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THE CHRISTMAS TREE

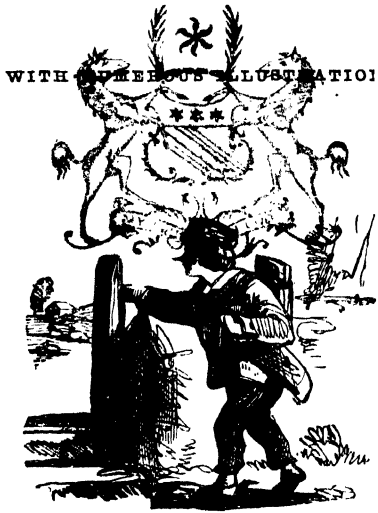
LONDON
JAMES BLACKWOOD
3. LOVELLS COURT PATERNOSTER ROW

THE CHRISTMAS TREE:

A

BOOK OF INSTRUCTION AND AMUSEMENT

FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE.



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PREFACE.

THE present is the fifth yearly issue of the CHRISTMAS TREE. It is with feelings of pleasure and gratification that the Editor and Publisher refer to the welcome so warmly accorded to this little book, which every year increases in popular favour. Many of the children to whom the first CHRISTMAS TREE was addressed, are now, if not quite young men and women, at least of an age to read and appreciate books of a more important and instructive character. But as children are always to be found who require reading adapted to youthful comprehensions, no departure from the original plan of this work has been attempted.' It has been said that the capability of writing well for children is a great gift. How few of us possess it. The Editor of the CHRISTMAS TREE is, however, of opinion that the literature provided for youthful readers is, generally, of too childish a character. While, therefore, he has been anxious to avoid

the fault he has observed in other juvenile books, he has been careful not to run into the opposite extreme, and make his volume too learned. Children do not want to be always learning: it is necessary that they should sometimes be amused. It is hoped that, in the present year's CHRISTMAS TREE, the happy medium has been attained.

G. F. P.

CHRISTMAS, 1859.

CONTENTS.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

Welcome to the Robin.

I WISH I could welcome the spring, bonnie bird,
With a carol as joyous as thine;
Would my heart was as light as thy wing, bonnie bird,
And thine eloquent spirit-song mine!

They sang to my childhood the ballads that told
Of "the snow coming down very fast,"
And the plaint of the Robin, all starving and cold,
Flung a spell that will live to the last.

How my tiny heart struggled with sorrowful heaves,
That kept choking my eyes and my breath,
When I heard of thee spreading the shroud of green leaves
O'er the little ones lovely in death.

I stood with delight by the frost-chequered pane,
And whispered, "See, see, Robin comes!"
While I fondly enticed him again and again
With a plateful of savoury crumbs.

They wondered what led the young dreamer to rove
In the face of the chill winter wind,
But the Snowdrop below, and the Robin above,
Were bright things that I ever could find.

Then I wish I could welcome the spring, bonnie bird,
With a carol as joyous as thine;
Would my heart were as light as thy wing, bonnie bird,
And thy beautiful spirit-song mine!

The Christmas Holidays.

OW for a Christmas holiday — this is what I call diverting! Here we have been shut up in this room the whole afternoon, with strict orders not to budge, though we can hear other people bustling about, and the street door banging every now and then. I can't hold charitable soul will not set us at liberty, or satisfy my curiosity, I shall turn disobedient and satisfy it myself." So said Fred Wilton to his brother Maurice and his twin sisters Rachel and Mary, whom their brothers playfully called the fairy princesses, Nip and Trip. The little girls were seated on one chair, reading out of the same book, with their arms intertwined, whilst Maurice was doing something intricate on a slate, and Fred himself was twisting round and round on a high stool, balancing it on one leg, and occasionally allowing the other three to strike the ground with a clatter not altogether pleasant to the other

inmates of the school-room. As he said, they had spent there three wearisome hours. Wearisome only because they were confined there; for they had books and games in plenty, had they chosen to make use of them. "Now, Maurice," continued Fred, "you are the long-head of the family; just give us a specimen of your 'cuteness by revealing this mystery."

"Aunt Grif is come," replied Maurice.

"Wrong, wise counsellor; for no sound of scolding tongue has reached my ears, and we all know that Aunt Grif's voice precedes her person by exactly two minutes and forty-five seconds."

"Ask the princesses, then," retorted Maurice; "they come from fairy-land, where they hear the grass grow. Come, Nip and Trip, tell us what is going on in the house?"

"Papa or mamma may be ill," said the twins together.

"Wrong again, I'll be bound!—feminine fears! They were both alive and well, eating their dinners, a very short time before we were imprisoned; and when papa bade us remain quietly here, he would have told us if it had been on mamma's account, to make sure of our obedience. Oh, here's Martha with the tea! Now, Martha, what's it all about? Horrid shame! She's bursting with the importance of her secret, and she is not going to tell. Look at her mouth; look at her eyes! Now, Martha, do you hear? You shall not go till you have explained all I want to know." And he seized hold of her arm to detain her forcibly, when his father entered, and with a look rebuked his son, and set the maid at liberty. The children looked at him eagerly, and then at each other, as much as to say, "Now we are going to know."

"You have spent rather an uncomfortable afternoon, children, I fear?"

"Yes, papa," all at once and very fast, that they might not retard the story.

"But I hope to make compensation by presenting to you"—

"Oh, papa, make haste; what is the present?"

"Guess."

"We have been guessing all the afternoon to no purpose."

"Can it be," began Rachel, colouring up and looking towards Mary, "can it be"—

"A baby?" finished Mary; for the twins had always one thought between them.

"Yes, fairies, you have guessed it; you have a dear little new brother."

There was a long pause, which Maurice broke somewhat abruptly.

"May his name be Launcelot or Marincon, please, papa?"

Mr. Wilton smiled.

"There will be time enough for that, romantic boy, when you see what sort of a warrior he is likely to prove."

"May we see him?" asked the twins.

"Yes; if you will be very quiet, I will take you at once; for both mamma and baby are awake just now. Now, remember, be very quiet." But there was no need of the injunction, for the children seemed quite awe-stricken at the sight of the new-born infant; and it was not till they had gazed on it in silence for some time, looking, it must be owned, very red in the face, and making strange grimaces with its tiny features, that Fred turned to his brother and remarked in a whisper:

"How dreadfully ugly it looks!—like a red frog!"

"Master Wilton! how can you speak so of your blessed little brother?" exclaimed the nurse, indignantly; "pretty angel as it is! I had you in my arms before any other living creature; and I can tell you, you weren't half so beautiful."

"No, but I make up for it now; it's only the other day, nursy, I heard you telling mamma how handsome I grew, and I have done nothing but look at myself in the glass ever since."

Nurse could not but smile at the affected look of conceit the boy assumed; and by this time the twins had ventured close to her knee. "May I touch him?" and when she nodded, they each laid one of their little fingers very gently in each of the wee hands, and then looked up delighted, exclaiming,

"He squeezes my finger really; he is glad to see us, dear baby. How pretty he is! Look at his tiny mouth, and little hair so soft, so soft, coming from under his cap. What a finger! just look at its little nails!"

"Do you know, sisters," said Maurice, gravely (he was proud of being so much graver than his elder brother)—"do you know that I can remember you even smaller than that, when first I saw you?"

The girls suppressed a great "Oh!" of surprise, lest they should startle the baby, but they looked at each other and whispered a doubt as to the possibility of such a fact.

"Nip and Trip are not much bigger now," suggested Fred; "of course, changelings don't grow, you know."

They were now summoned into the adjoining room, where their mother longed to kiss them all before she composed herself to sleep; but ere they went, good old nurse gave Rachel and Mary the very grand treat of each holding the

baby for a minute or two; and, with faces glowing with delight, and arms trembling with eagerness and a little fear, they received it on their knees, quite solemn with the importance and pleasure of such a charge,

> "As though such burden once to take
> A blessing were and charm."

Their mother kissed them fondly—her pale face so calm and happy—her sweet voice so inexpressibly fond and gentle. "Good night, darlings. Papa will have tea with you in the school-room, and the fairies will make it for him; will not that be a treat? Pray for dear baby and me before you go to bed; you are all so much older than he is, that you may protect as well as love him. Be very good to papa and each other. Good night, God bless you!" and their father drew the curtain between them and his wife, who would willingly have protracted their interview, and who managed to catch a last look of the beloved group, as the door closed, through the aperture in the bed-curtains. Alas! it was indeed a last look! Never again were those watchful eyes to follow the movements of her children on earth; never again was that sweet voice to guide and bless them here below. But they knew it not. Not a care, not a foreboding thought clouded their young minds as they prattled about their new dear brother, or helped their father to his tea with pleasant officiousness. Fred was up to all sorts of tricks, to the great bewilderment of the little tea-makers; and even the father's anxiety was stilled, and not one of them surmised that the heaviest possible calamity was at hand.

They had all been in bed some hours when Rachel awoke,

and, forgetting what had occurred that afternoon, exclaimed,—

"Why, Mary, what? where is that noise?"

"In mamma's room; it must be baby crying. Oh, poor baby! I cannot bear to hear him cry."

At that moment the door of their room opened.

"O Fred, is it you? what is the matter? Are you awake? Have you heard that noise? I made out Dr. Jones's voice, and there was a scream and a strange sobbing. I think it must have been nurse! What can it all mean?"

Maurice did not speak, but his teeth chattered, and his face looked very white.

"You are catching cold, Maurice," said Rachel; "you had better go back to bed—all is quite still now."

"Very still," replied he, without moving.

"I feel afraid," said Fred.

"Oh, do you?" asked the twins in dismay; for Fred was never frightened, and the children looked in each other's faces, each countenance growing more terrified as it reflected the expression of its neighbour's.

"Something has happened to mamma," said Fred.

"Let us say our prayers," said Mary.

"Mamma told us," added Rachel; and clasping their little hands, as the boys sank on their knees by the bed, the twins began, "Pray, God, take care of mamma! and pray take care of us and don't let us be afraid, for Jesus Christ's sake!" and they bowed their heads as they pronounced their Saviour's name with reverence.

Darkness was in the room, and it was not vouchsafed to them to discern through the midnight gloom a white angel-

form, the newly-ransomed spirit of their mother, waiting to carry their prayer to heaven!

A minute's silence ensued, then a female voice, weeping hysterically, was heard at the end of the passage. Fred flew to the door, and almost dragged in poor Martha. "O Martha, why are you crying?"

"My mistress! my dear mistress! O poor children!" came from amidst her sobs.

"Is mamma very ill?" they asked.

"Sweet angel! she's not ill now—she is gone to heaven; she is dead!"

Fred threw himself on the faithful servant's neck with a scream of anguish; Maurice rushed back to his own room in agony too great to bear a witness; and the twins clung to each other and wept. Soon, Martha led Fred away in hope of soothing him, and the two little girls remained alone. Worthily did the little creatures show on that night of trial in "whom they believed," and that even to "babes" He has revealed the "things which belong to their peace."

"Rachel dear, mamma is an angel in heaven," said Mary, wiping away her tears; "but *we* shall have no mamma now—she is dead! Mamma said, that when people die, they begin their real happy life with God."

"Oh, but she will not be with us."

"I don't know that; perhaps she will, though we don't see her." Rachel looked up hopefully. "Perhaps she can see us now; I believe she can, and so we must never grieve her."

"Papa never had a mother, you know, after he was six years old; and when we said how dreadfully sad it must have

been, mamma told us that God took her in kindness, and that He comforted papa, and made it up to him."

"Poor papa! oh, poor papa, what will he do now? I dare say he is crying at this moment; shall we go and see if we can comfort him?"

"Are we not too little?"

"Mamma said we were a comfort to her when he was away, you know."

"Yes, so she did; let us go."

And hand in hand they crept along the passage, feeling their way fearlessly in the dark till they came to a door at the end.

"Is mamma here still, do you think?"

"No, she is in heaven; papa must be alone."

"Papa!" they said, softly. There was no answer, and they went into the room slowly and curiously. It looked just as it had done in the afternoon, except that a little night-lamp burned on the mantel-piece, and the fire had died nearly out in the grate. The curtains were closed about the bed, and they thought the room was empty; but on their once more calling "Papa!" he suddenly moved from behind the curtains, and came forward.

"My poor children, why are you here?" he asked.

They stood for a moment alarmed, for he hardly looked like himself, so wild was his face, so changed, so ghastly! At last Rachel took courage, and drawing nearer as each kissed his cheek, they said, "We are come to comfort you, dear papa!"

The afflicted man looked with surprise, almost with awe, at what might well have appeared to him angelic messengers; the two lovely little girls, clothed in white, their golden hair

shading their soft cheeks, and an indescribable expression in their upward gaze of compassion, love, and meek, trustful confidence. The sweet little voices again repeated, "We are come to comfort you, papa!" The father clasped them in his arms, and the tears, which anguish had repressed, gushed streaming forth. It was a vision of love, hope, and faith, bursting upon the gloom of a despairing heart; and, compared with the horror of his previous suffering, his softened sorrow was almost comfort. Yet the innocent children had said nothing to soothe him; but they had *wished* to do it, and God blesses the faintest effort of the weakest child in the path of goodness.

It would sadden you too much to describe the days which followed that eventful night; but their sorrow for the departed was subdued by the remembrance of her sweet happy look, her gentle, earnest love. It seemed to cast a ray of holiness on their own hearts, where it was enshrined for ever. Their father reminded them of their last interview, the serene joy of their dear mother's countenance, the tenderness of her blessing, and her last injunction to protect and love each other and their little baby-brother. With what earnestness did they promise to observe sacredly her dying injunction, and what a treasure of good intentions and struggles against evil did that charge prove to them through life!

Two years had passed away, during which time the little Wiltons returned to their former playfulness, though they were certainly less happy than under the watchful love of

their mother. An aunt of hers, a certain Miss Griffiths, who was commonly called "Aunt Grif," or as the boys secretly added, "Aunt Griffin," took the place of her gentle niece as mistress of Mr. Wilton's house. The children, who had always feared her in the brighter days when she came only as a guest, were not the more attached to her from the contrast her reign presented to that of their beloved mother. Yet Aunt Grif was not really a hard-hearted woman. She had lived all her life alone, and grown rigid in her own habits. Her countenance was unprepossessing and angular, and so was her mind, never having had its corners polished by contact with another's angles. She was wonderfully neat and particular, and, as a matter of course, rather sharp in her temper. She understood nothing about children, except that they were bound to obey—born, in short, only to do what they were told. The twins were so very good and amiable that they could not dislike even her, and she, in return, regarded them with a feeling as near akin to tenderness as her nature would allow. Maurice she just tolerated, for he was grave and studious; but she sneered at his romantic ideas, and set down his conceit (it wanted setting down occasionally) in the most humiliating manner. But Fred she could not endure: his high spirits, his forgetfulness, his disorder, even the love of nicknames, which she justly designated as vulgar, were all grave errors in her eyes; and she would speak of him as a "good-for-nothing prodigal," and seriously warn him of a most fearful end as the unavoidable result of his wicked courses. And yet poor Fred was as far from wickedness as a good-hearted, riotous boy can be. Children's spirits are very elastic, and they roughed it com-

fortably enough, till their father's occupation led him into Germany for a tour of several weeks' duration. For a day or two Aunt Grif showed something like compassion for their desolate condition, but as their buoyancy returned, so did her severity, and open warfare was soon proclaimed between her and the boys. They went daily to a public school, but that only got rid of them for a few hours; and they returned, she said, every afternoon with ruder spirits and newer tricks than ever. Besides, the Christmas holidays were at hand, and their father had allowed them to invite a young schoolfellow of whose talents he thought highly, to spend a week with them.

"Talents," grumbled Miss Griffiths, "every one knows what is meant by a *boy's* talents; pulling clocks to pieces—making electricity,—doing mischief by way of experiment: vastly clever indeed; and we shall certainly be blown out of the windows with some of their batteries and fooleries, or burnt alive in our beds, or something. Accordingly when the young friend arrived, the old lady's face was, as Fred expressed it, "of the temperature of the North Pole, and the sweetness of small green gooseberries;" and her welcome, if welcome it can be called, consisted of, "Master Somers" (Master Somers, be it observed, wore "stick-ups," and straps to his trowsers, and had been *Mr.* Somers for at least eight months)—"Master Somers, your young friends being, together with yourself, under my charge—and a very laborious charge it is—I beg that, during the time of your sojourn here, you will make them feel that you are their senior, and curb the turbulence which so often leads to unpleasant consequences. Let me not find that 'evil communications corrupt good manners.'"

"Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," interposed Fred. His aunt turned round sharply. "Beg pardon, aunt, but I never can hear a copy-slip quoted without thinking of another"—

"I must beg you," continued Miss Griffiths, stiffly—"I must beg you, young gentlemen, not to throw any acids or things on the carpet, nor to displace any of the furniture. There is that looking-glass—mind you do not break it; the fire, too, take care of that. Don't stand on the chair-covers, otherwise I shall be obliged—but I won't threaten; 'a word to the wise is sufficient.'"

She moved slowly away, gazing on the different objects she had omitted to enumerate that the boys might damage.

"Wait a minute, aunt," called out the incorrigible Fred; "you have not got such a thing, have you, as a hammock or two?—if we were swung up, you know, we should not touch anything; or a loadstone, now, to suspend us, like Mahomet's coffin, between heaven and earth."

Aunt Grif banged the door to, without deigning an answer; and Fred threw himself laughing on the sofa, his head buried in the cushion, and his legs thrown over the back.

"Sublime idea! that last of yours, Fred," said Somers, taking out his pocket-handkerchief and laying it on a chair, on which he seated himself, just at the edge, lifting his feet from the floor in the most absurd fashion, and a face of rigid demureness.

"Oh, we won't stop here, Somers; come up into our room, and have some fun; there's neither curtains, nor carpet, nor aunts there."

And thither they sallied, and enjoyed themselves till dinner

time, which meal was rather substantial than cheerful. After dinner a walk was proposed, and they started, not without a long exhortation from Miss Griffiths, ending, as usual, with an aphorism: "It is easier to prevent evils than to cure them." "Meaning," as Fred remarked, "that it is easier to avoid the Serpentine than not to skate on it and fall under the ice; so I suppose we had better walk elsewhere. A pity, too, for there'll be a thaw to-morrow. It is seldom cold on Christmas-day."

"No, it is nearly always muggy: a spiteful trick of the weather to falsify all the poet's descriptions," said Maurice.

"Or rather, is it not that our climate is really considerably warmer than when George Herbert sang?" replied Somers; and, having got on a rational track, they pursued the subject for some time, and had a pleasant walk without getting into mischief.

As they had anticipated, damp weather set in, and it was so disagreeable walking in London mud, that nearly all their time was spent in the boys' room. Aunt Grif, suspecting they were hatching tricks, several times attempted an invasion; but the door was always locked; and, as they declared on their honour that they were rationally and even scientifically employed, she felt she had no right to interfere. Still, as she sat working with the girls, she repeated their words, and added a guess that "Science was gunpowder or electricity, or something that would either blow up the house or shock them into fits."

They often left the house for a few minutes; and when asked who they visited so near, replied that it was a secret, and they only went to a shop. Besides all this, they were

quiet, somewhat grave, and very self-important; and who ever knew a boy to be quiet for a day or two, without having his fears of evil awakened?

Christmas-day came. The boys had not been so busy as to forget their little brother, and as soon as he opened his eyes a variety of beautiful objects were discovered peeping out from the quilt at the foot of his bed. A stable with three highly varnished horses; a white woolly dog, large enough to swallow up the stable, with a brilliant vermillion mouth, which opened when he said "Bow wow," though he evidently kept his voice in a leathern pouch beneath his feet; and a Noah's ark, with an assemblage of birds, beasts, and reptiles, of wondrous proportions; and a human family dressed in round green hats, yellow dresses with extremely short waists, no arms or feet, and red buttons down their long skirts,—the costume which German toy-makers have invariably given to Noah and his family since the time of the flood, or, at any rate, since such specimens of natural history were first invented. Being once strewed on baby's bed, when all the family came to kiss him and wish him a merry Christmas, it seemed doubtful if the pairs of creatures would ever be returned to the ark again. The boys, indeed, soon maimed a few of their legs and arms in the attempt, but the gentle patience of the twins proved useful even in the arrangement of a toy; and the beasts, obedient to their fingers, re-entered the ark, and the little boy was dressed. But for many nights the whole zoological collection was admitted to share his bed. Neither were the twins forgotten. Very soon after his arrival, Somers had been asked by the affectionate brothers if the fairies were not "regular bricks," and he assented, though an older person

might have cavilled at the fitness of the epithet to the lovely little girls, who were essentially soft and gentle in face, voice, and manner. However, Somers fully appreciated them, and had been gallant enough to purchase for each an elegant little work-basket, whilst he had actually taken for Aunt Grif a photograph of the baby. To be sure, the poor little fellow's beautiful large eyes had well nigh disappeared, and one side of his head was black whilst the other was white; but it was reckoned a striking likeness (photographs always are), particularly the work on the top of his frock, which, being the fruit of Aunt Grif's labour, seemed to come out strongly on purpose to compliment her. So that stern lady was obliged to look almost pleasant when she appeared on Christmas-morning, wearing a pair of warm mittens—a *twin* present. Nor was that all; for each boy found a purse, strongly knitted, slipped into his pocket, and containing a half-crown which Aunt Grif had given to the fairies to enhance the value of their work. All went to church in very good mood. I think a London church gains almost more than a country one from its decoration of holly and variegated laurel; it looks so bright and pure when coming out of the dingy, muddy streets and the squares with their forlorn trees and smoke-environed boughs. The little Wiltons saw the charity-children sit down to their one great feast of the year, and then they returned to their own. All had entered the dining-room before Somers made his appearance; and his voice was heard in the passage in earnest but subdued conversation with Martha.

"Master Somers, we're waiting," said Aunt Grif, in a tone of injured astonishment.

"I beg pardon, ma'am," he answered, trying to look humble, but crimson with suppressed fun.

The other boys bit their lips and endeavoured to chat; but their thoughts were evidently elsewhere—in the kitchen, perhaps, for their eyes involuntarily turned that way whenever the door was opened. At length, just as the turkey was removed, Somers crept out of the room.

"Master Somers! really very extraordinary to quit the table in the middle of dinner."

Somers was seized with a dreadful fit of coughing. "Crumb, ma'am—(cough, cough)—wrong way—(cough). Excuse me—better retire;" and off he went. But he returned very speedily, followed by Martha with the pudding. Little Harry, who was ensconced in a high chair under the care of the twins, cried—

"Pudding! plum pudding!" with such rapture and distinctness of utterance, that Aunt Grif forgot her anger, and smiling blandly, replied—

"Yes, nice plum pudding for good little boys."

The dish was placed before her; Martha lifted up the cover —when lo! the pudding, the plum pudding, the Christmas pudding, quitted its dish, rose into the air, and floated majestically round the room. Oh, how those boys shouted and clapped their hands in an extasy—they roared for joy; and oh! to see the baby's eyes open, and his lips droop, at sight of the *retreating treat;* to see the twins looking upwards, half-frightened, half-amused, catching hold, as usual, of each other's hands; and, above all, to see Aunt Grif, in half-displeased amazement, rise from her seat, and still believing it was a real pudding, watch its course through her spectacles, as she

endeavoured to guard her best satin dress from the descent of so *rich* a freightage! Oh, to see all this, fully accounted for the boys' merriment; and the gentler laugh of the little girls soon followed theirs, till the pudding exploded and proved itself a balloon ingeniously painted to represent a pudding, prepared by the scientific Mr. Somers, assisted by a neighbouring chemist, to whose shop such frequent journeys had been made. It was a glorious exploit, *so* glorious that not all Aunt Griffith's resentment could damp the fun, though the twins were obliged suddenly to leave off laughing when they saw how it increased her anger. She considered that she had been made a fool of; and as it was some time before she could understand how the affair was managed, her stupidity only tickled the boys more and more, and it seemed doubtful if she could ever be pacified again. When they proposed a game of snap-dragon in the evening, she peremptorily refused.

"We have had a game of snap-griffin," said Fred, "and that is first cousin to snap-dragon." Poor Fred's bad jokes rolled incessantly, and amused his friends as much as if they had been choice witticisms.

A few days after Christmas, Somers returned home, having left to his friends a very dangerous legacy, namely, a superficial knowledge of chemical phenomena, and a great taste for physical experiments, with an extremely small stock of science to direct them. About that time a letter from their father announced to them the speedy arrival at Southampton of his only brother from India: a merchant who had been away three years, and who was so kind and indulgent an uncle that the prospect of seeing him with their father was full of

delight to the children, and heightened the boys' spirits to a pitch highly displeasing to Aunt Grif.

They were sitting round the table at tea one evening when Maurice conceived the brilliant idea of saluting their relations on their arrival with a display of fireworks, which Somers had taught them how to make; and in order to lose no time in imparting so brilliant a scheme to his brother, he wrote down the plan on a slip of paper, and passed it to him with his cup of tea. A few minutes afterwards Fred, having perused it, returned it to him, with an answer on the back; but, as ill luck would have it, Aunt Grif had perceived the communication, and, as usual, imagining it was some trick against herself, stretched out her hand and obtained possession of it before Fred could prevent her. With her strong disagreeable voice, she read aloud these words:—

"Excellent—but beware the Griffin!"

There was a pause of ominous solemnity; the twins looked as one afraid of lightning does at a tremendous copper-tinged cloud. Maurice, who could always command his countenance, sipped his tea quietly, only hoping she might not turn the paper round and discover the firework plan; and Fred, really good-natured, was afraid he might have hurt his aunt's feelings.

