with a trance-like stride stepped out of the cabin into the open. A shot, which brought a biting sting in his neck, put him instantly in command of all his faculties.

The cabin stood upon a bald mountain and many yards below was the breast of the forest. It was a laboring distance for a rifle to carry true, and likely the bullet that found the convict's neck had had the help of chance. Only from that direction could the attack be made, as back of the cabin the mountain was naked to the crown.

The convict, watchfully scanning the forest front for a mark, held his rifle poised. The gray convict color had returned to his face, and with it all the hardness and sullen determination of a man making a final stand for his freedom or his life. But was it so? Wherefore stood he out in the open, when the cabin walls might have given him so secure protection? What had become of his purpose to use the Little One as a shield against which a rifle could not even be aimed? No matter. It was a thing of his own doing, the action of a man under a joyous inspiration of the knowledge that he was free—free to live or die in the manner that his soul should choose. Behind the dark forest rampart there might be a dozen, a score, a hundred men with shining eyes at that moment ranging rifle-sights upon his breast; at any instant, from the wide arc that

stretched before him, might come an overwhelming charge of men mounted and afoot to riddle him at closer quarters. But there he stood alone, massive, calm, defiant, his eyes blazing with the madness of hate, his gray face drawn with the passion to kill. And not the slightest heed did he give to the stinging in his neck or the blood that trickled down and saturated the convict's shirt on his breast.

A puff of smoke issued from the edge of the forest. The bullet went astray, but instantly the convict had sent an answering one. Then the arc gave forth a long scattered line of men. They ran rapidly up the slope, and when the convict's rifle came again to bear—this time upon the leader, who was the warden himself—every man fell flat, and the convict reserved his fire. Thus he stood with his rifle poised, ready to shoot the first man who rose; but they were too wily for that. Then he beheld an extraordinary scene. The pursuers, instead of coming to their feet and charging, began to crawl upon their bellies up the mountain-side. Thus in deathly silence approached the wriggling line, made of small black dots upon the ground.

The convict was bewildered. The slowness of the advance, the deadly and implacable purpose of it, and its awful silence weighed cold and heavy upon his spirit. If they would only come on like men, with shouts and the cracking of rifles, how gloriously he could fight, how bravely he could die! But the line crept on with the slow fatality of the rising tide. Its every inch of progress shortened the range, and the very position of the men on the ground would lend a deadly effectiveness to their aim.

But they were wasting no shots now.

The convict fired at one of the black spots, and saw the dust that his bullet raised near it; but worse than that, he saw the line spring to its feet, dash forward, and sink the moment he had thrown the lever and was ready for another shot.

The line crept steadily on. Then an ominous stillness fell upon it, and a volley rang out from end to end. The convict fell, and the line dashed onward. He arose to a sitting posture, then to his knees, and the line dropped again.

At this juncture there appeared in the doorway of the cabin, within sight of all the men, and in range behind the convict, a tiny morsel of humanity, known in certain quarters as the Little One. The door-facing and the cabin walls to her right and left showed the rips and tears of rifle-balls. Though the hunters could not see at that distance the terror in her wide eyes and the deepened pallor of her cheeks, they did behold, and some of them recognized, the thick crown of fair hair to which the early sun had lent a richer amber glow.

"Tom!" she called.

That struck him harder and cut deeper than the stinging bite in his neck and the vicious leg-snip that had cut him down. He flung the rifle aside, rose to his feet, and, a great light driving the black iron from his face, he cried exultantly:

"Why, Little One, you've found your legs!" And then she ran to him, and he caught her up in his arms.

There are said to be those living to-day who declare that in their opinion the convict threw away his rifle and snatched up the child as the better protection of his life. But—well upon one

point there is no variance of opinion, for it was what every man saw and heard: The Little One led the unarmed giant by the hand to meet his pursuers, and promised him again and again, in response to his pleadings, while she nestled in her father's arms, that she would visit him in the prison every day.

GOD'S MYSTERY.

Into my heart there came a harbinger of spring;
 A something vague, and undefined
 As that strange change which comes in one night's dark,
 And when the daylight falls, we say, "The spring is here!"
 Frozen and cold my heart pulsed wearily,
 Like mountain torrent 'cased in icy fold;
 Which held its joy and song within itself,
 Nor thought 'twould e'er again find utterance.
 But lo! A warm, encircling, penetrating light,
 Like sun of spring to snow enshrouded fount,
 Came close and closer yet, from out life's void,
 And wrought God's Mystery!
 The icy band which seals the streamlets flow,
 Makes music as it slowly melts away,
 So does the frost-cold casing 'round my heart,
 Yield to the warmth of love most gratefully.
 No more the song and joy will be confined;
 No more will be the pent up ecstasy!
 Like rippling flow of waters long repressed,
 My heart sings joyously, "Love, Love is here!"

—ALICE HARRIMAN.



KIM LUNG, HUMORIST.

By Alice Prescott Smith.

DAWN comes slowly in the California redwoods. Long after the far-away patches of blue show pink flushes, deep wells of shadow lie among the giant tree boles, and the burnished leaves of the manzanita wear their midnight livery.

The pony waked first, and with gentle neighs and furtive pawings reproachfully summoned his master to look at the lengthening arrows of light that were already coloring the lofty arches of their forest lodge. The answer came with a long-drawn yawn.

"All right, old fellow, I hear. Went to sleep, didn't I? Well, here goes for breakfast."

The "go" through the forest was not a rapid one. It was still dusky, and even a mountain-bred pony has reservations about jumping over logs, when certain possibilities may be sleeping on the other side; so Sambo and his master picked their way with nicety till the brown stretches of the open road offered dusty and prosaic footing. Here they traveled briskly, with gay whistle accompanying the clattering heels, till the pony stopped abruptly before a sentinel redwood. The whistle jerked to a discord.

"Well done, Sambo! You're a practical brute!" and, with a spring, the rider disappeared in the cavity of the tree—a cavity that played wayside inn, through the long rains, to many a furry wanderer—soon emerging with an irregular bundle loosely wrapped in an old newspaper.

On once more, with the growing light gilding the attendant dust cloud, till, at a turn in the road, the forest wall gave place to the rough desolation of a clearing. The house—large, bare, neglected, and uglier than common, in that it was built of sawed boards instead of logs—stood at the edge of the woodland, and borrowed a fleeting grace from the luxuriant growth of rank grass around it. If loneliness be peace it was a peaceful picture. Even the stream, donor of this unwonted display of greenery, slipped noiselessly under its protecting willows, as if, wearied with its babbling scramble down the rocks, it were glad to lie at quiet length in the silent meadow.

As horse and rider turned toward the corrals, a slight figure parted a clump of bushes further up the stream, and ran to meet them with the headlong speed of a child.

"Hello, Watson!" The voice was slight as the figure. "I'm confoundedly glad to see you! I was worried about you and got out early to look around."

The rider tightened his lips. They had been firm enough before. "Took your fish basket, I see, to bring me home in. Get anything?"

"Nothing worth keeping. I threw some little fellows back. I've been up by the fall, but it was too dark to see the flies on the water, so I made only a few casts. I thought you were up that way."

"I was in the farther timber, where

I belonged," said the elder, shortly, as he turned the pony into its stall.

His companion made no reply, but his sallow face showed a glow of red, and his hands worked in a way that was not pleasant. Watson's face acquired a new line as he looked at him.

"There's nothing to wring your hands over, Jack," he said, as they went toward the house. "If you'd mind your own business and stay in bed, you'd be of more account in the daytime. Somebody has to watch the sheep. You're acting like a woman."

The sharpness of the insult struck out a semblance of fire. "Better get a new partner if you feel that way. It's a deuced queer place for a woman." The cadence of the last word held the echo of a sob, and, controlling his desire to swear, Watson tried to take the boy seriously.

"Look here, old chap," said he, "you need a bracer. You're looking shaky. All the watching I did last night wouldn't hurt a baby. I went sound asleep and would have been there yet, if Sambo hadn't waked me. I'm ready for breakfast. Is Kim up?"

"Kim's always up," said the lad wearily. "He's a perfect cat. You never hear him, but he's always there."

"Well, what of it? Would it soothe your feelings if he banged the pots? We'll import a Biddy to do that, if you say so." Watson's tone was genial. The smell of coffee was good to the nostrils of a hungry man, and he felt in an unwontedly expansive frame of mind. You'll find a package of mail in the pocket of my outside coat," he went on. "Sambo stopped at the tree of his own accord. Hello, Kim! Give us some

coffee—quick, now!"

Kim was the usual soft-footed Chinese, with a most unusual malignity of expression—an expression part nature, more largely cultivation, the cultivation dating from a moment when he had suggested returning to the haunts of civilization and fantan, leaving his master cookless. Watson had been in a peremptory mood that day, and had punctuated his remarks with a pistol. Kim did not go—not that he wholly believed the threats, but white devils of uncertain temper are not to be reckoned with lightly. Then, too, on a lonely ranch opportunities for revenge are not only alluring, but probable. Therefore he stayed, solacing himself by serving the inevitable bacon with an air of dark protest, and pouring the coffee with the mein of a stage Borgia.

His air this morning was unusually tragic, for Watson found the coffee weak, and said as much—in language suited to the emergency. Kim shuffled away with apparent docility, but the kitchen door, judiciously ajar, admitted a rumbling soliloquy.

"White man damn funny. Kim damn funny, too. Maybe you see damn quick."

"Imitative brute, that," drawled Watson, lighting his pipe. "Vocabulary sounds familiar. What's the mail, Jack?"

The lad sorted the letters, chattering like a school-boy. "'Cecil Watson,' 'Cecil Marmaduke Watson.' Take them, you conscienceless grabber. 'John Stark.' That looks better. You've a funny name, 'Cecil'—it isn't like you."

The owner of the funny name laughed. "You've struck my weak point, old man. Yes, that's my debt to a maiden aunt;

and she left everything else to a home for inebriates. She may have thought the name would drive me there, eventually. A pretty kind of a Cecil Marmaduke I am," and he pinched his biceps approvingly.

The breakfast was proving far and away the most social meal in months, and the lad glowed with enjoyment and sipped his coffee luxuriously.

"Yes, you should have been a John or James," he said, with an adoring look at his friend's girth of chest. "You're such a confoundedly solid sort of a human. Now, I"—spreading a thin hand to the light—"should have a nice sissy name. I'd look it to a T."

"Oh, shut up!" laughed Watson good-humoredly, over his paper. "Those sheep will have to be dipped next week. We must get them into the corral. I'll go over after the dip Saturday, and lay in some things. Kim says we're shy on beans again. I vow I think the heathen must feed them to the hogs."

"You'll be away two nights, won't you? I say, Cecil, can't we get out of this?"

"This what?"

"This house. It's such a beastly hole, and I'm here alone so much! The rats will carry me off some night the way they're going on now."

"I haven't seen any rats, but it's a bit cheaper to get a terrier than a house. We ought to have a dog, anyway. I'll look around for one, Saturday. The house is all right. We're in luck to have a place big enough to turn around in."

Of the bigness of the house there was no question, and it admitted of turnings divers enough to cause vertigo in the very thinking. A hotel in the days when

the stage road was other than a thing of memory and romance, it had sunk by various steps, each more ill-omened than the last, to a state of semi-ruin inviting to the coyotes, who were claiming it as their own when the partners bought the property. The young men restored a few of the rooms to a livable state, and both shut their eyes—and ears when possible—to the remainder. How livable the few might appear depended, not on your traditions, for few had traditions more exacting than Cecil Watson, but on your point of view; and the point of view of a wise ranchman is bounded by shelter and a chimney.

"I could build a log house in the south meadow myself," young Stark ventured, conciliatingly. "It would be lots snugger. This is mighty lonesome."

His partner knocked the ashes from his pipe contemptuously. "Lonesome! If you want society you'd better clear out. I didn't come up here for the social whirl, exactly. I'm herding sheep." He walked out, snapping his fingers impatiently, to forget all about the matter five minutes afterward. He himself was more than content. His every pulse responded to the joy of this vagrant life, and he resented the complaints of his partner as if they had been personalities. The sheep, whose fleeces were to send him back to England, were comparatively safe in the daytime, but with the sun-down came a time of peril for creatures sworn to the arts of peace; and so, through the long nights, their Jason rode the range, marring the midnight sport of many a soft-footed hunter. They were glorious nights in the main—a pipe, a horse, and sovereignty of the great breathing forest. Include youth, and kings have died for less. As for

danger—well, he used his pistol not indifferently; then, too, he was an Englishman, and nature chooses her pathfinders wisely.

When the moonlight traced its silver broideries over the mosses in his way, he would lie for hours on the aromatic earth, looking up through the weaving branches at the frosted cone of the great Shasta, outlined against the gray. The darker nights, too, were full of their own peculiar witchery; still, close nights, when rank odors from tree and flower brought strange dream-pictures in their train. But the wild nights were best of all. Then the tide of life leaped with the crash of the wind, and Sambo and his master learned the fierce joy of primitive savagery. All were nights for thought, not for conscious reflection, other than of wandering coyotes, or the meaning of a snapping twig, but for rambling imaginings of the not unpleasant past and the yet rosier future. Watson puffed his pipe over uncounted visions wherein he figured not ungallantly, and the battles of the coming years were fought and won to the tinkling accompaniment of the sheep bell. Sometimes he thought of a girl, but more infrequently, for she was the least satisfactory of all his nebulous companions, being variable beyond the wont of her sex, and refusing to wear the same hair and complexion two weeks together. Her eyes, too, suffered many a sea change, though of late they had been deeply blue, with eye-brows piquantly arched. Similar eyes had looked across a tennis net in Sausalito, and Watson found the memory diverting.

As for taking his partner with him on these night rides—nonsense! Stark was

a frail, whimsical lad, as unfitted for hardship as a woman. Watson had promised his people at home to look after him, and it appealed to the overmastering masculinity in the man to treat this slender boy with the patronizing kindness that was as yet his sole concession to the sex commonly called weaker. They seldom met save at their hurried meals. The youngster talked too much; a phase of his annoying womanliness that his censor tolerantly hoped he would outgrow.

One night an unwonted chill in the June air sent Watson home earlier than usual, with longing thoughts intent on blankets. As the pony clattered past the corrals, his rider's eye, trained to the subtlest distinction of shadow, saw a figure moving under the willows in the direction of the house.

"Hands up, there! Quick!" commanded Watson, from behind his revolver. His voice rang sharply, and his blood danced at the prospect of adventure; but it was only Stark, who moved toward him with reluctant apology.

"I'm not worth shooting, Cecil. Don't make such a confounded row."

For once Watson did not frown. "By the Lord Harry, Jack, what's the matter with you? What are you doing out of bed at this hour?"

The lad put both hands appealingly on his partner's arm. "I can't stay in the house," he said. "They make so much noise! Hear Them now," and he shivered nearer to his friend. "They don't know you're here, or They'd go away. They are afraid of you."

"What They? The rats? For heaven's sake, boy, what are you talking about?"

"Rats! No. They—the Things, you know. Hear Them?" The long-drawn wail of a coyote sounded near.

"Oh, those brutes!" cried Mason, with a relieved laugh. "Why, man, they won't hurt you!"

"Coyotes," said the boy, knowingly. "Funny kind of coyotes that have two legs and—." The look of wondering distaste that he encountered roused him. He brushed his hand over his face, and essayed a laugh. "I was just talking, Cecil. Come on, let's turn in."

"All right. Better bunk with me, Jack—it's cold."

"Just as you like."

The lad assented with an indifference that, barring the terror in his eyes, was well done. Watson saw the eyes and drew conclusions—somewhat startling ones. He found he had matter for thought, and gave several wakeful hours to its consideration. Who were They, and what was the trouble with the old house? The night was teaching him that it was a dank sort of place, with possibilities that a certain kind of people might call ghostly. Watson joyed to the bottom of his honest, Pharasaical soul that he was not that kind of people. The gusty halls rumbled with unknowable noises. Gray shapes chattered in the shadows. Were they rats? Highly decorated tales clamored at his memory; tales of lives lived—or otherwise—in the room where he lay. The tales had been a convenience formerly, but a haunted house, however comforting to the pocketbook of the buyer, has its drawbacks at two in the morning, and Watson, looking at his sleeping partner, wished, for one sentimental moment, that they had paid more and bought less. He

had been a little hard on Jack. He must cheer him up; talk to him more. The house wasn't exactly a cheerful place to be alone in, he admitted, with a candor newborn of a vague perplexity. What a mysterious old hole it was! He could swear that some of those noises came from a human throat if he didn't know better. How could they come from a person when there was no one there?