"Beware the Griffin!" she began. "Very pretty, young gentlemen, very proper conduct towards an aunt of your mother's! And so I am a griffin! Griffin, indeed, one had need to be, to guard against such impudent, good-for-nothing, up-to-everything, mischief-planning prodigals. Well, live and learn; old eyes see what young ones dream. When I was your age, sir, such conduct would have sufficed to banish a youth

from polite society. But may I ask why Master Fred is to beware?—oh, I see; vastly pretty, really! A written arrangement to greet your respected relatives by setting the house on fire, and burning up your good sisters and innocent little brother. Fireworks, indeed! you will be clever indeed if you make fireworks out of the materials I will leave you for that purpose!"

The next day accordingly she locked Maurice and Fred in their room, from which she previously removed every article, save the bed, two chairs, water, a towel, comb and brush; "just as if," Fred said—"just as if we should amuse ourselves by brushing our hair!" Everything else was gone—books, papers, tables, clothes, everything, in short; for Aunt Griffin was determined that her ignorance of pyrotechny should not subject her to the mistake of leaving behind any article capable of forming fireworks. Poor Aunt Grif! she had no notion but of punishment. She had only to forbid the fireworks at once, and make the boys promise not to indulge in them, and they would have kept their word; but that was treating them with a degree of deference which did not belong to Aunt Grif's notions of discipline and childish subjugation. She was obliged to leave them a fire in the room—which was a great trial to her—and a plate of bread and meat. It was damp, if not cold; and Maurice was not strong.

Never did two boys spend a more wearisome day. At first they began pretending to be in good spirits, and laughed at their punishment; but, as Fred confessed it was "no go," they were chafed, indignant, and miserable. There was not a thing to amuse them, and they were tired out long before dinner-time. Early in the afternoon the welcome sound of a

key was heard turning in the lock; the door was opened sufficiently to admit the fairies, and then locked again.

"Oh, Nip and Trip; dear fairies, how did you gain permission to come? But how red your eyes are; has she been scolding you, the Griffin?"

"Oh no, no; but Fred, we remembered this morning the Christmas holidays two years ago! This day two years we were all shut up in this room, because baby was born, you know, and mamma"— The twins suddenly stopped and burst into tears, and the boys coloured and felt very choky. "We asked Aunt Grif to let us come," resumed Mary, "because of that; and she said we might stop from dinner till tea, if we brought nothing with us."

"We knew you must be feeling angry," said Rachel, "and that perhaps you would not remember about mamma; and we knew you would not like to have spent this day in crossness and bitterness."

Every twitch of unkind feeling gradually subsided before the sweet seriousness of their sisters, and left their hearts open to the softest impressions. There were only two chairs left; so they sat down together on the rug in front of the fire, and talked over all the circumstances of that last day of their dear mother's life; and the mention of her name only seemed to inspire them with good and gentle thoughts. "If we had a Bible, we might read that psalm papa told us she asked him to read to her just before she died." But the twins needed no book; their minds were well stored with holy things, and together they repeated the psalm their mother had chosen for her last hymn—"The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore shall I lack nothing." Their voices trembled a little, but they went

steadily through it, whilst the boys, restraining their tears no longer, buried their faces in their hands, and wept, and were relieved. To them, as to their father on that sad night, the little creatures had come with their sweet tones, "We are come to comfort you."

"Maurice," said Fred, in a low voice, "we must forgive Aunt Grif, and remember that she loved mamma."

"And that mamma would have taught us to love her," added Mary.

"Yes, we will tell her we are sorry that we were so inconsiderate and called her names."

The twins kissed them almost as tenderly as their mother would have done; and when the door was once more unlocked at tea-time, and the Griffin gaoler stood there with the key in her hand, Fred went towards her and said firmly, "I am sorry, aunt, that I called you Griffin;" "and that I proposed what I knew you would dislike," continued Maurice. "It is not because we want to come out"— "But because," resumed Mary, just as if she had been guilty too—"because we want to do what dear mamma taught us was right."

Aunt Grif was quite mollified. She kissed the boys on their foreheads, and there was something uncommonly like tears in her cold grey eyes as she gazed on the twins, who both kissed her and each other, and then by a common impulse ran away to fetch little Harry to be kissed too.

After that, all was harmony. On the 15th the travellers were expected home. The children all wished to sit up for them; but Aunt Grif packed them off to bed, declaring that they would certainly not arrive in the night. The twins were quietly sleeping in each other's arms, with little Harry

in his cot near them,—for, young as they were, they were trusted to take care of him,—when the boys suddenly rushed into their room.

"Is papa come?" they asked.

"Lose no time—get up—the house is on fire! Quick, quick, wrap the blankets round you; the staircase begins to blaze;—quick!"

The twins did as they were told, one of them catching up little Harry, and hurried after the boys; or rather, were dragged along by them till they reached the front door. The engines were rattling down the street. Cries of "Fire! fire!" resounded in all the neighbourhood; the smoke was suffocating them; the heat was tremendous, and the hollow bellows-like sound of the heaving breath of the fire struck them with terror. Fred was unbolting the door whilst Maurice shrieked, "Aunt Grif! Martha! make haste, the fire, the fire!" when the splashing of water outside told them help was arrived, and the firemen bellowed out to them, "Don't open the front door or windows; the wind sets that way. The house won't last five minutes, if you make a draught. Go to the east side, and we will come to you."

The children ran into the dining-room, and were received into the arms of the strange rough men, who looked terrible in the red gleam of the fire, though they hailed them as angels of light. The poor fat cook, followed by Martha trembling and panting, with face as white as their night-dresses, now made their appearance.

"My aunt, my aunt—she is not here!" exclaimed Fred, leaping back into the dining-room, followed by two firemen, whilst Maurice conveyed the terrified little ones to the chemist's well-known shop; the servants keeping

close to him for protection, young as he was. In the meantime, Fred and the firemen crept along on their hands and knees, their faces close to the ground to prevent suffocation. "We are too late!" exclaimed Fred in anguish, as he saw his aunt's room already burning so fiercely that no living creature could possibly be there.

"Perhaps, after all, she got down; at any rate, we can't stop here another moment;" and the fireman beat a retreat with his friend.

Fred, however, made his way to the girls' room. It was horribly full of smoke, and he could see nothing. "Aunt," he called, but no answer came; and the tongues of fire darted against his feet from the fast-consuming staircase. One more chance; Aunt Grif might have gone to their room up above. He ran to the window, and, stretching out his head, called, "Aunt Grif, where are you?"

"I am here," answered a voice from the window above; "I came here to see for you. Are the children safe?"

"All safe."

"Thank God."

"But you, how can you get down?"

"Get down yourself, my brave boy; never mind an old woman like me. I die content, if you are all safe; get down quickly."

"Oh, dear aunt, I cannot leave you. Stand still at the window, aunt, and listen to me."

"Make for the roof; you can't come down, ma'am," interrupted the fireman.

"Listen," resumed Fred. "Our skipping-ropes are in the corner by the book-case; knot them firmly together, tie them

to the leg of my bed, and throw down the other end to me. But make haste; I'm almost roasted."

It was done; the ropes reached him. Thin as they were, they supported *him*. He climbed them, the handles helping him materially. One minute he stood on the window-sill, his hair singed, his arms burnt, his face black with smoke. The crowd below cheered rapturously as they watched his progress.

"Now, aunt, we must make for the roof," he said, "if only I can get you through the trap-door!"

But at that moment a welcome shadow passed over the window; the end of the tall fire-escape arrived at last. They both descended till within a few yards of the bottom, when the feeling of safety overpowered the exhausted boy, and he would have fallen to the ground had not some one rushed forward to catch him. It was his father; and by his side stood Uncle William. When Fred recovered his senses, the whole family were united in the friendly chemist's little back-parlour; and his own burns were being dressed, whilst the twins bathed his face with eau-de-cologne. After the first burst of thanksgiving and congratulation were over, Aunt Grif owned, with many sobs, that she supposed she had herself occasioned the fire, by falling asleep over her devotional reading, and setting her cap on fire.

"Oh, Aunt Grif!" exclaimed Fred, slily, "to think that, after all, *you* should have been the one to get up *fireworks* for their arrival."

Aunt Grif, in reply, only kissed him, and called him her brave, noble boy. The Griffin was burnt out entirely, as far as Fred was concerned.

The Moorland Flower.

NEATH a crag whose forehead rude
O'erfrowns the mountain's side,—
Stern monarch of the solitude,
Dark heaving, wild, and wide,—
A flowret of the moorland hill
Peeped out unto the sky,
In a mossy nook, where a limpid rill
Came trickling blithely by,

Like a star-seed from the night skies flung
Upon the mountain's cone,
Into a gleaming flowret sprung,—
Amid the wild it shone;
And bush and brier, and rock and rill,
And every wandering wind,
In interchange of sweet goodwill
And mutual love did bind.

In the gloaming grey at close of day,
Beneath the deepening blue,
It lifted up its little cup
To catch the evening dew:
And when dark tempests swept the waste,
And north winds whistled wild,
The brave old rock kept off the shock,
As a mother shields her child.

So, lovingly embrace thy lot,
Though lowly it may be,
And beautify the little spot
Where God hath planted thee:
To win the world's approving eyes
Make thou no foolish haste;
Heaven loves the heart that lives and dies
To bless its neighbouring waste.

New Year's Eve.

A TALE FROM THE GERMAN.

THE last day of the departing year had seldom dawned at Grunfeld so beautiful as now. The sunlight became so warm, and the air so mild, that the inhabitants of this little town allowed themselves almost to believe that spring had already commenced. Under the leafless trees of the many pleasant avenues in its environs, young and old of all classes were assembled. Blooming girls were cheerfully telling one another what delightful presents each had received on Christmas-eve, and what splendid dresses they would wear in honour of the New Year. Meanwhile, their noisy brothers made the most of what little snow the southerly winds had

spared in bye-corners and thickets, formed themselves into volunteer battalions, and kept up a hot fire of ice-cold missiles. Grave, long-headed men of business rejoiced in a day of uninterrupted leisure; and, under the genial influence of the hour, even old burgesses wished each other many happy returns of the season, feeling for the moment as if they were still young. But there were other causes of rejoicing. After long-protracted, desolating war, peace had recently been established over the land. The town of Grunfeld, from its favourable situation, had, during all the changes, retained a good share of its former prosperity; and its inhabitants now looked forward to the future with reanimated hopes. During this day, grocers, cooks, confectioners, were the only shopkeepers who would not leave their homes to bask in the sunshine. Never had there been at Grunfeld such a run for lemons, sugar, arrack, tarts, and bon-bons.

"This New Year's-eve we shall, indeed, be merry!" These words were echoed from all quarters. Never, on any St. Sylvester's-day, were so many jovial meetings arranged for the coming night, as now. So passed the morning and afternoon. But when, at length, the eastern hills caught the last ruddy gleams of the setting sun, the promenaders gradually disappeared; for the evening air indicated more of winter than of spring. The walks were almost deserted, when, for the first time, appeared under the lime-trees the lonely figure of an old man of grave aspect, in officer's uniform. In his right hand he carried a strong knotted walking-stick, and under his left shoulder a crutch, with the help of which together he moved along in strict military style.

Now meeting him, you see another burgess of the town, a man equally old, with hair almost snow-white, yet whose ruddy complexion and rapid movements show that he has not lost the vivacity of youth. This patriarchal figure is attired simply in a suit of Saxon grey, but he carries a highly respectable cane, headed with silver, which he swings about, disdaining to use it as a support. As they meet each other, unlike the rest of the world, they do not utter one word. Both are preoccupied with their own thoughts. Each stretches out his hand in silence; you can see how cordial is the tacit greeting, that each can read in the other's looks his meaning far better than language could express it. At last says the man in grey—

"Major, you will come to-night at nine?"

"Yes, my dear brother, I shall be there," responded the other.

Then, as if it were not possible for either to bring out another word, he of the crutch moves on in his usual gait towards the town, and his friend with increased rapidity disappears by the opposite route.

The military man, an invalid major, was named Walter. His friend, Gerald, in the grey suit, was the richest merchant and manufacturer in Grunfeld. Both were brave, steadfast, excellent men, who, in different departments, had rendered good service to their country, and gained unanimous respect from their townsmen. For several years their lives had been lonely, for both were widowers. Walter's only son, Rodolph, imitating his father, had gone into the army; and Gerald's, Reinhold, by profession an artist, now travelled in Italy and other foreign lands, in quest of improvement. By simi-

larity of circumstances, the spirit of brotherly affection was strengthened between the two veterans; and as both were of convivial, cheerful disposition, they found gradually among the citizens of Grunfeld six (but only six) companions whom they thought worthy of their entire confidence. By degrees, the little society became so united, and met so often, that in German phrase they were called *du achter*, or club of eight. This amicable circle usually held its meetings at the commodious, well-appointed house of the rich merchant, Gerald. It may be inferred that they had always a jovial reunion on St. Sylvester's-day, to which the members looked forward almost as if they took pleasure in the departure of another year. It was not till after a long series of St. Sylvester's-days that they began to reflect upon this. By degrees, when one after another failed to take his accustomed chair, and was lost in the long, dark, silent chamber of the churchyard, and when by no means could they obtain any genial successor, they did indeed reflect sadly. Yet, by force of habit, under Gerald's roof, the last evening of December brought always its bowl of punch and smiling faces to welcome in the new year.

On the present anniversary, however, these two aged men, whom we have just left, could not feel as heretofore. During one season, recently too, the already diminished club had lost three members. Thus of the eight pillars that had for so many years supported the temple of concord and brotherly union, only two, Walter and Gerald, were now left among its ruins. For these potent reasons it was that, when we observed their meeting to-day, neither could subdue his emotion, too great to admit of utterance. Nine o'clock approached; the

old major, with military precision, held himself in readiness and marched forth. The clock was still striking, when the well-known sound of his crutch was heard on the staircase at the merchant's. But on his entering the banqueting-hall, where Gerald awaited him, so great was his astonishment, that he again lost the power of utterance. The room was lighted up as of old; the merchant was at his usual place, behind the steaming and odoriferous punch-bowl: thus much was to be expected. But, to the major's utter astonishment, the table was loaded with a profusion of delicacies, and around it were placed seven vacant chairs, as if the whole club of eight were about to meet as formerly. This was too much for the old hero. To prepare places for the dead was a *mauvaise plaisanterie;* to invite new guests to occupy their places was, to his feelings, a great deal worse.

"Left about wheel!" he exclaimed, making a half-turn towards the door. "Don't take it unkindly, my dear brother," he added, "but in truth I did not come prepared to meet a large party: I must beg you will excuse me."

At these words Gerald started up briskly: "No, no, old comrade," said he, "don't conclude so rashly. I have not invited any party. Yet the chairs are placed as you see, and for good reasons, as I will tell you, though our friends may never come again."

The old soldier then took his place at the host's right hand, and, in sad inquiring silence, looked at the empty seats.

"And now, major, cheer up," said Gerald. "To begin the night, I will honestly make my confession, and, instead of looking dolorous, your mode of absolving must be to laugh

heartily at the strange fancies of an old fool like me. Now you shall hear. It was natural enough, surely; for an hour before you came, having arranged all matters for the day, I should feel very lonely walking to and fro in this long apartment, with the portraits of our departed friends looking down upon me from the wall. I fell unawares into a mood of mind to which you may guess I am but little accustomed. The thoughts of the past, of days long past, and the short time that remains for us, got the better, by degrees, of every other impression, till at length, I might almost say, that to my fancy a funeral shroud seemed to spread over the earth, covering thee and me, and all things; and I will not conceal it from thee, brother Walter, that my old weak eyes overflowed. I struggled against this unbecoming mood, however, paced vehemently up and down, and at last became somewhat excited. Well, you see that portrait of our grandmaster, the amiable and accomplished organist, whose death made the first blank in our society. Laugh at me, brother, I desired you to laugh; but in sober earnest I heard from the wall his well-remembered voice, softly but distinctly whispering, 'Gerald, set a chair for me.' Then all the rest followed one by one articulately, and each in his well-known accents, 'And for me too, Gerald: don't forget old friends. Set another chair.' You may smile, indeed, but don't sneer; for I did absolutely hear the whispering; and you may despise the cranky nerves of an old civilian, but I frankly avow, that for the moment a cold shuddering awe, if not of terror, crept over me. It may, no doubt, be that the voices were only in my own excited brain; but never mind, I really heard them, and felt bound to do their bidding; and so the

chairs were placed, and the table arranged, as you see. But now this unexpected intercourse with ghosts, this waking dream or trance, is ended. Since you have taken your place, my wonted intellects and composure are restored; and so, brother, if you think proper, we will draw the chairs back to the wall."

The major held up his forefinger warningly, and shook his head; but after a minute, under his bushy grey mustachios became visible a lurking smile, and his brows relaxed.

"In good truth," said he, "I little thought ever to hear from you an avowal of waking dreams such as these. I am rejoiced you think as I do—that they deserve to be laughed at. So much the better; for I have not spent the day overmerrily, and am heartily glad of anything now by way of diversion. As to the chairs, by all means let them remain where they are; and let us thank God, that in his mercy he has yet spared us to fill two of them, and once more welcome a New Year."

"Suppose, now," said Gerald, also regaining a blithe tone—"suppose our departed friends did return to take their places, what have we to fear? Doubtless, they would not appear in the guise of haggard spectres and skeletons, but would come in the spirit of love and friendship, as beneficent guests. For it could only be out of sincerest affection for us, that they would leave the realms of the blessed, to visit this cold weary earth of ours."

"True enough," answered Walter, accepting the first proffered glass of punch; "yet there are people in the world who have half turned their brains over the ghost stories of romances, and who would certainly feel rather nervous at the

sight of these empty seats, waiting to be occupied by the dead."

"On the contrary," said Gerald, "let it be a consoling thought for us, that the soul one day frees itself, and escapes from the incumbrance of old, earthly habiliments."

"And flings away its crutches," exclaimed Walter, raising himself, and cordially joining glasses with his faithful comrade.

Thus, without knowing how, the two friends were led into a conversation which promised to carry them cheerfully through the hours that had yet to run before the commencement of another year. Each assisting the recollections of the other, they revived characteristic traits of the club's departed members; and many a pleasant anecdote was called to mind; so that, for the time present, they lived their youth over again. During their dialogue, however, Gerald had frequently stopped short, listened, and turned an inquiring look towards the door, in which at last the old major participated.

"There can be no doubt about it," at length said the merchant, "we are certainly watched from the corridor. Every now and then, I hear light steps rustl ealong the floor; and just now there was a confused whispering noise, as if a large party were communing together."

"Nay, then, 'tis full time the matter should be cleared up," said the major, moving from his chair; but at that moment the folding doors were gently opened, and through the twilight of the distance came forward a troop of dazzling forms, attired in robes of spotless white, with many-coloured wings on their shoulders; little blooming angels, with the wreath of everlasting youth upon their glossy ringleted heads, in solemn procession, approached the now-astonished old men. Their

movements were directed by a genius, who, in his attire, formed precisely the counterpart of the Elfin King, as represented by the immortal poet of "Oberon." A large white lily formed the sceptre wherewith he marshalled his five companions, arranging them round the table, each behind the six empty chairs. On first sight of these voiceless, mysterious visitors, the friends involuntarily stood up with a strange feeling, not merely of amazement, but awe. Venturing, however, to scrutinise their features a little more closely, they nodded to each other with significant smiles; then awaited in silence what their extraordinary guests might further intend to do. Now the genius of the lily-stalk raised the tall, nodding flower, directing it to two of his companions, who advanced at the signal, bearing wreaths of evergreen, which raising in their tiny hands, they proceeded to the two old men. Meanwhile the king spoke slowly and metrically:—"Like the constancy of friendship, like the hopes of the faithful, like the blessings of love, the wreaths of brotherly concord is ever green." Then, with his flower-sceptre, he made a sign to another of the supernatural guests, who advanced, bearing a resplendent vase of coloured crystal, filled with overhanging roses; and the genius thus said:—"Though roses no longer bloom in the winter garden of age, yet the gratitude of the young has preserved and cherished them for you."

At another signal, the fourth spirit advanced, and laid before the merchant a civic golden crown; and before his friend was laid the splendid diamond cross of military order. Addressing Gerald, the genius then said, "The citizens of Grunfeld presents this to their father;" and to Walter, "Our father-land offers this homage to its brave champion and

defender." At last, with a quicker step, the fifth of the celestial group advanced, and encircled the friends together with a chain of flowers; whereupon added the genius:—"Thus continue in fraternal concord on earth, and think of those who, in communion with the saints, are united in paradise."

The lively old merchant could no longer keep silence. "Oh, my kind-hearted, clever little Julia," he cried, lifting up the genius, and pressing her to his heart, "how beautifully you have played your part, and how much have you entertained and delighted us." Then the old Major caressed them one after another.

As the reader may possibly have conjectured, these unlooked-for guests were five grandchildren of the deceased members of the club.

"But who art thou, dear little creature?" said Gerald, raising up the sixth child; "ought I not to know thee?"

Julia was interpreter.

"Because uncle Knoman left no granddaughter, mamma made choice of a poor orphan-girl to come instead, and has presented her with a dress."

"Well done," said Gerald, gazing intently on the child's dark blue eyes; "but thou shalt not go unrewarded for coming in this angel's guise, to bring me a blessing. From this hour I adopt thee as my daughter."

"Partnership, brother," cried the Major; "mind, the angel's blessing was for me as well as you."

"Be it so," answered Gerald. "I will educate the dear infant;—and you shall give her a dowry afterwards."

"A bargain," responded Walter; "and if by that time our brethren in the other world should insist on having us among

them, my Rodolph will take my place, and readily do honour to my promise."

The poor little orphan could scarcely comprehend the extent of her good fortune, but in the fulness of her grateful heart began to weep. Gerald, with caresses, placed her on Knoman's chair. The other children were then arranged regularly in their grandfathers' place. They then began to grow exceedingly merry. Each found a small goblet, containing a tiny portion from the odoriferous punch-bowl, and soon had enough to do to answer their host's questions after parents, and uncles, and aunts, and cousins. So the last hour of the old year glided imperceptibly away; and as the clock commenced striking, the friends arose, each grasping a full glass, and silently awaited the last moment. Already in the streets were heard numberless voices, each shouting out, "A good new year!" More distantly sounded the report of fire-arms, an irregular *feu de joie;* and from the market-place, according to a good old custom, was heard the beautiful hymn —"Nun danket alle Gott."

The clock was silent—the joined glasses rang after it; but before Gerald and Walter could pronounce the first toast of the new year, Julia again stepped forward, and waved the lily, in token that she had somewhat yet to say. The friends paused to listen, and the genius then addressed them:—

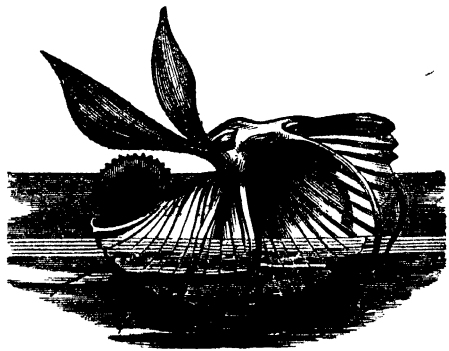
"With the sacred cup of the blithe New Year,
A blessing is yet in store:
Think now, ere the moment is o'er,
What is it that most in your hearts you desire,—
The wish that a father's love could inspire;
Speak boldly and cheerily, what is most wanted,
By the mercy of God, that shall be granted!"

Then Gerald and Walter gaily raised their glasses, the former exclaiming, "Brother, your dear son Rodolph!" and the other, "Old friend, your affectionate Reinhold!"

They had not long to wait. Without uttering a word, two young men rushed into the room, and the next moment were clasped in the arms of their parents. Rodolph had left home as a private in the ranks, but now returned as captain in the Hussars. Reinhold returned, in his travelling garb, from his long pilgrimage. Neither of the absentees being yet expected home, they had communicated with each other, agreeing to meet at a place mutually fixed upon, and to then enter at Grunfeld in the morning of St. Sylvester's-day, unexpected and unknown. The young painter, who was also a poet, immediately paid his respects to those friends of the family whom he inclined to trust with his plans; he had just time enough to contrive and arrange the dresses, to teach Julia her lesson, and to get up the spectacle we have witnessed. To that silent mood in which the overflowing heart scarcely dares trust the greatness of the happiness, succeeded the loud exultation of delight when one speaks without knowing what one utters—sees and hears without understanding—queries without waiting for answers; but after all this, joy, growing, reflective, and intelligent, dawns on the mind like the light of a new day. When thus thoroughly awakened, the old men looked around them. What a competition of saluting, and questioning, and narrating, was there now! Even Gerald's evening adventure with the ghost must be repeated over again.

It ought not to be forgotten, that the brilliant cross of the military order, and the merchant's brilliant crown, were not,

as supposed, mere contrivances of a poetical imagination. Ever since his retirement, the veteran Walter, by his courage, vigilance, and wise counsels, had rendered good service to his country; and the diamond cross was veritably a gift of the reigning prince, who had made choice of the major's worthy son Rodolph as the fittest ambassador. In like manner, the golden crown was truly a gift to Gerald from the citizens of Grunfeld, who gratefully remembered the assistance which, from his ample fortune, he had many times rendered them on occasions of great dearth and sickness.



The Leopard.

THE Leopard (*Felis Leopardus,*) as most of my readers know, belongs to the feline or cat-tribe of animals, of which the king of the forest and the domestic mouser are the extreme examples.

The characteristics of the entire cat tribe, in a state of nature, are all of the same general kind: continually in action both by night and day; they either creep, walk, or advance rapidly by a bounding jump; but they very seldom run, from the fact, probably, that the extreme flexibility of their limbs and vertebral column is not well adapted to the rigidity necessary to that species of movement. Their sense of sight, especially during twilight, is intense; their hearing is extremely acute and perfect; and their sense of smell but little inferior to that of animals of the dog tribe. Their most obtuse sense is that of taste—the lingual nerve of the lion being, according to Des Moulins, no larger than that of an ordinary-sized house-dog. In fact, the tongue of these animals is as much an organ of mastication as taste; its sharp and bony points, which all incline

backwards, enabling it to tear the softer parts of the flesh which forms their food. Lastly, the sense of feeling in the feline tribe is most exquisitely delicate, the hairs or whiskers, as they are called, around their mouths, being attached to a fine set of nerves at the base of the fleshy excrescences on either side of the nose.

In the picture which forms the frontispiece to the Christmas Tree, we have a couple of leopards battling desperately together. Here we observe the characteristics of the tribe displayed in a most remarkable manner—fierceness, gracefulness of outline, beauty of covering, and brightness of eye—treachery, ferocity, cruelty, and strength, in a velvet covering of spotted white and brown!

The leopard differs little from the tiger, excepting in size and the peculiar markings of his coat. The leopard is much smaller than his friend, the tiger, and perhaps not quite so ferocious; and instead of stripes, his fur is marked with irregularly-shaped spots of a blackish hue. In various parts of Asia and Africa, it is so far tamed as to be occasionally used in the chase like a dog—hunting hares, antelopes, and foxes, with a dexterity, courage, and faithfulness quite surprising.

The leopard has a long body, bright shining eyes, a great mouth filled with sharp teeth, round ears, and a tawny skin covered with spots, which decrease in intensity of colour as they approach the under part of the stomach. The Jaguar, of South America, is only another variety of the leopard, but possessing little of its courage and ferocity, seldom daring to attack a man and larger beasts, unless much pressed by hunger. Like other carnivorous animals of the cat tribe, both tigers and leopards are provided with soft spongy feet, which

allow them to come up noiselessly with their prey, on which they spring from a couching position. Both the leopard and the jaguar can swim well, and Sonini relates that he once saw a jaguar draw the body of a horse along the banks of a river for more than sixty yards, and then swim across with it to a wood, where he might devour it in safety. The Panther, of America, which is sometimes called the "tree tiger," from his facility in climbing trees in pursuit of prey, is not much larger than a greyhound, and is of a reddish colour, and fierce, lively disposition. His flesh is sometimes eaten by the Indians, who affirm that it is delicate food. The skins of the tiger tribe are imported into this and other countries, where, after being properly dressed, they are used as carriage mats, &c. In Russia, the skin of the leopard is occasionally tanned and made into gloves and shoes.

Many anecdotes are told of the taming of the leopard and panther. These animals, though differently named, are now generally considered to be but slightly distinguished in size and colour, and to be, in fact, members of the same family, if not identical—the panther being of a paler yellow hue and rather smaller, with the markings on his body somewhat closer together. The distinction between the two animals, if any, has never however been properly described.

Mrs. Bowdich gives a very interesting account of a tame panther, first in the possession of the King of Ashantee, afterwards of Mr. Hutchinson, who resided at Coomosir, Africa, and subsequently of herself:—

"Mr. Hutchison, observing the animal very docile, took pains to tame him, and in a great measure succeeded. When he was about a year old, that gentleman returned to

Cape Coast, and had him led through the country by a chain, occasionally letting him loose, when eating was going forward; at which time he would sit by his master's side, and eat his share with comparative gentleness. Once he purloined a fowl, but easily gave it up to Mr. Hutchison on being allowed a portion of something else.

"During the period of his residence at Cape Town," says Mrs. Bowdich, "I was much occupied in making arrangements for my departure from Africa, but generally visited my future companion every day, and in consequence became great friends before we sailed. He was conveyed on board the vessel in a large wooden cage, thickly barred on the front with iron. Even this confinement was not deemed a sufficient protection by the canoe-men, who were so alarmed at taking him from the shore to the vessel, that, in their consternation, they dropped the cage into the sea.

"For a few minutes I gave up my poor panther for lost; but some sailors jumped into a boat belonging to the vessel, and dragged him out with safety. The beast himself seemed completely subdued by his ducking; and as no one dared open his cage to dry it, he rolled himself up in one corner, nor roused himself till after an interval of some days, when he recognised my voice. When I first spoke, he raised his head, held it on one side, then on the other, to listen; and when I came fully into his view, he jumped on his legs, and appeared frantic; he rolled himself over and over, he howled, opened his enormous jaws, and cried, and seemed as if he would tear the cage to pieces. However, as his violence subsided, he contented himself with thrusting his paws and nose through the bars of the cage to receive my caresses. I suspect that

he had suffered from sea-sickness, as he had apparently loathed all food; but after this period he ate everything that was given him.

"His indignation was strongly excited by pigs, when they were suffered to run past his cage; and the sight of a monkey put him in a complete fury. While at anchor in the river Gaboa, an ourang-outang was brought for sale, and lived for three days on board; and I shall never forget the uncontrollable rage of one, or the agony of the other, at this meeting. The ourang fled with precipitation from the panther, whose eyes even flashed fire, and his huge teeth glittered. The sight of any negro produced the same agitation. He arrived safely in England, but died soon after."

[For other interesting anecdotes about the Tiger and the Leopard, let me refer my young readers to Mr. Pardon's interesting book called "Stories about Animals."]

The New Year.

WELCOME the glad New Year!
With blessings on its fleecy wing.
Only the wicked fear
Thy advent, dawning year,
And fly the judgments thou may'st bring.

Welcome the glad New Year!
Let every lowly heart aspire
To use thy moments well;
And let thy progress tell
Of hopeful souls still soaring higher.

Welcome the glad New Year!
May loving friends be spared to see
Many a glad New Year
Their welcome blessings bear,
Leading to bright eternity.

The Ghost of Mickey Macabe.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

HAT a very different thing Christmas seems to be in the big town, to what it was in the country, in my youthful days. Christmas has often been but a dull and meaningless thing to me in the overgrown city—a holiday at most. But in the country, in those days, it meant a great deal. It meant placing the yule log on the fire, and keeping it well alight, lest there should be no luck for any of us throughout all the next year. It meant cutting into a new loaf and into a prime new cheese. It meant killing a pig, and eating a goose. It meant the roasting of beef, and the baking and boiling of pies and puddings, for the whole week before Christmas-day, without ever considering how the good things were all to be eaten; and it meant the eating of them, and finding as many people as possible to help at it, for nearly a fortnight afterwards. It meant the tapping of the October home-brewed, and of barrels of home-

made wines—not forgetting the elderberry. In those days, Christmas meant frost and snow, and the earth and the pools all icebound; the crisp white carpet spread over the earth crackling beneath the feet; and the trees, with their leafless branches and twigs, feathered with a new foliage. Some of them to my memory, now, looked like ghosts, that had forgot to doff the white sheet at cock-crow and glide into their proper hiding-places. Little elfin sprites, I fancy, might have been at work on some of them, trying their hands at confectionary,—crusting the boughs over with powdered loaf sugar, to set the mouths of little boys and girls a-watering, by reminding them of the snow-white crusts of the twelfth-cakes. And then the stillness that pervaded the strange landscape in its secluded nook, with its grotesque imagery, so fantastic, yet so beautiful; and the thin haze gathered in the atmosphere. giving a dreamy indistinctness to objects in the distance!

Christmas was Christmas in those days, You had not to give half-a-crown for a choice sprig of holly or misletoe only large enough for your button-hole; the luxurious hedgerows furnished both in profuse abundance, and the walls and windows were amply decked with evergreens, whilst a huge branch, suspended from the centre of the ceiling in the hall, and loaded with berries, formed a kissing-bunch for a dozen couples at once. But Christmas meant not only roast beef, and fat capons, and plum-puddings, and punch-bowls, and kissing-branches; it meant listening to carols and mummers, with card-playing and dancing for the elders, and blindman's-buff and ghost-stories for the youngsters. Particularly ghost-stories! With what intense awe would the children gather round the servants in the hall as the short hours of the night

approached, and the lights grew dim, and gusts of wind rattled doors and windows, or sighed and moaned and whistled through lobbies and corridors! Very few, if any, of the company had seen ghosts themselves, but every one knew some one else who had. And then the ghosts usually chose such queer disguises to appear in. Sometimes the ghost discovered itself in the form of a milk-white greyhound, with six legs and an enormous tail. At others it assumed the form of a cat, with great saucer eyes, and played the part of grimalkin so naturally, that people less superstitious might have suspected it to have been a real cat. One ghost, I remember well, was a most dishonest goblin. It was described as a tall feminine-looking sprite, nearly ten feet high, clothed in a white sheet, bent nearly double over a stack of coals on the pit-brow hard bye. And what most seemed to prove that it was a ghost, was the fact that nearly a hundredweight of coals were missing next morning! The most extraordinary and troublesome ghosts, however, were those who never would show themselves at all, but took a malicious pleasure in pushing open drawers and doors as fast as you could close them; and those who came knocking at doors and tapping at windows, and rattling chains, and uttering groans and most unearthly sounds behind cellar doors, and in unoccupied rooms and dark closets, and near lonesome roads across the heath, or near the spots where travellers had been waylaid and maltreated, and where foul deeds had been expiated on the gibbet. These were the spirits of those who had left the world with burthened consciences, and could not rest until the priest had laid them for the third time in the depths of the Red Sea. When stories of this kind were being told, the

superstition of the listeners became awfully contagious. You might almost see their flesh creep, their hair stand on end, and their blood freeze. The speakers' voices were lowered to a whisper. The space occupied by the group on the hearth gradually narrowed until they became huddled close together: their breathing became short and almost hushed; and their eyes would be seen now and again stealthily peering round the room as if tempted, in spite of their fears, to encounter the sight of some frightful object. Hush! What's that? Down comes a saucepan-lid or dish-cover, rattling upon the kitchen floor. The hearts of the group are in their mouths;—the girls scream out in chorus, "Good gracious!" * * * And then what a tittering and laughing there is, as the warm blood comes back to their cheeks, and their courage begins to return a little, at the discovery that it was such a tinpot sort of ghost had frightened them.

But sometimes the ghost-story took a comic character. One of the oddest that used to be told on those occasion was "The Ghost of Mickey Macabe; or, the Haunted Cellar." Mickey Macabe had been a labourer on a neighbouring farm, but had been discharged for tippling too freely; and a story got abroad that he had fallen in a stone quarry and been killed. Pat Murphy, a fellow-servant of Mickey's, who was equally fond of his cups, but generally showed more discretion under the influence of the "crathur," was retained for some time afterwards. Now Pat was a sly fox, and having been lucky, or unlucky, enough to find a key that would fit the door of the cellar, used to steal down amongst the ale casks when the family had retired for the night, and make a solitary night of it. One Christmas Eve he had been seated some time before

his favourite barrel, upon a three-legged stool, and had enjoyed himself till he was getting drowsy, when he heard a slight noise in one corner of the cellar where there was a shallow, dry well. Looking in that direction, he fancied he saw a tall, gaunt figure, rising out of the well, dressed in the white flannel clothes common to miners in that part of the country, with a white napkin round its head. He could not see very clearly, because of the "drap in his 'ee," and also because he had left the lantern in a little nook at the other end of the cellar, that too much light might not be thrown upon the scene of his revels in case of a surprise. The figure had no sooner risen till its feet were on a level with the cellar floor, than it began to advance towards Pat. Now Pat's hair began to stand on end, at sight of the apparition, but being in a bold humour, he tried to put a bold front on the matter, and cried out—

"Who's that?"

"It's me," said the intruder, seating himself unasked on another stool opposite Pat.

"Faith," says Pat, recognising the voice, "and is that you, Mickey Macabe, or is it your ghost?"

"My ghost," was the brief reply. And with that the ghost whips the quart mug out of Pat's hand, places it under the tap, fills it to the brim, and drinks off a whole bumper, without saying so much as, "with your laive, or by your laive," or even stopping to give a toast. Pat afterwards declared that he heard the ale fizz as it went down his throat.

"Them's mighty dry quarters you've come up from?" says Pat, inquiringly.

"Very dry," says the ghost.

"Rather cowld?" suggests Pat.

"Mighty hot," says the ghost. And with that the ghost whips off another quart of ale "like winking," and then considerately hands back the mug to Pat.

"Poor crathur!" says Pat; "but I never knew before that ghosts were allowed to come out drinking in this way."

"That depinds," replied the ghost.

"Depinds," says Pat; "depinds, does it? Sure, and by St. Patrick, is it, you mane to say, depindent upon what you've been accustomed to take in your lifetime?"

"Entirely," replies the ghost.

"Bedad, then," quoth Pat, "here goes for another quart. Here's to your health, Mickey, my boy!"

"Got any baccy?" asks the ghost.

"A little," answers Pat.

"Light this pipe for me, then," says the ghost, taking one from his pocket. And no sooner is it lighted than he says—"Now Pat, my boy, give us a carol, and we'll make a night of it!" So they fell to a-singing. Pat tips him the "Cat of Kilgrowley," and the ghost sings "Groves of Blarney." Then they drink, and crack jokes, and sing together till the barrel gets low, when the ghost asks Pat if there is not a drop of the "real crathur" to be had? So they set to work upon whiskey, and both get nearly tipsy; when Pat, perceiving that the ghost staggers every time he rises to his legs, thinks there would be a capital chance of escape if he could only "slaughter him" clean off by provoking him to drink "double quick."

"You don't drink," says Pat.

"Don't I!" says the ghost.

"I'll drink wid ye, tot for tot," says Pat.

"I'll drink wid ye, bottle for bottle," says the ghost.

"I'll bet on the winner," says Pat.

"Then I'll drink you for your skin," says the ghost.

"The odds of that wager," quoth Pat, "would be that you could not pay if you lost; seeing that you'd be an odd sort of ghost if you'd a skin to your back."

Now no sooner had the ghost heard this irreverent sneer, as Pat afterwards told the story, "than his blood was up!" "Tunder and turf," cries he, "and if I've not got a skin, I've had a good skinful of the old farmer's ale and whiskey; and as for you, ye spalpeen, you'll have had a bottle too much when you've had this;" and he hit him with the empty bottle a crack on the head that made his eyes strike fire, and then vanished in a cloud of blue smoke.

There were people who said that when Pat Murphy was found tipsy on the cellar floor next morning, there was a stronger smell of whiskey and tobacco than of brimstone; but, to corroborate Pat's story in so far as a real ghost must have been there, the white napkin it had worn round its head was found on the cellar floor.

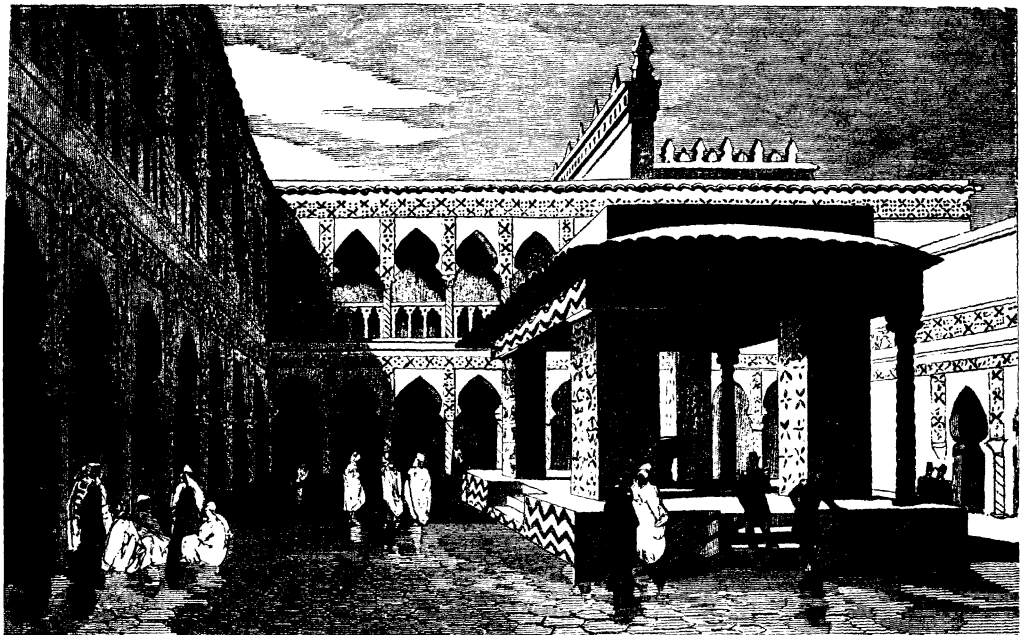
But what was strangest of all, was the fact that, some two months afterwards, back comes Mickey Macabe to the village, in the white dress of a miller. Many people questioned him about his absence, but he always kept a mysterious silence, and never once alluded to his visit to the cellar. So that, folks said, it *must* have been a ghost that drank whiskey with Pat Murphy on Christmas Eve.

The Truth Doth Never Die.

THOUGH kingdoms, states, and empires fall,
And dynasties decay;
Though cities crumble into dust,
And nations die away;
Though gorgeous towers and palaces
In heaps of ruin lie,
Which once was proudest of the proud,—
The Truth doth never die.

We'll mourn not o'er the silent past;
Its glories are not fled,
Although its men of high renown
Be numbered with the dead.
We'll grieve not over what earth has lost,
It cannot claim a sigh;
For the wrong alone hath perished,
And the Truth doth never die.

All of the past is living still,
All that was good and true ;
The rest hath perished, and it did
Deserve to perish, too !
The world rolls ever round and round,
And time rolls ever by ;
And the wrong is ever rooted up,
But the Truth doth never die.



GREAT COURT IN THE PALACE OF MUSTAPHA PASHA.

An Eastern Story.

CARAZAN, the merchant of Bagdad, was eminent throughout all the East for his avarice and for his wealth; his origin was obscure as that of the dark spark which, by the collision of steel and adamant, is struck out of darkness; and the patient labour of persevering diligence alone had made him rich. It was remembered, that when he was indigent he was thought to be generous; and he was still acknowledged to be inexorably just. But whether, in his dealings with men, he discovered a perfidy which tempted him to put his trust in gold, or whether, in proportion as he accumulated wealth, he discovered his own importance to increase, Carazan prized it more, as he used it less: he gradually lost the inclination to do good, as he acquired the power; and as the hand of time scattered snow upon his head, the freezing influence extended to his bosom.

But though the door of Carazan was never opened by hospitality, nor his hand by compassion, yet fear led him constantly to the mosque at the stated hours of prayer; he

performed all the rites of devotion with the most scrupulous punctuality, and had thrice paid his vows at the temple of the prophet. That devotion which arises from the love of God, and necessarily includes the love of man, as it connects gratitude with beneficence, and exhalts that which was moral to divine, confers new dignity upon goodness, and is the object not only of affection, but reverence. On the contrary, the devotion of the selfish, whether it be thought to avert the punishment which every one wishes to be inflicted, or to insure it by the complication of hypocrisy with guilt, never fails to excite indignation and abhorrence. Carazan, therefore, when he had locked his door, and, turning round with a look of circumspective suspicion, proceeded to the mosque, was followed by every eye with silent malignity; the poor suspended their supplication when he passed by; and though he was known by every man, yet no man saluted him.

Such had long been the life of Carazan, and such was the character which he had acquired, when notice was given by proclamation that he was removed to a magnificent building in the centre of the city; that his table should be spread for the public, and the stranger should be welcome to his bed. The multitude soon rushed like a torrent to his door, where they beheld him distributing bread to the hungry, and apparel to the naked, his eye softened with compassion, and his cheek glowing with delight. Every one gazed with astonishment at the prodigy; and the murmur of innumerable voices increasing like the approaching thunder, Carazan beckoned with his hand; attention suspended the tumult in a moment, and he thus gratified the curiosity which had procured him audience:—

"To Him who touches the mountains and the smoke, the Almighty and the Most Merciful, be everlasting honour! He has ordained sleep to be the minister of instruction, and his visions have reproved me in the night. As I was sitting alone in my harem, with my lamp burning before me, computing the profit of merchandise, and exulting in the increase of my wealth, I fell into a deep sleep, and the hand of Him who dwells in the third heaven was upon me. I beheld the Angel of Death coming forward like a whirlwind, and he smote me before I could deprecate the blow. At the same moment I felt myself lifted from the ground, and transported with astonishment through the regions of the air. The earth was contracted to an atom beneath, and the stars glowed round me with a lustre that obscured the sun. The gate of paradise was now in sight, and I was intercepted by a sudden brightness which no human eye could behold. The irrevocable sentence was now to be pronounced; my day of probation was passed; and from the evil of my life nothing could be taken away, nor could anything be added to the good. When I reflected that my lot for eternity was cast, which not all the powers of nature could reverse, my confidence totally forsook me; and while I stood trembling and silent, covered with confusion, and chilled with horror, I was thus addressed by the radiance that flamed before me:—'Carazan, thy worship has not been accepted, because it was not prompted by the love of God; neither can thy righteousness be rewarded, because it was not produced by the love of man: for thy own sake only, hast thou rendered to every man his due; and thou has approached the Almighty only for thyself. Thou hast not looked up with gratitude, nor round thee with

kindness. Around thee thou hast, indeed, beheld vice and folly; but if vice and folly could justify thy parsimony, would they not condemn the bounty of Heaven? If not upon the foolish and the vicious, where shall the sun diffuse its light, or the clouds distil their dew? where shall the lips of the spring breathe fragrance, or the hand of autumn diffuse plenty? Remember, Carazan, that thou hast shut compassion from thine heart, and grasped thy treasures with a hand of iron: thou hast lived for thyself; and, therefore, henceforth for ever thou shalt subsist alone. From the light of heaven, and from the society of all beings, shalt thou be driven; solitude shall protract the lingering hours of eternity, and darkness aggravate the horrors of despair.' At this moment I was driven by some secret and irresistible power through the glowing system of creation, and passed innumerable worlds in a moment. As I approached the verge of a nature, I perceived the shadows of total and boundless vacuity deepen before me,—a dreadful region of eternal silence, solitude, and darkness. Unutterable horror seized me at the moment, and this exclamation burst from me with all the vehemence of desire: 'Oh that I had been doomed for ever to the common receptacle of impenitence and guilt! Their society would have alleviated the torrent of despair, and the rage of fire could not have excluded the comfort of light. Or if I had been condemned to reside on a comet, that would return but once in a thousand years to the regions of light and life, the hope of these periods, however distant, would cheer me in the dreary interval of cold and darkness, and the vicissitude would divide eternity into time.' While this thought passed over my mind, I lost sight of the remotest

star, and the last glimmering of light was quenched in utter darkness. The agonies of despair every moment increased as every moment augmented my distance from the last habitable world. I reflected with intolerable anguish, that when ten thousand thousand years had carried me beyond reach of all but that Power who fills infinitude, I should still look forward into an immense abyss of darkness, through which I still drive without succour and without society, farther and farther still, and for ever and ever. I then stretched out my hands towards the regions of existence, with an emotion that awakened me. Thus have I been taught to estimate society, like every other blessing, by its loss. My heart is warmed to liberality, and I am zealous to communicate the happiness that I feel to those from whom it is derived; for the society of one wretch, who, in the pride of prosperity, I would have spurned from my door, would, in the dreadful solitude to which I was condemned, have been more highly prized than the gold of Africa, or the gems of Golconda."

At this reflection upon his dream, Carazan became suddenly silent, and looked upward with an extasy of gratitude and devotion. The multitude were struck at once with the precept and example; and the Caliph, to whom the event was related, that he might be liberal beyond the power of gold, commanded it to be recorded for the benefit of posterity.

The Pebble and the Acorn.

"AM a Pebble! and yield to none,"
Were the swelling words of a tiny stone.
"Nor time nor seasons can alter me;
I am abiding while ages flee.
The pelting hail and the drizzling rain
Have tried to soften me long in vain;
And the tender dew has sought to melt
Or touch my heart, but it was not felt.
There is none that can tell about my birth;
For I am as old as the big, ruined earth.
The children of men arise, and pass
Out of the world like blades of grass;
And many a foot on me has trod
That's gone from sight and under the sod!
I am a Pebble! but who art thou,
Rattling along from the restless bough?"

The Acorn was shocked at the rude salute,
And lay for a moment abashed and mute;
She never before had been so near
This gravelly ball, the modern sphere;
And she felt, at the time, at a loss to know
How to answer a thing so coarse and low.
But to give reproof of a nobler sort
Than the angry look, or the keen retort,
At length she said, in a gentle tone,
"Since it has happened that I am thrown
From the lighter element, where I grew,
Down to another so hard and new,
And beside a personage so unjust,
Abased, I will cover my head with dust,
And quickly retire from the side of one
Whom time, nor season, nor storm, nor sun,
Nor the gentle dew, nor the grinding heel,
Has ever subdued or made to feel."
And soon in the earth she sunk away
From the comfortless spot where the pebble lay.

But it was not long ere the soil was broke
By the peering head of the infant oak!
And as it arose, and its branches spread,
The Pebble looked up, and wondering said,
"A modest Acorn! never to tell
What was enclosed in its simple shell;
That the pride of the forest was folded up
In the narrow space of its little cup!

And meekly to sink into the darksome earth ;
Which proves that nothing conceals her worth !
And, oh ! how many will tread on me,
To come and admire the beautiful tree
Whose head is towering towards the sky,
Above such a worthless thing as I !
Useless and vain, a cumberer here,
I have been idling from year to year.
But never from this shall a vaunting word
From the humble Pebble again be heard,
Till something without me, or within,
Shall show the purpose for which I've been."
The Pebble its vow could not forget,
And it lies there wrapped in silence yet.

Valentine's Day.

IT is the fourteenth of February: the sun rose this morning with a splendour rare for the season; the busy chirping of the birds in the few trees and shrubs that stand in the neat little garden fronting Adelaide Cottage serves to show that the warm impulses of nature are again awakening; that the season of sunshine, flowers, and love, is advancing, to gladden and stimulate the hearts of all living things.