He tossed uneasily at the suggestion. There was Kim, of course. Could he be given to midnight prowlings? Hardly. He wouldn't make such noises, anyway. The house must have a thorough overhauling, and that before long; in the meantime he would keep Jack with him. His eminently praiseworthy resolutions sent him to sleep in a glow of self-satisfaction. For full two days the resolves bore fruit, and might have kept on doing so, but that a letter from England brought news that made Watson distinctly aggrieved at the way things were going at home.

Nothing is so wholly absorbing as a grievance. In fact, a thoroughly developed grievance supplies not only occupation, but companionship as well, and makes its possessor singularly independent of surroundings. So the days slipped on, and the night rides grew yet longer, under this congenial stimulus.

Watson had been over at the settlement for two days. Kim's appetite for beans and bacon smacked of the abnormal, and no supply seemed equal to the colossal demands of the household. It was sunset as Watson rode into the clearing. He was glad to be at home; for deeper than his active consciousness lay a troublesome worry about Jack. The long ride had crystallized his reso-

lution to see more of the boy. He was very fond of the lad. How sharp had been his anxiety he realized when he saw the familiar figure walking the unrailled porch in front of the house. In his relief he grew demonstrative, and, throwing the reins to the Chinese, hurried to the front door.

The northern redwoods were unused to the splendor of the figure that met him—frock coat, crush hat, patent leathers; all sadly rumped, but worn with jaunty assurance. A look in the lad's eyes stopped his friend's rising laughter.

"Well, old fellow," he said, gravely, "you're dressed early. Going to the opera?"

"Possibly." The tone was evidently intended to be chilling. "I wish, for your own self-respect, Cecil, that you'd preserve the decencies of life, and dress yourself properly. If you had the instincts of a gentleman you'd know better."

"It's rather bad, that's a fact. I must turn over a new leaf." Watson taught his tone, humility, and tried to grasp the situation. Stark was blocking the door, and his eyes were queer. "You'll have to excuse me to-night, though, Jack. I have no frock coat, and my evening clothes are a little out of repair." Instinct told him it was as well not to remind his friend that the dress suit in question had done valiant duty in furnishing hinges for the gate only the week before.

Stark gave way sulkily, and started for the dining-room. "I want you to understand that I won't put up with this much longer," he said querulously. "This isn't fit for pigs." His voice was growing shrill.

Watson did some rapid thinking. How much of this was masquerade? How could he deal with it? The wave of pity that choked him made him turn to the window to clear his eyes. A familiar click brought him around with a whirl like an automaton. The width of the dining table was between the men, but Stark's thin arms were long, and Watson found the barrel of a revolver unpleasantly near his eyes.

"I'm going to kill you when I count ten," the maniac announced complacently.

From the whirling centuries that passed through Watson's mind, an old story shrieked at his benumbed consciousness.

"All right, Jack, but no hurry about it, is there? Better wait till I finish milking. You'll spoil your clothes in the cow yard. You can kill me later just as well."

The head behind the revolver wagged derisively, but Watson's tongue was regaining its normal state, and he talked on glibly, meanwhile trying sundry experiments with his eye, that did not seem as satisfactory as tradition promised. He mentally damned tradition, and put forth fresh endeavor.

"They won't like it if you kill me," he said, with what he hoped sounded like menace. "They are afraid of me. If you touch me they will punish you."

The maniac shivered, then chuckled horribly. An idea had come to him. He found it pleasing.

"We will ask Them," he cackled. "We will wait and ask Them. Then you will see. You will see Them all. They will play with you." The idea was monstrously amusing. He enjoyed it afresh,

but never to the detriment of the aim of his revolver.

The diversion promised a gain of time, but Watson did not feel conspicuously elated. A price for life itself may be too heavy to bear payment, and it was growing dark. Kim did not come, but that was no surprise. Many things were becoming clear, and Kim was one of them—Kim, with his muttered threats, and his voracity for beans. Watson thought of the many trips to the settlement that had left the boy so much alone, and shut his teeth hard. Truly, he had been easily duped.

As the shadows blackened, Stark began to talk. Given most conditions, his story might have sounded odd. Just then it appeared most matter-of-fact.

He had been afraid of Them at first, he admitted—so afraid that he used to sit out of doors all night rather than hear Them. He knew better now. Oh, They were a jolly lot! They told him stories—such funny, funny stories! His glee at this point was a thing of which one must not talk. And They were so clever, too! Why, They had told him about Cecil long before he would have thought of suspecting! Oh, he was only poor, foolish Jack, and was easily humbugged; but They were clever, so clever! Cecil needn't think he didn't know.

What he knew Watson found it wiser not to ask. The Thing in the corner preferred monologue, and its manner, when irritated, was disturbing.

They had told him how to kill Cecil, too, and how red the blood would be, and how warm; and how it would trickle, trickle—They knew, for their own blood had trickled in that room. Oh, They were merry company! Wat-

son should see.

He did see. Some of the hours ticked themselves away in what should have been silence—it was silence in that no words were spoken — and Watson thought he learned what Jack had been through. In that he mistook. Had he but known it, Kim's absence robbed the hours of their most picturesque horrors, Kim being somewhat of a humorist, and having, withal, a taste for melodrama.

At times it racked even Watson's unworn young nerves to keep his head clear, and master his longing to grapple with the mumbling shape in the shadows, and end the nightmare. No, he must not move. He must endure till daylight. The alternative held the greater horror that he might kill this Thing that had been his friend; kill him in the darkness, where the blood would—he broke off at this point, and concluded to whistle, an impulse he again found it prudent to restrain. Yes, he would wait till daylight; odd that it didn't come! Could he, too, be going insane? Nonsense! What an ass he was making of himself! Of course, it was a cloudy morning. The light must come now, very soon. He would count the seconds. Sixty to the minute, he checked them off with his fingers. It was safer to occupy his fingers when the waves of savage repulsion well-nigh drowned his self-control. Not that it was all repulsion. More overwhelming than his horror, rolled the surge of a feeling so new that he did not know it for remorse.

He had counted hours away, now in unendurable suspense, now in benumbing apathy, when a lightening of the blackness showed him the glitter of eyes. The table was still between them, then;

he had not been sure. As the light gained, courage grew. The face across the table looked so familiar, so commonplace, so unexpectedly dear! Where was his midnight demon? Why, this was Jack Stark, his friend, his adoring imitator, his boyish comrade who had slept by his side!

A sudden moisture clouded his eyes. "Jack!" he cried, "Come, old boy! Stop playing tricks. It's a glorious morning. Get those togs off, and we'll take a canter."

For a moment it seemed that the familiarly authoritative tone had won. The stiff figure relaxed, and the shifting eyes drooped—drooped till they caught sight of the revolver—then gathered a temporary firmness.

"All right, as soon as I kill you." The shaking hand stroked the revolver caressingly, and took fresh aim, but the owner of the quiet eyes did not flinch.

"Don't be a fool, boy," he said, tersely. "That thing won't go off. Don't you remember that Kim knocked it off the shelf? Look at the hammer."

The ruse gained only an instant, but it was long enough for Watson's clear hand-spring over the table. His bulk knocked the slighter figure against the wall, and threw the revolver across the room, where it discharged harmlessly at the ceiling.

Locked in a swaying embrace, the figures staggered about, bruising against the table, crashing over chairs. Watson felt sure of his endurance, but the hands at his throat troubled him. He had heard of the strength of a maniac, and though he had grown wary of tradition, in this case it seemed trustworthy. His head struck the rough stones of the fire-place, and red drops blinded his eyes.

"Trickle, trickle, trickle," giggled the voice near his ear. Whose voice was it? If those hands would only let go a little, he could think better. How blue Jack's eyes were! He must be careful not to hurt Jack. But it wasn't Jack at all; it was a girl, and her eye-brows—oh, see the strange, bright light!

And then, mercifully, though daylight had come at last, he did not see.

* * * * *

The ranchman, who came into the room two days later, and examined the two bodies (the one, the strangled, the other, the suicide) could not understand why two chambers of the revolver were empty, but then he did not stay long. He said it made him sick. That was odd, too, for Kim and the coyotes, who also made investigations, did not mind. But coyotes are inquisitive beasts, and Kim, as I have said, had a sense of humor.



A CHRISTMAS ODE.

Said Gabriel to God; "A mighty army,
At the gates of heaven stands clamoring;
Strange pallid shapes, their withered hands upheld,
And "Justice Lord!" they cry incessantly.
Some with great wounds upon their bodies fair,
But strangely these have countenance content;
Their shrouding prayers beseech a simple peace,
They seem some battle's honorable dead."

"But Lord! our ears are weary of the wails
That surge and breast the very walls of heaven,
Hearken, great God! the groaning agonies
The lamentations of the needless dead.
The grim earth-chorus of a mourning land;
The moans of mothers, menace of strong men,
The wails of women for a bridegroom lost,
The feeble cry of babes now fatherless."

For thirty pieces, Lord, thy son was sold,
With base advantage, misbegotten power;
The shameful merchant's spawn still fouls the earth,
Thy thousand sons are crucified for gain.

* * * * *

Then spake the Lord, and cries of anguished earth
And futile death were stilled, hushed were the heavens,
And lo! the listening angels fold their wings,
And holy silence waits the word of God.

"Hear ye!" then shook the mighty of the land,
Whence rose the shuddering cries, and ghastly paled,
"Ye rulers, fatted with the spoils of earth,
I come to judgment, render your accounts."
"Woe unto ye who sit in high places,
Who sell your saviours for a filthy power;
Repent ye cursèd, for the widows' cry
Comes up against ye, for the Lord is God."

And ye proud Pharisees who pass him by,
Dumb, ye blaspheme, and deaf, hear hell's acclaim.
Your brother's blood calls from the pitying stones,
Ye fools and blind! the night is almost come.
Woe to the land where monstrous murder reigns,
Where impious silence canonizes crime;
Lo! the dread harvest even now appears,
I am a just God, and the seed is sown."

THE LITTLE CASK.

(LE PETIT FUT)

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF GUY DE MAUPASSANT, BY WILL KING.

MAITRE CHICOT, the innkeeper of Epreville, drew up in his tilbury before Mother Magloire's farmyard. He was a burly fellow of about forty, florid and pot-bellied, with a reputation for sharp dealing.

He tied his horse to the gate-post and walked into the yard. The old woman's farm adjoined a piece of property of his own, and he had coveted it for a long while. Twenty times he had tried to buy it, but as often had Mother Magloire obstinately refused.

"I was born here; here I'll die," said she.

He found her peeling potatoes before her door. Seventy-two years of age, dry, wrinkled and bent, she was tireless as a girl. Chicot, in friendly fashion, tapped her on the back, and seated himself near her on a footstool.

"Well, Mother, how's the health? Good?"

"Oh, not bad; and how 're you, Mait' Prosper?"

"Eh! eh! pains occasionally. Aside from that it goes well enough."

"That's all right, then."

She said nothing more. Chicot watched her finish her task. Her fingers, knotted and crooked, hard as the claws of a crab, reached out to the basket and seized the tubers as in a pair of pincers; and then she turned them rapidly, stripping off long bands of rind with the blade of an old knife which she held in the other hand. And when the potato

showed all yellowy-white she tossed it into a pail of water. Three valiant hens adventured, one after the other, even as far as her skirts to peck at the rinds, and then fled in all haste, with their plunder in the beak.

Chicot seemed bothered, hesitating, anxious, with something on the end of his tongue which he could not bring himself to utter. Finally he decided:

"Say, Mother Magloire"—

"What can I do for you?"

"This farm—you still don't want to sell it to me?"

"No. Don't count on that. It's said; it's done; don't keep coming back to it."

"But I've got a scheme that would be just the thing for both of us."

"What's that?"

"Listen. You sell it to me, and then you keep it all the same. You don't understand? Follow closely."

The old woman dropped her vegetables, and fixed on the innkeeper her sharp eyes under the wrinkled lids.

He recommenced:

"Now I'll explain myself. Every month I give you a hundred and fifty francs. Understand clearly. Every month I bring here, in my tilbury, thirty five-franc pieces. And then, nothing else is changed, not a single thing; you stay here at home, you don't bother yourself about me, and you owe me nothing. All you do is to take my money. How does that suit you?"

He beamed on her good-humoredly, happily.

The old woman peered at him distrustfully, hunting the trap. She demanded:

"That's my side; but how about you, —that doesn't give you this farm?"

He replied:

"Don't you worry yourself about that. You stay here as long as God lets you live. You're in your own house. Only, you sign a little paper at the notary's, so that after you it will come to me. You have no children; no one but a couple of nephews that you don't care a lot about. Does that suit you? You keep your property all through your life, and I pay you thirty five-franc pieces every month. It is all gain for you."

The old woman was surprised and disturbed, but tempted. She replied:

"I won't say no. Only I want to think that over a little while. Come and talk it over about the middle of next week. I'll let you know, then, what I think about it."

Maitre Chicot departed, pleased as a king who has just conquered an empire.

Mother Magloire remained very thoughtful. She couldn't sleep the following night, and during four days she was in a fever of hesitation. She suspected some trap for herself in this proposal, but the thought of thirty *ecus* each month, of the good, ringing silver which would come flowing into her apron, which would fall as if from heaven, without her turning a hand, ravaged her with desire.

She went to see the notary, and explained her affair to him. He advised her to accept Chicot's proposition, but to demand fifty five-franc pieces every month, instead of thirty, her farm being worth, at the lowest estimate, sixty thousand francs.

"If you live fifteen years," said the notary, "even at these figures, he would only pay you forty-five thousand francs."

The old woman shivered at this prospect of fifty *ecus* of five francs each a month; but she was still distrustful, fearing a thousand unforeseen things, hidden traps, and she stayed at the notary's till evening asking questions, unable to bring herself to go. Finally she authorized him to prepare the papers, and she returned home, her head swimming as though she had drunk four mugs of new cider.

When Chicot came to receive her answer she had to be coaxed a long while, declaring that she would not accede, but consumed with a fear that he would refuse to give her the fifty *ecus*. At last he was so persistent that she announced her terms.

It was a disappointing surprise to him, and he refused.

Then she set about convincing him, and commenced calculating on the probable duration of her life.

"I can't count on more than five or six years more. I'm in my seventy-third now, and none too strong at that. The other evening I thought I was done for. It felt as though some one was tearing my body, and they had to carry me to bed."

But Chicot was not easily caught.

"Go on. Go on, you old swindler, you're as solid as the church tower. You'll reach a hundred and ten at least. You'll be the one to bury me—sure."

The whole day was spent in discussions. But, finally, as the old woman remained obstinate, the innkeeper agreed to pay the fifty *ecus*.

They signed the papers the next day

and Mother Magloire made him throw in ten *ecus*' worth of wine.

Three years rolled by, and the old woman flourished amazingly. She had not aged a day, and Chicot was in despair. It seemed to him that he had been paying this tax for half a century; that he had been trapped, swindled and ruined. From time to time he went to see how she was getting along, as one goes into the fields in July to see whether the grain is ready for the scythe. She welcomed him with shrewd amusement in her eyes. You would have said that she congratulated herself on the good trick she had played him; and he would soon climb back into his tilbury, muttering to himself:

"So you won't die, old carcass!"

He did not know what to do. He would have liked to strangle her every time he saw her. He hated her with a fierce, sinister hatred, the hatred of a peasant who has been tricked.

He set himself to planning.

One day, he went to see her, rubbing his hands, as he had done that first day when he had proposed the bargain.

After chatting a few minutes he broke out:

"Say, Mother, how is it you never come to dine at the inn, when you happen to be in Epreville. Folks talk about it; they say we ain't friends any longer, and I don't like that. You know at my place you don't pay a sou. I'm not particular about a dinner. Come in, just as often as you feel like it, and it will be a pleasure to me."

Mother Magloire needed no coaxing, and, two days later, when she went to market in her carry-all, driven by the farm hand Celestin, she did not hesitate

to put up her horse at Chicot's stable, and present herself for the promised dinner.

The innkeeper, radiant, treated her as though she were a lady, and served her with chicken, blood pudding, *audonille*, with leg of mutton, and bacon with cabbage. But she, abstemious from a child, ate almost nothing, a little soup and a crust of bread and butter having always sufficed.

Chicot, who urged her, was disappointed. She drank nothing, and refused to have coffee after the meal.

"At least, you'll take a small glass of cognac?"

"Oh! that's another matter. I won't say no to that."

And he shouted across the room:

"Rosalie, bring us the fine cognac, the superfine, the gold label."

The servant soon appeared, bringing a tall bottle, ornamented with a vine leaf in gilt paper.

He filled two *liqueur* glasses.

"Taste this, Mother. There's something famous."

The old woman drank it slowly, in little mouthfuls, lengthening out the pleasure. When she had emptied her glass to the last drop, she said:

"Yes, that *is* fine."

While she was speaking Chicot poured her a second glass. She would have refused, but it was too late, and she drank it very slowly, like the other.

Then he tried to make her accept a third round, but she refused. He insisted:

"That—why, that's just like milk; I drink ten or a dozen of them without winking. It melts away like sugar; never bothers your stomach or your

head, just as though it evaporated on the tongue. There's nothing better for the health."

As she really wanted it, she let herself be coaxed, but would only take half a glass.

Then Chicot, in a burst of generosity, cried:

"Here, since you like it so much, I'm going to give you a little cask of it, just to show that we're still a pair of good friends."

The old woman did not refuse, and went away, the least bit drunk.

The next day, the innkeeper drove into Mother Magloire's yard, and produced from the bottom of the wagon a small cask, circled with iron hoops. Then she had to taste the contents to prove that it was the same superfine; and when they had each drunk three glasses he said, in departing:

"You know, when that's finished, there's plenty more. I'm not mean. The sooner that's finished, the better I'll be pleased."

And he climbed back into his tilbury.

He returned four days later, and found the old woman, seated before her door, occupied in cutting the bread for the soup.

He came up to her and said, "Good

day!" speaking close to her face, that he might smell her breath. He recognized a faint odor of alcohol, and his face lighted up.

"Well, are you going to offer me a glass of 'superfine'?" he said.

And they drank each other's health two or three times.

Soon, though, it began to be noised about through the country that Mother Magloire had taken to solitary drinking. They picked her up, now in the kitchen, then in the farmyard, and sometimes in the roads round about, and carried her home inert as a corpse.

Chicot no longer went to see the old peasant, and when any one mentioned her he would murmur with a sad countenance:

"Now, isn't it a pity that at her age she should commence drinking like that! But then, you know, when folks are old they haven't any resources. I'm afraid that it will finish badly for her."

It really did finish badly for her. She died the following winter, near Christmas, having fallen, drunk, in the snow.

And Maitre Chicot inherited the farm, declaring:

"Old fool! if she hadn't drunk so much she'd have been good for another ten years."

TRUTH.

Truth flees before the tempest of debate;
When tongues begin, she hurries to the gate;
These whirlwind controversies only mar
The watery glass wherein we see her star.

—EDWIN MARKHAM.



CHRISTMAS IN CALIFORNIA.—A. METHFESSEL.

CHRISTMAS IN CALIFORNIA.

By An English Girl.

"Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born king,
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."

The waits! the waits! Christmas morning at last!

With a cosy shiver I turned over in my bed, uncovering one ear to listen to the "heralding angels" down below my window. Always the quaint cruelty of those comfortable folks on shore, reveling in their safety as the ship goes down but a bow-shot from land, comes to my mind on cold nights, when I hear the belated wanderer trudging wearily homeward. Their point of view is appallingly general.

Two feet of snow, if an inch, fell yesterday. I could hear the little chorus stamping numb feet on the cleared gravel path, and imagine the "violins" and the "cello" blowing red fingers with steaming breath. Old Pemberton's nasal tenor quavered bravely in the lead, as usual, and the choir of country voices rang out strong and clear from carol to carol! "God rest you merry gentlemen!" "Hark the herald angels!" "In a manger he lay," and a good half-dozen more, till "Christians, awake!" announced the willingness of "Little St. Bede's" choir to partake of the mulled ale and mince pies hospitably awaiting their coming in the hall below.

"Christians awake! Salute this happy morn,
Whereon the Savior of mankind was born.
With hosts of angels chanting from above."

It was so cold, was it worth while going downstairs through the icy halls?

Yes, I must not miss the merry Christmas sight, the quaint crowd, rosy, cheerful, and pictures queerly awkward in the presence of gentlefolk, and I started up, in spite of suasive shiver and a ridiculous drowsiness—

"But what is this?"

For a moment I swing hazily between earth and dream, then swift remembering, open wide eyes upon the golden dawning of my first Californian Christmas. A royal contrast is this, and I laugh as I listen to the winged "waits" below my window, who have stolen into my dream in such strange foreign guise, bursting their little throats in joyful ecstasy. "Christians, awake!" they sing, too, and "Hail, smiling morn!" and "Pity all unhappy birds outside of California this day—more especially Brother Redbreast of England!"

There is a fine edge of lightest frost in the air, but roses peer in at the open window, smiling a Christmas welcome from their fresh, pink faces. The sun shines brightly in a pearly sky, and soon will send to hiding the shy white flower of night. It must be getting late. I fancy I smell the inevitable and always good coffee of American breakfasts; and pleasant thoughts of Santa Claus add yet another argument for beginning the bright day. Here is no martyrdom of the morning tub; bath and atmosphere alike are just cool enough to confer a sensation of comfortable heroism. The climate is shockingly sybaritic.

* * * * *

It has been my unworthy pleasure of late to expatiate minutely upon the beauties of Californian winters, for the benefit of my befogged, drenched and frozen friends in England. I have thrown Christmas roses in their faces, bombarded them with "navel" oranges, dangled grapes before their longing eyes, and dazzled them with the wonder of Californian sunshine. Then, for their sins, I have sent them *menus* of Christmas dinners in the hotels, which tell in brief the story of the astonishing variety of foods available here in the winter season. As I wandered through the markets this week, I thought how variously appalling would be the experience of a Californian woman sent adrift among English shops; what with the limited list of vegetables, the costliness of meat, and the almost prohibitive price of fruit.

In London there is a good story still told over the nuts and wine of two distinguished Californians and a dish of fruit. At a banquet given some years ago in honor of Joaquin Miller and Bret Harte, while they were in London together, the thoughtful host had provided a dish of peaches, as a hospitable reminder to his distinguished guests of their own fruitful land. As dessert was served, Mr. Miller and Mr. Harte, considerably to the amusement of the rest of the company, helped themselves first to one peach, then to another, until the dish was empty; imagining, no doubt, if they gave thought at all to such a small thing as an indifferently good dish of peaches, that there were plenty more on the table. They learned afterwards, to their amazement and horror, that the peaches were half a guinea each (\$2.75), and that each guest was supposed to take

half a one!

Californian housekeepers simply do not know that they are born. The difficulties of providing dessert are non-existent here, and the question of "What shall we have for dinner" is troublesome, not from the lack of variety, but from the unlimited choice that the food markets afford. It is undoubtedly true that one can dine more cheaply and luxuriously here than in almost any other city in the world. Turtle soup can be had for fifteen cents a dish, and turkey dinners on Thanksgiving and Christmas days, for twenty-five cents, in numberless restaurants; and, indeed, everybody must have turkey at Christmas. The Salvation Army provides turkey for the poor folk; the prisons provide turkey or chicken for the prisoners, and hundreds of the noble birds are given away at this time, in the large, charitable fashion that distinguishes this place. It must be "feast" to-day, whether or no "famine" is the lot to-morrow. There is much of the old Spanish carelessness of consequence still left in the Californian character. And just as every one to-day must dine on turkey though cabbage without the corned beef be to-morrow's fare, so gifts must be provided for all the kith and kin, though Jack and Jill may go without their winter coats in consequence. For weeks past people have been preparing for the festal season with a large lavishness and absorption that to English eyes looks rather alarming; but to hint at economy in such direction is to call down cries of heresy and high treason upon one's devoted head. To measure the joys of giving with the aftermath of owing is not Californian, and, wise or unwise, it is a lovable way.

I had thought that the Spirit of Christmas was nowhere nearer to the heart of the people than in England; but here its hold seems even deeper and more vital. Lacking many of the traditional accessories of the season—the snow, the holly, the picturesque superstitions—there is yet here so vivid warmth of appreciation of the true inwardness of Christmas, so sweet and gentle service of the Christ-child, so splendid measure of content and plenty, that all things needful seem to remain.

It is perhaps well that the lesser superstitions have not found footing here, to judge by the intense hold that the worship of Santa Claus has taken upon the people. There is a remarkable difference between the Californian and English conception of the Christmas saint. From a modest old gentleman of moderate means, the Californian has evolved a splendid Personage of unlimited income; not at all mythological in character, as with us, a benevolent bogey who sleighs down the chimney, but a sort of glorified, universal uncle, represented by various deputies in the shape of mothers and fathers, and pleasant people of that species. Also, there are innumerable editions of him in the shop windows, whose mission it has been for the last three weeks or so to distribute largess to each small child asking his favor. The character of almost every "store" window is completely changed at this time; there would be no possibility of even the "man from Mars" mistaking the season. The crowds, always more eager and absorbed, always gathering, have thronged the gay streets from early morning till late at night, heavy-laden with bundles of queerest shape and size.

It is indeed deemed not quite respectable to be without a parcel of some sort at this time! Such stores as deal in Christmas goods—and the range is a Catholic one—have doubled their forces, extended their closing hours from six o'clock until ten or later; and even so, they cannot keep up with the immense rush of trade. There is a lot of lamentable rubbish in the shape of celluloid horrors, plush nightmares, "art" pictures (ye gods!), and distressful "literature" foisted upon a long-suffering public at this season; but nowhere, also, are gifts more magnificently chosen, nor with a wider latitude of choice, than can be found here. From pots and pans to Persian rugs—there are still here a number of Armenian refugees who sell them reasonably; from bicycles to bull-dogs; from things "made in Germany" to the glories of Japanese art—everything is deemed available. In walking to church this morning, I saw scores of fur capes taking a first happy airing; "Dent's" by the dozen (these gloves are very popular here) perfumed the air; fairy-fine handkerchiefs peeped out of willing pockets; gorgeous watches were frequently consulted; new jewelry conspicuously displayed; card cases and purses—not too full just now—proclaimed their evident newness; satiny horses and shining turnouts satisfied a fair driver's longings; and John walked proudly alongside his new dog-collar, sometimes indulging in a thoughtful "Manila," with a new cane or overcoat—men are awkward to "buy for," anyway!

But the children! Such a procession of small idols in the hands of proud mothers I never saw; just dolls of all possible kinds. And the strange menag-

erie upon the sidewalk—mooring cows, mechanical frogs, elephants, horses, lambs, alligators, and Noah's ark "at home" generally. No one seriously objects to being run down by a sunny-haired bicyclist of three or four years old, out on her first wild adventure into the world; nor by a blue-eyed youngster careening down a hill on his new mail-cart; nor by a laughing lass stumbling along on her treacherous skates (oh, yes! we skate in San Francisco—on wheels!), and peace and good-will are with us.

The church service, a service of song, was fine and imposing. The average of church music is high here, especially in the vocal department. The practice of paying singers seems distinctly conducive to sweet sound. I understand that many great American singers began their career in church choirs; almost all, in fact, have at some time appeared there. Many chorus numbers from the "Messiah" were given with a nice appreciation for shading, good "attack," and distinct enunciation, that was most pleasing; the solo, "Rejoice greatly," I have rarely heard rendered more satisfactorily. Music, generally, is in hopeful condition in California; not yet among the masses, but there is a large proportion of highly cultivated individuals whose leavening power is only a question of time.

It was odd to think that in the same church wherein we were worshipping "Christ come from Bethlehem," but five days ago we were heartily applauding a piano virtuoso. The use of a church for secular purposes, though not against reason, seems variously hurtful and offensive on the sentimental side, and I

cannot get used to it. It leaves an atmosphere, frivolous, sensuous, irreverent, and it sticks! All the churches, excepting the Episcopal and Catholic, seem to follow this singular custom; the American character is the queerest possible mixture of romanticism and materialism, and which is predominant it would be difficult to say.

Unfamiliarly lovely and abundant were the church decorations. In one corner I could almost imagine myself at home in England; the greenery and red berries, which only a close inspection reveals are not our own beautiful holly, smiles in old friendly fashion to me. But there were other gorgeous blooms; the marvelous Japanese chrysanthemums, here grown in so rare perfection; the purely beautiful hyacinth; the smart carnations; the white moon of the magnolia, with its royal leaf—these and more bore lovely witness to the distance of our English shores. Violets, too, were there, large as pansies and common as English daisies in the spring. The first I saw, a few months ago, I invested in wholesale, triumphantly exhibiting my prize to my laughing friends as a wonderful unexampled find! But so it is—the winter is like our late spring; things don't go by our calendar at all! The holly, such as there is, I hear is all imported, but there is plenty of mistletoe to be found in the state. It is for no lack of material that the virtues of this gentle parasite remains unexploited, and its temptation to right use is nowhere more bewitchingly evident than among the lovely maidens of California, nor can the small element of Puritanism account for its lack of employ—I give it up!

There is little house decoration at this season—why should there be? with flowers abloom in every garden? But I miss the dark, shining green foliage and brilliant berries bedecking English walls and every possible thing that can be decorated. From Christmas to Shrove Tuesday these must remain in position, and then only may they be taken down and used as fuel to fry the pancakes. Death in the family is supposed to result from defiance of these precautions. But we had a sprig of real holly on the Christmas pudding—"English plum-pudding," as it is called here—and it was a bonny sight amidst the cheerful blue flames. Recipes innumerable for this dish are treasured here, but it is by no means a *sine qua non* of the Christmas dinner. Canned plum-pudding can be bought—profane makeshift for that ancient dish, religiously stirred by each member of the family, and boiled to succulent richness during long ceremonial hours! Mince-meat also can be bought, but is extensively made at home, and mince-pies are largely in evidence. Indeed, the pie-eating propensity of Americans is proverbial; not that they really indulge any more freely than do we, but they are apparently more conscious of their courage. There is no reward attached to the wholesale destruction of mince-pies here further than the edible enjoyment to be gained there-

from. We in England win one happy month for each pie eaten between Christmas and New Year's day!

The turkey was stuffed with oysters—amusingly small in comparison with California's exaggerations of almost everything that grows; the native oysters are no larger than a cockle! Cranberry sauce is a delicacy worthy of the speediest importation to England, and the wines, I am assured, of importation to Paradise!

We have had a Christmas tree—everybody has; and a Christmas party—American parties are very original; and it has all been most pleasant and interesting. Still, I found myself longing for the thing which I had not got, for a sight of the snow-covered fields, the sullen, gray skies, which made the coming-in to the huge glowing fire so splendidly cheerful; for a look at the fairy-like trees outlined in dazzling white; for a peep through a window-pane silvered over in finest arabesque of frost; for a tramp on a hard, ringing road; for a sight of dear and distant faces. But, kind American cousins, if, when you come to spend Christmas in England, you shall be half so pleased with your faring, with our fashion of welcome, with our ways and country, as I gratefully proclaim myself to be with yours, then will you love us forever and a day.

HANNAH LANGTRY.

When Christ, The Master, Whispers, "Peace."

Two thousand years of Christ—and Light—
 Yet lo, the darkness still prevails;
 Earth for her stricken children wails,
And men grope vainly through the night.
He came—all Strength, all Tenderness;
 His touch was Love, His word was Life;
 Amidst the sin, the woe, the strife
He meekly moved to heal and bless.

The angels and earth's toilers sang
 Paeans of joy for Man redeemed;
 To deepest hell heaven's glory streamed
And heavenly hosannas rang.