Adelaide Cottage stands at the summit of a gentle elevation, and looks down a respectable street, remarkable for its cleanliness and quietude. The dust-bell of the morning, and the muffin-bell of eve, are the most clamorous disturbers of its peace. Although noisy beggars, vociferating vulgar ballads, or shouting in gruff accents varied tales of distress, are numerous everywhere, there is something so compact, and even forbidding, in the external aspect of the houses in South Albany Street, that few of the troublesome mendicants infesting large towns presume to break in upon its solitude. Now and then a hand-organ may be heard grinding out its melan-

choly notes; or a group of German musicians, enlivening the comparative solitude of the street, attract around them a group of juvenile errand-bearers, who have ever been known to hold the most important despatches in abeyance to a lively chorus of street music.

Inhabiting Adelaide Cottage are the Widow Marshall and her three lovely daughters, Emily, Laura, and Julia. Mrs. Marshall has been a widow about two years; and since the death of her husband (a half-pay officer), her maiden sister, Prudence Linwood, has become an inmate of the cottage, with the view of assuaging the sorrows of the good widow, and of dividing with her the care of a family now assuming an age requiring the most scrupulous maternal regard.

The young ladies attend with unaccustomed promptitude to the breakfast-table this morning. Mrs. Marshall remarks that the fine weather appears to have called them forth earlier than usual; and Aunt Prudence, who has sometimes seen occasion to reprove them, either for slumbering too late, or dwelling unduly over their toilette, takes the opportunity to suggest the decided superiority of quitting the chamber at an early hour, to breathe the fresh incense of the morning air. It is remarkable, too, with what freshness of spirits the young ladies have commenced the day; and Aunt Prudence ventures to suggest, that this is the effect of early rising. "Nothing," she adds, "is so depressing to the system as too long slumber in close apartments." Aunt Prudence is quite right as to the fact just stated, but decidedly wrong in her inference as to the cause of the ladies' hilarity, this morning at least. Breakfast is partaken with but slender appetite, for which Aunt Prudence is really at a loss to account. It has ever been

her argument, that early rising gives a keen relish for the morning meal. It soon becomes obvious, however, that there are some unusual phenomena at work, to which Aunt Prudence is yet a stranger, and which have had the effect of disturbing her usually accurate calculations.

The breakfast scarcely over, the young ladies gather at the front window; Julia's lovely blue eyes, aided by the elevation of a foot-stool, peering out over the wire blind. Falling over Julia's light hair are Laura's large, dark auburn tresses; and somewhat over and between the heads of these two, smiles the half-thoughtful, half-merry Emily, the elder of the three,

Suddenly an ebullition of excitement seems to stir the group; and Mrs. Marshall draws to the window, wondering what can present such extraordinary attraction to her daughters. She sees nothing, and, for the moment, the smothered excitement of her children seems to assure her that it is only some innocent jest among themselves, and no external object, by which their lively spirits are stirred.

"Number four," says the vivacious little Julia.

"Hush!" cries Emily.

"I tell you that it is number six," says Laura;" "it is to Miss Redwood."

"Number ten; that's Miss Thompson, or her brother, or both," says Emily.

"Do you know Miss Thompson?" asked Aunt Prudence, overhearing their conversation.

"No," replied Emily, "I have no acquaintance with her."

"I thought I heard you mention her name, dear."

"I only said she lives at number ten, dear aunt," said Emily.

"I am glad you have no acquaintance with her," replied Aunt Prudence; "I am told she is a very frivolous girl, and quite a coquette."

During these interrogations and replies, Laura and Julia were busy enumerating.

"Number fifteen; that's Miss Tompkins."

"Number twenty; that must be—who can that be?"

"Oh, there! number twenty-two; that's the Misses Williams: five or six, at least!"

"Hush!" cried Emily; but her request was quite unnecessary. Already the noisy bustle had subsided into breathless silence, and the young ladies had instinctively withdrawn from the window.

There was a long and weary pause; the young ladies looked at each other wistfully. It was fortunate that, at this moment, a paragraph upon "unhappy marriages," in a corner of the *Times*, had attracted Aunt Prudence's attention, and she was reading it with too much avidity to mark the altered demeanour of the young ladies. Suddenly a loud "rap-tap" at the door fairly startled the young damsels from their seats. Their cheeks were tinged by fitful blushes. Laura and Julia would, without ceremony, have darted to the door; but Emily's better sense held them back; while Aunt Prudence remarked—

"Young ladies, young ladies! why are you so boisterous this morning? A letter from your brother, I dare say. Betsy will bring it, of course!"

Mrs. Marshall had gone to superintend some matter of domestic importance. And in a moment Betsy's red, smiling face presented itself at the door; and in her doubled apron

were half-a-dozen letters, done up in such neat style, such delicate tints, rich borders, and glittering seals, that Betsy fairly hesitated to touch them with her fingers, lest a slight blemish should be set upon them. She, therefore, extended her apron, for the postman to drop them in.

Betsy was taking the precious packets towards Aunt Prudence, when Emily intercepted her, and took upon herself the duty of handing them to their respective owners.

"There is one for Julia, one for Laura, one for"—(she mentioned not the name—it was her own), "one for Aunt Prudence, and one for Betsy!"

Each young lady unsealed her treasure. Julia, in her excited state, read out the first line aloud—

"Oh! lovely blue eyes, like the stars!"

And then hastily caught up her breath, as if she would draw the words back again. After a short pause, during which the young ladies eagerly gazed upon their sweet bagatelles, they all turned to Aunt Prudence.

"Aunt, dear aunt, you have had a valentine."

"Young ladies, young ladies! how can you be so frivolous?"

And as she said this, she folded up the letter, and was putting it into the bag, with a very grave look, which became still sterner when the laughing Julia said,—

"I saw the picture by the light through the paper, dear aunt; a great heart and an arrow."

"Julia," said Aunt Prudence, "say no more, or I shall be obliged to chide you."

Finding Aunt Prudence in no mood for jesting, and suddenly recollecting the letter addressed in a great round hand

to "Betsy Tippet," lying on the table, it was caught up, and the merry little group were in the kitchen in an instant.

"Betsy! Betsy! here's a valentine for you," exclaimed the blue-eyed Julia, always the first in a matter of the kind.

Betsy turned from a broiling fire, wiping her face on her apron, and saying,—

"Now don't tease me, Miss Laura and Miss Julia. I know it is your making up."

"No, no, indeed!" they all cried; "the postman has brought you it!"

"Don't'e say so; you puts me all in a flutter," said Betsy.

"Don't fear, Betsy," said Miss Emily; "it's doubtless from some young man that loves you very much."

"Law! there now, Miss Emily; when the likes of you talks like that, it makes me"—

"Blush," cried the vivacious Julia.

And sure enough Betsy's face was—not exactly blushing, but had coloured almost to crimson.

Poor Betsy, could she read writing she would have retained her own love-token, and no one should have been the wiser.

"Let me read it for you, dear Betsy," said Emily.

Betsy, not being able to gather its contents except through a translator, and being very anxious to know it all, assented, upon one condition.

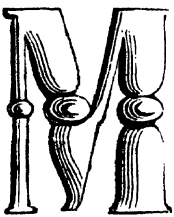
"Yes, if you won't laugh," said she.

So they broke the seal, and there was the graceless figure of a fat cook tossing a pancake, which was just alighting upon her protuberant red nose; and underneath were the words—

"You ugly cook, this face is thine,
Thou shalt not be my valentine!"

To the good sense of the young ladies, they did not laugh, but said it was very wrong, and very stupid, in the sender; that Betsy was a good girl, and deserved something sweet and pretty; and they all agreed with Betsy, that it came from the nursemaid at number twenty-three, just by, whom Betsy knew "owed her a grudge." She had been seen to watch the postman to the door that morning. All the day the young ladies consoled Betsy, by assuring her, that one day she would have a real valentine from a truthful lover; and this assurance pleased and consoled poor Betsy very much; and the young ladies were enabled to enjoy their own sweet valentines the more for having contributed to lessen the disappointment of Betsy.

The Day of Life.



ORN breaks freshly o'er the hills,
Sweeps the pearly dew away;
Light with joy each bosom fills,
Opes to view the charms of day.
Noon, the fitful storms begin,
Now in sunshine, now in shade;

Ocean's troubled tide rolls in,
Wrecks along its margin laid.
Evening cometh, bringing rest;
Calm the air, and clear the sky;
Sun goes down the golden west,
Ends the day without a sigh.

Such is life! As smiling morn,
Bright are childhood's happy years;
Man to varied struggles born,
His the strife of smiles and tears;
Age brings peace unto his breast,
Calmly ushering in his rest.

Icebergs.

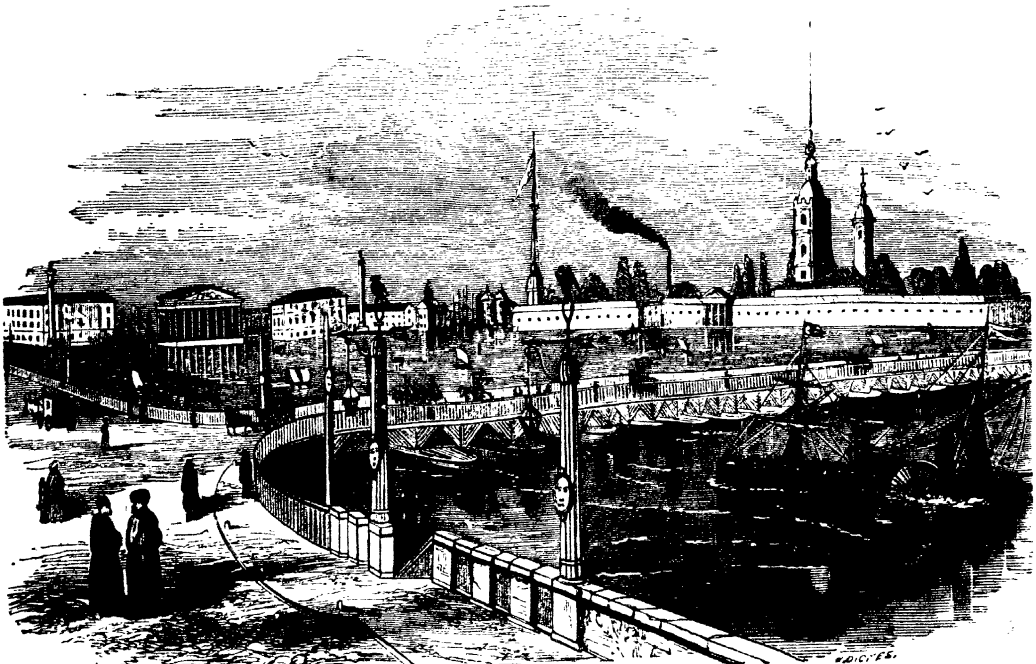
THE earth is full of variety. From torrid seas to arctic snows the power and goodness of the Almighty are discoverable, to those who have eyes to see and brains to comprehend. Our illustration will serve to give stay-at-home travellers some idea of the Polar Regions, where frost reigns eternal and supreme, and a brief summer only comes to show by contrast how severe is the winter. In such a scene as the one depicted, it is more than probable that Sir John Franklin and his brave companions lost their lives.

My young readers would perhaps like to know something about Icebergs. Well, then, I turn to my book-shelves, and look for a volume that will furnish the proper information. I find nearly all that I want in a capital little work, entitled, "The Earth; its Physical Condition and Remarkable Phenomena;" by Mr. W. H. Higgins. He tells us that an iceberg is an island of ice seen in the seas and gulfs of the northern regions. It is sometimes fixed to some mass of earth jutting out into the sea, but more commonly found floating about from place to place, according to the action of the wind and tides. They are usually very perpendicular on one side, and

on the opposite have a more gradual sloping direction. Their height is variable, and some of them have an elevation of two hundred feet above the level of the ocean. The colour of these vast masses of ice depends upon the direction of the incidental luminous rays, and in part on the constitution of the bergs themselves. They not unfrequently appear as though formed of emerald or sapphire, and the colours produced by the refraction are frequently so beautiful that they seem as though they were built of light, and mimic the representation of Oriental fable. It has been supposed that the iceberg is formed by the piling together of the fragments produced by the breaking up of the large fields of ice; but it is more commonly allowed that they are masses broken off from the enormous glaciers abounding on the coasts of Greenland and Spitzbergen. Some appear, however, to be produced by the consolidation of driven snow; and contain trees, which occasionally take fire, in consequence of the friction to which they are exposed,—presenting the singular appearance of a burning mountain of ice. The bergs are sometimes enveloped in a thick fog; and if a ship should come in contact with them, almost certain destruction must follow. Very many of the vessels employed in the fisheries are every year lost, we are informed, by accidents of this kind.

These Icebergs are everywhere traversed by deep fissures, varying in width from a few inches to several feet. These rents in the eternal rocks of ice are supposed to be formed by the expansion during the process of freezing, after the brief heats of summer have rendered the masses somewhat spongy and porous. Into these rents water again flows, and being frozen as before, the fissures are increased in length and width;

The Arctic Regions.



ST. PETERSBURGH.

and this process going on continually, has the effect of raising the whole mass higher and higher from the sea. Among the most remarkable icebergs known to travellers are those on the east coast of Spitzbergen. They are seven in number, lying at great distances from each other, with smaller masses of ice between. They are known as the Seven Islands, and they stand as it were the foremost sentinels of an unknown and inaccessible land. The most distant of them exhibits a front to the sea upwards of three hundred feet in height, and many thousand feet in breadth. Its colour is a bright emerald, varied by vast caverns of unmeasured depth. Cataracts of melted snow often fall down its sides, and black spire-like mountains, streaked with white, rise up from its surface, in various parts, crag above crag, pinnacle above pinnacle, as far as the eye can reach in the background. At times, immense fragments break off, and precipitate themselves into the water with a most alarming crash. A portion of this vivid green substance was seen by Lord Mulgrave to fall into the sea; and, notwithstanding it grounded in twenty-four fathoms of water, it spired above the water fifty feet. Similar icebergs are frequent in all the arctic regions, and to their lapse is owing the solid mountainous ice common in those seas.

King Frost sports wonderfully with these Icebergs, and gives them majestic as well as other forms. Masses have been seen to assume the shape of a gothic church, with arched windows and doors, and all the rich drapery of that style of architecture, composed of what the writer of an Arabian tale would scarcely have ventured to introduce among the marvellous suggestions of his fancy—crystals of the most

sapphirine blue. Tables, with one or more feet, and often immense flat-roofed temples, like those of Luxor, on the banks of the Nile, supported by round transparent columns of cerulian hue, float by the astonished spectators. These icebergs are the creation of ages, and acquire additional height by falls of snow and rain, which latter often freezes instantly, and more than repairs the loss occasioned by the influence of the sun's heat.

The island of Iceland, so called perhaps from its being formed principally of ice, presents the remarkable peculiarity of possessing in its centre a burning mountain, called Hecla, from the crater of which are continually being thrown great masses of the material known in commerce as pumice-stone.

The Soldier's Dog.

THERE is a place in Brussels,
Once red with many a stain
Of Belgium's best and noblest blood,
When heaped with Belgium's slain.
'Twas there, when in its fury raged
That memorable strife,
An alien soldier from afar
For glory lost his life.

The fight was done; they bore him off,
And laid him in his grave;
And who were near to mourn his fate,
So young, and yet so brave,
To the dark dust, without a tear,
Unfeelingly consigned?
Oh! yes, there was óne mourner there,
But not of human kind.

Thriced waned the day, and still that friend
His wakeful vigils kept,
In silent grief; for 'twas a grief
That eyes had never wept.
There is a sorrow that becomes
Extinguished in its tears;
And there is that which mocks the power,
And passes not with years.

Reluctantly he moved away,
And sought the fatal scene,
Where every harrowing sight and sound
So recently had been.
Approach not near that hallowed spot;
'Tis perilous! beware!
There is an incorruptible,
A faithful guardian there.

What better sentinel to watch
At noon or eventide?
For there his bleeding master fell,
And, 'mid the dying, died.
He died!—His home was far away:
No whisper reached the ear
Of those by heart-ties closely bound,
Whom love had rendered dear.
But one, that was far, far below
Man's heaven-predestined race,
Stood gazing long and anxiously
Upon that dying face.

When the sad tidings came at length
To the sunny hills of France,
Where, underneath the trellised vine,
He had led the moonlight dance,
On young warm hearts, that faster throbbed,
A fearful shadow fell,
And on their pale and lovely brows
A change was visible ;

But, like the shadow which the cloud
Throws on the emerald grass,
It passed away as that is seen,
Even as you gaze, to pass.
The soldier's dog was faithful still:
His eyes with age grew dim,
Still there was no forgetfulness,
No chilling change in him !

The soldier's dog would never leave,
Though basely spurned aside ;—
In shame, O man, before the brute
Thy head inglorious hide.
Well may thy human charity
The glorious standard miss,
And vaunted friendship blush before
Fidelity like this !

A Cheerful Heart.

How wearily the little news-boy plodded along the deserted street on New Year's Eve! The cold rain was beating fiercely on him, and a few tattered garments served to protect him from its rage. All day long had he been out amid the storm, and was now returning, weary and hungry, to his humble home. The street lamps were lighted, and as he passed by them, you could see by the gleam that his face was pale and emaciated; could see that, young as he was, something had been there already to attenuate his features, and to give him that wan and desolate look which can be given only by some great affliction, some pinching want, or overwhelming grief. You could see at a glance that some dark shadow was resting on his pathway—a shadow out of which there seemed, just then, no hope of escape. Born amid poverty and wretchedness, and left fatherless when yet in his cradle, his life up to that hour had been nothing but misery; and the whole record of that life was written in his pale face and tattered rags. Yet with all this, as he passed along, a close observer might have noticed a strange light in his clear blue eye,—an expression of kindly cheerfulness, such as we may not often see in

this world of care and grief; for God's blessing was upon him—the blessing of a cheerful heart. The sorrow of his life, however deep and abiding, the gloom upon his pathway, however dark and fearful, dimmed not the light that burned so quietly, and yet so steadily, within. Like the vestal fire of old, it grew not dim, but threw its rays far out over the great gloom around him; even now the cold storm beat about him unheeded. There are waking dreams that come upon us sometimes when we least expect them—bright dreams of love, and home, and heaven—beautiful visions of the future, all-glorious with its burden of song and gladness! And such a vision, of such a future, now filled, and crowded, and blessed the heart of that forsaken boy. He was dreaming, as he walked along, of better days to come—of the time poverty in his pathway should depart, and the beautiful flowers should spring up to bless him with their presence—of a bright home far away from that great city, upon whose cheerful hearth the fire should never go out, and where hunger should never haunt him more; and then into that dream of a better life, into that vision of a cheerful home far off among the green hills, came a pleasant face—the face of his beloved mother. He could see her as she sat by the lattice, at the quiet evening-hour, reading the sacred Bible, with the last red rays resting like a glory upon her brow, while the rose-leaf trembles at the window, and the little violets fold themselves to sleep. Very pleasant was the picture passing before the gaze of that ragged child; very glorious the panorama of green hills, and bright flowers, and singing-birds; and his heart thrilled and heaved with a strange rapture,—such joy as the stricken poor can never know, save when some good angel

comes down from the light blue heaven, and beckons them away from the haunts of woe and want, in which they suffer, to the free air and blessed sunshine.

But the dream has passed; the sun has set, the flowers faded, the cottage disappeared. Of all that beautiful vision, so cheering and so glorious, no trace remained; no vestige of tree, or leaf, or bird; no letter of his mother's Bible; no love-light of his mother's eye. The darkness came around him, and he found himself then amid the storm, in the silent streets of that great and sinful city. So, gathering his garments more closely around him, he hurried along to his home, with a prayer upon his lip, and God's sunlight in his heart. Turning into an obscure street, a few steps brought him to the door of a wretched dwelling, which he entered. Follow now, and behold a scene of want and penury, such as may be found sometimes in this world of ours—a scene upon which men look with unconcern, but on which, thank God! the angels gaze with joy; a home where poverty struggles with a brave heart, and is conquered. Before the fire sat a pale, sad woman, upon whose features the traces of great loveliness were still visible, though sorrow had sharpened them somewhat, and ghastly want done much to dim her beauty. Upon her high and placid brow the blue veins were clearly visible, as the blood coursed through them with unwonted rapidity. Her large dark eyes were dim with tears. Some new sorrow had started afresh the sealed fountain of her grief; and now, as she gazed silently upon the red embers in all the utter agony of despair, it might seem that hope had gone for ever, and God forsaken her.

"Mother!" said the boy, as he entered all dripping

with rain, "I have come at last; and I am tired and hungry."

"My son! my son!" replied the mother, "there is no morsel of food in the house;" and her lips quivered. "We must starve! we must starve! God help us!" And her tears broke forth afresh.

Thus had it been for many a weary month. With scarcely food sufficient to support life, that mother and her boy had struggled, and suffered, and wept, and prayed; and now that the cold winter was coming on, no wonder that her heart shuddered, and her cheek grew pale, at the hopeless prospect ahead. How could they pass the dreary days and long nights, the storm and the terrible cold, without food, and raiment, and shelter? And then where could they go, when the heartless landlord should thrust them from their present wretched dwelling, as he had threatened to do on the morrow? Verily, the gloom and the despair were great and fearful.

And yet, even at that desolate hour, an Eye looked down from heaven upon the friendless widow. There by the hearthstone, by the dying embers, an angel hovered—an earthly angel, even in the guise of that cheerful child. For,

> "Earth has its angels, though their forms are moulded
> But of such clay as fashions all;
> Though harps are wanting, and bright pinions folded,
> We know them by the love-light on their brow."

"Mother," said he, "we will not starve. God has not forsaken us. There are better days to come, mother! I saw it in a dream; and in it I beheld your own dear self, and you

were singing a pleasant song away in that blessed home. Oh, mother, cheer up! cheer up!"

When the little boy lay down on his wretched couch that night, he was changed. His mother's great despair had transformed him from a suffering child to a strong-hearted man: henceforth his path was one of duty alone; and no allurement, be it ever so bright, could turn him from it. Before him glittered for ever a guiding star; and his intense, absorbing gaze neither the cares nor the vanities of life could for an instant divert. Existence had for him one object, and his utmost energies were taxed for its attainment.

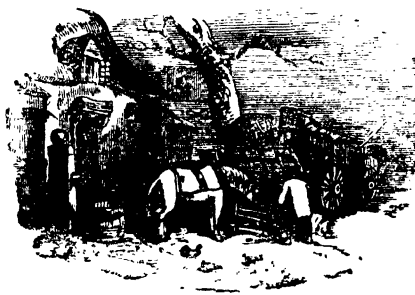
Never did the sun rise in greater splendour than on the New Year's morning following that night of hunger, gilding the spires and the domes of the city with its rays. The streets were already rapidly filling with the gay crowd, seeking pleasure, and men walked as though new life had been given them by the general hilarity and bracing air. In the most crowded street was the news-boy, but not the wretched lad who had plodded his way through the storm, the night before, to a desolate home and a supperless bed. You would not have recognised him as he hurried along, eagerly bent on his avocation, and his face all-radiant with the great hope that struggled at his heart.

That night, joy visited the forsaken fireside. They had paid the landlord his rent, and still had sufficient left to purchase food. It was a merry New Year for them.

Years came and went. Great changes had taken place. The boy had grown to manhood. High honours were conferred upon him. Wealth flowed into his coffers; his praise was upon every tongue. And at this very hour, upon the

banks of the Hudson, his mansion stands conspicuous among a thousand others for its taste and elegance.

Thank God! thank God! for every suffering son of man who thus comes up from the deep shadow of despair, into the blessed sunlight, and turning, gives his word of cheer to the groping millions beneath him. Thank God! thank God! that scattered here and there throughout the world, in many a humble home, may be found men and women, unto whom life presents but little of love, or hope, or joy, and yet who pass along amid its desolate paths without a murmur, sustained, and soothed, and blessed by this alone—a Cheerful Heart.



Cottage Flowers.

DEEP in a dell our cot was built,
And from the door a pathway wound
Through meadow-lands, and up a hill
With corn-fields crowned.

An ivy-bush about the porch
Entwined its wreaths of darkest green,
The blinded casements through its leaves
Were scarcely seen.

A walnut-tree, with gnarled trunk,
Shaded a well from summer heat,
Where sparkling waters freshly drawn
Danced cool and sweet.

A little brook through matted weeds,
Like hidden birds, sang in the grass,
And ancient willows stooped to feel
Its waters pass.

Within our garden, hedged about,
Such herbs for use, such flowers for hue,
As simple hearts had treasured there,
Profusely grew.

The honey-breathing scabious globes,
Lost in a swarm of winged sweet peas,
And fragrant beds of sunny thyme,
Alive with bees.

The marigold, with plaited ruff,
The sweetbriar, full of dainty buds,
And knotted marjoram planted there,
Fresh from the woods.

The stonecrop weaved its golden nest,
The hollyhock built up its spires,
And fringed poppies steeped their heads
In sunset fires.

Love-lies-a-bleeding, too, was there,
And candytuft, as white a snow;
There flaunting flags and ribbon grass
Waved to and fro.

The martial sunflower held his shield
To shade the lilies at his side;
So guards the strong the fairer form,
With noble pride.

The morning starred them with her gems;
The noontide glory made them bright;
The moon enshrined them, while they slept,
In silver light.

We wore them on our festal days;
They made our rural banquet fair;
Our dreams were brighter when their breath
Perfumed the air.

We nurtured them with tender skill;
We watched them bud, and bloom, and fade;
Their births made summer, and their deaths
Our wintry shade.