Two thousand years! How long, O Christ,
 Shall Mammon's dripping sword o'erawe
 The cringing servitors of law,
And love to greed be sacrificed.

The flames of war lick up the seas;
 The lust of gain preys on the lands;
 The nations, lifting bloody hands,
Crush on to darker destinies?

Yet still Thou art the Life, the Way,
 The God of gods, the Man of men;
 And in this snarling human den
Thy voice the gory paws shall stay.

We know not, Christ, how, ages through,
 Thy love's intent may ceaseless run
 Till all be well beneath the sun,—
We only know that Thou art true.

That in Thy realm of spirit comes
 No tone of discord or dismay;—
 There every tear is wiped away,
And Soul forgets her martyrdoms.

The Star of Bethlehem's far ray,
 Cleaving the continental glooms,
 Even now the wan earth's wastes illumines,
Tracing the path of perfect Day;

And man's misrule of man shall cease,
 Oppression be no longer known,
 For Love shall seek and shield his own
When Christ, the Master, whispers "Peace!"

FRED LEWIS FOSTER.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

By Benjamin Fay Mills.

The birth of Jesus is regarded differently by different people. By some hundreds of millions of the human race it is not regarded at all; they have not so much as heard his name. Among those who have heard of him there are some millions more who are indifferent to it. Among those who regard it as a name 'that is above every name' there are also differences in the esteem in which they hold this remarkable man.

In this address I shall endeavor to say nothing that could be considered as antagonistic or critical of any noble view that anyone may take of Jesus and of his influence upon history. I might attempt to show the unreliability of the Gospel records, or to prove that they were accurate records of actual facts. I might endeavor to show that the stories recorded in them are probable, or improbable. I might endeavor to bring reasons why we should believe in the story of the Immaculate Conception and the Virgin Birth and the miraculous life of Jesus and his Resurrection and Ascension; or reasons why we should believe none of these statements.

But I should like to say something on this Christmas occasion that might be helpful and encouraging to every one, whether he believes that the records written in the New Testament are fable or fact. I believe for my part that this celebration of Christmas indicates something larger than any of our views concerning it; that it is an indication of man's hun-

ger for the divine, and his appreciation of the fact that the divine is at least intimately connected with the human.

So far as we can judge, the mere animal is not conscious of divinity. The entrance of consciousness of divinity into humanity might well be marked by the supreme human festival. The actual entrance of the divine into the human is measured by no passing Christmas Day, but is dateless, for there never was a time when the divine was not perfectly human or when the human was not completely divine.

And this is what is meant by the incarnations that we find in so many of our great religions: they express the growing consciousness of humanity that it is as divine as anything in the universe. Men have been eager to believe this, and they ought to be eager to believe it. We are, to a large extent, that which we desire to be, and the popular beliefs about Jesus have indicated the growing conviction that divinity can be manifested in humanity—the coming to self-consciousness of the divine in the human.

The thought of a definite time when this takes place—not the making of humanity divine, as I said, for that was divine in the first place—but the consciousness that it is a part of God, is suggestive.

What do we find recorded in the Gospels concerning Jesus, the divine man? We find the statements that he had power over the evils of human experience, such as disease and pain and sin and death

We read that he easily controlled what we call the evils of nature, such as storms and tempests and cyclones. We read that he was victorious over hostile purposes so far as they affected him and the main objects of his life, and that he was possessed of a sublime confidence in God, whom he called by the great name of Father. We get the conception that here was a human being who believed with all his soul that this was a good world, that here was a good order upon which men may depend; that justice would be triumphant; that love was the only great thing in the universe. He said to his disciples, You need not pray as the heathen do, for they believe they shall be heard for their much speaking; you need not have the least anxiety as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, or wherewithal you shall be clothed. "For," he said, "your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." He said that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." And this man, without wealth, without friends that were true in the time of need, without a place to lay his head, went with a shining face through life so that men called him "the friend of Publicans and sinners," and said that he consorted with those who made merry in the world.

He was a man, we are told, of unadulterated devotion to humanity. He emphasized what was already in the world, the value of sacrifice of self for the sake of the whole. He lived as though he believed that the world had a right to him, to all he had. He "counted not his life dear unto himself," but valued his life only as he might invest it in the growth of humanity.

And he was a man who believed with all his soul in the final triumph of the

good. He never uttered a pessimistic word concerning the future of the world. When he met the evil he bared his breast without any shield to the worst that it could do. He took into him all the poisoned darts that men had heretofore regarded as fatal. He lived a triumphant life and he died a triumphant death, and that instrument of his death which had been regarded by men as the symbol of the lowest shame was uplifted by the death of this noble lover of his kind to be made the symbol of humanity's deepest consecration and of its highest hope.

To live in the Christmas Spirit is to live in such a spirit as this. What is there impracticable about this for you and me? Why should we not claim the Spirit of Power? Not one of us has ever thought "how divine he himself is," not one! It is a strange thing that so many who have borne the name of Jesus have practically contradicted the spirit of Jesus, so that to-day the wealthy nations are known as the followers of him who lived like a pauper, dependent for his daily bread upon what his fellows pleased to give him; and the most warlike nations, foremost in strife, are the so-called Christian nations, arrayed over against the uncounted millions of the gentle peoples that we call by the title of "Heathen"; and some of the greatest mourners in the world have been those who have borne the name of Jesus, that marvelously cheerful soul.

One trouble with the church is that, while it has accepted all the miracles and believed in the Virgin Birth and in the Resurrection, it has exalted the hard practical things instead of exalting its miracles. For, whatever you may believe about the Virgin Birth and the actual Resurrection, turning water into wine, and stilling storms, and all the rest of the wonder-tales

of the Gospels, the fact remains that what we call "Miracle" is the normal thing. If Christ had killed living people, and made well people sick, I should not say that "Miracle" was normal. And by "Miracle" I do not mean some freak of the divine nature or some abrogation or disregard of law, but I mean a shining forth for a moment of that which is real and eternal, however hard to see by our eyes that are sealed with sense and selfishness. And I would to God that you and I—whether we call ourselves Christians or something worse or better—might catch something of this supreme song of power. It is outrageous to exalt the Cross for one who believes also in the Resurrection. It is outrageous for Christians to mourn and groan and weep if they believe that they live in a world that is forever redeemed from the powers of evil and made free to triumph over all the enemies of mankind. We all of us need more exaltation.

And I do not care whether Jesus was born of a virgin! I expect the day to come when souls will spring self-conscious into the full sense of manhood and womanhood, and that is more of a miracle than a virgin birth. I do not care whether the tomb held him and his body rotted, or whether he broke the bars with which men had bound him and ascended with this body up above the clouds into the presence of an eternal Jehovah sitting upon a throne! for "I know that I am deathless," and that my spirit communes now with God, and that whether in the flesh or out of the flesh I shall see God, whom "my eyes shall behold for myself and not another"—and that is infinitely more than any story of a resurrection from any rock-hewn tomb!

I never expect to be happier in any world than I am sometimes in this, unless I become several times greater than I am

now. I do not expect that some people will ever have to endure misery in any world that is greater than some endure now. If you would only see the divine justice, the righteousness, the glory of things as they are, and the potentiality enclosed within them, you could rise up and sing doxologies and hallelujahs through a perpetual day where there should be no night.

And what is there about this Christmas spirit so far as Joy is concerned that you and I may not possess? You remember the words of Carlyle: "Give us the man who sings at his work! He will do more in the same time, he will do it better, he will persevere longer. One is scarcely sensible of fatigue while he marches to music. The very stars are said to make harmony as they revolve in their spheres. Wonderful is the strength of cheerfulness, altogether past calculation its power of endurance. Efforts, to be permanently useful, must be uniformly joyous—a spirit all sunshine, graceful from very gladness, beautiful because bright."

The man who said, "I look upon a pure joke with the same veneration that I do upon the Ten Commandments," was a first cousin to the old prophet who said to the Israelites, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." The weak man is the joyless man; the powerful man is the man who runs over with joy. The joy of the Lord is your strength.

Some people always look as though they had met with misfortune, and some people always look as though they had just heard good news. There are more chains than those that bound the hands of Paul and Silas that fall off when men begin to sing. I heard of an epitaph on a tombstone: "She was so pleasant." Possibly you knew her—I did! And I know more like her whose tombstones have not been ordered

yet.

"'Tis easy enough to be pleasant
When life flows along like a song;
But the man worth while is the one who
will smile
When everything goes dead wrong;
For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years;
And the smile that is worth the praise
of earth
Is the smile that comes through tears."

And I do not know what there was in Jesus of sublime trust and confidence in God that you and I might not have if we would. I do not care what you call it! Some people will say they have no belief in God, and then make the best sort of speeches to the glory of God. And I have learned that some people who call themselves Atheists are as devout worshippers of God as any of us. It is simply that they do not worship the thing that past ages have called God. But I care not what you call it—you may call it by any pronoun you please; you may regard it as a force; you may endow it with conscious purpose or not. But so long as you believe that there is a force or an intelligence or a purpose that has power, or, in other words, so long as you believe that power is beneficent, you believe in God enough to start with, to say the least. And that is what gives people confidence. The faithless man is always the downcast and troubled man. Yesterday I took the Gospel of Matthew and read through a large portion of it. I read the beautiful Sermon on the Mount, and I came to these words that struck me with a new meaning: "Do not take thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself." Be not anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for itself! And I thought of the

countless ages, I thought of this day, I thought of the other Christmas Days, I thought of the years that have passed, and the centuries and the cycles, and that they all have been, to give birth to to-morrow! All the object of the existence of the universe has been for the sake of to-morrow! And I propose to let my brow be unclouded. What you are you have been made by all the heritage and progress and development of the past. Glorious morrow! it is better than to-day, it has one more day to be its father! The morrow through infinite cycles has been taking thought for the things of itself!

And I know not what there is in Jesus' devotion to humanity that you and I might not emulate! Forgiveness of enemies—he taught that. It would do us good if we would forgive all of our enemies. I have seen a great many happy people; I never saw one happy person who had enmity in his heart. It would not make any difference whether he were a Mohammedan or a Jew, whether he were a Hindoo or a Christian—if he had malice in his heart he would be unhappy. It is utterly impossible for one to be comfortable while they feel unkindly toward anybody or toward anything. Why is it so hard to learn that lesson?

What is there that you and I cannot do in this respect in the spirit of him who is reported to have said concerning those who were murdering him, "Father, forgive them?"

And what is there in the generosity that was manifested in his sublime devotion to humanity that you and I cannot imitate? A good book to read on Christmas Day is the beautiful Christmas Carol of Dickens. You remember the story of Scrooge and Marley—and the firm were very much like the name Scrooge. Marley had been dead seven years, and Scrooge is

described by Dickens like this:

"Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him froze his old features, nipped his pointed nose, shriveled his cheek, stiffened his gait; made his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and spoke out shrewdly in his grating voice. A frosty rime was on his head, and on his eyebrows, and his wiry chin. He carried his own low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dog-days; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas.

"External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge. No warmth could warm, no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he, no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose, no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain, and snow, and hail, and sleet, could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect. They often 'came down' handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

"Nobody ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, 'My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?' No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children ever asked him what it was o'clock, no man or woman ever once in all his life inquired the way to such and such a place of Scrooge. Even the blindmen's dogs appeared to know him; and when they saw him coming on, would tug their owners into doorways and up courts; and then would wag their tails as though they said, 'No eye at all is better than an evil eye, dark master!'

"But what did Scrooge care! It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance, was what the knowing ones call 'nuts' to Scrooge."

And there comes to him suddenly, after being brutal to his nephew and his starving clerk, there comes to him on Christmas Eve the spirit of his departed partner dragging a heavy chain, telling him that the chain which he must carry was the working out of the meanness that he had shared with Scrooge in their conduct of the business while he was upon earth. And the old fellow begins to tremble. There is a noteworthy word that Marley the ghost says to Scrooge the living partner. Marley had just been telling the awful remorse that he had to bear in working out the meanness of his life, and Scrooge tries to apologize for him a little, and says, "But you were always a good man of business, Jacob." "Business!" cries the Ghost, wringing its hands again. "Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!"

I would these words might be written in letters of gold. If ghosts talk like that let us have more ghosts.

Then Marley tells Scrooge that he is to be visited by three other disembodied spirits—the first at one that night, the second at one the next night, and the third at the striking of twelve the following night. The first ghost comes and says, "I am the spirit of Christmas Past," and he shows this mean, contemptible, niggardly miser what he had lost by losing the Christmas spirit in the past. And the next night comes another ghost,

who says, "I am the spirit of Christmas Present," and he shows the wretch the poverty of the home of his own employee, and the little boy who is starving in that home. And the third night comes the spirit of the Christmases yet to come, and tells him of the possibilities of the future. When Scrooge wakes from the dream (what a pity that these blessed ghosts only talk to people in dreams in the story books!) he cannot realize that he is still in the same day as when he went to sleep, and that he has been dreaming ghosts! But his conversion is real. He is a new man. He goes out to see his nephew and take a Christmas dinner with him; he buys the prize turkey at the poulterer's and sends it to the poor clerk's house; he nearly scares the clerk to death the next morning when he comes in late by telling him he is going to raise his wages. Now Scrooge is thoroughly happy. Listen to his language: "I don't know what to do! I am as light as a feather, I am as happy as an angel, I am as merry as a schoolboy. I am as giddy as a drunken man. A merry Christmas to everybody! A Happy New Year to all the world! Hallo here! Whoop! Hallo!"

I do not suppose that any of us have shared the contemptible qualities of Scrooge, but I would that we all might share the joy and the generosity of the new man!

And the self-giving of Jesus, what is there impracticable about that? The brotherhood of man—to make it real! You remember those great words of Margaret Fuller: "While one man remains base, no man can be altogether great and noble." I do not know what Jesus meant in the words that are written, where we are told that as he sat at the Last Supper with his disciples he said to them: "I will

not drink any more of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." But I can think what he might have meant. I know "the fruit of the vine" meant the good things of life, comfort, luxury, satisfaction; and Jesus said, I will have none of it until I have it with you in my Father's kingdom. And I do not know but that this man, who went so bravely to the cross, meant, I will not possess as I might, I will not be as rich and comfortable as I might, I will have none of luxury, I will not enjoy as I might—until it shall be done "unto this last" as unto me, and until the whole of humanity shall be brought into the fullness of the perfect luxury of the life of love!

When I read of the wretched hospital ship, with 180 men suffering from the foul Southern diseases as well as from wounds they had received on the battlefield, with only six nurses, and two of them rich society women from New York, I am glad there are other people who have caught that spirit. Do you know what you and I need in order to make this world a Paradise? I read in a paper yesterday, about a pit which had been dug for a drain in London, and suddenly it caved in and a man was buried under the debris. Eager hands were trying to take away the dirt and rescue him before he ceased to breathe, when one man came up and said, "What is the matter down there?" Another man said, "Bill, your brother is down there!" Then how he threw off his coat and worked like three men in an endeavor to rescue his brother! And the thing that we need is this—not only for Mr. Vanderbilt to realize that his brother is in the worst slum in New York or London or Boston, but for us to realize that these who are not as fortunate as we, are our brothers, down there, and

resolve that we will not drink of the fruit of the vine until they shall drink it new with us in the kingdom of the eternal family of love. It is not meant necessarily that we should have millions to give. There is something better than that! The best things cannot be bought and sold; they cannot be procured in the market for money. We read about Mr. Leiter giving to his daughter, the Vice-Empress of India, such marvelous gifts that no ruler of India has ever been appareled as she, and giving to her husband the three cloaks of ceremony, each one of value enough to build a house. But do you think those were the best Christmas gifts? The appreciation of nature; an ear for music; an eye for beauty; these cannot be bought and sold. A mother's love; a wife's devotion; a brother's real friendship; these things cannot be bought for gold. Did you ever hear of anything more beautiful than when Ruskin, day after day, passed along an Italian street and put a little coin in a beggar's hand, and one day the beggar seized the hand of the noble Englishman and kissed it, and John Ruskin bent over and kissed the beggar on his cheek! Was there ever anything more religious in any church than when our great American preacher, Henry Ward Beecher, went out of Plymouth Church for the last time—he tarried behind the congregation as he loved to do to have the choir sing to him, and they sang to him for a half hour; and as he rose to go down the aisle he saw two street Arabs who had strayed in and had been standing with uplifted, rapt faces; and this great, beautiful soul bent down and took first the one and then the other of the faces of the little fellows in his hands, and kissed them, and then "went out from the scene of his trials and his triumphs forever!"

There is something better than Midas' touch that turned everything to gold, and finally turned his food and clothes and friends to gold. Oh, the marvelous touch of the human heart and the spirit of sympathy and brotherhood!

And now, men and women, I congratulate you, as you represent the human race, that you have made the festival of Christmas. For my own part, I care not, as I said a year ago, whether Jesus was ever born in Bethlehem or lived in Judea, I might have more hope for the race if I thought he had never lived than if I thought he had lived and that the stories in the Gospels were true, because I would say that if this race could create such an ideal as it has that it was a glorious race and capable of infinite advance in the future.

I heard a remarkable address by a Jew (Rabbi Fleischer) about Jesus. He said that we have to see the concrete before we can understand the abstract, so the race perhaps needed the idea of a concrete Jesus in order to get the abstract ideal of humanity. But it a wonderful thing when a man grows up so that he does not need a ladder, but knows God for himself as Jesus knew God. The mission of Jesus would be comparatively fruitless if it were not for this, that the race appreciated such a life, and appreciates it today. And whether it was real or unreal we have made the ideal of the race, what we call—for the lack of a better name—the Christian spirit. In the same way it is a great thing that we have filled this Christmas that used to be a Pagan feast with the spirit of Heaven. I congratulate you as the representatives of the race.

The old song said:

"Let's sing and dance and make good cheer

For Christmas comes but once a year."

Why should it come but once a year? One of our editors says: "On Christmas Christendom takes a day off to be Christian. Christmas is the day on which we conspicuously are not what we are the rest of the year. We permit ourselves for once to be humane, sympathetic, charitable, and kind." Why not make it a perpetual feast? As an orator said recently: "If man's inhumanity to man can transform earth into hell, man's humanity to man may transform earth into heaven!"

The Christmas festival did not originate with Christianity. The world knew it long before the Christ who was called Jesus lived on earth. The Hindoo knew it, the Greek knew it, the Roman knew it, and the wild untamed son of the North—they hewed their trees and burned their yule and made their festival gifts before they ever heard of the Christ-child of Bethlehem. But there was a large sense in which Jesus of Nazareth brought a new Christmas to the earth. The old pagan festivals had existed because man rejoiced in himself, although as yet he did not know himself or realize his value. The day called by the name of Christ meant this to the Christian, that God had come from his far-off heaven to live on earth in a man, in one man, the "only-begotten son." It was a great thing when the world gained the idea that God had come in one man—vastly better one than none. They had recognized the principle of the unity of God and man; by that sweet legend men discerned something of human glory, and some of them uplifted themselves to believe in the possibility of their attaining as individuals to membership in the family of God. It was in some ways a better thought than men had ever known. They were misled only when they came to think that it

must be better than any they could ever learn; we have learned a better lesson today.

Let us infuse into our festival a joyful appreciation of our larger revelation of the divine. Let us celebrate our Christmas not because we are a peculiar people, special favorites of Jehovah, a few people in an enlightened land passing through some experiences to enable us to appreciate Jesus and his relationship to God; let us keep our Christmas because we are men and all of us the children of God! Let us keep our Christmas because of the birth of the consciousness of the divine heritage of all the human race! Let us speak no more of an "only-begotten son," but of millions of sons. Let us elevate our festival as much above the primal Christian idea as that idea surpassed the Roman Saturnalia which the Christmas feast displaced!

Far be it from me to bid you disbelieve in one essential thing about Jesus of Nazareth. I would exhort you to "prove all things"—all things—and "hold fast that which is good." I would ask you to discard the shell in order to find the life, to tear away the rags of tradition to find the man, to gaze through the body and behold the soul. Invest the Christ with what glory you please, array him in royal purple, let him manifest deific power, crown him with many crowns, render him your own and the world's homage, and then realize that this appreciation is the token of your own birthright; that the same glory is waiting to be revealed in you as in him, to pour itself through you as it flowed through him for a world's inspiration, to deify your life with the eternal consciousness of power, of service and of triumphant joy. You have not thought too highly of the Christ, but you have thought too meanly of yourself, and

of your fellows, and of what we have blindly called "the lower orders of creation"—in which there lays hidden the potentiality of the highest revelation of the greatest God.

And now I offer my best Christmas wishes, the best that man's tongue can speak, man's mind conceive, or man's heart desire. I wish you all health and wealth and worldly wisdom and happy homes and the best of friendship. I wish for you all patience and peace, con-

tentment and joy and noble ambitions grandly fulfilled. I wish for you purity and unselfishness and gentleness and faith and hope and love. I wish for you the consciousness of your opportunities for the divinest service. May you be brethren to your brothers, and promote justice, and help to lift the lowest. May all your days be an abiding Christmas, and all your years be as the Christ's—of conscious communion and union with the unseen.

"WITH THE STRENGTH OF DREAMS."

GEORGE STERLING.

I saw the Lesbian Sappho bowed in light
 Before the hush'd altar of the sea—
 Song-swept, a lyre on which in threnody
 Th' ascendant tremors of her spirit's might
 Thrilled chord on chord to music. In my flight
 From dream to dream, I paused; I wept; while she
 Sang till I saw the western glory flee,
 A molten pearl, one with the wine of night.

I know not if the blossom of their day,
 In Paradise, be blessed with fairer fruit,
 If deeper ecstasies of music may,
 Dying or latent, fill their fancied lute,
 Or happier teardrops find the olden way,
 Ere yet the twilight seraphim be mute.

THE DISCOMFITURE OF THE DORKINGS.

A CHILD'S STORY

By Blanche Partington.

THERE was a great clucking, and crowing, and ruffling of feathers in the chicken-yard at Snow's Corner, one gay Sunday morning just a little while before Christmas, and little Peachy Snow wondered what it was all about as she stood watching the excited poultry, with her little flaxen head stuck through the bedroom window. It was quite early in the morning, for Mollie hadn't come up stairs to dress her, and she was standing at the window in her little white night-gown, and there she stood till her toes and her nose got quite cold before she could make up her mind to get into her cot again—it was so interesting down in the yard there!

Peachy half thought that she would try to dress herself, but those tiresome buttons at the back she could not fasten—horrid things! Then she bethought herself of dragging her cot to the window so that she might look out; it was no sooner thought of than done, after a good deal of tugging by the small arms.

Mollie, Mrs. Snow's hired girl, hearing the noise, came running upstairs to see what was the matter; but she only laughed when she saw what Peachy had done, tucked her in and told her not to take cold.

There was a very tall, magnificent Brown Leghorn Rooster in the Snow's

chicken yard, almost as tall as Peachy, and he seemed to be making a bigger row than anybody else. It really seemed sometimes as if she could almost hear him say something.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo-oo!"

"Cluck-a-cluck, cluck-cluck!"

"Doo-oo-oo!"

"Cluck-a-cluck!"

"Cock-a-doodle doo-oo-oo!"

"Gracious!" said Peachy, "what a racket! I wish I knew what it was all about! I wonder if anybody ever did—*really*—*truly*—know what the chickens talk about. I guess it's about eggs and the baby chicks, and if it's going to be fine or wet, and if their dinner's good, etc."

Here Peachy laid her head back on the pillow for a moment, for she was tired of holding it up. She had no sooner done so than she heard a noise as of a number of people talking out in the yard.

"Good morning!"

"A fine day!"

"Lovely weather!"

"Somebody's come early to-day," she said to herself, pushing up her head to see who it was. But she couldn't see anybody, and the talking had all stopped.

"Well, I *did* hear somebody," Peachy assured herself, dropping back on the pillow. She had no sooner done so than

she heard the chattering begin again.

"I knew I heard somebody," the little girl laughed, jumping up and peeking out between the white curtains, but she couldn't see a single soul down there!

Again and again she tried it, hiding behind the curtains and popping out suddenly, and again the same thing happened. Then she found that the talking began as soon as her head touched the pillow, and stopped as soon as she lifted it. So she put the little pillow on the window sill, that she might look out and see as well as hear the mysterious visitors who hid themselves so quickly.

Now, you would never guess, if you took a whole long year about it, who those queer folks down in the yard were.

Perhaps you think it was a Santa Claus crowd, clearing the way for the Christmas Sleigh; or some Eastern relations coming to stay over the vacation; or even the milk-boy, and the paper-boy gossiping with Mollie. Not a bit of it!

It was just the plain, every-day chickens, that had been in Papa Snow's poultry-yard ever since Peachy could remember. Of course if they had been circus-chickens, it would not have been so wonderful. But to hear those commonplace, uneducated fowls, that looked just like every-one else's, talking away like good Americans — you may well be surprised. If you have chickens, I'd watch them if I were you!

Peachy's pillow seemed to act as a kind of telephone. Strange things one's pillow whispers, if one will but hearken! She found she could look and listen to the play down yonder in the yard, just as if she had been at the theatre.

So she listened, and listened, and pre-

sently, sure enough, she heard the rooster say:

"Cook-a-doodle-doo! Who'll be my wife to-day! Did you ever see such handsome feet, such fine tail-feathers, such a splendid coat, — look at me!" And up he flew, onto the fence, and truly he was a gorgeous sight, as the sun shone on his golden feathers.

"That is all very well," said an elegant little Leghorn pullet, "but times are hard. Does he provide well?" she asked of a lady-like Andalusian hen, to whom he had been making love for the last few days.

"Oh, yes; very nicely! Won't you come and see my new eggs?" said Mrs. Andalusia, politely.

"Not just now, thank you," hurriedly answered the Leghorn dame. "I've been picking for myself the last day or two, and I'm hungry. Those greedy pigeons just grab all the corn, and do nothing for their living, either."

"But poor Mrs. Pouter is going to lose all her little ones," said Mrs. Andalusia, gently. "We heard Farmer Snow say that there would be enough squabs for a pie for Christmas, but we haven't told her yet, poor thing! And goodness knows who else will go!"

"Oh, well, it serves them right!" said Mrs. Whitefeather Leghorn, heartlessly, and then she went off picking up such scraps as her late husband, a very jealous Black Spanish, left behind him on his voyage round the yard.

"Look at that, will you?" clucked one fat Dorking to another. "Wouldn't you be ashamed to go picking up after a rooster that had called you a 'giddy bird' after he married you? Oh, fie! Mrs. Whitefeather! And *did* you hear that old Andalusia going around asking every-

body to look at her new egg? as if nobody ever laid an egg before!"

"Yes," sniffed the other, "and such long, thin eggs at that!"

"I *did* hear that she'd been trying to make a nest for herself, under the old wheelbarrow," chuckled the first gossip in a whisper, "but little Peachy found it. I call that kind of thing very dishonest, don't you? I *have* thought we ought to drop her acquaintance. What do you think?"

Now, this first gossip knew perfectly well that the other Dorking dame had done precisely the same thing as Mrs. Andalusia, and *she* had done it, too, and they each knew that the other had done it, but they had never been found out, which made all the difference, perhaps.

"I have often thought she was not a nice person to know," said the older Dorking. "I think we won't ask her to our barrel again."

"No, we won't," clucked the other, "You can never trust that very particular poultry. "Don't you remember how she used to say she could never lay comfortably, except on that old cushion in the laundry, and somebody had to open the back door every day for her to get in?—just as if she were a Japanese game bird! I've no patience with fowls putting on such style!"

"She said she got in that way after she was ill, when they nursed her up at the house. She told us all the news when she came home again," explained the older dame.

"Well, I don't call it good taste to gossip about family affairs," said the younger Dorking, righteously.

"Good morning, ladies," here interrupted the handsome Black Spanish rooster, that everybody knew as Don

Jose. "I have a very fine worm over yonder which I should be most pleased to lay at your feet, if you will allow me?" And he turned about and strutted off proudly on receiving their eager permission.

"Such an elegant bird!" "Such polished manners!" Such a gentle fowl!" they clucked to each other on the way, in whispers.

"I think you will find him tender," graciously crowed Don Jose, standing aside politely as the two Dorkings amiably divided the worm, each taking an end, and pulling till it parted, fortunately in the middle. And you may be sure they did not forget to praise the worm, loudly enough for the jealous white Leghorn to hear them:

"Just enough fat to this worm, don't you think so, my dear?"

"Certainly, my love. I never saw a better. It tastes quite as good as a cabbage caterpillar."

"Would you object to our leaving the head and tail for poor Mrs. Whitefeather Leghorn?" asked the older Dorking spitefully. "I heard her say she was hungry this morning."

Now when Mrs. Whitefeather heard this, she was in a terrible rage.

"Can't a poor hen make a respectable living for herself and not wait for other fowls to support her, but she must be insulted at all turns? Things have come to a pretty pass! But I'll pay them out! Cluck-a-cluck, cluck-a-cluck, cluck-a-cluck, cluck-a-cluck!" And she certainly looked angry enough to do anything as she marched up and down, with the ruffles on her feather skirts standing away out.

"Did you ever see the like?" asked the elder Dorking dame, looking very

shocked, "and I only meant to be kind in my way."

"You see she used to be quite a belle, had all the young roosters running after her," clucked the other one in her loudest tones. Yes, as loud as a young pullet over her first egg! "It must be rather hard to be passed over for others that are prettier or better behaved, these days."

"Yes, indeed!" said a sharp-nosed Black Spanish pullet, joining in the conversation. "It serves her right for believing in such heathen ideas, that a hen should make her own living—gracious! What are the roosters for! Let a hen stay at home and mind her eggs say I, and leave the picking up to our roosters."

"Isn't it too funny to hear Mrs. Spanish talk about minding her eggs?" sneered the younger Dorking to Mrs. Andalusia, who was near by, "and everybody knows she deserted her nest every time she had one!"

"Oh! can't you stop scandalizing, this fine Sunday morning?" asked a large motherly-looking Brahma hen, with a crowd of small fluffy chicks around her. (She was the only hen in the yard that could be trusted to bring up chickens properly at that time of the year.)

"What do you suppose Mrs. Whitefeather will do?" asked the elder Dorking of the crowd, which, attracted by the loud cluck-cluck, had grown quite large.

"Oh! she's bright enough to do something interesting," said good-natured Mrs. Big-Brahma, and little Peachy thought she was quite right, as she watched Mrs. Whitefeather Leghorn's doings.

After giving herself a final shake, shaking off the dust from her feet, as it were, she marched off, with a proud, dainty, strut, into a faraway corner of the yard, and there put on her little thinking-cap. Peachy could tell in a minute that she had thought of something to do, for she distinctly saw that rude little fowl stamp three times, on the ground, hard, put out her small, im-



THAT RUDE LITTLE FOWL STAMPED
THREE TIMES ON THE GROUND

pertinent tongue as far as it would go, and furthermore, wiggle it, in the direction of the two unkind Dorking dames. Then she started off, at a flutter-and-fly, for another faraway corner of the yard, and there began operations.

Now, if there is one thing more than another that a pure Leghorn dame prides herself upon, it is her complexion, and Mrs. Whitefeather Leghorn was no exception to this rule. She was of quite an old family, and her clear white feathers, beautiful rose-pink comb, scalloped in the finest fashion, and waving elegantly over her left eye, and her stylish yellow legs, made her as beautiful a barn-yard belle as one could imagine.

"Oh, dear! what does she do that for?" said Peachy, with a disgusted

sniff, watching Mrs. Whitefeather's next proceedings, taking a dust bath on the ash heap. "But it is only like Mollie making the spoons clean with putting kind o'dirt on 'em, I s'pose," she continued, answering her own question.

"I wonder if I could clean up mamma's feather muff that way, to s'prise her—I'm going to try if I don't forget to!"

Then when Mrs. Whitefeather had finished her bath, she shook, and shook, and shook herself, till Peachy thought her head would drop off, and then she picked off every bit of dirt from her feathers, and polished them with her little yellow beak, till they shone again, and then rubbed up the beak itself against the pickets, till it looked like pure tortise shell.

"And now, what next?" wondered Peachy.