Though brighter blooms and sweeter scents
Eclipse these simple gems of ours,
Yet memory holds the dearest still
Those Cottage Flowers.

mena. It must be a magnificent but a fearful sight to see a number of gigantic pillars of sand stalking with greater or less velocity over the unmeasured waste, their tops reaching the clouds, and their bases resting on the attenuated air. Should they, however, happen to cross the path of a traveller, there is little chance of escape. But if this phenomenon be sometimes destructive to a kafila, or caravan, how much more so the sand-wind, or hurricane. Denham, the celebrated traveller, had the misfortune to encounter a sand-storm in crossing the desert, and has briefly but graphically described its effects. The unlimited expanse seemed to be filled with particles of sand, and the eye of the traveller could only penetrate the space of a few yards around him; the sun and the clouds were obscured, and a suffocating weight rested upon every individual; the horses refused to face the sandy clouds which threatened to overwhelm them, and both man and beast suffered under an oppressive thirst which could not be alleviated.

The hurricanes which ravish the Antilles are among the most violent and destructive phenomena. Mr. Stewart has described, in a vivid manner, the approach and effects of a hurricane in the island of Jamaica. It is usually preceded by awful and certain prognostics. An unusual calm prevails; not a breath of wind is felt; the atmosphere is close and sultry; the clouds wild, broken, and perpetually and rapidly shifting. At length a deep and portentous gloom gradually overspreads the atmosphere; the sun is enveloped in darkness; a deep, hollow, murmuring sound is indistinctly heard, like the roaring of a cataract, or the howling of winds through remote woods; rapid gusts of wind and rain speedily succeed;

various birds of passage are seen hastily driving along the sky, or are thrown down by the force of these gusts; even the cattle grazing in the fields, as if aware of the approaching danger, withdraw to the thickets for shelter. In a few moments the hurricane reaches the acme of violence, when all the winds of heaven, and from every point of the compass, winged with destruction, seem let loose from their caverns. The largest trees are thrown prostrate, or shattered and stripped of their foliage; the provision grounds are laid waste; the sugar-canes levelled to the earth, and in the more exposed situations torn up by the roots and wafted about like chaff. Nothing can be more appalling than the wild howling and threatening violence of a hurricane during the night, when the vivid and succeeding gleams of lightning, darting athwart the heavens, make "darkness visible," and heighten the horrors of the scene.

A recent writer has described in eloquent terms the effects of a violent wind-storm among the mountains of India. Those, he says, who would witness the grandest of all scenes in the world must journey to the Himalaya Mountains, and behold the thunderstorm that usually ushers in the rainy season—about the middle of June or early in July. For some days previously, the weather, even in the mountains, is intolerably hot, while from the plains below the steam and vapour may be seen rising and mingling with the atmosphere. Even the great plain, called the Dehwah Dhoon, is enveloped in mist. It takes at least three days for one of these storms to gather materials for its matchless strength. On the evening of the first day, at the setting of the sun, there may be seen banks of dense dark clouds, which wall in the horizon; on the second

day they are denser and higher; on the third day, denser and higher still. The battle generally begins in the plains. From Mussoorie come the lightning, and the hail, and the distant thunder; while on the mountain all is calm and still. The sun sometimes shines while the plains are wrapped in storm. Towards night, the Dhoon becomes a perfect blaze of light, while the mountains near at hand still hold their ordnance in reserve. Ere long, comes a flash of lightning, instantly followed by a deafening clap of thunder, rolling and reverberating through the deep valleys. Presently, another flash and another roar wake up the echoes, and the Dhoon is lighted up by one constant blaze of lurid glare, which reveals every mountain and valley, every rock and tree, for miles around.

Christmas Tide.

THE summer beams may shine
On the rich and curling vine,
And the moontide's rays light up
The tulip's dazzling cup;
But the pearly mistletoe,
And the holly-berries' glow,
Are not even by the boasted rose outvied;
For the happy hearts beneath
The green and coral wreath
Love the garlands that are turned at Christmas tide.

The northern gusts may howl,
The rolling storm-cloud scowl;
King Frost may make a slave
Of the river's rapid wave;
The snow-drift choke the path,
Or the hail-shower spend its wrath;
But the sternest blast right bravely is defied,
While limbs and spirits bound
To the merry minstrel sound,
And social woodfires blaze at Christmas tide.

But while joy's echo falls
In gay and plenteous halls,
Let the low and poorly share
The warmth, the sport, the fare;
For the one of humble lot
Must not shiver in his cot,
But claim a bounteous meed from Wealth and Pride.
Shed kindly blessings round,
Till no aching heart be found;
And then, all hail to Christmas tide!

The Stammerer Cured.

A GROUP of boys were assembled in the playground of Dr. Dalton's school, engaged in bullying a new comer. And Albert Wilson, the new boy, stood in the midst of them, as fair a mark for the purpose as could well be imagined. His well-combed fair hair and delicate complexion, his neatly arranged collar and necktie, his girlish timidity, and slight, weak limbs would alone have denoted a "mother's boy." But in addition to this, his name was a fine one; they already called him Prince Albert. He stammered so excessively that he had never got through the shortest sentence since his arrival the day before. He had been seen clinging to his mother, and kissing her with tears as he bade her good-bye; and Harry Smith had just made the discovery of a pair of kid gloves in his pocket.

"Prince Albert wears kid gloves in the playground. Faugh! how they smell of essence de fine-lady! Let's give 'em an airing." And up went the gloves into the air; and then another boy tossed them up, and finally they lodged on the lower projection of a chimney-pot. "There, now they've got that elevated

position that becomes them. Would your Royal Highness like to join them?" And he proceeded to lay hold of his shoulder.

"Give me his precious toes," shouted Jones—a child conconsiderably younger than Albert, but an old school-boy. "Now for it; go it, Smith."

"There, don't you interfere, d'ye hear, little 'un: he's light enough for me to manage, without such a battledoor as you to chuck him up. Now—one, two, three, and away. My prince, don't struggle; we're only going to send you to fetch the scented gloves."

"Give it him," called out little Jones, with all the glee of a would-be tyrant—"give it him; he's got no friends."

"You're mistaken there, young 'un," said a boy, who then joined the party. "I say, Smith, let him alone; he is all but dumb, and he shan't be bullied. I wonder you're not ashamed of yourselves, worrying a boy younger than any of you."

"He's not younger than I am," answered Jones.

"Younger than you!" retorted the speaker, contemptuously; "I should think not. Why you're a baby! I don't know by what chance you strayed here from your nursery."

Jones looked very crest-fallen; the others laughed, and, the object of their satire being changed, suffered Dalton to walk quietly away with poor Albert.

Dalton was the master's son—a steady and clever boy, who possessed a very decided authority over the others—the authority which great moral superiority is sure to give, either to boys or men.

"Now, Wilson," he said, when they were clear of the noisy group, "just let me give you a little advice. You have already done several foolish things, for want of knowing school ways;

and your probation will last a long time if you don't listen to what I tell you. In the first place, you should have told them your name was Wilson, when they asked you, and dropped the Albert."

"But I—I—I like my name; they call me by it at home," stammered the lad.

"Well, keep it for home; it's too choice for school. And you must not mention your old nurse, or your sister, or even your mother, before them" (Albert opened his eyes). "Love them always the same, but keep it to yourself. Some of them don't understand that sort of thing, and others pretend they don't, lest they should seem Mollies. It is very foolish. I have, unfortunately, no mother or sister to be ashamed of; but when you want to talk about yours, come to me: I can listen. I saw your mother yesterday; it made me long for one, to see her tenderness. She is very pretty, too."

Albert's eyes glistened with mingled satisfaction and sorrow, and from that moment his entire friendship was Dalton's, and his aim became that of proving himself worthy to claim his in return, some day, when he should be big enough.

"And then, Wilson, you must eschew scented gloves."

"Of course, I must; I can't get them from up there," said the boy, disconsolately looking up to the chimney. "But they were not mine; my mother dropped them at the door, and it was shut before I could return them to her; so I put them in my pocket. Besides, I don't think they were scented; and I'm sure all the boys' things here are.

"Why, what in the world are they scented with?"

"Oh, not proper scent; only they all smell of apples."

Even Dalton was obliged to laugh at this "essence de school-boy," as Harry Smith would probably have called it;

he, however, listened with patience to the observations, so long coming, of the new scholar; and advising him to act and look like a man, left him, when the bell rang for prayers, to take his chance amongst the boys of his own dormitory.

The presence of the presiding usher checked any outward demonstration of humour, but many a sly joke and mocking grimace reached him during the ten minutes allowed for getting into bed; and then only could he bury his head beneath the counterpane, and enjoy perfect freedom from teasing. And how did he enjoy it? Poor boy! By crying unrestrainedly, as he had done the night before, whilst thinking of that sweet maternal kiss which had blessed him hitherto ere he slept, whilst praying, in all the fervour of grief, for that dear and loving being, who now appeared a perfect angel of purity and tenderness, as contrasted with the rude, reckless, seemingly unkind creatures who snored loudly on either side. Oh, I do think that of all the desolate of the earth, who feel their banishment acutely, the home-sick child first transplanted in a school is the greatest sufferer.

A little comfort had been given to poor Albert that day by the generous protection of Dalton; but he knew how little he could expect to be with him, the head boy of the school; and, besides, he might grow tired soon of being his champion. Perhaps his mother was thinking of him just then; he was sure she was, and crying, too. Strange necessity, which severed two beings so fondly, so clingingly attached to each other, so weak, too, and helpless, as the widow and her son!

Such thoughts lasted far on through the night, and the tired boy was sinking to sleep upon his moistened pillow, when he heard the boys near him move very gently; and, thinking it

possible some trick was meditated against himself, he raised his head to prove his wakefulness.

"Prince Albert 's not asleep, the little ninny; he'll see us and peach, I shouldn't wonder," said Harry Smith, in a very low voice. "How can we silence him, Foster?"

"Tie his head up in his sheet."

"Nonsense, he'll call out if we touch him. I say, prince, we're up to a lark; and if you don't shut your eyes, and know nothing at all about it for the rest of your natural existence, we'll welt you. Do you twig?"

Albert made no answer.

"Promise him a share of the cherries, if he'll hold his tongue," suggested another whisperer.

Albert began to understand what they were about. "I don't want any," he stammered out.

"What a noodle it is! I'm sure he won't dare tell. It doesn't matter about him; let us go." And Albert saw them creep to the window, shoeless as they were, and opening it very softly, they disappeared.

He could no longer doubt their errand. A corner of the master's garden extended beneath this dormitory, and the branches of a beautiful cherry-tree shot up close enough to the window for a squirrel or a school-boy to spring upon. The lads were going to make a midnight repast on the master's cherries; not gathering them and bringing them into the house—that was dangerous in several ways—but sitting in their night-shirts on the boughs, deliberately sucking the cherries from the stones, which they left hanging, to pretend the depredators were blackbirds. The cherries were quite sour, but the boys could not afford to lose the full moon, as it

revealed the fruit to them, and the gardener would gather them long before the next month.

What would the anxious parents of those boys have felt, if from their warm beds they could have seen their hopeful darlings sitting astride the boughs of a cherry-tree, in their short white garments, sucking away at the stolen and unripe fruit, like gigantic ghosts of some departed race of blackbirds condemned to a penance for the orchard rogueries of their material career? Wilson knew such things were done in schools, and the exploit in itself did not appear to him so wicked as the actual theft; whilst, on the contrary, the insubordination of such conduct struck the culprits themselves as by far the most formidable part of the affair,—the robbery being to them mere fun; so easily do we grow familiarised with wickedness, so successfully do we blunt our first early impressions of right and wrong.

Poor Albert was greatly troubled at this incident, and resolved, if the adventure were repeated the next night, to shut his eyes that he might not see the thieves, and thus be exposed to betray them if questioned. All such thoughts were, however, speedily forgotten in the delights of a letter from his mother, which was given to him the following morning. In a postscript she mentioned having dropped her gloves on the staircase, and hoped that Albert would preserve them to give her on the first opportunity, as they fitted particularly well, and she wished to send them to London as a pattern when she ordered more. When the play-hour came, Albert looked up wistfully towards the chimney-pot, where still rested the gloves, and he was thinking by what means he could obtain possession of them, when he observed that from

the top of the garden wall beneath the dormitory window it would not be difficult to spring upon the roof by the help of the boughs of the cherry-tree; and he half resolved when the other boys opened the window for their repast of stolen fruit, to take the opportunity of climbing for his mother's gloves, before they were spoiled by rain, or blown away by the wind. But might he not get caught, and be mistaken for a cherry-stealer? Oh! but he would tell the master that he was not! It could not be done in the day, partly because the dormitory was always locked till night, and partly because he dreaded the ridicule of the boys, if they saw him striving to regain the kid gloves, for which they had already teased him. He did not even like to consult Dalton, for he also had advised him to eschew gloves; besides which, he was not in the way, being busy preparing some studies he privately pursued with his father. Night came: Albert thought of his mother, and prayed as before, but with fewer tears; for he was busy calculating the possibilities of performing his exploit without the knowledge of the other boys.

No sooner were they all escaped quietly through the window than Albert followed them, and, cautiously springing upon the roof, crept steadily up the leads, and extending his arm obtained the coveted prize, whilst the cherry-takers, intent upon their sport, allowed him to return unheeded. He had scarcely regained his roost, however, ere the others scampered in, evidently in dismay; and he congratulated himself on his escape when he heard by their whispers that they had reason to suppose themselves discovered.

"Young gentlemen, remain in your places!" said Dr. Dalton, the next morning after breakfast. "My gardener

has informed me that certain of my pupils are greedy enough to forget the commonest principles of honesty, for the love of a little unripe fruit growing on a tree, which does not belong to them, in *my* garden, and cultivated by a gardener whose services *I* pay. The guilty persons sleep in the west dormitory, and were observed regaining their beds after their depredation. It will therefore be necessary that I should punish all those pupils, if I cannot ascertain who are the actual culprits. At the same time, I must express to you my displeasure and disappointment that any among you should have been tempted to break a moral and religious law for the sake of so paltry a gratification."

"Please, sir," said little Jones, "it was not for the sake of the cherries. I don't care for them; and they are not nice."

The doctor could not but smile at this specimen of indignation, in spite of his displeasure. "Very well, sir," he answered; "you acknowledge, at least, having tried their virtue."

"Little fool!" whispered Wilson. "What a pity we couldn't keep him out of the way. Now there's that innocent ninny of an Albert to betray us all."

"As for you, Wilson, I scarcely suppose you were amongst them, being so freshly come amongst us, and so carefully reared at home. You do not know how my cherries taste, eh?"

"N—n—no!" said Albert, colouring exceedingly.

"Were you awake?" continued Dr. Dalton, suspiciously.

"Ye—ye—yes, sir."

"And saw the others go?"

"No, sir!"

"What! you were awake, and knew nothing of all this?"

"Yes, sir," said Albert, stammering worse than ever in his confusion; "I heard them go, but I shut my eyes not to see them, for fear I should be questioned who they were."

"He's game, after all!" whispered Foster.

The Doctor looked approvingly, when, lo! the gardener appeared with a shoe he had found under the tree, which must of course belong to a culprit.

Albert looked dismayed; he had put on his shoes, thinking he should stand more firmly whilst reaching for the gloves, and one of them had dropped. He had put on another pair in the morning, and had not foreseen that it would find its way through the branches to the ground beneath.

"Gentlemen, who owns this shoe?"

Albert stretched out his hand for it.

"You, sir! why I thought you had not joined them."

"No, sir, I did not!"

"Then how came your shoe there?"

"It dropped from the leads."

"Dropped from the leads, sir! and what fruit grows there, that you were hunting for, whilst your friends made free with my cherries? No answer! Have you heard my question, sir; what were you doing on the leads last night?"

Albert could not reply. The boys were so surprised at the shoe incident, that they all looked earnestly at him. He already thought he heard the burst of laughter which would succeed such an avowal. Confused, awkward, with the blood tingling to his very ears, he stood silent before the searching glance of the master.

"Then, sir, I am to conclude that you told me a lie when"—

"N—n—no," interrupted Albert.

"I think, sir, I know how it was," said young Dalton; "but Wilson is afraid of telling, lest the boys should laugh at him; because he has already been teased about it. He went to fetch some gloves of his which were thrown up there; for I saw this morning they were gone."

"Produce them!"

Albert produced the gloves, relieved at the solemn quiet of the listening boys, from his jacket pocket.

"And who threw them up?" asked Dr. Dalton.

"Oh, sir," said Albert, as fast as he could stutter, "they were playing; no one meant any harm; and they are as good as ever—the gloves, I mean."

"That system of teazing is one I abominate; I must use some means of putting a stop to it. As for you, Wilson, being a new scholar, you could hardly know how great an act of rebellion you were guilty of. Mr. Switch will allot you a slight punishment, as it is your first offence; endeavour to let it also be your last."

The Doctor then proceeded to lecture the others more severely, and to assign them punishments proportionable to the offence.

"I say, Wilson, you're a trump after all!" said the boys, when the Doctor had disappeared. "I won't call you Prince any more."

"No more will I," said little Jones, patronisingly.

By the way, the child was grievously disappointed, though he thought himself so *great* a culprit; the Doctor had curtailed his "pensum," he "being such a *little boy;*" and Latin verses were sweet compared to such an epithet.

This affair put an end to the greater portion of Albert's school-sufferings. Thanks to Dalton's advice, and his mother's gentle letters, he gained strength and courage, without losing his home candour, honesty, and affectionate feelings. His infirmity was so conspicuous and inconvenient as to expose him often either to ridicule or neglect, but on the whole he improved, and was happier than he had thought possible; whilst the kindness of Dalton, and his own lively gratitude, formed a source of pleasurable emotion as pure as it was constant. He grew very much attached to him; he praised him so continually in his letters, that the widowed mother never wrote without some pretty message for the "protector of her fatherless boy;" and the youth derived no small gratification himself from these proofs of their regard.

Months passed by without any particular event, till the searching winds of October gave notice that the winter's cold breath had already reached England from his icy palace, and that, ere long, himself might be expected. It was a half-holiday; the boys were warming themselves with a long walk, shouting and laughing merrily as they proceeded in little groups, or couples of friends, arm-in-arm, quietly talking. The last were Dalton and Albert, who had waited some time till Dalton finished his writing, that he might enjoy the pleasure of his society. Dalton threw his plaid over his shoulder, and advised Albert to don the warm comforter his kind mother had knitted for him; and the bleak air naturally led their discourse to winter, its enjoyments and privations.

"There, in that field, where you see the turnstile, is a nice long pond, where we have famous skating in the winter, sometimes. Do you skate?"

"No!"

"Well, I'll teach you. But what have they been about here? It looks as if they were filling up the pond; just wait whilst I run and see. It's always miry; you'd better not come: your shoes are less strong than mine."

Albert quietly waited an instant, industriously practising the ingenious art of carving on the palings at hand; but ere his capital A was executed, a tremendous roar startled him, and he saw his friend fleeing from the pursuit of a powerful bull, of whose presence in the field neither of the boys had before been aware. With wonderful courage, Albert leaped over the palings, with no thought but to save his friend at any cost; and, untying the scarlet scarf from his throat, ran and waved it before the bull, who was fast gaining ground on poor Dalton.

"Keep back, Wilson; leave me alone, for pity's—for your mother's sake. I'm stronger than you. He'll be on you; throw the scarf down, and run for your life. Go and call assistance."

Albert threw the scarf down, and ran to some men he saw in an adjoining field. The animal tore the scarf in its fury, and tossing it away as if in contempt, returned to its former adversary, who, recalling his presence of mind, retreated as rapidly and as quietly as he could, without taking his eyes from the bull. The plan, so often tried, succeeded; and when, by the shape of the field, Dalton knew that the turnstile was at hand, he suddenly turned, and rushing through it, soon found himself in safety.

In the meanwhile, Wilson ran with all his might; and no sooner was he within hearing, than he called out, "Help!

help! Bring your spades and things, and come quickly. The bull is pursuing Dalton. The bull! the bull!"

They came; but on the road they saw Dalton himself returning rapidly towards them, with many of the boys and ushers, who had been recalled by their shouts. For once, Albert never thought of their mockery, nor dreaded their laughter; he threw himself in his friend's arms, exclaiming, "Are you safe; are you quite unhurt? Oh, I am so glad! Thank God!" and he hid his face; for the tears would come.

"How was it? Tell us all about it," resounded from a dozen different quarters; and Albert proceeded some way in the narrative ere Dalton exclaimed, "Why, Wilson, you don't stammer!"

It was so, indeed; the great excitement had cured his nervous infirmity, and, though he was himself too agitated to notice it, from his first calling the labourers he had ceased to stammer.

"How pleased my mother will be!" was the little boy's only exclamation.

The Cuckoo.

HOW glad shall I be when the Cuckoo is singing,
When spring-time is here, and the sunshine is warm;
For 'tis pleasant to tread where the bluebell is springing,
And lily-cups grow in their fairy-like form.
Then we shall see the loud twittering swallow
Building his home 'neath the cottagers' eaves;
The brown-headed nightingale quickly will follow,
And the orchard be grand with its blossoms and leaves;
The branches so gay will be dancing away,
Decked out in their dresses so white and so pink.
And then we'll go straying,
And playing,
And maying,
By valleys, and hills, and the rivulets' brink.

How glad I shall be when the bright little daisies
Are peeping all over the meadows again;
How merry 'twill sound when the skylark upraises
His carolling voice o'er the flower-strewn plain.
Then the corn will be up, and the lambs will be leaping;
The palm with its buds of rich gold will be bent;
The hedges of hawthorn will burst from their sleeping,
All fresh and delicious with beauty and scent.
'Twill be joyous to see the young wandering bee,
When the lilacs are out, and laburnum bough swell.
And then we'll go straying,
And playing,
And maying,
By upland and lowland, by dingle and dell.

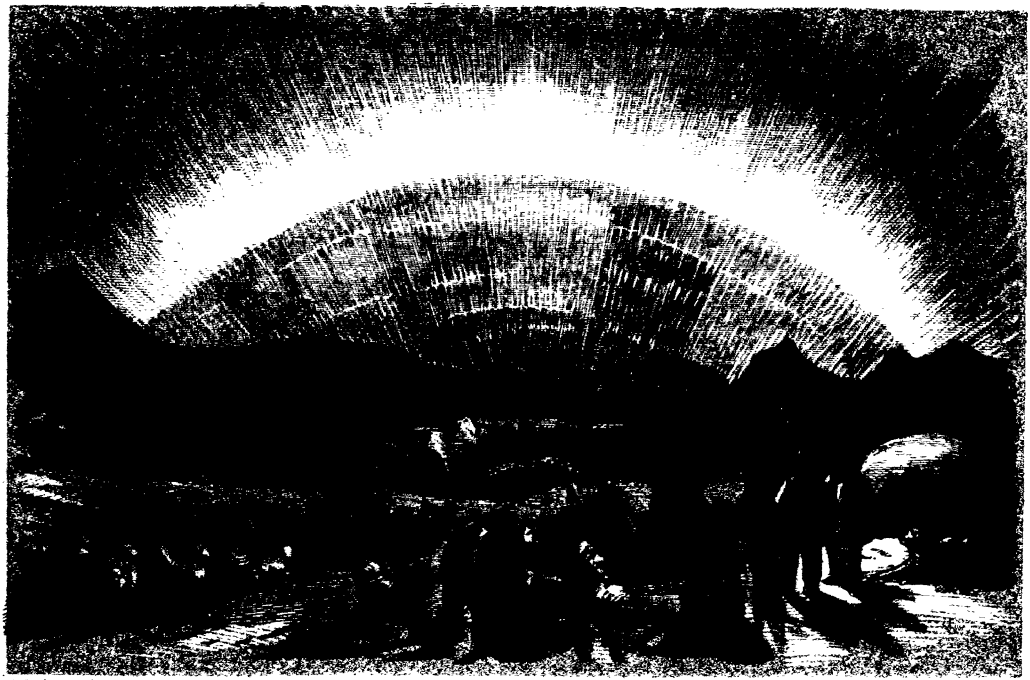
How glad I shall be when the furze bush and clover
Stand up in their garments of yellow and red;
When the butterfly comes like a holiday rover,
And grasshoppers cheerily jump as we tread.
All the sweet wild-flowers then will be shining,
All the high trees will be covered with green;
We'll gather the rarest of blossoms for twining,
And garland the brow of some bonnie May-queen.
Like the branches so gay, we'll go dancing away,
With our cheeks in the sunlight, and voices of mirth;
And then we'll go straying,
And playing,
And maying,
And praise all the loveliness showered on earth.

The Aurora Borealis.

MONG the most remarkable and beautiful of the phenomena of nature may be named the Aurora Borealis, or Merry Dancer, as the inhabitants of the Shetland Isles have termed it. This wonderful light is common in the heavens of the Polar regions, and is scarcely absent a single night from the skies in Sweden, Lapland, and other northern parts of the world.

Gmelin, the traveller, tells us that these northern lights are invariably brilliant in the north-eastern parts of Siberia. They are observed to begin with single bright pillars rising in the north, and almost at the same time to the north-east, which, gradually increasing, occupy a large space in the heavens, rush about from place to place with incredible velocity, and finally almost cover the whole sky up to the zenith, and produce an appearance as if a vast tent were spread in the heavens, glittering with gold, rubies, and sapphire.

The aurora is not a very common appearance in this country, but when seen it is generally in the late autumn and spring



NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR. The Aurora Borealis.

seasons, and after a continuation of dry weather. The appearance which has been so minutely described by Dr. Dalton was, perhaps, the most splendid that ever illumined an English sky. Attention was first excited by a remarkably red appearance of the clouds in the south, which afforded sufficient light to read by at eight o'clock in the evening, though there was no moon or light in the north. Some remarkable appearance being expected, a theodolite was placed to observe its altitude and bearing. From about half-past nine to ten o'clock at night there was a large luminous horizontal arch to the southward, almost exactly like those we see in the north, with one or more concentric arches northward. The intensity of the light, the prodigious number and brightness of the dancing beams, the grand intermixture of all the primitive colours in their utmost splendour, variegating the glowing canopy with the most luxuriant and enchanting scenery, afforded an astonishing but at the same time a most sublime and pleasing spectacle. Every one gazed with astonishment; but the uncommon grandeur of the scene only lasted for a few minutes; the variety of colours disappeared, and the beams lost their motion, and were converted, as usual, into flashing radiations; but even then it surpassed all other appearances of the aurora, for the whole hemisphere was bathed in flashing light. The aurora is evidently an electrical phenomenon, which has been imitated on a small scale by means of the ordinary electrical machine.

Dr. Faraday, the eminent experimental chemist, considers the aurora is a luminous representation of electricity flowing from the equator to the poles, and that its purpose is the restoration of electric equilibrium; but it is not yet possible

to say with any degree of certainty whether it is an occasional discharge, or a luminous representation of a constant stream of electricity. That it is a phenomenon occurring in a very attenuated atmosphere there can be no doubt, and that it is some way connected with its temperature. In Siberia, one of the coldest inhabited countries, the aurora borealis is so brilliant as to sometimes excite the fears of those who are accustomed to view it from night to night; and it is well known that the electrical condition of the atmosphere in that region is more decided in winter than in summer: a circumstance that tends to support the opinion that the aurora borealis is dependent upon the temperature of the atmospheric strata in which it is produced. Our illustration gives a tolerably fair notion of the splendid appearance of the heavens in high northern latitudes; but the painter's art altogether fails to convey a satisfactory notion of the beauty and sublimity of the wonderful scene which is occasionally witnessed by the poor untaught Esquimaux Indian.

The Homestead.

'Tis June, 'tis merry smiling June,
'Tis blushing summer now;
The rose is red, the bloom is dead,
The fruit is on the bough.

Flora, with Ceres, hand in hand,
Bring all their smiling train;
The yellow corn is waving high,
To gild the earth again.

The birdcage hangs upon the wall,
Amid the clustering vine;
The rustic seat is in the porch,
Where honeysuckles twine.

The rosy, ragged urchins play
Beneath the glowing sky;
They scoop the sand, or gaily chase
The bee that buzzes by.

The mower whistles o'er his toil,
The emerald grass must yield;
The scythe is out, the swathe is down,
There's incense in the field.

Oh! how I love to calmly muse
In such an hour as this,
To muse the joy Creation gives
In purity and bliss!

Dick Whittington

'Turn again, Whittington,
Lord Mayor of London."

WE remember to have read many years ago—it *was* many years ago, for the reminiscence brings with it the recollection of the fourth form and a very much bethumbed and dog's-eared copy of "Carpenter's Spelling-book"—a little paper-covered volume, entitled "The True History of Whittington and his Cat;" in which was set forth, in that exquisitely simple and truthful manner which makes "Robinson Crusoe" and "The Vicar of Wakefield" so much admired, a full, true, and particular account of the hero of Bow-bells. How we devoured the story! There must have been something in the manner of the telling to have made it so entrancing; or, perhaps, after all, the charm lay in our inexperience. But, whichever it was, it is certain that no *very* modern tales possess, even now, so absorbing an interest. How naturally the incidents of the little, old, almost worn-out child's-book rise to our memory! How many years have

passed since we read it, we wonder? We were then only about seven or eight years old, and we are now—tush! what matters to the reader?

There it is—brown cover, yellow-white leaves, great awkward type, barbarous woodcuts — but what a glorious story for a boy; a story of industry, perseverance, well-directed ambition, and honour at the last. Cover, and leaves, and type, and cuts, what were they to the tale they enshrined? What were they to the account of the little ragged boy who lived to be thrice Lord Mayor? What were they to the history of the poor child who ran away from cruel parents at Taunton Dean, in Somersetshire, and, not knowing his way, followed the carrier's cart to London? What were they to the story of that poor child, almost starving in the streets of the great city, and lying down to die upon a door-step, and being pitied and relieved by, and taken into the service of, the rich merchant, Hugh Fitz Warren? What were they to the sympathy we felt for him when he was cruelly treated by the merchant's cook, or our joy at discovering that he was pitied by the merchant's fair young daughter, Alice? What were they to the admiration we felt for that same poor child when he spent his only penny in the purchase of a half-starved cat, so that he might have something to love in his lonely garret at nights? or to the pleasure he took in the society of the poor despised animal? or to the regret he had in parting with it, when his master offered to send it to sea as a little venture of his *protégé?* or to our sympathy for him when, after the departure of his cat, he yielded to the temptation of evil thoughts, and, heartsick at his servant-mistress' cruel conduct, escaped from the rich merchant's house on Allhallows-day?

or to the relish we had for the romance of his situation as he sat on the mile-stone on Highgate-hill, not knowing whither he should bend his steps, the wide world all before him? or to the surprise we shared with him when the sound of the great Bow bells came wafting gently on the breeze, "Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London!"—Oh, nothing!

And turn again he did—so the story goes; and, bearing his misfortunes like a man, lived to witness the arrival safe at home of the great ship. It came back, but the feline beauty was left behind. But how we gloated on the picture of pussy destroying the rats and mice in the palace of the Moorish king of Barbary; and how we rejoiced when Dick received the rich present sent him from his sable majesty in exchange for the cat, the first of its species ever seen in that king's dominions! Of course, all goes smooth with our hero after that; and he becomes rich, and we learn with pleasure that, when he was washed and dressed, he looked a very handsome young fellow indeed. Of course, he received the rich Fitz Warren's daughter for a bride; and, of course, he grew rich as a brave young merchant should; and, of course, he was made sheriff, and subsequently Lord Mayor, which highest of civic offices he served no fewer than three times; and then at last he dies, full of years and honours, esteemed and regretted by everybody, bequeathing a legacy of honourable ambition to city apprentices and ragged boys for all time to come.

Here the story ends; though we remember it tells us how he entertained King Henry V. at Guildhall; and how, when his majesty expressed the pleasure he felt at the scent of the civic fire, in which was burnt cedar and cinnamon, and other choice and fragrant woods and spices, Whittington arose and

boldly declared that he would make a fire which should please the king yet more. On which he produced the bonds given by Henry to the merchants for certain moneys lent by them to him for the prosecution of the war with France, and threw them into the flames. "These have I purchased," says the Lord Mayor in the story; "and thus I repay the debt." The value of these bonds, we learn, too, was considerable; for the company of mercers had lent the king ten thousand marks; the chamber of London, ten thousand five hundred; and the merchant staplers, the haberdashers, the vintners, and the brewers, three hundred each. It is no wonder that his majesty instantly knighted his munificent entertainer, or that, on the expiration of his term of office, Whittington was unanimously re-elected by his fellow-citizens.

It is a capital story, this story of Richard Whittington; what a pity it is that it is almost entirely fabulous. If there be any other incidents related in our "veritable historie," they have escaped our memory.

We had written thus far when, being willing to verify our hasty remarks, we turn to our "Biographical Dictionary" for a notice of this extraordinary man. We turn to the W's, and find a notice of Whittington the writer, but not a word of Whittington the Lord Mayor. Strange;—we look in other books with no better success. At last we begin to think his biography has never been written except as a child's book; and a further search confirms us in the belief; for we learn from Lemprière that various stories are reported of him which are calculated to amuse children, but which are entirely destitute of truth. As a last resource, we open the French Biographical Dictionary—the "*Biographie Universelle*," and

there we find a meagre notice of the celebrated Lord Mayor: a notice which merely tells that he was born in 1360, of obscure family, came to London, acquired a considerable fortune, built Newgate prison, served the office of sheriff, was thrice Lord Mayor, was a considerable patron to Christ's Hospital and other charities, and died in 1425.

In Maitland's "History of London," however, we have a more detailed account of our Whittington. From thence we discover that he served the office of sheriff in 1393, was made mayor for the third time in 1419; and that he founded a college and almshouses, which went by his name, for the maintenance of thirteen poor men, a master of arts, clerks, choristers, &c. This college, which was also called the College of St. Spirit and St. Mary, stood where was afterwards built the parish church of St. Michael Paternoster, and was destroyed by the great fire in 1666. The historian states that Henry VI. granted a license to the college in the eleventh year of his reign, and that the corporation of London gave to Sir Richard the ground whereon it was built. It was in existence in Maitland's time, though it had some time since been diverted from its original purpose. The Church of St. Michael's was destroyed by the fire, and never rebuilt.

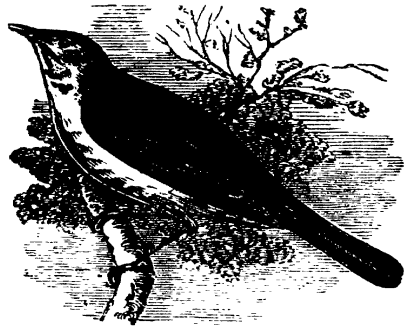
Sir Richard was thrice mayor, twice disinterred, and thrice buried; first, by his executors, who erected a handsome monument to his memory; next, by the parson of the parish, who, having heard that valuable property was concealed in his coffin, had it disinterred, the coffin stripped of its leaden covering, and the body recommitted to the earth; and lastly, by the parishioners, who took up the body, again swathed it in lead, and again buried it. In his will, Whittington directed

that the partakers of his charity should pray for the peace of himself and his dear wife Alice (who died before him, aged sixty), Sir William Whittington, and Dame Joan, his wife; Hugh Fitz Warren, and Dame Molde, his wife; King Richard II., the Duke of Gloucester, and others.

The following epitaph is said to have been placed on his tomb, at his last burial, by the grateful and romance-loving parishioners :—

"Here lies Sir Richard Whittington, thrice mayor,
And his dear wife, a virtuous, loving pair;
Him fortune raised to be beloved and great,
By the adventures only of a cat.
Let none that reade of God's love despair;
Who trust in Him, he will of them take care;
But growing rich, chuse humbleness, not pride—
Let these dead virtuous personages be your guide."

There may possibly have been some truth in the episode of the cat; though Maitland certainly says nothing about it, as far, at least, as we have been enabled to discover.



The Nightingale.

SING on, sweet bird; thy wild-wood note
Hath many a blissful charm for me,
I love to hear thy vocal throat
Pour forth its gush of melody;
It 'minds me of my girlhood's hours,
When in the woodland path I strayed,
When life itself was strewed with flowers,
And I too wandered not afraid:
A past, that now can only be
Recalled by some sweet melody.

Sing on, sweet bird; nor power, nor wealth,
  Can buy a simple strain like thine;
Both would I yield to gain the health
  Thy song denotes, that once was mine;
When, charmed by thee, the evening long
  I roved though many a tangled glen,
And only heard thy plantive song
  To cheer my pathway home again.
    Then sing, sweet bird, oh, sing to me—
    The past lives in thy melody!

Lady Godiva.

In the time of Edward the Confessor lived Leofric, Earl of Leicester, the lord of an extensive feudal territory in the midland part of England, of which Coventry formed a part. Leofric was so eminently a feudal lord, that the hereditary greatness of his dominion appears to have been singular even at that time; and it had lasted, with unabated importance, and in an uninterrupted succession, from the reign of Ethelbald to the Conquest, a period of more than three hundred years. The city of Coventry was at this time subject to a very severe tollage, by which it would seem that the feudal despot was in the enjoyment of the greatest part of the profit of all marketable commodities. The progress of knowledge has shown us how full of mischief, and how unhappy for all parties, is an injustice of this description; yet it affords an extraordinary idea of a mind in those days, to see it capable of bursting through the clouds of custom, of ignorance, and even of self-interest, and bravely daring to petition an established tyrant to forego so important a privilege. This mind was the Lady Godiva's. The other sex, always more

slow to admit reason through the medium of feeling, were then exclusively occupied in their warlike habits. It was thus reserved for a woman to anticipate many entire ages of liberal opinion, and to surpass them in the daring virtue of setting a rightful, virtuous principle above the usurpation of brutal custom.

The countess intreated her lord to give up his fancied right to this cruel impost, but in vain. At length, wishing to put an end to her importunities, he told her, either in a spirit of bitter jesting or in a playful raillery, that he would forego the accustomed tax for ever, upon the sole condition that she rode through the city of Coventry naked. One may imagine the astonishment of a fierce, unlettered chieftain, not untinged with chivalry, at hearing a high-minded nobly-born woman instantly take him at his word,—a woman of the greatest delicacy, and most unquestionable character for every feminine virtue. Such a man must have been in a manner thunder-struck, to hear an adorable wife maintaining seriously her intention of acting in a manner contrary to all that was supposed fitting for her sex, and at the same time forcing upon him a sense of the beauty and sublimity of her conduct, by the very excess of fine principle.

It is probable, that as he could not prevail upon her to give up her design, he had sworn some religious oath when he made his promise; but, be this as it may, he enforced every possible precaution to secure her natural feeling of modesty from violence. The people of Coventry were strictly enjoined to keep within doors on the day, to close up all their windows and outlets, and not to dare even a glance into the streets during the procession, upon pain of death. The day came,

and Coventry, as may be imagined, was silent as death. The lady went out of the palace-door, was set on horseback by her maids, and the same time divested of her garments, as if she were going into a bath; then, taking the fillet from her head, she let down her long and lovely tresses, which hung around her like a veil, and so took her gentle walk through the streets.

Than this, what scene can be more touching to the imagination?—beauty, modesty, feminine softness, a daring sympathy,—an extravagance, producing, by the nobleness of its object, and the strange gentleness of its means, the grave and profound effect of the most revered custom. We may suppose the scene taking place in the warm noon; the doors of every house scrupulously shut; every window hermetically closed; the earl and his court serious and wondering; the inhabitants reverently listening to hear the footsteps of the horse, and many of them dissolved to grateful tears; and lastly, we may imagine the lady, with a downcast but not shame-stricken eye, looking towards the earth through her flowing locks, riding through the dumb and deserted streets, like an angelic spirit working their redemption.

It was an honourable superstition in that country, that one individual who transgressed the injunction of retirement during the lady's progress, and ventured to look at the fair saviour of his native town, was struck blind. But the vulgar use to which that superstition has been turned by some writers of late times is not very creditable. The whole story is, indeed, as remote from vulgarity, and as sweetly serious, as can be well conceived. Our poet laureate has versified the

incidents here related with much grace and feeling; and in the old-fashioned town, in the corner wall of a house, there may yet be seen a grotesque bust of the too-curious Peeping Tom of Coventry.

The December Primrose.

LATE or soon, which is it, lonely flower?
That thus thou comest here to glad mine eye,
Smiling beneath the clouds that gloomy lower,
As thickly charged with dark futurity—
Portents of winter ill?
Late or soon, which is it, sweetest thing?
Or what the tidings which thou now dost bring,
Young charmer of the hill?

Quick, and the last month of the year will come,
And yet thou buddest forth, serenely gay,
As thou would'st triumph o'er each frail thing's tomb.
Creations which have gone to their decay,
Crushed by the season's chill;
O'er leafless shrub and wild-flower's perished hue,
Till even the very fields are blank to view—
So peep'st thou from the hill!

Or com'st the waning year in love to greet,
That it might die in thankfulness to thee—
Now, when the dull hours move with leaden feet,
And the fond bird but moans its misery?
Oh! what wouldst thou instil?
Affection lingering round the happy past,
For flowers and sunbeams which were not to last?
Say, stranger of the hill!

On mission blessed thou surely art, thy smile
So redolent of chastened charm appears;
A saint-like thing, homed in a rugged soil,
A gentle queller of unholy fears,
Such as the heart might kill;
All this thou surely art, or else why now,
When even lordly man wears sullen brow,
Tak'st station on the hill?

Welcome! then, let me welcome thee, sweet flower,
And draw rich stores of comfort from thy look;
So may I o'er this being's cares uptower,
As one who finds high good in Nature's book,
Such as should guide us still:
Yea! thousand welcomes I would free bestow,
Upon the very earth where thou dost grow,
Sweet Primrose of the hill.

Quarr Abbey.

post, to tell us which way lies daily toil. But above all is a glorious sunset, with its streaked clouds of grey and amber—suggesting thoughts of the holy calm of heaven.

Down we go, slowly and deliberately, into this, our "country lane." At the field-gates stand the waiting cattle. The old cart-horse, who has just been turned into the field, cannot help giving a jubilant whisk of his tail, and a heavy lumbering trot of a few score yards, in memory of his earlier days, and as a hint that he does not yet wholly agree to his thraldom! Now and then falls an early-faded leaf, sent from its summer-home by the fluttering of one of our "sweet singers in wood and copse." How the air vibrates with the clear notes of their whistled call! Then from this tree, then from that, comes the piping answer; and, ever and anon, in the hush between, floats the soft, low song of some solitary singer, who seems in too exquisite self-commune to seek for other company. And we, drinking in the sweet melody, fall into a train of thought, conscious only that the balmy air is around us—the blue sky above, and that we are *very* tranquilly happy!

As we turn the corner from a little wood we come to a farm-house. A goodly number of fowls are pecking up and down, and there are ducks in a green pond hard by. Now we confess to a little town-like cowardice in passing *close* by farm-yards, not knowing what may be the temper or judgment of the occupier of the kennel. So we hum a tune to apprise the house-dog of our presence. When we come round to the front, we see an old man at the door, who has a hale, kindly expression about him that takes our attention; so we venture the remark that "it is a fine evening."

"'Tis," is the old man's reply, and in the look round that he gives over the scene we fancy we discern an appreciation of its beauty, and a cast of gratitude for its bestowal.

We feel somehow drawn towards him, and therefore, lingering, add, "You people in the country lead a pleasant, quiet life."

He takes a keen survey of us, and replies, "Haply, you live in a big town."

"Not in a *very* large one," we answer; "only in ——, up here."

"Why, aye, it's *quiet* enough, for the matter of that; but we're not idle at a farm," says the old man.

"No, I should think not," is our reply; "but your work must be very pleasant, being so much out of doors?"

"Well, that's as folks take it," says he; "it's ***healthy,*** but some folks don't think *any work* 'pleasant.'"

We now feel quite "at home" with the old man, so we go towards a seat there is by the door; the house-dog, at the same time, coming to see what may be *our* business, and having, by look and smell, assured himself of our "friendly relations," he coils himself down by the door-step.

"Haply, you're tired," says the old man, "and would like to come in and rest. You're welcome."

"Thank you," say we, "but 'tis pleasanter here out of doors;" and we took the wooden seat.

The old man's eye has a soft light in it, yet a mixture of sorrow, as if life in its passage had painted many old portraits, and had hung them up in his memory; and they now gazed out with a half-sad remembrance of this working world of ours. We feel friendly towards him, and sympathetic, and

also that reverence which *good* old age ever awakens; and, sure that he has not lived in the world blindfolded, we are inclined to ask his opinion on some of our more immature ideas.

"Well, now, which should you say was most happy, a town life or a country life?"

"It depends on the bringing up, and likings of the person."

"Well, but which do you think the most *innocent* life?"

"That depends on the person's inclinations."

"But do you not think that townspeople have more temptations to evil?"

"Young gentleman!" and his eyes looked down *so* gently; "'temptation' is little else but 'inclination.' I have seen men leave this 'sweet country,' as you call it, and the quiet evening, and walk into the town ale-house, and the town's evils; while men *from* town come out here to enjoy the country."

"But do not country-people lead more *innocent* lives?"

"Evil is not in what we *do* only, but in what we *think* also; and many a man, while sowing his seed, or reaping his harvest, has thought *far* different from the hope and faith you would seem to expect in the one, or the thankful gratitude of the other."

"Then the young may be brought up as virtuously in towns as in the country?"

"Aye, if you teach them how to resist evil inclinations. In big towns you have fine schools, lots of books; and, if you give a lad good morals, he will grow up a good as well as a clever

man. He may *see* evil, and yet not help in *doing* it. Now, how often do you see youngsters who have been brought up steadily in the country sent into a town, and fall into evil. *The good in them was not strong enough.*"

"Then you would not have people kept altogether out of temptation?"

"*We cannot;* for temptation is all around us. He is the *best* man who, seeing evil, and feeling tempted, still does not yield and fall, but *acts* out his *prayer*, and delivers himself (with God's help) from temptation."

There was a pause in our talk; when we at length continued:—

"'Tis a troublesome world, and it takes hard work to get well on with it."

The old man's eyes bent again gently on us, as he replied,—

"You're maybe fresh in some trouble, just now, but we'll hope you'll overlive it yet. You must not be too much cast down, but lay your account with difficulties and sorrows; they're all sent for some good reason, if we could see it so. Always in your life," and he spoke softly and slowly, "(and I hope it may be a long and pleasant one) do as far as you can what you *know* to be right. There's no better rule than the golden one—'Do as you would be done by.' If you do so, when you're as old as me, you'll feel thankful that you *have* lived, and yet *ready to go when you're called.*"

We could not help the tear rising to our eye; we rose too; and bidding our old friend good-bye, took a short way home. Night falls dimly over the fields and woods; "our good town" is in the distance, *obscure*—so is our future; but with that

"golden" rule running as much as may be through our acts and thoughts, we hope that, at the end of life's up-and-down ramble, it may turn into the light which will guide us HOME!

The Old Year and December.

The OLD YEAR, *wrapped in a mantle of grey mist, is reclining near a fire.* *Enter* DECEMBER, *bringing a large basket filled with Crysanthemums, China Roses, Laurustinus, Arbutus, Holly, Box, Rosemary, &c., &c.*

December. See, father, what a store of bright, sweet flowers
I've brought you. Sure July, my fair lost sister,
Could not have gathered more from her rich bowers.
Old Year (*smiles and sighs*). Ah! little one, thou never saw'st the riches
That Summer lavished o'er thy sisters' pathway:
These pale and scentless blossoms are but shadows,
But faintest mock'ries of the gorgeous fav'rites
Of Juné and July, from whose dewy bosoms
Thousand of brilliant insects, and the sweet winds,
Drank life and fragrance.
December. Yet the Summer flowers,
Father, I've often heard you say yourself, are
Fleeting as lovely: mine will bloom untended,
For hours and days.

Old Year. True; but for *one* flower dying,
A thousand others, 'mid the Summer verdure,
Open to life and beauty; more than filling
Its vacant place, and every sense enchanting,

December (*puts down her basket and seats herself at the Old Year's feet*). Then, my imagined treasures have no value
For you, my father, who have looked on worthier.
Yet this bright holly, with its scarlet berries,
This arbutus, with gold and crimson clusters,
Surely are beautiful!

Old Year (*caressing her fondly*). They are, my darling,
And were they not, the offering Love presents us
Has in itself a charm more rich than beauty;
But thou say'st well. The arbutus and holly
Are beautiful.

December (*eagerly*). Yes, father, and around them
Mankind have woven sweet and holy feelings;
Do they not strip my hedges for the holly
To deck their homes and hearths, at that glad season
When families their scattered links draw closest;
Aye, and the temples too, where God is worshipped?

Old Year (*with solemnity*). What is that season called of which thou speakest?

December. 'Tis Christmas, father; happy, joyous Christmas!

Old Year (*as above*). Christmas! most true. The birth-time of the Blessed,
Of Him in whom all kindreds, families,
Yes, every human soul on earth is blessed,

Ah! little one (*laying his hand on her head*), thy father is declining
Fast to that misty region, where before him
His sires have passed away in long succession;
And thou, too, thou, mine age's child, my last-born,
Must end with mine, alas! thy brief existence.

December (*earnestly*). I know it, father, and even so I'd have it.
One snowy shroud shall wrap the sire and daughter;
And we will sleep together: so I'd have it.

Old Year. Then it is well, my child; but I was minded
To show thee how this early doom not wholly
Was left unrecompensed by one high solace.
To thee 'tis given to celebrate that season—
His birth whose advent is to all a blessing;
In this, beyond thy sisters, richly favoured.

December. Oh, yes! and with a world rejoicing round me,
I shall rejoice to end my course; for all men
Do at this season find some cause for gladness:
The wise and good, in the commemoration
Of Him who was the wisest and the best;
The young and ignorant, because they revel,
Scarce asking why, when others are rejoicing:
And gifts of love are changed, and kindly wishes.

Old Year. A happy interchange! yet not less happy
Who gives without exchange; who now remembers
The poor man's desolate hearth and empty larder,
And both refurnishes; nor ministers only
To the apparent and undoubted cravings

Of urgent want; but adds a trifling surplus
Which, to the pinching meagreness of penury,
May seem a luxury for the season's sake: "He
Hath his reward," and will again in heaven.

EXTERIOR OF THE ALHAMBRA.

Indian Legend of the Star and Lily.

In the wigwam of the Indian during the evenings of spring, that season when Nature, loosed from the bondage of winter, awakes to new life, and begins to deck itself with beauties, the old sage gathers around him the young men of the tribe, and relates the stories of days long since departed.

I have seen these youths sit in breathless silence, listening to the old man's narrative. Now and then the tear-drops would course down their cheeks, and fall to the ground, witnesses of the interest they felt in the words of their teacher.

To induce the sire to narrate a tradition, the Indian boys would contrive some ingenious plan by which to get some tobacco, which, when offered with a request for a story, would be sure of a favourable answer. Frequently it happens, that from sunset to its rise these clubs are entertained, and they do not separate till daylight calls them to the chase.

"There was once a time," said he, "when this world was filled with happy people, when all nations were as one, and the crimson tide of war had not begun to roll. Plenty of game were in the forests and on the plains. None were in

want, for a full supply was at hand. Sickness was unknown. The beasts of the field were tame, and came and went at the bidding of man. One unending spring gave no place for winter,—for its cold blasts or its chills. Every tree and bush yielded fruit. Flowers carpeted the earth; the air was filled with their fragrance, and redolent with the songs of myriad warblers that flew from branch to branch, fearing none, for there were none to harm them. There were birds then of more beautiful plumage than now.

"It was then, when earth was a paradise, and man worthy to be its possessor, that Indians were the lone inhabitants of the American wilderness. They numbered millions, and living as Nature designed them to live, enjoyed its many blessings. Instead of amusement in close rooms, the sports of the field were theirs.