But Mrs. Whitefeather had apparently forgotten that which she had set out to do—to get even with those spiteful old Dorking things, for she sidled along with her prim little steps, here, there, and anywhere, but nowhere in particular, that Peachy could see.

But, after a while, she began to notice that the dainty little bird was never very far away from the new rooster that had come to stay, a big, lovely fellow, looking like a knight of the olden time, with his black and silver coat and shining spurs; the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg was his name.

Haughty! sakes alive! He seemed to think that there wasn't anybody in *that* barn-yard good enough for *him* to play with! He wouldn't speak to a soul there!

"He's shy," said the kindly Mrs. Andalusia.

"Not much," said the elder Dorking

lady, "he's stuck up." She had tried to make up to him, and had been snubbed like—oh, well—just like everything, for the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg did nothing much during the first few days he came, but climb up on the fence, and spout bad poetry at the top of his fine, tenor crow, all about how nice it was where he used to board, and what a different crowd they seemed to be in Papa Snow's chicken-yard, which Peachy thought was pretty rude, *con-sidering*!

And she listened to him crowing away:

"For I am a noble-fowl!

(Cock-a-doodle!)

O, my lamented mother-fowl!

And my departed brother-fowl,

And all the noble other-fowl,

Look down on me and hear me howl,

(Cock-a-doodle!

Doo-oo-oo!)"

"How touching!" sighed Mrs. Whitefeather, to nobody in particular, but loudly enough for the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg to hear.

He didn't pay any attention, any way, but went on crowing:

"For I," etc.—

"Just think of me, High Double Dutch,

(Such things, of course, do trouble much,)

With dirty birds, that gobble such

Coarse things, that I could never touch!

(Cock-a-doodle!

Cock-a-doodle!)"

"So true!" feelingly interposed Mrs. Whitefeather, turning up her eyes at the beautiful, vain bird. "Blood *will* tell."

But the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg only looked down at her as if she were a piece of onion peel, and went on chanting:

"For I am a noble fowl!

(Cock-a-doodle.)

These ill-bred fow's they loudly laugh,
 And at my lineage rudely scoff,
 When at their food I proudly cough,
 They coarsely jabber, "O come off!"
 (Cock-a-doodle!
 Cock-a-doodle!")

"Blood will tell what, Mommer?" asked an inquisitive little Brahma chick that had been listening to Mrs. Whitefeather.

"Oh, nothing good, usually," said Mrs. Big-Brahma, rather crossly, for she was not a very well-bred bird herself, and disliked to be reminded of the fact. "And don't you worry me, chicken, or the 'Pot-pie Man' will come after you."



"THE POTPIE MAN WILL COME AFTER YOU!"

"Oh, Mommer, s'pose I believe that tale?" asked the very up-to-date American chick.

"Well, just be quiet, or I'll tell you another tale that you won't like—there have been tales of too smart young cockerels losing their pin-feathers before this. Do you believe that?" and here Mamma Big-Brahma's strong beak snapped a little ominously.

Quiet was thus quickly restored, and the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg might still be heard steadily chanting away, with Mrs. Whitefeather adoring from below. No one was paying any

attention to the music, further than to get as far from it as possible, because, you know, it gets tiresome hearing all the time what a fine fowl the other fellow is, and what common stuff you are! And still the weary chant dragged on:

"For I am a noble fowl," etc.

"Such noble sentiments," cooed the little Leghorn, sidling up a little nearer and a little nearer to the poet.

"Rather a sensible fowl that," said the Silver Spangled noble fowl to himself; "and she looks like a noble hen—plump and pretty, too." And he looked at her from the corner of his eye.

After a while, he flew down from the fence and began to pick, still slyly watching the little Leghorn, who kept turning up adoring eyes at him and gently clucking:

"A noble fowl! A genius! Handsome as a peacock! Happy the hen that he admires!" and pretending all the while that she didn't know he could hear her.

"Hem! Madam; good morning!" said the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg, presently, in a loud, patronizing tone, to Mrs. Whitefeather. (It was the first time he had spoken to any one since his coming, by the way.)

"Such fine manners," she went on, pretending not to hear. "Permit me to wish you good morning, Madam," said he, still louder.

Then she perked up her little head, as if listening to some far-off sound that she wasn't quite sure of.

"Madam, I have the great honor to wish you a very good morning!" crowed the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg at his loudest.



"SIR, I NEVER SPEAK TO STRANGERS WITHOUT AN INTRODUCTION."

"Sir," she clucked gently but firmly, "you must pardon me, but I *never* speak to strange fowls without an introduction. I'd have you know that my great-great-grandmother was one of the Leghorns, of Leghorn, Italy—cluck, cluck," and she shook her head haughtily, but let her dainty little comb hang becomingly over her left eye, where he could admire it as she stepped proudly away.

"Well, well, well!" crowed the discomfited rooster. "I might have known she was a noble hen—her manners are so good, and she has such fine taste in poetry. We *must* be friends. But who will introduce me? I don't know and don't want to know any of this common, ignorant crowd here. Ah! I have it. I

will give her a grand reception, and will write to ask her for a list of the guests whom she would wish to have invited. I *know* she will ask only the best-bred fowls!"

So he strutted off to the post office to buy some writing leaves and a quill pen from Mother Goose (quite a classical writer herself) who had been appointed postmistress after the last election.

He bought *four red leaves* for the letter (and you have to give a cabbage-caterpillar apiece for them) and it is not many fowls get four red leaves in a letter these hard times let me tell you!

It took quite a long time to compose, and when he had finished he had to rustle round to find another worm to pay a messenger-fowl for taking it to Mrs. Whitefeather, as he couldn't take it himself, like a low-caste common fowl; and, of course, the messenger-fowl was a long time on the way—they always are—for he had to stop and play a game of dust-balling with some other young roosters, and the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg got very impatient.

"A letter for me—red leaves!" exclaimed Mrs. Whitefeather in a loud, clear cluck (she was standing close to those old Dorking hens). "Dear me, I wasn't expecting a letter just at present; I suppose it will be from my noble great-grandmother in Italy, and the dear old thing's neck is still on straight! Who'd have thought it! Is there any answer?"

"No, Ma'am," replied the messenger-fowl.

"Well, here's a small worm for you," said Mrs. Whitefeather, and then she proceeded to open her letter.

Meantime the news had spread all over the yard that Mrs. Whitefeather had got a red letter, and they were all

dying to know where it came from.

"We hope there is nothing wrong with your family in Italy," at length ventured the younger Dorking dame, curiosity getting the better of her dislike for the little Leghorn.

"No, I thank you!" said Mrs. Whitefeather, very politely, "it is only an invitation to a reception which Lord Sil-

PROGRAMME

Reception 2 o'clock
 Caterpillars and Corncakes ½ past 2 o'clock
 Original Crowing at 3 o'clock
 (By the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg.)
 Song, "The Old Hens At Home."
 at ¼ past 3 o'clock
 (Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg.)
 To be followed by a Worm Social.

"H'm, the grub will be good!"



"THEY TOLD HIM EVERYTHING—AND MORE."

ver Spangled Hamburg intends giving to me this afternoon, and he writes to ask me for a list of the guests whom I wish to be asked—of course only the *best* fowls will be invited. Do you wish to see the invitation?" and she held up one of the red leaves before Mrs. Dorking's envious eyes. It looked something like this:

A RECEPTION
 TO MRS. WHITEFEATHER LEGHORN,
 will be given by
 THE LORD SILVER SPANGLED HAMBURG,
 in the
 PARSLEY PATCH,
 at 2 of the Clock, Sunday Afternoon.

clucked Mrs. Dorking, smacking her beak appreciatively. "Can I help you make out the list of guests?"

"No, I thank you," clucked Mrs. Whitefeather, still very politely. "I wish it to be quite exclusive, you know. Only the very *niciest* fowls will be invited, for the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg is *very* particular. *Good morning!*"

And what a tale the younger Dorking had to tell!

"Worms and caterpillars *both*, my dears!"

"A new song by the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg!"

"Only the very high-toned fowls to be invited!"

"Shall *you* go?" was the question of the hour.

"Wait till you are asked," said the wise Mrs. Big-Brahma.

"And it will be time enough then to say whether you'll go or not."

"I sha'n't go, for one," clucked the elder Dorking—very sure that she wouldn't be asked.

"Nobody asked you, Ma'm, she said," chipped in the younger Dorking, mischievously, thinking that *she might* possibly be asked, yet.

"May I know the meaning of all this excitement?" majestically demanded Don Jose, the Black Spanish.

And they told him everything, and a little more, as stories do grow in the telling. Then began signs of great wrath to appear. The inoffensive ground was scratched up all over, like a newly raked flower-bed, under Don Jose's indignant feet. He examined his spurs, stuck out his neck feathers, flapped his wings violently, and then crowed out:

"To the impudent stranger who has come amongst us, who makes bad poetry, who insults everybody, who wants to carry off the prettiest hen in the place! Are you ready to fight, fight, fight! Come on! Come on! Come on! Cock-a-doo-dle-do-oo-oo!"

"Prettiest hen in the place! Well, I like that," grumbled the elder Dorking, and Mrs. Whitefeather Leghorn, who also heard it, thought that *she* liked it, too. For she had really been very fond of Don Jose, but his quick-tempered, jealous ways had made him very uncomfortable to live with.

"Is he a noble fowl?" asked the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg, of Mrs. Whitefeather, coolly regarding his spurs the while, for he was no coward.

"No! but he's a gentle-fowl of good family," clucked Mrs. Whitefeather, "but don't fight today—I don't want you to get hurt," though in her small heart she was hoping that Don Jose would be the conqueror.

"Not fight! Why, Madam, no noble-fowl ever refuses the challenge of a gentle-fowl!" proudly crowed the Lord Silver Spangled Hamburg. "But I shall come back safe and sound, never fear! And I shall ask for a kiss from your pretty yellow beak, when I do. Good-bye, for the present, beautiful noble-hen!"



THE CHALLENGE.

And off he went, at a leisurely, insulting strut, up to where Don Jose was fuming away at a great rate, and took his stand a few feet away from that impatient gentle-fowl. Then they stared at each other steadily for a moment, stuck out their necks with the feathers standing like Queen Elizabeth ruffs round them.

danced a few measures of the war dance, came a little nearer, and a little nearer, and then something happened that looked like the splashing of a great blot on the whitewashed wall at the end of the yard. And then—"Peachy! Peachy!" said a laughing voice.

"Why, Mollie, I never heard you come!" laughed little Peachy.

"Well, how could you? You were fast asleep! Come, it's time to get up," and Mollie turned down the clothes for Peachy to get out of her cot.

"But, Mollie, I wasn't asleep. I really-truly wasn't. I was looking at the chick, ens, Mollie; I heard 'em talking!"

"Pooh, little girl, you were dreaming!"

"Mollie, I wasn't! So there!"

"Well, tell me what they said," said the good-natured Mollie.

So while she was being dressed, Peachy told her all about it, and many times

Mollie opened her eyes, and then she said:

"Why, Peachy! you mustn't tell such stories!"

"Solemn word-'an-'onor, Mollie.

'Is my finger wet?

Is it dry?

Cut my throat 'fore I die'

if I didn't," solemnly drawing her tiny fore-finger across her little throat.

"Well! well! well!" was all Mollie could find to say. "I guess you *thought* you heard 'em."

But Mollie certainly did think it rather odd when in the afternoon about three o'clock, on that same day, every hen in the place seemed bent on getting into the Parsley Patch, and no wonder, as Papa Snow said, "when it looked as if all the boys in the village had emptied their bait-cans there!"

SONG OF THE WOOD CHOPPER.

CHARLES A. KEELER.

Chop, chop, chips a-flying,
Breezes through the pine boughs sighing;
Swing the ax and fell the tree
And sing a song right merrily!

Chop, chop, the bright ax flashes,
Down the tottering fir tree crashes!
Lop the limbs and saw the bole
While round about the thunders roll.

Chop, chop, the ax is swinging,
Rain is falling, birds are winging;
Down the mountain haste away
From thunder's crash and lightning's play!

MISS CHERRY FLOWER'S DIARY.

ON THE PORCH AT KYOTO.

To-day the air of Spring is silky soft, the restful calm and fragrant fancy exquisitely sweet.

"Come, my husband, to the porch where shadows of trees here and there dreamily wave, and I will read to you the little history of my visit to the strange and wonderful land of America, the history of the long days when I earnestly prayed for the swift death of S * * * * old man most horrible.

You remember, how with tears, I meekly asked one year to prepare myself to become the wife of such high, political minister, (how much I hated him!) and how humbly I asked to come to America to learn language and much knowledge. But he wished not that I go away, but I prayed always, and you were far away, unkind one. But earth lies heavy upon his head, and here! here is the sunshine, and you! My little diary! What a quaint, singular fragrance from its every line, in which I again became a little stranger in a far country! One year I kept it, one year ago. To-day I lifted my little book out of the drawer, turned it over and over, and many times I said:

"This is what I could not write again! Yes, I felt a strange delight, as if I found many beautiful pieces of rare embroidery. I confess I am a dress-adoring, foolish little Oriental lady! But come!

Here at last I am in America! As long time as I remember—yes! when I was a tiny *kodomo musume*, the word

"America" was to me the symbol of sweetest perfumes, richest clothing and finest food. Whenever to me came the thought of it, there at once a high marble edifice appeared in the air, beautiful ladies of inimitable gesture bowed low before me, strong and graceful men walked like gods abroad, and it was to me the land of finest grace, sweetest promise. It is not strange, therefore, that the Pacific Ocean seemed wide as the Eternal Sea, and the voyage as long as life itself, till the dream-city of my days rose up before me. Alas! I remembered not wisely that dreams never come true, that perfection is not a flower of earth, and foolishly I forgot "other lands, other gods." Imagine what I, Miss Cherry Flower, fresh-minded as a polished mirror, felt, when my steamer, *Belgie*, anchored slowly at that San Francisco wharf—that wharf so ugly, so dirty!

"Gentlemen," I said, "is this really America, of which I dreamed, which I worshipped; this land of black dust, great smokes, and strange smells? The beautiful place is far from here, one tells me; but how inhospitable seems it to receive strangers at the back door of the City! So many dusty, paint-faded, broken-windowed houses, I saw on that Third street where I landed, and heavy wagons of disgusting sound, and dirty children—so thin! Wretched women with sunken eyes—even poor people in rich America, I understand. Oh, my dream that I builded just two weeks ago! Alas! Alas!

Is it that Japan, also, holds such strange smells for foreign nostrils? I think not. Wagon oil smell, thick smoke smell, smell of cheapest cigar in Chinaman's mouth, smell of strange goods, somewhat curious smell from American's body itself, *keto-no-moi*. Not of honorable gentlemen do I speak, but the man unwashed of sweat and dust and beer, who is very numerous round the landing place.

Noisy! noisy! busy! and all hurry it seems. What a mighty crowd! This must be some festival day? No, this is a common crowd of Saturday afternoon! Is that true? Our Tokio crowd can be compared only to a midnight crowd of this city.

Wonderful street-cars, one, two, three, four—I cannot count them. In Japan, I am sure a dozen people would be killed in every hour.

H—M—, Esq., the honorable Japanese Minister to the City of Mexico, my fellow-passenger and guardian on the journey, stood by me at the corner of Market and Third streets.

"What a wonderful clock!" he exclaimed, staring up at the great clock-tower of the *Chronicle* building.

His mouth was much open, and the passers-by looked with curiosity on his short, stout, stooping figure, and on his outwardly bending legs (for which he is remarkable in Japanese society).

"Funny little Jap," laughed a news-boy, looking at his careless dressing, which is of our best *samurai* fashion, but he did not see his great gold watch of five hundred *yen*!

"Mr. M—, please don't look so wondering," I whispered, "boys laugh at you. What indignity on the Japanese Minister!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed with heroic voice, and then we came to the hotel.

When we walked into the courtyard of that large, splendid place, I saw a gentleman kiss his wife—how warmly I blushed! Said Mr. M.:

"They blushed not, kissing each other at a public place, and you, *hazukashigaru*, blushed more pink than cherry-flowers!"

Kiss! Too sweet for open place! Foreigners think Japanese know not this rose of love, but I blush to say!