"At night they met on the wide, green fields. They watched the stars; they loved to gaze at them, for they believed them to be the residences of the good who had been taken home by the Great Spirit. One night they saw one star that shone brighter than all others. Its location was far away in the south, near a mountain peak. For many nights it was seen, till at length it was doubted by many that this star was as far off in the southern skies as it seemed to be. This doubt led to an examination, which proved the star to be only a short distance, and near the tops of some trees. A number of warriors were deputed to go and see what it was. They went and returned, saying that it appeared strange, and somewhat like a bird. A council of the wise men was called, to inquire into, and, if possible, ascertain the meaning of the phenomenon.

"They feared that it was an omen of some disaster. Some thought it a precursor of good, others of evil. Some supposed it to be the star spoken of by their forefathers, as a forerunner of a dreadful war.

"One moon had nearly gone by, and yet the mystery remained unsolved.

"One night a young warrior had a dream, in which a beautiful maiden came and stood at his side, and thus addressed him :—

"'Young brave! charmed with the land of thy forefathers, its flowers, its birds, its rivers, its beautiful lakes and its mountains clothed with green, I have left my sister in yonder world to dwell among you.

"'Young brave! ask your wise and your great men where I can live and see the happy race continually; ask them what form I shall assume, in order to be loved and cherished among the people.'

"Thus discoursed the bright stranger. The young man awoke. On stepping out of his lodge, he saw the star yet blazing in its accustomed place.

"At early dawn the chief's crier was sent round the camp to call every warrior to the Council Lodge. When they had met, the young warrior related his dream. They concluded that the star they had seen in the south had fallen in love with mankind, and that it was desirous to dwell with them.

"The next night five tall, noble-looking, adventurous braves were sent to welcome the stranger to earth.

"They went, and presenting to it a pipe of peace, filled with sweet-scented herbs, were rejoiced to find that it took it

from them. As they returned to the village, the star, with expanded wings followed, and hovered over their houses till the dawn of day.

"Again it came to the young man in a dream, and desired to know where it should live, and what form it should take. Places were named. On the tops of giant trees or in flowers. At length it was told to choose a place itself—and it did so. At first it dwelt in the wild rose of the mountain, but there it was so buried it could not be seen. It went to the prairie, but it feared the hoof of the buffalo. It next went to the rocky cliff, but it was there so high that the children, whom it loved most, could not see it.

"'I know where I shall live,' said the bright fugitive; 'where I can see the gliding canoe of the race I most admire. Children, yes, they shall be my playmates, and I will kiss their brows when they slumber at the side of the cool lakes. The nations shall love me wherever I am.'

"Those words having been uttered, she alighted on the waters where she saw herself reflected.

"The next morning thousands of white flowers were seen on the surface of all the lakes, and the Indians gave them this name—*Wah-be-gwon-nee* (White Lily).

"Now," continued the old man, "this star lived in the southern skies. Its brethren can be seen far off in the cold north, hunting the great bear, while its sisters watch her in the east and west.

"Children, when you see the lily on the waters, take it in your hands, and hold it to the skies, that it may be happy on earth, as its two sisters (the morning and evening stars) are happy in heaven."

While tears fell fast from the eyes of all, the old man lay him down, and was soon silent in sleep.

Since then I have often plucked the white lily, and garlanded around my head,—have dipped it in its watery bed, but never have I seen it without remembering the *Legend of the Descending Star.*

The English Hearth.

When autumn's fruits are gathered in,
And trees and fields are bare;
When merry birds no more are heard
To warble in the air;
When sweetest flowers have drooped and died,
And snow is on the ground;
How cheerful is an English hearth,
With friends all seated round.

Then is the time for festive mirth,
Then is the time for glee;
'Tis then the tale of bygone days
Gives pleasure unto me.
But when the wild storm howls without,
With deep and hollow sound,
I love the cheerful English hearth,
With friends all seated round.

And when those cheerful strains are sung
Writ by the bards of old,
How swift the evenings seem to fly—
Unfelt the piercing cold.
What though the snow-flakes thickly fall,
And icicles abound!
I have a cheerful English hearth,
For friends to sit around.

The Field of Waterloo.

THE Field of Waterloo must ever possess an interest for Englishmen superior to that of any battle-field of modern times. It was on this field that the destinies of Napoleon and Europe were decided,—here that the soldiers of England and her allies struck the fatal blow to the mightiest of modern conquerors—the self-created Emperor, whose power was founded on the ruins of empires. No Englishman visits Brussels without going over the field of Waterloo. Nothing now remains but the few monuments shown in our picture, and the corn-fields waving as of old. But is there more at Marathon or Thermopylæ, the great battle-fields of the heroic Grecians? or, in a few years' time, will there be more at Alma, Inkermann, or Balaklava?

The original features of the ground where the centre of the English line held its position, at the last desperate effort by the enemy, are entirely obliterated; and the ridge which formed a part of Mont St. Jean is now levelled with the rest of its plain. This was done for the purpose of obtaining a

sufficient quantity of earth to form the great mound, on which is erected the colossal bronze lion, that may serve either as the British or Belgic lion, the pedestal of which bears the simple inscription, "June 18, 1815." The mound and the lion have equally been the subjects of ill-natured censure; but the one containing the bones of friends and foes, who fell on that fatal day, and the other composed of cannon taken from the enemy, would appear to be strictly appropriate, as being at once a memorial, a trophy, and a tomb. The mound is placed on the spot where the Prince of Orange received his wound.

The drive from Brussels, through the forest of Soignies, on a fine summer's day, is very agreeable. The ground has been well trodden by poets, painters, historians, novelists, statesmen, and warriors. Byron, with allowable poet license, converts Soignies into Ardennes. After describing the hasty departure of the troops from Brussels, Childe Harold says:—

> "Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
> Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
> Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
> Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
> Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
> Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
> In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
> Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
> And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low."

Southey, who visited the field of Waterloo soon after the battle, before either Byron or Scott set foot upon it, has left a very excellent poetical description of the scene of the great fight. I transcribe a few verses:—

"Southward from Brussels lies the field of blood,
Some three hours' journey for a well-girt man;
A horseman, who in haste pursued his road,
Would reach it as the second hour began.
The way is through a forest deep and wide,
Extending for many a mile on either side.

"Here, where the woods, receding from the road,
Have left on either hand an open space
For fields and gardens, and for man's abode,
Stands Waterloo; a little lowly place,
Obscure till now, when it has risen to fame,
And given its victory an English name.

"Behold the scene where slaughter had full sway;
A mile before us lieth Mount St. John,
The hamlet which the Highlanders that day
Preserved from spoil; yet as much farther on
The single farm is placed, now known to fame,
Which from the sacred hedge derives its name.

"Straight onward yet for one like distance more,
And there the house of Belle Alliance stands,
So named, I guess, by some in days of yore,
In friendship or in wedlock joining hands;
Little did they who called it thus foresee
The place that name should hold in history!

"But would'st thou tread this celebrated ground,
And trace with understanding eyes a scene
Above all other fields of war renowned,
From western Hougoumont thy way begin;
There was our strength on that side, and there first,
In all its force, the storm of battle burst.

"Still eastward then across towards La Haye,
The single farm: with dead the fields between
Are lined, and thou wilt see upon the way
Long wave-like dips and swells which intervene,
Such as would breathe the war-horse, and impede,
When that deep soil was wet, his martial speed.

TUILERIES, PARIS.

"When thou hast reached La Haye, survey it well.
Here was the heat and centre of the strife;
This point must Britain hold whate'er befell,
And here both armies were profuse of life;
Once it was lost—and then a stander by
Belike had trembled for the victory.

"La Haye, bear witness! sacred in its height,
And sacred is it truly from that day;
For never braver blood was spent in fight
Than Britain here hath mingled in the clay..
Set where thou wilt thy foot, thou scarce canst tread
Here on a spot unhallowed by the dead.

"Here was it that the Highlanders withstood
The tide of hostile power, received its weight
With resolute strength, and streamed, and turned the flood;
And fitly here as in that Grecian strait,
The Prussian, issuing on the yielding foe,
Consummated their great and total overthrow."

The number of men actually engaged in the Battle of Waterloo stands thus:—the English and their allies, 67,655, with 156 pieces of artillery, opposed to 71,947 Frenchmen, with 246 guns, forming part only of Napoleon's great army. Of the whole number of fighting men, upwards of ten thousand were left to fatten the field of Waterloo.

Guardian Angels.

GENTLY, gently, fall sweet sleep
O'er thine eyelids, soft and deep;
Gently as the breath of flowers,
In the bright noon's honeyed hours,
Gently as the dews of heaven
On the wild rose at the even.

Thou art pure, immortal one;
Oh! be pure till life is done.
We would take thee in thy bloom
From the dim walls of the tomb;
We would bear thee, blest and fair,
Where thy home and kindred are.

Pray then—strive to enter in
Through the cold world's woe and sin;
In each glad and gloomy hour,
In thy weakness, in thy power,
Pray—and we will pray for thee;
Strive—and we will strengthen thee.

Aye, on the land, and on the seas,
In the tempest and the breeze,
In the solemn hush of night,
In the loud morn's burst of light,
Strive! oh, strive!—around, above thee,
We will lead and we will love thee.

Law and Order.

A LITTLE STORY FOR BOYS.

"HAS she come yet?" said Barney Gibson to a group of boys and girls who were collected in front of the village schoolhouse on a pleasant spring morning. He referred to the new schoolmistress, who was to begin school that morning.

"No; it is only half-past eight o'clock," said one.

"Let us go in and overturn the benches," said Barney.

"What for?" said James Everill.

"To plague her."

"I can't see what you wish to plague her for. She has not done you any harm."

"And I do not intend she shall. I do not intend to mind her. She isn't seventeen years old yet, and I am not to be governed by a girl."

"No doubt, she knows enough to teach you," said one of the girls.

"And I intend to obey her," said James, "because she is the teacher. It is the business of those who go to school to obey the teacher. That is what they go for."

"I have heard it said that young persons go to school to learn."

"They cannot learn unless they are obedient to the rules of the school."

"I know better than that. A person can learn, if he has a mind to, whether he obeys the teacher or not. I should like to see that little girl undertake to make me obey. I would show her that it will take a man to do that."

"You need not talk," said the girl who spoke before; "you won't dare to disobey."

"Won't I, though? you'll see."

At nine o'clock the schoolmistress came, and school began. It was a beautiful scene. The children were all clean and neatly dressed, and the sweet smile that rested on the lips of Miss Mason caused a similar one to rest on the lips of all the girls and most of the boys. Barney, you may well believe, was not of that number. He was bent on showing his courage, by setting himself in opposition to authority. He determined to go as far as he could towards making a brute of himself, by acknowledging no law but that of the stronger, that is, of brute force.

"You may all study your lessons for half an hour," said Miss Mason. "Let us have no inattention or whispering, but let each one fix his eye and his mind on the lesson."

Every one gave cheerful obedience to her command, except Barney. He continued gazing about the room in a manner intended to attract attention, and provoke reproof from the teacher. She suspected his object, and took no notice of him, busying herself with preparing the copies for writing. When he came to stand up with his class, to spell the lesson which

they had thus been directed to study, he missed almost every word.

"You have not studied your lesson," said the teacher.

"I know it," said Barney.

In thus speaking, Miss Mason fixed her eye upon him, till he turned very red, and felt very uncomfortable.

"You will study this afternoon," said Miss Mason, in a tone so pleasant, that it seemed like an exhortation, but so firmly, as to leave no doubt that it was a command.

After school was dismissed, Barney attempted in vain to rouse a spirit of rebellion against the new teacher. The impression she had made was decidedly favourable. The pupils felt a much stronger inclination to love her than to disobey her. If this had not been the case, they knew that they were under obligation to obey her just commands. They had been too well instructed in their duty to suppose that their obedience was to depend upon their personal feelings towards the teacher.

Barney found he should gain no credit by braving authority; and besides, he thought it quite possible that Miss Mason might do more than look at him the next time he disobeyed her. He accordingly laid aside his bold and insulting manner, and adopted an obsequious one scarcely less unpleasant. The bully and the sycophant are nearly related.

The Sunday School.

GROUP after group are gathering. Such as pressed
Once to their Saviour's arms, and gently laid
Their cherub heads upon His shielding breast,
Though sterner souls the fond approach forbade,—
Group after group glide on with noiseless tread,
And round Jehovah's sacred altar meet,
Where holy thoughts in infant hearts are bred,
And holy words their ruby lips repeat,
Oft with a chastened glance, in modulation sweet.

Yet some there are, upon whose childish brows
Wan poverty hath done its work of care.
Look up, ye sad ones!—'tis *your Father's house,*
Beneath whose consecrated dome you are;
More gorgeous robes ye see, and trappings rare,
And watch the gaudier forms that gaily move,
And deem, perchance, mistaken as you are,
The "coat of many colours" proves *His* love,
Whose sign is *in the heart,* and whose reward *above.*

And ye, blessed labourers in this humble sphere,
To deeds of saint-like charity inclined,
Who, from your cells of meditation dear,
Come forth to gird the weak, untutored mind,—
Yet ask no payment, save one smile refined
Of grateful love,—one tear of contrite pain,—
Meekly ye forfeit to your mission kind
The rest of earthly Sabbaths.—Be your gain
A Sabbath without end, 'mid yon celestial plain.

Fables.

FROM THE GERMAN OF LESSING.

HAT is a Fable? The definition of the dictionary says, "a feigned story, intended to enforce some moral precept." We must have a fuller, if not better, description than this. We hold a Fable, in its generally understood sense, to be opposite causes producing an apposite result, or, to be plainer, by the employment of improbable, or even impossible, agents "to point a moral" that is true to the natural or moral laws of our being. It may also be called the simpler form of allegory. That the term is capable of much further usage our youthful readers are aware, as we speak of the fable of a poem, in distinction to its beauties of expression or description. The word is even sometimes applied to the arrangement of the events narrated in such compositions. The fabulist depicts not the real, but the possible; not things as they are, but as they might well be; not with historical exactness, but with a kind of poetic possibility. The most

general form of the fable has been used as a means of inculcating practical rules of worldly wisdom, or prudence, by imaginary representations drawn from the physical or external world. A fable consists properly of two parts: the symbolical representation, and the application—moral; that is, the instruction intended to be deduced from it. Perhaps we may add, that a parable is another form of fable. Fables, like proverbs, are amongst the earliest forms of didactic teaching; both being evidently fitted, from their pithy form and terseness of expression, for easy retention in the popular mind in the days when books were not known, or when reading was an inaccessible art to the people at large. The choice of animals as the performers in these brief dramas would seem to be an idea common to all the authors of these productions; for we find them used as the vehicles of their teachings in the fables of all nations, both ancient and modern. The earliest collection of fables extant is one of Eastern origin, preserved in the Sanscrit language. It is called "Hitopadesa," and the author, Veshnoo Sarma; but they are known in Europe as the Fables of Bilpay, or Pilpay, an ancient Indian philosopher. These were translated into French and English at the commencement of the last century. But the master-fabulist is certainly he whom our old poets called "Dan Æsop," and who was so well known to us in childhood by the podgy, oval illustrations on the top of the page, and the too obtrusive and rather overdone "moral" at the bottom; as if we hadn't wit enough to find it out for ourselves! Everybody knows Æsop's Fables; and every schoolboy learning Latin knows those of Phædrus, who, like his Greek prototype, was a slave. In France, La Fontaine, and in England, Gay, have been the most successful of the

many writers of these compositions. The Fables of Lessing, of which we subjoin a few specimens, are held in the highest esteem in Germany.

THE RAVEN.

The fox said the raven robbed the altars of the gods, and lived upon their oblations. Then he thought to himself, "I should like to know whether the raven has a share in the oblations because he is a prophetical bird; or whether he is taken for a prophetical bird because he is bold enough to share the oblations with the gods."

THE RAVEN.

The raven saw that the eagle sat for thirty whole days upon her eggs. "That, no doubt, is the reason," said she, "that young eagles are so strong, and can see to so great a distance. Well, I will do the same." And since that time the raven has always sat for thirty whole days upon her eggs. But yet she has never hatched anything but miserable ravens.

JUPITER AND THE HORSE.

"Father of beasts and men," thus spoke the horse, as it approached the throne of Jupiter, "men say that I am one of the most beautiful creatures with which you have adorned the world; and my self-love inclines me to believe it. But is not there yet some possibility of improvement?"

"And what improvements could you suggest? Speak; I am ready to receive instruction," said the god, with a benevolent smile.

"Perhaps," said the horse, "I should move more swiftly if my legs were higher and more slender; a longer, swan's neck would do me no harm; a broader chest would increase my strength: but, since you have destined me to carry your favourite, man, perhaps it would be better if I were provided with a saddle beforehand, instead of that which my benevolent rider lays upon me."

"Restrain your impatience for a moment," interrupted Jupiter, and, with a solemn countenance, he spoke the word of creation. Then arose life from the dust; the disjointed atoms were united, and suddenly before the throne stood—the misshapen camel. The horse beheld, and shuddered at the sight.

"Here are higher and more slender legs," said Jupiter, "here is a longer, swan's neck; here is a wider chest; a saddle already provided! Do you still desire, O horse, that I should thus transform you?"

The horse shuddered, and was silent.

"Go," continued Jupiter, "this time be instructed without being punished; but, to remind you repentingly from time to time of your presumption, continue thou to exist, new creature" (Jupiter, as he spoke, threw a glance of compassion on the camel), "and may the horse never look on you without shuddering."

THE KNIGHT ON THE CHESSBOARD.

Two boys began playing at chess; and as there was a knight wanting, they made another pawn serve for one.

"Ha!" exclaimed the other knight, "where do you come from, Sir Slowpace?"

. The boys, hearing his mockery, said, "Silence! does he not do us the same service that you do?"

THE LION AND THE HARE.

A lion once esteemed a droll hare worthy of his intimate acquaintance.

"Is it true, as I have heard," the hare asked him one day, that you lions are frightened by the crowing of a miserable cock?"

"It is true," answered the lion; "and it is a common observation that we noble animals usually have one particular little weakness. Take, for example, that of the elephant; how the grunt of a pig makes him tremble with fear."

"Ah!" interrupted his friend, "now I see why we hares are so terrified at the sight of the hounds."

THE POSSESSOR OF THE BOW.

A man had an excellent bow of ebony, with which he could shoot very far, and take a very certain aim; and on which he set particular value. But one day he was attentively examining it, and said: "You are still a little too thick!—all your ornament is in your smoothness. It is a pity; yet I think there is a way to remedy it. I will go to the best sculptor, and let him carve my bow." He went, and the artist carved the representation of a chase upon the bow; and what could have suited a huntsman's bow better than a chase? The man was transported with joy. "You deserve this ornament, my dear bow;—now I will try you." He bent the bow, and—it broke.

THE BRAZEN STATUE.

A brazen statue, by an excellent artist, was melted into a confused mass by the heat of a raging fire. The lump of metal fell into the hands of another sculptor, who made from it another statue, different from the first, but equal to it in taste and beauty. Envy saw it, and gnashed his teeth; at last he bethought himself of this pitiful consolation: "The good man could not have put out of hand even this middling piece of workmanship, if the materials of the old statue had not fallen naturally into their former shape."

Christmas Carol.

WHEN holly leaves and ivy green,
With berries bright and dark between,
Around the cottage room are seen,
The simple place adorning—
What joy before the cheerful blaze
The almost conscious fire displays,
To sit in Christmas' merry days—
Aye! sit up till the morning!

And hear the early carillon
Of village-bells—while old and young
Are mingled in that festal throng,
Through life we aye remember!
To feel the heat of summer's glow,
In frosty depth of winter's snow,
And think we're *Maying it*, although
'Tis flowerless December!

To join the hearty laugh around,
When some coy damsel's feet are found
To thoughtless tread the fairy-ground
The mistletoe that's under;
And see some longing lover steal
A kiss from cheeks that ill conceal
The secret joy they inward feel,
'Neath frowns and blushing wonder!

What face with summer's sun embrowned
Was ever half so joyous found
As those in ruddy gladness round
The yule-log's cheerful gleaming!
Romance may seek wild solitudes,
By waterfalls in lonely woods;
But Mirth and Love, with happier moods,
O'er Christmas hearth are beaming!

to

My parents, as all parents are, had been most unequivocally opposed to my going to sea, and this had, probably, an effect in making me more bent upon it. I had no idea of being "a common sailor." The midshipman, that everlasting hero of the naval romance, was the cynosure of my hopes and wishes. I was past the age generally allowed for entering, it was true; but a frank statement of my current studies in voyages and

sea-novels, laid before the Admiralty, might have caused an exception in my case. On inquiry, however, it was found that I could not enter the navy, so that I found I must choose forthwith one or other of two avocations—that of mercantile business, or entering on board of a merchant vessel. They would no longer oppose my bent, and perhaps sea life was best suited to me. In my eyes, great as was the fall from the navy to a common merchantman, still the alternative was just whether to plod along the dullest of all realities, or to take the sole remaining opportunity of escaping from the every-day world to that of adventure and romance. I made up my mind, and it was arranged that to sea I should go, and that without further delay.

It is superfluous to relate how the large chest (made by the carpenter with very distant ideas indeed of what a sea-chest is, except that it should be large and ugly) was packed carefully by my mother and sister; what a number of things —almost all useless—it contained; how the dear good souls cried over the thing when it was done; or how, in fine, my father and I set off very early one morning, but not early enough to keep my poor mother from getting up, and—mischievous scamp as I was—embracing me at the door over and over again, with the sobs and tears excited by her fearful thoughts of the sea.

The bustling, busy, huge town of Liverpool, with its great warehouses, its crowds of politely indifferent people mixed up with crowds of rudely careless ones, its clanging, clashing sounds, its thundering drays and creaking cranes, all bewildered me; lastly, the enormous docks, with their world of shipping, gave me such a sense of homelessness and awful

mechanism, that I just began to realise the sea as perhaps not so very different from the serious, disagreeable world after all. However, I endeavoured in secret to keep up my own courage, and my own counsel; even walking about by my father's side, I felt that I had put my foot out to go alone, and that I must "fend for myself." Even if I had then had the offer of retracting proposed to me, I should have declined it, were it from nothing else than keeping up my pride. But this notion did not seem to occur to my father's mind at all, now the matter had gone so far. The momentousness of the affair with him was internal and abstract, no doubt, instead of being determined at every step by the particulars, as they arose in all their sharp actuality. It was with a new thrill of personal misgiving, that I saw the formidable-looking indenture laid upon the table in the Company's office, by signing which, I found I should transfer my service and obedience under pains and penalties to the said Company for the term of four years, to go wherever they chose, and do as they bade. My father, however, signed it calmly, and I affixed my name after his with the air of as much nonchalance as I could assume; still the sense of being no longer my own master, and bound irrevocably to a profession so strange and arduous, of which I had no experience, weighed upon me in my sleep.

I was allowed to choose my ship; the Company had vessels bound to all quarters of the globe, and I at once declared my wish to visit the East. We accordingly went down to Prince's Dock, and walked along the edge of the wharf, accompanied by a gentleman connected with the house. He pointed out two ships lying near each other, the *Tigris* and the *Westminster*, the first bound for China, the latter for the East

Indies. My enthusiastic associations, somewhat driven into the background recently, revived as I gazed down upon the decks of these vessels; for a minute I hesitated between the strange, fantastic land of the Celestials, and my old gorgeous golden dreams of the wondrous Ind. But after a minute's hesitation I chose the *Westminster*. The voyage of the *Tigris* might extend to a year and a-half, and the captain, I heard, was a regular Tartar. Captain C——, of the *Westminster*, happened to be on board, in his cabin, so that we were at once introduced to him; a tall, strong, dark, gentlemanly man, who, after some conversation with my father, intimated that the ship would sail in a day or two, and I might bring my things on board that afternoon. This was accordingly done; one of the elder apprentices, named Hodson, the first I saw of my future companions, looked over my clothes, discarded a dozen or two of socks, nearly as many shirts, with various other superfluities of maternal care, at which the young sailor was evidently amused; he then gave a list of several necessaries to replace them, which we got next day at an outfitting shop, and which I had often cause to wish had been doubled.

It was one fine forenoon in July when the ship was beginning to haul out of dock; I went down in time, accompanied on this last occasion by my father; we bade each other farewell, and I got on board. A minute after I saw a tall young fellow, dressed out to the full in blue sailor's clothes, with conspicuous mother-of-pearl buttons, and a glazed hat, reach the wharf side; as I thought, one of the most thorough-bred mariners, for his years, of all that could plough the deep. He jumped on board with a proud, magnificent air, and stood,

like myself, looking over the bulwarks. For my part, I continued, while the ship moved slowly along the dock-wharf, to stand erect and motionless, hearing the stamp-and-go of the dock-men who manned the capstan, the "Oh-he-he-oh" of those of our crew who had come aboard to haul out, seeing now and then a face amongst the spectators that recurs to me vividly now—but altogether in a sort of stunned bewildered state, which makes the scene like something in a night-mare dream. One particular image is fixed in my memory—it is that of my father, who walked along the quay with the ship, as by dint of hawsers, lines, stern-fasts, and bow-fasts, she approached the dock-gates, till at length he stood at the last corner. I cannot say that I felt anything definite. I do not know what I felt: and since then the emotion has come back upon me, not so much in the form of pain at parting, as in the thought of what he himself, the seemingly austere and calm parent, would feel at seeing that confused deck, those towering spars and hampers of the ship, recede from under his eye, bearing away the inexperienced and erring boy to the vast distances of the watery globe, to contend with difficulties and behold scenes which he himself had merely heard of. In that recollection of his figure standing out from amongst the casual throng, there was something of profoundly sacred emotion, which revisited me more strongly in each of many a midnight watch and many a bitter trial of the energies: when I thought of him returning home with that final intelligence of my departure, I knew that many an evening circle or rough winter night would make them think and speak of me.

Between the ship's getting clear of harbour, with a fair

wind and tide, and her beginning to issue forth in the wider channel of the Mersey, there is little but a blank in my mind, interspersed here and there with a few vague glimpses. As I gradually collected my thoughts to look round, I observed three only besides myself who were idle and apparently unconscious of having any call to join in the work; the nautically dressed youth before mentioned, a tallish, awkward-looking, country-like lad, whose arms dangled at his side, and who stared round him with open mouth and eyes, and a rather sharp-looking active slip of a boy, who looked as if he would fain have done something if he knew what. These two latter, indeed, were in a short time engaged in some little job by one of the mates, who seemed to have taken them under his care; the dandy sailor continued to look over the side and amuse himself, while I, sick at heart and listless, remained leaning aloof against some spars. This reverie on both parts was not long in being broken, however. Till now we had scarcely been noticed, but I was suddenly startled by the voice of the carpenter, a rough, hairy, yellow-whiskered man, in a red woollen shirt, canvas trowsers, and a sort of travelling cap on his head, who was at that moment superintending the rigging out of the jib-boom.

"Hullo, youngster!" he growled out, looking at me, "what is t'ou sculking there for? Clap on here, or I'se lend 'ee a clip i' the lug to drive the sense into ye! Here, pull, stupid, pull!"

I mechanically took hold of the rope's end he thrust into my hands, and imitated the men as well as I could.

"Who's this?" said the carpenter, looking at the young fellow near me. "What are *you* about now? Come aboard

for a tenth mate, I reckon! Harkee, lad, pull off that fine jacket of your'n and tail on here!"

The young man surveyed him for a moment in surprise, as if inclined to question his authority; but by his face it was evident that an entire revolution passed though his mind, probably from seeing that his rough appellant was not to be trifled with; he took off his jacket, carefully folded it up and laid it on the spars, then addressed himself to the task enjoined. In a short time we four new apprentices found ourselves engaged under orders of the carpenter, in getting up, arranging, and handing to him the loose pieces of a wooden "round-house," or light open shed, which he was knocking up above the bare quarter-deck. How vividly I remember that scene, and its dull, half-conscious misery! The unsheltered quarter-deck of the lumbered ship, strewed with those pieces of wood which were the subject of my first real labour in life; the sharp, angry, impatient orders of the ill-humoured carpenter; and the wide, heaving sea that came in sight every time I lifted up my head, while the vessel all the time was steadily cleaving her way onward. Land was already sunk low down on the horizon; the long summer afternoon, dwelling wearily over and around the ship, seemed likely to show us the complete circle of the waters before it should set: even the half-finished shelter of the wooden round-house arching over the steady face of the man at the wheel, who gazed up through a couple of small openings in it, gave a less dreary look to the quarter-deck; the ship, too, now under full sail, leant slightly to one side, and slipped more quickly between the waves as the breeze increased.

By six o'clock our work was finished, and we descended by

a ladder to the half-deck, a place in the middle of the vessel, where we four greenhorns were to mess with the carpenter and third mate. It was the first time I had been below; the place looked dark, desolate, dreary, and confused; lighted only by the hatchway above, and its glimmer of the blue sky; with a range of huge water-casks at one side, chests and lumber on the other, and long bundles of sails in the middle. Our meal consisted of lumps of fresh cooked beef, brought down in the tin they had been boiled in, and accompanied by some potatoes with the skins on; we had neither plate, knife, spoon, nor salt, and both viands tasted to my palate unutterably different from anything I had been accustomed to; there seemed to me bewilderment and sickness in the very food, yet I ate with the savage appetite of labour, or with the mechanical instinct of some helpless prisoner condemned to die. Had my mind not been in a state of dull, unmoving lethargy, I should have thought bitterly of home; but all was so unexpected, so vividly real and coarsely practical, that my whole spirit was overwhelmed, and I could not have summoned a word to throw at a dog. At eight o'clock we went on deck again; it began to get dusk, the binnacle lamp was lighted before the wheel, and the lofty spars of the *Westminster*, clothed with all their canvas, in its ample and stately proportions, rose far up into the twilight. She surged swiftly onward, leaning off a little at times as if intently surveying the furrow ploughed by her keel in the deep; the men were clustered in a group forward; we raw youngsters stood on the quarter-deck, unaware of any etiquette or rule to the contrary. The first mate told us to go to the forecastle; next minute he came forward himself to divide the watches for the

voyage, which were parcelled out from amongst the whole crew, he and the second mate choosing alternately. All I knew was, that I had fallen to the first mate's or larboard watch, and that we might go below to sleep; the other being the starboard watch, officered by the second mate, but supposed to be the captain's watch, although that nautical sovereign rarely breaks his repose to come on deck at midnight, unless something extraordinary is in the wind. For my part, in returning to the half-deck to sleep, I had only a dim sort of idea about keeping watches, or what I might have to do with them; there was now a dull lamp swinging from the beam in this gloomy receptacle, the others had got their hammocks up; seeing a heap of sails in a corner, I threw myself upon it without taking off my clothes, and soon was in the deep, dreamless, lethargic sleep of a body and mind wearied out. In the dark, dead chaos of this place I was awakened, however, at what time I was unaware, by a tremendous knocking and a fearful cry, as it seemed to me; I saw the figures of my companions going up the ladder, and, somehow or other, found myself on deck, cold, shivering, and drowsy. The night was obscure; the wind blew through the rigging. I heard the waves of ocean heaving and washing alongside and around, the huge frame of the ship mounting over the long ocean-swell. I sat down mechanically upon the threshold of the half-open door of the galley, or cook's house, near the foremast, leaned my head upon my hands, and felt sick. Thus I continued, in the sort of nightmare stupidity that admitted no definite ideas or recollections, till the watch was out, and we got below again. In the morning I awoke, too sick to join the rest in their breakfast, of which the smell was enough

for me, and lay vomiting upon the deck, till the rough carpenter, in his brutal unfeeling way, and Cumberland dialect, ordered me to get out and go up, or else he would help me with his foot. On deck the sea air and wind soon revived me, and I never felt sick again, although one of my fellow-novices, the smart little youngster I had noticed the previous day, was ill for several days; after which, notwithstanding, he took more kindly and readily to his situation than any of us. On deck I found the business of clearing away lumber and getting things trim aloft was proceeding actively; however, as I did not conceive I had anything to do with it, I sat down on the spars, by the weather bulwarks, took out a little book from my pocket, and began to divert my thoughts by reading it. I was soon observed by the second mate, a long, flat, elderly Scotchman, with a hook nose and large red whiskers, who shambled over to me, with one shoe down at heel, as it always was.

"Hoity-toity, ye young fool, what's this ye're about?" said Mr. Sharp, grinning. "Don't ye know no better yet as to sit down 'pon deck, eh? Ye've got nothing more to do with books, I can tell ye; look sharp and get something to do!"

The first mate, Mr. Sproull, here came up; he was a clean-built, smart, handsome young man, the model of an English sailor of the higher class; the captain and other officers happened to be all Scotchmen.

The nautically-dressed young fellow who had attracted my attention the preceding day was on the other side of the long-boat when the first mate came up to me; his name, I found, was Herd, and he was in future to be my most familiar acquaintance and watch-mate. He was the son of a merchant;

and having "seen life" on land, after a fashion, greatly beyond my own humble experience, had come to get acquainted with it at sea. During our voyage out to the golden Orient, Herd was rather disgusted with this particular form of existence; and often did he, like myself, vow that no mortal power should force him to go again.

"Here, you C——, and you Herd," said the first mate, "let's see you run up the main-rigging there! Come, which of you will be first at the cross-trees?"

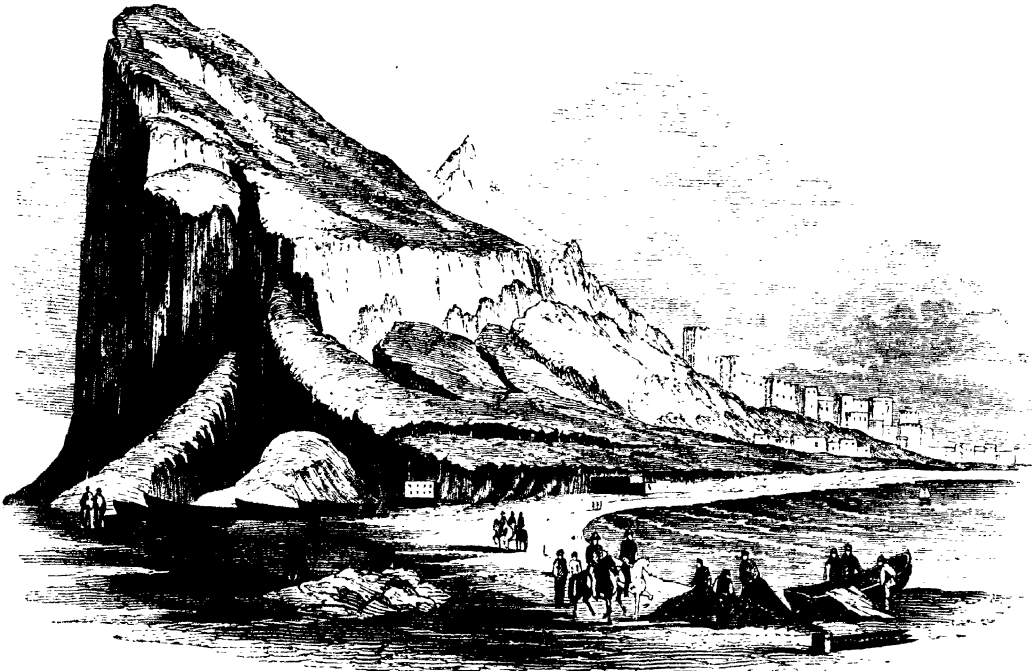
He pointed to the rope-ladder shrouds, and both of us of course obeyed. I had been so far up the mast of a sloop before, and I now ascended pretty well. On coming under the *top*, each paused on opposite sides at that *pons asinorum* of greenhorns, the "futtock shrouds." The men below looked up to see us go through the "lubber's hole," which we naturally did, and then continued to mount the top-mast rigging. At the "cross-trees," however, a more serious obstacle presented itself; the mate still called out to us to go on; but, instead of ladders, there were only shrouds without ratlins. Herd looked at me, and I at him.

"Hang it," said he, "does he want us to go any farther? I'm sure *I* shant, if he was twice the mate!"

I looked down upon the length of the ship, holding her way on; and round upon the wide waste of waters, rolling in the light, from which England had long been washed out; the height was already giddy, and the rigging overhead stretched barer and barer, till there were not even shrouds, but a naked pole, with a line or two from the truck. The mate was coming up the shrouds after us, and as soon as he got to the cross-trees he showed us the way to "shin up," by twisting our

knees and ankles round the shrouds, while the strength of the arms also was excited. I tried it, found the achievement less difficult than I had expected, and got slowly up to the royal yard, from whence I looked down, shuddering at the elevation I occupied, and saw Herd still arguing with the first officer against the possibility of ascending farther. At length the mate gave him a blow on the side of the head, which apparently proved sufficient as a reply, since he immediately applied himself to the task. The first mate did not compel us to go farther this time, as it was the first; though next day we had to learn going out on the foot-ropes of the yards, climbing without ropes at all, with sundry other little practices, that would have driven our respective mothers insane. We found it still more disagreeable to come down; but this time I descended by the futtock-shrouds, hanging by the hands, and my feet almost dangling off.

Thus dragged on and ended our second day at sea. We had been out of sight of land all day, and the feeling which accompanies that fact is one almost as novel and thrilling as if you became the denizen of another world,—as if everything you ever knew, loved, or clung to were melted down into that awful element, and earth were reduced to one drop, in the ship and crew. It was only on that second night, when the ship had settled into some order, and we remained quietly on deck to keep the first watch, that I could begin to see my late existence, or put it into separate perspective; painful glimpses of beauty and sublimity in the scene fell in after the bustling annoyance of work was over, and the rude voices of strangers had ceased to trouble me. The men of the watch sat or walked on the forecastle, the mates kept alone on the



GIBRALTAR.

quarter-deck; my fellow-novice had begun to get acquainted with some of the sailors, while I found a little shadowy spot to myself to windward of the long-boat, to lean against the bulwarks, and brood upon my new situation. It may be imagined that many things now appeared in a different light; that rebukes, warnings, and entreaties, which had failed to impress me before, now fell upon me with emphasis; that I reproached myself, and seemed at once to have passed into something like the position of a mature critic of my previous acts and impulses. My heart melted within me at the contrast of domestic tenderness and parental discipline with the blind, brutal, indifferent manners of those by whom I was surrounded. Still, in that long voyage, how full were those night-vigils; what keen, salutary discipline was in them; how did they gradually bestow experience, self-knowledge, self-possession! Each at length was as a calm recess, where, being alone with the stars, the wind, and ceaseless ocean, one could retire, if he chose, and enjoy a freedom that no coarseness or want of sympathy could break; each of them strengthened one for being more independent of such external circumstances in future.

It was the middle watch of this second night, and we had got down below to sleep; the ship was rushing with a strong breeze out of the Channel, and the breeze had been growing stronger; the ship's heavier lurching, and the louder wash of waves along her side, came distinctly even into my sleep. Suddenly the scuttle of the hatch was pushed aside, the roar of wind and sea was audible, and a gruff voice shouted down the half-deck, "All hands reef top-sails!" What it meant I did not know very well; but the threatening order of the

carpenter, to "turn out and get on deck in no time," was sufficient to make me jump as well as I could out of my hammock, and slip on my trowsers and shoes by the dim glimmer of the swinging lamp. I scrambled up the ladder after the rest; it was almost as dark as pitch; the rain was driving through the rigging, and the white showers of spray flashed up against the shrouds; there was a Babel of voices, stamping, throwing down ropes, wind, and waves. All I could see was that the huge topsails were lowered from their places and slanted to the wind, while the black sky looked in where they had extended; the figures of the men, too, clustering into the weather-chains, and scrambling up the rope-ladders, till they appeared along the top of the yards. As for us "green" ones, we could do nothing but hold the end of the rope put into our hands, and try to stand on the sloping, splashing deck, till it was time to pull and "hoist away." The whole wild scene of confusion was to me no more than a shapeless, unintelligible vision, in which I must act mechanically, bear what happened, and be glad when it was over, or else drown and be done with it. In a little while, however, somehow or other, the affair was passed, the reduced canvas hoisted again, the ship plunging stoutly on, a glass of grog served out to us as well as the rest, and we went below to sleep another short hour.

Among the first and last disagreeables of that sea-life, though, of all things, it was detested to the end, let me not forget the washing of decks, that took place every morning at day-break, unless we were in such a gale that the sea washed them for us.

We were going to breakfast that morning when a blue cloud

of land appeared upon our larboard bow; it was the coast of distant France, and our last sight of mother earth for nearly five months. By Monday we were again encircled by the perfect rim of the blue ocean.

Had I space here, I could proceed to tell of the endless series of new tasks we had now to learn, each with its peculiar difficulty, discomfort, or disgust, to be got over; of scraping or greasing masts, varnishing spars, cleaning boats, tarring down rigging; of clearing away the studding sails aloft as they were set; rigging out booms for them on the yards; or furling a royal together; and then alone, high up out of sight, on a dark night, with a squall coming on, the yard swinging, and the sail flapping over one's head. Enough, however, to suggest what an unknown change is "going to sea" for one bred up tenderly at home; what occupations are substituted instead of those a youth of at all romantic notions is used to; whether for good or ill, how much he who finally adopts the calling must have got over, and how much he who retreats from it may be excused. If there be any circumstances adapted to exercise a mind perhaps enervated, or effeminate, from its previous nurture, to elicit there masculine energy, it is when the individual is scraping a long-boat, struggling to furl a royal in the dark gale, or walking out a midnight watch alone and unsympathised with, at sea, long months before him of outward and homeward bound; the heat and calms of the Line, the storms of the Cape, and a thousand nameless contingencies yet to be borne. Silent, stern, solemn patience comes out in his inmost soul; he is hardened outwardly, while remaining soft within; in those weary, slow-dragged intervals of *waiting*, mixed with *acting*, the calm eye he will

learn to bend both upon mischance and upon the inward sources of pain, will appear to himself wonderful. He will turn life at a distance in and out, and see into the world, in some measure, as if he had died and gone away from it; he will be glad that the wild billows have weltered with him upon their tops, in their hollows—that the fierce winds and rains have blown upon him; for they have silently taught *endurance*. For my part, I should say, if one has a refractory, unteachable, unmanageable, wild youth for his son, and cannot tell what to do with him, then ship the young gentleman forthwith off to sea, whether he likes it or not, just as a school.

With respect to my own case, I confess that, over and over again, in many a quiet hour, the strong terrors and the keen beauties of the life oceanic come back upon me with yearning. I would fain once more feel the stately ship upborne upon the liquid ridges, as she rolls to windward with her high spars and tracery, once more anchor some night in a broad, tropical river. Some fine day, if I live, I shall probably sail forth again upon the waters.

Old Father Christmas.

If, in this round of worldly strife,
  This daily, toilsome, struggling grind,
This battle-field which we call life,
  It be allowed us e'er to find
A time when troubles least oppress,
  When better, purer feelings rise,
When loss and gain are thought of less,
  And man is nearer to the skies,

'Tis now, when once more from his lair
  Old Father Christmas issues forth,
Impregnating our murky air
  With biting blasts from east and north;
See, here he stands; a giant kind,
  Sworn foe to enmity and guile,
His brow with holly branch entwined,
  His lips wreathed in a jolly smile.

Hail, Father Christmas! Come, and bring
  Thine ancient merriment and glee;
Their gladdest peal the bells shall ring
  In honour of thy sovereignty;
Gigantic logs of yule shall blaze;
  The surloin on the board shall smoke;
Old men forget their length of days,
  In many a bygone song and joke.

A Country Ride in Autumn.

(FROM THE "FACES IN THE FIRE," BY G. F. PARDON.)

Oh the bliss of a country ride. The sun is just declining, and in the mellow light we travel on. Through a wood with overarching trees, whose topmost branches and wind-stirred, dancing leaves seem to embrace and kiss each other. Through a lane, whose sides are lined with the blackberry and the wild clematis. Through another country lane, with fields on either hand; fields where the clover lies thick and close upon the ground; fields where the stumps of the reapen corn are

yet standing, and from which a covey of wild birds rises up with a sudden whirr, and cross the path; fields where the earth is brown and fresh, and redolent of fragrance, being just turned up and over, and but the very afternoon before escaped the plough, whose ridges run along in almost mathematical precision; fields where the scent of the bean-stubble, burning in a heap, comes upon the gentle wind, and comes, and goes, and comes again; fields where the cattle are grazing, and the sheep are penned; fields on each side, and haystacks neatly piled, and smelling sweetly, in nearly every one. Orchard grounds and gardens also line the way. Through a little, little village, which seems to consist entirely of a farm and outhouses, an ivy-curtained mansion, where roses grow against the walls though it is late in Autumn, and flowers bloom in every bed along the lawn; a little public-house, with a swinging sign in front, and a blacksmith's shop—was there ever an English village without a blacksmith's shop?—and a cottage or two, with children at the doors, and out into the country road again. Through trees which shade it like a grove, with ripe rich orchards on either hand; and, passing them, through hop-gardens, which look brown and healthy, and through fields and orchards again.

The Celestial Army.

I STOOD by the open casement,
And looked upon the night,
And saw the westward-going stars
Pass slowly out of sight.

Slowly the bright procession
Went down the gleaming arch,
And my soul discerned the music
Of the long triumphal march;

Till the great celestial army,
Stretching far beyond the poles,
Became the eternal symbol
Of the mighty march of souls.

Onward, for ever onward,
Red Mars led down his clan;
And the Moon, like a mailéd maiden,
Was riding in the van.

And some were bright in beauty,
  And some were faint and small,
But these might be in their great heights
  The noblest of them all.

Downward, for ever downward,
  Behind Earth's dusky shore
They passed into the unknown night,
  They passed, and were no more.

No more! oh, say not so!
  And downward is not just;
For the sight is weak and the sense is dim
  That looks through heated dust.

The stars and the mailéd moon,
  Through they seem to fall and die,
Still sweep with their embattled lines
  An endless reach of sky.

And though the hills of Death
  May hide the bright array,
The marshalled brotherhood of souls
  Still keeps its onward way.

Upward, for ever upward,
  I see their march sublime,
And hear the glorious music
  Of the conquerors of Time.

And long let me remember,
That the palest fainting one
May to diviner vision be
A bright and blazing sun.

The Prince and the Peasant.

(FROM THE FRENCH OF ALPHONSE KARR.)

A PRINCE was one day lost in a forest while pursuing a stag. The greater number of his suite were lost also, and there remained with him only his squire and his steward. After many turns and windings, the prince declared that he was dying from fatigue and hunger; and presently they discovered the cottage of a poor wood-cutter, with emotions of joy which the sight of the most sumptuous palaces had never caused. The squire and the steward entered the cabin, and soon returned, the first with a bench; upon which the prince descended from his horse, and did not require entreaties to sit down; the second with a table.

"What can you give us to eat, good man?" said the prince to the wood-cutter.

"Next to nothing," answered the wood-cutter.

"Then give us that quickly before our appetite increases."

"It wants preparing; I have only raw potatoes."

"Whatever you want to prepare, no matter what, here is

my steward, who pretends to understand such subjects; confer with him."

The steward begged a few moments for reflection; he retired thoughtfully under the shade of the trees, and then came back to the prince.

"Well, have you contrived a method to procure us something to eat?"

"Prince," said the steward, "I have reflected that it is very unfortunate these potatoes are not truffles, and we have no turkey in which I could put them. It is true that would necessitate our not being in a hurry, and oblige your highness to grant at least eight days, before the turkey had the honour of appeasing the royal appetite, in order that the flesh should be properly impregnated with the savoury perfume of the truffles."

The Prince interrupted him. "If you are going to furnish a list of all we might eat if we had it, your catalogue will be long, and not satisfying. We are told there is nothing but potatoes; therefore with potatoes you must provide me a dinner."

"The reasoning of your highness is perfectly correct," said the steward. "I request only five minutes to consider how I can prepare, in the best manner, this modest entertainment."

The steward withdrew, and again meditated under the trees. Then he returned. "Prince, I have it; since there are only potatoes, we must be satisfied with a dish of potatoes; but there are eighty-three modes of dressing potatoes. It belongs to my art to impart a savour to this provision, if I cannot give variety. I have decided to cook them *à la polonaise*." He recited the receipt in a low voice: "You take

potatoes, you boil them in water with salt, you peel them, you slice them, and serve them with a white sauce of capers, with gherkins cut into small pieces, and anchovies."

"Good man," said he, addressing the wood-cutter, "bring me what I require for the white sauce; first, butter."

"I have none," said the wood-cutter.

"Flour?"

"I have none."

"Two eggs?"

"I have none."

"And the capers, gherkins, and anchovies?"

"I have none."

"*Diantre*," exclaimed the prince.

"There are no means, then, to dress the potatoes *à la polonaise*," said the steward. "How unfortunate! How is it possible for any person to have neither anchovies, butter, nor eggs?" He reflected a moment, then said: "Well, let us dress the potatoes simply *en boulettes*. Ah! pardon, your highness, to dress potatoes *en boulettes* requires four eggs, cream, and nutmeg. We must renounce the potatoes *en boulettes*, and yet it is a dish excessively simple, and agreeable enough. Let us think of something else."

The squire, impatient, disappeared. The steward passed in review other methods of dressing potatoes, each more simple than the other; but something was always wanting, which the woodcutter, who had only potatoes, could not supply.

"What a pity!" he cried: "that would be excellent!"

The prince began to be angry.

"Ah, well," said the steward, "let us have a dish horribly vulgar, a dish that never before dared appear on the table of

your highness—fried potatoes. Good man," he continued to the woodcutter, "bring me immediately a frying-pan and some grease."

"I have neither frying-pan nor grease," said the woodcutter.

"What!" answered the steward, in a passion, "neither frying-pan nor grease! I have seen poor people; but your poverty must be aggravated by some imprudence or some vice, to cause your destitution of things so cheap and so indispensable!"

"Ah! steward," cried the prince, "this is too much! What! not only you give me nothing to eat when I am perishing for hunger; but you destroy me with tedious speeches. I permit you from this day to retire to your own estates; for I am told you have become very rich."

"Your highness, I shall obey with sorrow and respect; and, notwithstanding the rigour of your decision, I shall remember only your benefactions on the lands I owe to your munificence; but it is not the less true, if I have not been able to furnish your repast to-day, the fault lies with this man, who has not provided utensils and provisions the most common and necessary to life."

"The fault is yours," answered the prince, "who wanted the good sense to say: 'Since I have only potatoes, I cannot make a truffled turkey, nor all kinds of savoury dishes, of which I cannot command the elements.' Why, instead of quarrelling with this good man who gives us willingly all he possesses, do you not quarrel with the potatoes because they are not lamb cutlets or fillets of veal?"

"But, prince—"

"But, steward—"

Doubtless the prince at this point would have pulverised the steward's feeble arguments, and proved, in a manner the most humiliating to the steward and triumphant to himself, that the fault was on his side. But the squire approached, and, by his mere apparition, demonstrated the absurdity of the steward more victoriously than the prince's oration would have done,—if I may venture to pronounce so bold an opinion. While the steward imagined impossible perfections to bestow upon the potatoes—while the prince discoursed magnificently to the squire upon the folly of his steward—the squire glided into the hut, and quietly roasted the potatoes upon the hot ashes; he now brought them smoking forward, and the prince often declared he had never enjoyed a finer repast. He took from his neck the collar of the Blue Elephant, the most distinguished order in his state, placed it upon the neck of the squire, and has never failed since to summon him to his council under difficult circumstances.

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