AT THE — HOTEL, Dec. 11th.

Did I expect to hear kind greetings from the hotel man when we entered his house? "Condescend to enter, please," "honor us with your presence," "honorable welcome." But no! American hotel man nothing seems to know of etiquette, how to be kind and polished to guests. Never he smiles, as a statue; he is rough as a Japanese officer. Did I expect any American girl sweetly to receive my wraps and umbrella, as in Japan? It was a silly dream!

How strange, when I remember the hotel-master and mistress in Japan are studying from morning till midnight how graciously to entertain their guests and make them comfortable as at home! It is harder to be a Japanese hotel-keeper than a leader in society here, but anyone, without culture in courtesy and kindness, may in a moment become a hotel-keeper in America. And so, it is very surprising to me, to hear that many Americans are born and die in hotels.

"Are there such poor people?" we should say.

In Japan only people without homes go there, asking temporary shelter and food, and friends say to them:

"Still in hotel? You have no home

yet? How pitifully sad!"

Hotel! The word itself, to the Japanese mind, speaks of wandering, homelessness. Hotel-living (*yadoya-sumai*) is thought of as a somewhat contemptible condition, and those who live that way cannot inspire any confidence and respect. Society never opens the door to them.

How silent is this room! It is the silence that is dead; the silence that stifles thought, not inspires it; the silence that man has made with the murder of birds, and bees, and singing waters, in the heart of a great city. Shall I open the window? No; the smoke and the thunder of wagons will enter. Any poor Japanese place has a garden, upon which one may look from the open *shoji* to get fresh air and beautiful thoughts. It is like prison here. Not one comes to see you. Time slips away gracefully in Japan, when a kind hotel girl comes in smiling with "honorable tea and cake," or brings in the register of guests, and a Chinese pen, bashfully asking:

"If I may venture to request, Miss —, that you inscribe your name and dwelling place?"

Oh, I feel so lonesome here, and was to-day secretly crying. I hope soon my honorable uncle will arrive to conduct me to his home.

I have noticed some strange things common here — freckled faces, bald heads, spectacled women, flies, plenty wild dogs on the street, and horse refuse. And then, some things that are scarce—pock-marked faces (not one have I seen yet), beggars, pickpockets, street musicians, earthquakes.

WASHINGTON ST., Dec. 15th.

At the house of my honorable uncle.

It is true these people are wonderful. How came I to the top of this tall hill? Did I walk breathlessly up the steep street, or come in American horse carriage, or in *jiurikisha*, or on horse's back? No; one cannot ride up hills steeper than the steps of *Atago-San*, with horse or man, yet am here without walking. Americans have made carriages that can climb hills without horses; a giant rope of iron under the ground pulls them along. It is very wonderful. Thus I came here.

It is very large and splendid up here, many houses all over the heights, the dreaming waters of the Golden Gate at our feet, great hills afar and all around, but *Fujiyama* is far from here! How tall and strong are the houses, like temples, many of them, none so small as with us. American man must think he lives forever, or he too lazy to build a nice, clean, new house, when old one gets worn out! One cannot here take down the house front, and breathe the gracious morning air. It is built like a prison; get out only at the door. A Japanese cynic has said, "American house fits well for men to commit wicked things. Shut the door and nobody espies what he or she is doing inside." Japanese house is free for everybody; even in hotel we never lock our doors.

A sweet American custom is to knock at the door before entering and American houses are convenient and perfect with water supply and electricity. The kitchens are of beautiful order, and without any offensive smells. One enters any house in his shoes, all dirty from the street, walking on the strange and brilliant carpets; even in the temples one has told me.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

It is like our New Year here now. What a pity it is not to have even a flake of descending snow! Christmas Eve in San Francisco is, however, softly sweet and poetical, the heavy, soft, gossamer-like sea-fogs gently cover the city like fallen clouds; the veiled electric lamps mildly illumine the hurrying, joyful crowd. How cheerful to see every mail-box full of packages, every arm full of secret, happy bundles! How sweet to see even a broken-skirted old mother carrying large parcels! You feel her soul full of love for her children, good thoughts for her relations and friends, new hopes, and sweet forgetfulness. I am not a Christian, but to tell the truth, I feel something of joy and gladness of true Christ's teaching. I wrote indeed to a friend, "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas!" It was the first time I wrote those words, and the sound of it is joyful and happy to me. One cannot help to feel a friendly happiness, seeing such gracious, sweet, satisfied sight of America.

How beautiful looks the lighted "Christmas tree" through the windows, with love gifts gracefully hanging from its branches, and sweetly dressed children joyfully regarding it—alas! I am a little stranger in a far country! But best country is it for me now, glad I am to be here; why, I know!

CHRISTMAS DAY.

How solemnly, heavenly, the church bells sound, gracefully announcing our

"Savior is born!" I think of Buddha the Beautiful, and I love, too, his gentle brother of Palestine.

Every street is silent, peaceful as our New Year's Day. Where are the noise and confusion of yesterday? The birds are abroad and the gentle air caresses my cheek with warm kisses. Roses bloom instead of starry snow blossoms. There is no frown of cold, grey sky upon a dead, white earth. The morning sun is gloriously shining in the blue heavens, "Peace on earth, and good will towards men!" This is the good day of all the year, when the wicked, vain, pretentious city turns, with heart of saint, and humbly kneels to God. Sacred friendship lives again; old sin is forgotten; any blot of shame or sorrow is not seen in the earth; love, peace and satisfaction are in the face of every mortal. How brightly look those who open door for the postman! I have myself received two little gifts from kind Americans—a Japanese basket of candy from our kind neighbour, Mrs. J * * *, a handkerchief of silk from the American clerk whom my honorable uncle employs. Good hearted Americans, you I shall remember always.

"Merry Christmas!" It sounds like pious speech from lips of a priest. How sad it comes only "once a year." But true, he comes once a year and leaves a long garland of sweetness and happiness over his following days.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



FIGHT A BOY OF YOUR SIZE.

(TO WHOM IT MOST CONCERNS.)

Back, far back in that backwoods school
Of Lincoln, Grant and the great we prize
We boys would fight, but we had one rule—
You must fight a boy of your size.

Or white boy or brown, ay, Boer no doubt,
Whatever the quarrel, whatever the prize
You must stand up fair and so fight it out
With a boy somewhat your size.

But a big boy spoiled so for fights, he did,
He lied most diplomatic-like-lies
And he fought such fights—ye gods forbid—
But never a boy of his size.

He skinned and he tanned kept hide and hair
Now I am speaking figure-wise—
But he didn't care who and he didn't care where
Just so he was under size.

Then the big boy cried, "a big chief am I,
I was born to bang and to civilize,
And yet sometimes I, in my pride I sigh
For something about my size."

Then the good Schoolmaster he reached a hand
And across his knee he did flop crosswise
That bully, and raise in his good right hand
A board of considerable size.

And the good Schoolmaster he smote that chief,
He smote both hips and he smote both thighs;
And he said as he smote, "It is my belief
This board is about your size."

* * * * *

Beware the bully, of his words beware,
His triangular lips are a nest of lies,
For he never did dare and he never will dare,
To bang a boy of his size.

JOAQUIN MILLER.

THE HEIGHTS, CAL., Nov. 15, 1899.



A STUDY.
J. H. E. PARTINGTON.

A CHRISTMAS JINGLE.

Glimmer of a shining sleigh,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
Comes a maiden on her way,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
From the silent northern seas,
Through the icy Arctic breeze,
Towards the south the maiden flees;
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas.

Tinkling of tiny bells,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
Hark! how now the chiming swells,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
Patter of a reindeer's feet,
Through the snow and mud and sleet,
SUCH a place for maiden sweet;
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas.

Hark! a ringing laugh and clear,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
Now the maid is coming near,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
Leaves the reindeer in the snows,
Reaches now the living rose,
Southward now a burro goes;
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas.

Loose the clinging furs, and look,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
Shining sun and flowing brook,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
Land of sunshine; here you are,
In your favored land afar,
Blessed California;
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas.

Ring the joyful Christmas bells,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
Gives she much, but nought she sells,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas;
May you hear the maiden's call,
Old and young, and great and small,
Many of them to you all,
Mary Christmas, Mary Christmas.

BLANCHE PARTINGTON.

SWEET-BRIER ROSES.

By Marie Alice Keatinge.

Strangely fascinating was the contrast of the two women who lingered on the rose-covered veranda. The sunlight touched with warm dainty fingers the gentle, earnest face of the elder woman, with her early crown of gray hair. Her companion's fresh, youthful face was framed with gleaming masses of chestnut hair. As they sat idly there, the elder woman was haunted with a memory of the past. It would not go at her bidding, but lingered with strange insistency, with all its old sadness and sweetness.

It was long years ago. It seemed strange that she remembered every detail so well. Reg. had taken her to his old home to meet his mother and father, and ask them to approve of the girl that he had chosen. The wedding day was not yet set, but he had many things to show her that would be her's some day. He was leading her down the hall to the library, to see some family jewels that were in a private cabinet. As they passed a door someone came out and said in a cheery voice:

"Say, Reg., old man, I have some work to do here. Let me have a moment," and Reginald's twin brother, Ronald, followed them into the library. Reg. was fair, quiet, and gentle, but Ronald had dark hair and eyes, and was quick and eager.

He took both her hands in his,—they were warm, manly hands.

"It's really true, little girl," he questioned, "you are going to make Reg.,

happy?" and he kissed her fondly on the forehead. "I am fond of old Reg.," he continued, "and I know how kind he will be to you. And you will make him happy, too," he said musingly, as he still held her hands, and looked kindly into her face.

She was very happy, not only to have a husband like dear Reg., but a brother like this.

She could not remember what she had answered, but he smiled approvingly, and then turned to Reg., who had been looking over the cabinet. He held up a curious wrought necklace, set with emeralds.

"Margery," he said, "come here and let me see if this suits you."

"Don't!" she begged in a voice of alarm. "You must not give me such valuable things."

Ronald looked at her in as much surprise as if she had said she could not marry Reg. A feeling had come over her suddenly, a presentiment as it were, that she had no right to these family jewels.

"I am not fond of gems," she explained in apology. "I don't even value them or care for them, as most people do."

Reg. laughed gleefully. Ronald looked at her again, with penetrating eyes. She could see his playful smile yet.

"Do you like books?" he asked.

"She reads deep blue ones, and heaps of them," Reg. answered for her, and put his arm around her with a proud air of possession.

The weeks went by, happy, happy weeks. She was to stay a month, but they insisted on a longer visit. Reg. petted, loved and caressed her, and she and Ronald lived in an elysium of books and discussions of literature, art, and science. He was a great student and well informed on many things. They were wont to agree, and again, differ almost to the verge of bad taste, but became famous friends and comrades.

Reg's mother and father could not do too much for her. They were as happy as the young people.

How vividly came the awakening! Ronald had been away for two days on business. She had missed him grievously, notwithstanding Reg's presence. She heard one of the servants say that he had returned. Her heart was filled with gladness, as she came down from her room to the long cool veranda, just before dinner. There he was at the very end, with the others.

An unaccountable fear seized her—a dread of meeting Ronald in the presence of others. Her heart thrilled with gladness when he left the group and came eagerly forward to greet her. They joyously clasped hands. As their eyes met, soul answered soul, heart responded to heart. They spoke not a word, for never yet has the love of men and women needed speech. As the veil was lifted their hands fell apart, the warm, happy flush left their faces, and they stood white and still. Then for an instant his eyes gleamed with a fierce defiance, as if he would crush the barriers that held them apart; but his eyes faltered and fell, as he gazed at the wonder and the helpless pain in the pleading eyes of the woman before him, appealing to his manliness and generosity.

They went back to the others. She felt faint and weak. He brought her a glass of water. "You look tired," he said:

They passed the evening with the usual routine, but scarcely spoke to each other—just a word now and then, conscious all the while of unutterable happiness, and for the time entirely forgetful that there was any after-reckoning.

All night long she lay on her bed sleepless, thinking of him—submerged in a happiness she had never dreamed of, and could never know again in her whole life. She knew, as well as if she had been told, that Ronald was lying awake, soaring in the same heaven as herself. She had completely forgotten Reg.

But the morning came, and the shadows on her brain were swept away. Poor Reg.—how dearly she loved him! and she thought of how kind and tender he had always been to her,—but she did not love him as the other. Her sufferings were great. She could not think of words to pray, but said over and over again:

"O God, has this come to me,—has this come to me?" She had always held a very strict code of ideas in regard to loyalty, and now she scorned herself for her fall.

She was late for breakfast, and as she crossed the hall she met Ronald. His face was white and set. It wrung her heart to see how he, too, had suffered. They looked into each other's eyes for one moment as they met, but neither spoke.

She was to return home in another two weeks. The days that followed were like weeks of bitterest remorse. She knew that she must marry Reg.; hon-

or demanded that; and she blamed herself for falling unawares into a flame that seared her soul and Ronald's. They avoided each other in every way possible. He was pale and haggard, and had little to say, excusing himself by pleading illness. She could see that his glance was upon her constantly, despite his evident effort to refrain. She had a haunting fear of doing anything that would make her more attractive in his eyes. At last she became lively, and assumed a heartless, mocking air. She hoped that he would hate her. Then she grew vexed that he did not think of going away. It seemed to her the wisest and the only thing to do, as she saw that his sufferings were increasing day by day. Finally he read her thoughts, and announced that he must go away for a day or two again on business. She upbraided herself severely for being the cause of his hopeless pain. For her own despair she cared nothing, for she felt that she deserved it.

They all appeared oblivious to any change, and she tried to be doubly kind to Reg., and at times was quite persuaded that her infatuation for Ronald was a terrible hallucination. The fact of Ronald's wretchedness she could not evade.

He returned early in the morning, after a two days' absence. The members of the family were scattered about the lawn. Ronald walked straight to her and called her by name,—something that he had not done for days. There was not a tremor in his voice, and his eyes looked bravely into hers, as if asking forgiveness. Then they seemed to say, "I have fought a bitter fight and have conquered." As she earnestly scanned his white, worn face, she

thanked God for the calm, sweet peace that rested there.

On the day before she returned home, Ronald came to her and said:

"Come with me for a walk in the meadows, Margery. The sweet brier roses are in bloom."

She hesitated a moment. She was afraid to go. Then she thought that surely this much was due to him, and consented. Could she ever forget that walk? He wanted to show her how strong he was—convince her that she was mistaken—but she was afraid for herself and for him.

They did not speak until they reached a gate some distance from the house. She was praying all the while, asking divine help to keep them both true to Reg. As they walked side by side in silence, through the sunlit meadow, their hearts seemed to be mutually caressing. It was something like a soft, tender hand binding up a wound with loving fingers. All the pain was turned into a restful, holy calm. They were happy now, and babbled like two little children, as they gathered the fragrant sweet brier roses. They came to a little stream which she could not easily step across; he hesitated a moment before he offered his hand, but she was afraid, and went down the stream a little way, and crossed alone. They went home with their arms full of the long delicate sprays of sweet-scented blossoms. He looked happy after this.

She thought that all was over. Vain fancy! No sooner had she returned home than wild longings came over her to see him—just to see him once more—and Reg.'s letters were like stabs to her heart.

As the weeks went by she knew that

fibre, Turks and Southerner, Greek and Hebrew, Slav and Hindoo; all—all have entered in at the Golden Gate and live enchanted in the Paradise beyond! Each has given of his blood to make California what she is; watered her with his tears, fired her with his laughter; and what she may be no man knows. Each loves her according to his genius, and out of the worship strange things will come. For she is a luring, fascinating creature, this California! No man whom she has once held may live long away from her, strive as he will.

Her seal is on his breast and anon he must return to his adoration. He has hymned her, painted her, shaped her loveliness in marble; with all the passion and reverence that in him is; in the endless diversions of his worship lie the promise and the prophecy of her future greatness.

Already the "long reaches of the peaks of song" are glinting in the light of coming day; already rise young voices chanting carols to the new-born queen; and wise men from the East lay tribute at her feet. The day is here, the time now; our day, our time, our California. What of our love? Shall future ages sing the birth of another and greater Greece, point back over a waste of centuries to California days, and leash their duller wits to memories of a splendid efflorescence of life that we shall plant and gather?

Commerce lies at our feet—willing slave—strong rock on which to build our dream of civilization. All roads lead to San Francisco; every known country sends ships into her harbor—the first natural harbor in the world. Standing staunch upon her purple hills, she looks down upon the riches of the lands; tea, ivory and silks of India; tea, porcelain, bronze of China and Japan; the coffee ships of Java; the sugar ships of Hawaii; the gold ships of Alaska; the passenger ships from everywhere, all pour the wealth into her coffers. Come East, come West, San Francisco is the halfway house between. She is the end and beginning of the American continent, the centre of her domain.

A new voice rises in her halls of learning. A later Pallas, clear-eyed, grave, irresistible, opens wise lips proclaiming the glorious dawn of new days. Her temples lift proud heads assured of worship. Pilgrims from afar lay offerings at her shrines. The columns of a new Parthenon rise shimmering in the distance.

The average citizen of California, gracefully as-

sured of earth's best gifts, takes easily the knowledge of her excellence in all things. That in California are two of the best equipped and most modern universities in the States; inspired by the distinguished genius and wisdom of men like David Starr Jordan, and Benjamiu Ide Wheeler; he coolly takes along with the rest of the good things. That out of these universities should ceaselessly pour a stream of noble citizens—strong, brave, sane, wise young men and women, he calmly accepts as inevitable. That her schools are famed afar for originality and thoroughness; her teachers for inspired devotion to their work; her ruler for a fine loyalty to the cause of learning, these he lightly considers as "Californian way." But these things have been worked for, prayed for, died for, it is only so great deeds are done, and it is only from these and such sources that we look for the living tomorrow.

There are those among us who know these things; whose exalted faith has made California what she is; whose eyes are steadfast set on even higher heights for her, who tend and foster every hint and promise of her betterment. It is from all such that we, in this new world sent out into the wilderness, ask a hearing. The spirit of the West, rare, audacious, original, seeks new outlet for expression; our purpose and mission is to furnish it. Believing as we do, in the singular genius of California; her coming commercial and political pre-eminence; her swiftening civilization; to us it seems that the world-chorus waits her clear young voice, its song imperfect till her fine keen note completes the harmony.

In this faith we ask your help, conscious of the inherent strength of our venture. For all short comings we ask a charitable judgment, confidently promising an ever-growing excellence as our resources increase. The response we have so far met with, has been beyond our most sanguine expectations, proving the need felt for a magazine of this kind; a representative publication, free from small provincialism, yet carefully conserving the singular, original essence of things Californian.

We place it in your hands, assured already of friendly welcome, and, with the season's greetings, and for this month bid you good-bye.

In presenting the initial number of *HALE'S* we ask the indulgence of our readers.

Few realize the magnitude of making a magazine. Considerable matter intended for this number has been unavoidably left out.

BOOK REVIEW.

BOHEMIAN PARIS OF TO-DAY.

W. C. MORROW, ILLUSTRATED BY EDOUARD CUCUEL.

[Lippincott, publishers.]

"For the wise," says W. C. Morrow in the frank preface to his book "Bohemian Paris" written from notes by Edward Cucuel and ably illustrated by the latter.

Not only for the wise, but for the wearied many has he written, whose drab monotony of days may lift awhile in hours of storied pleasure through these pages, brilliant with the colors we knew as children. For "Bohemian Paris of To-day" is essentially a "picture book," picturesque in subject, picturesquely written and lavishly illustrated. Almost it seems as if its people, supremely conscious of the artistic fitness of things, lived only as the light and shadow, the fore and background of the "living picture" of the Latin Quarter of to-day. The brilliant impish student; the fantastic nymph of the cafes and her American fairy god-father; the gorgeous queens of "modeldom;" the starving sages of the cellars; the artist autocrats passing in wildly picturesque procession, seem sometimes more like "living pictures," than life actual, soberly chronicled for our amusement and delight.

Yet we know the atmosphere to be true, the *vraisemblance* of this narrative of artist life astounding in its verity. "Bohemian Paris of To-day" is the Baedeker of the Latin Quarter; the textbook of Parisian art life; the guide, philosopher and friend of him who would wander in the merges of that strange under-world, whose flower is the noblest art of this century. Once among its lawless, happy people, the reader will not willingly leave them. Once within the magic portals of "le Moulin Rouge" he stays content until tempted to enter the still more fascinating "Soleil d'Or," where not alone gayety is seen, but the pathos and dignity of refined poverty.

Of the *Bal des Quat'z Arts*—scene of riotous dreaming where is no vision rare form however beautiful, but finds a living embodiment,—of the

exodus of students, picture laden and wild with hope, into the promised land of medals and "honorable mention,"—of *le Boul' Mich*,—the *Cafe du Neant*,—let it be earnestly hoped that there shall be found no literary "Thompkins" with agile and prudish handkerchief to wipe from his, or more probably her lips, this magic kiss of Bohemianism.

Mr. Morrow's text is on friendly and sympathetic terms with its illustrations and both of these he characterizes as being of "engaging frankness." Neither belies the author's apt phrase. He is of those who believe the purpose of art is to depict, not preach, and he paints with broadest brush and color of the strongest this strange, splendid life of the Latin Quarter, its heights and lowest depths. It is for the philosopher to find the meaning and moral of it all—to us be the pleasure. To the book-worn reader this volume brings new zest, to the weary toiler new courage, for out of the gay bravery of "Bohemian Paris" where starvation smiles and shame does penance in loving selfless deeds, there comes to us a dauntless cheer and hope from those who lead, live and know the way of ambition and accomplishment.

It will please those who have watched the progress of Edouard Cucuel from *Examiner* days, to note the gratifying result of Parisian study upon his work. The illustrations of "Bohemian Paris of To-day"—numbering over 100, bear witness to a progress little short of marvelous, and to an industry and conscientious effort most praiseworthy. Innumerable "types" are here, which while somewhat lacking in distinction, are true and valuable. Each and every inhabitant of Bohemia here finds his interpreter and all his famous haunts are set before us. Such architectural drawing as occurs is particularly admirable and Mr. Cucuel may be warmly congratulated upon his share in the production of "Bohemian Paris of To-day." Its "make-up" is altogether attractive and will probably find for the volume a ready sale as gift-book during the holidays.

EVA CRAWFORD.

JANICE MEREDITH.

BY PAUL LEICESTER FORD.

In his recent "Life of Washington," Mr. Ford harvested the fruits of his study of the Revolutionary period; he now gathers the aftermath of romance into his historical story "Janice Meredith." The pretty name and charming face on the cover would of themselves gain a reading for the volume, even though the first chapters did not so completely arrest and chain attention. Whoever reads the first two chapters will finish the book. The mystery there introduced continues very nearly to the end, and there is a clever trap for those who read the last chapter first—but a word to the wise is sufficient.

The ready welcome awaiting tales of the Revolution is well attested by the recent reception of "Hugh Wynne" and "Richard Carvel." Ours is the first generation able to do full and impartial justice to that period. The last veteran of the Revolution is dead, and with him died the last heart-throb of real and personal feeling against Great Britain. The Colonial Dames and Sons and Daughters of the Revolution keep alive among us the traditions, principles, and quaint and romantic customs and costumes of the old time; but none of the present generation ever sat at the feet of grandfathers who fought or of grandmothers who endured through the terrible strife. It was inevitable that such, even to the third and fourth generation, should hate a red-coat and the Government that backed it. But the horrors of that period come to us softened by time and with no trace of personal rancor; and we, facing the possibility of an Anglo-Saxon alliance, are able to do justice, both as writers and readers, to the men and women who maintained the long struggle, without regard to the side on which they fought.

With this in mind, Mr. Ford pictures life in New Jersey during the years between the Boston Tea Party and the surrender of Cornwallis, when that devoted country was harried by the passing and re-passing of hostile armies, and the picture presented is in the main convincing. The horrors of a military occupation are set forth in a manner at once concrete and delicate; it is a wholesome story for a generation that knows war only from the marching out and in of easily victorious troops.

We trace the fortunes of a beautiful girl and

her tory family through the vicissitudes of those weary years, following closely the movements of Washington's Army—too closely, perhaps, for artistic effect, for Washington's movements were based upon military, not literary, tactics, and the doubling and twisting of the historical thread gives an impression of extreme length to what is not a long tale, as stories go. This intricacy and lack of distinct forward movement are bewildering to the reader, and any historical accuracy thus gained is at the expense of definiteness—a needless sacrifice in view of the latitude permissible to the romancer.

The portrait of Washington presented is only a more concrete rendering of that given in the "Life of Washington;" it is the same fiery, courtly Virginian, tender of heart and unswerving in principle, who led the Continental Armies through worse than war. The ever-fascinating figure of Major Andre loses nothing of its charm in Mr. Ford's hands. Other subordinate figures, historical and imaginary, fill in the background with more or less effect, but the main interest is centered in the love story of Janice Meredith and the bond servant, Charles Fownes, so-called.

Mr. Ford's men, from Peter Stirling on, are a delight; good or bad, they are wholesome, and there are grace and savor in them all; they grasp us with their strong personality and hold us by their true humanity. His women are quite another thing. No woman that he has given us bears the stamp of reality. The best are very high and pure ideals, the poorest are harmlessly frivolous ideals, but these ideals, high and low, are equally enshrined and sacred to him. The worst that can be said of them, however, is that they are inadequate. In Peter Stirling, the robust strength of the hero's character atones for the triviality of the leading feminine element, for it is Peter himself in whom we are interested. The idealization of the heroine in "The Story of an Untold Love" does not so much matter, for it is still the men whom we are primarily interested in; we never get a glimpse of the woman save through his eyes, and idealization in love is the natural thing. But this story purports to be a study of a woman's growth and development, and must be judged with that purpose in mind. Here we have an attempt at understanding and realizing the ideal; it is not a success in this particular. Mr. Ford's knowledge of woman is objective, rather than subjective. He gives perfect

pictures of their life and action, but when he attempts to account for that action by a study of motives, he falls short.

Janice Meredith is the fascinating, all compelling beauty, dear to tradition; and that we may be the more convinced of her beauty, we have her portrait, forming the thread upon which her love story is strung. She loves once, and is loved by many, commanding undying attention from true men and false, bringing out the best or arousing the worst, in each according to his kind. So far she is natural; but the analysis of her motives is unconvincing and inadequate. Yet her influence is that of the true and ideal woman, the "eternal feminine." It makes a man of poor Philemon Hennion, but it cannot make her love him; it subjects her to the worst dangers of her life under the subtle scheming of Lord Clowes; Charles Fownes, exile, bond-servant, soldier, brave to the death where himself is concerned, never flinches in his stern honor, but when by sacrificing himself he may save her father from death, and her from sorrow. These studies of strong men in

their moments of weakness, and of weak men in their strength, strike the core of true manhood. There are scenes where the woman is incomprehensible according to any known principles, but the men are always men and nothing less.

Janice's mother and father are well contrasted, one a stern Puritan, the other weak, vain, pleasure-loving, easy-going, yet honorable in the main intention. There are dainty touches all through, particularly in the small talk of the girls in the early chapters.

But enough of faults and particulars. While as a study of womanhood the book cannot be called a success, as a story it fulfills some of the best requirements of literature. There is an excellent working out of an interesting idea, there is purity of thought and expression, simple-heartedness, courage and devotion to principle; all these win for the book a sure place in the hearts of those who love the lovely and the good, and have faith to believe that it is also, ultimately the true.

WILMETTA CURTIS.

PUBLISHERS' DEPARTMENT.

A NEW SPORTING GOODS FIRM.

THE H. E. SKINNER CO.

The surprise of the season transpired on Sportsmen's Row during the week. Monday morning the portals of that well known firm, the E. T. Allen Co., were closed to their customers and the public—the cause for the temporary cessation of a large and increasing business carried on by a popular dealer in all kinds of sporting goods for the past twenty-five years was briefly told by a notice posted on the panel of the closed iron door.

Mr. E. T. Allen, a most courteous and genial gentleman, who has been identified with the business of dealing in sporting goods and outfits for

sportsmen for many years past in this city and who is most favorably known to the trade throughout the United States, in England and the Orient, after a long and successful business career has sold out the business heretofore conducted at 416 Market street, below Sansome. What the particular reason was for the retirement from business of Mr. E. T. Allen is not material in this announcement; suffice it to say, that the sale was consummated at a valuation placed upon the business by the seller.

Yesterday morning business was resumed in the usual manner at the old stand, the signs reading "H. E. Skinner Company" successor to "E. T. Allen Co."

Henry E. Skinner, the head of the new house

has been connected with the old firm for the past thirteen years. Mr. Skinner has an enviable reputation with the trade as a conscientious and energetic business man. To his efforts is due not a little of the high standing of the business house which is now merged into the firm of which he is the directing genius. One branch of the emporium, the fishing tackle department, his personal charge, has a far reaching fame known to and appreciated by the angling fraternity. He has also made a record as an expert in other lines of the business.

Mr. Skinner is a prominent and enthusiastic member of the San Francisco Fly-Casting Club and has been prominent in every movement towards developing the gentle art among the sportsmen of this city. He is esteemed by a large circle of business and social acquaintances.

The new firm proposes to take advantage of every opportunity to establish and maintain a live up-to-date sportsman's emporium. They will carry a choice stock of all kinds of sporting goods, of all qualities, thus meeting the demands of each and every purchaser. The market of demand and supply will be closely watched, novelties, new goods and all kinds of stock will be in touch with the times and the wants of patrons.

The former customers and friends of the E. T. Allen Co. will, of course, be interested in the personnel of the staff under Mr. Skinner. We take pleasure in announcing that Mr. H. Justins will have charge of the main floor, assisted by Leon Hazen, Julius Bruns, Wm. Schendel and Wm. Jensen.

Another matter of importance which should not be overlooked is the fact that Mr. David Thom (a veteran sportsman and all around good fellow) will maintain his former quarters intact on the second floor of the store, where he can always be found by sportsmen requiring his skillful services.

The publisher of the Pacific Home Journal and the Home Builder has decided to consolidate the two papers into one publication. This has been done under a change of both name and style.

The new publication will be called "HALE'S MAGAZINE" and will be of the usual style of the popular magazines of the day.

We take the volume and number of the Home Builder (established 1893) and therefore with the beginning of the new year we enter our seventh volume. HALE'S MAGAZINE succeeds to the sub-

scription list and the advertising patronage of both the former publications.

The unexpired subscriptions of each will be completed by HALE'S.

Any persons who have subscribed to HALE'S MAGAZINE, or who are already subscribers to either The Pacific Home Journal or the Home Builder, will confer a favor by notifying us if they do not receive their magazine.

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Nelligan's Leather Compo, a superior quality of leather dressing as manufactured by the Nelligan Leather Dressing Co., is the only enterprise of its kind in this city. It is especially used for carriage tops and for harness dressing, and is highly recommended by the leading houses for superior finish and appearance as well as for its lasting qualities. It preserves the leather and does not crack.

When you realize that there are only three standard leather dressing manufacturies in the world, you form some idea of the importance of this industry.

We invite our readers to investigate this new process, as it is worthy of their attention.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

"Janice Meredith;" \$1.15; Illus., \$4.00; At the Emporium.

"A Looker-on in London;" Mary N. Krout; Dodd, Mead & Co.

"Songs and Sonnets;" Juliette Estelle Mathis; C. A. Murdock & Co.

"La Parra Grande;" Amelia W. Truesdell; Doscey, San Francisco.

"La Princesse Lointaine;" Edmond Rostand; Frederick A. Stokes Co.

"Little Novels of Italy;" Maurice Hewlett; The Macmillan Company.

"Cruise of the Cachalot;" Paper 20 cents; Cloth 75 cents, \$1.20; At the Emporium.



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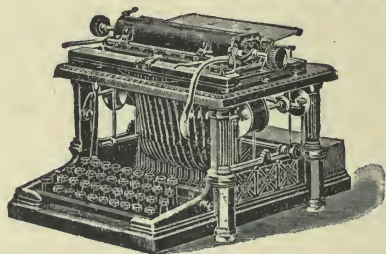
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