OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

AN

Illustrated Magazine

FOR

BOYS AND GIRLS.

EDITED BY

J. T. TROWBRIDGE & GAIL HAMILTON

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BOSTON

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FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

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THE THREE LIGHTS.

WINDOW that looks down the west,
Where the cloud-thrones and islands rest,
One evening to my random sight
Showed forth this picture of delight.

The shifting glories were all gone,
The clear blue stillness coming on;
And the sweet shade 'twixt day and night
Held the old earth in tender light.

Up in the ether hung the horn
Of a young moon; and, newly born
From out the shadows, trembled far
The shining of a single star.
Only a hand's-breadth was between:
They held the heaven, and burned serene.

Then my glance fell from that fair sky
A little down, yet very nigh,
And from the earth-dark twinkled clear
One other spark—of human cheer.
A home-smile, telling where there stood
A farmer's house, beneath the wood.

Only these three in all the space,—
Far telegraphs of various place.
Which seeing, this glad thought was mine:
Be it but little candle-shine,
Or golden disk of moon that swings
Nearest of all the heavenly things,
Or world in awful distance small,
One Light doth feed and liken all!

Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.

THE TWO CHRISTMAS EVENINGS.

It was a beautiful Christmas Eve. A light snow had fallen just before night, and made the city streets look clean. Icicles hanging from the roofs glittered in the moonlight, and the trees on the Common looked as if they had put on white feathers for a festival.

Mrs. Rich's parlor was brighter than the moonlight splendor without. The folding-doors were open. A clear flame rose from the cannel-coal as it split and crackled in the grate; the gas burned brilliantly in the chandeliers; at the upper end of the room was an Evergreen Tree, with a sparkling crown of little lamps, and gay with festoons of ribbons and trinkets; the carpet was like a meadow enamelled with flowers; the crimson damask curtains glowed in the brilliant light; and the gilded paper on the walls gleamed here and there, like the bright edges of little sunset clouds. Mrs. Rich was just putting some finishing touches to the Tree, when the great clock on the staircase struck seven, and the pattering of feet was heard. The door opened, and Papa entered with a group of children. There was Frank, in all the dignity of his fourteen years; earnest-looking Isabel, who was about twelve; Ellen, not much over nine, whose honest face had an expression of thoughtfulness beyond her years; and little Alice, whom they named Pet Poodle, because she had such a quantity of soft, light curls falling about her face. In her first stammering of this name she called herself Petty Poo, and they all adopted her infantile abbreviation.

The Evergreen Tree and the treasures with which it was covered produced but slight excitement in the minds of the older children. As they approached it, they said, "How tastefully you have arranged it, mamma!" and they quietly awaited the distribution of the gifts, like well-trained young ladies and gentlemen. But little Alice, who opened her blue eyes on the world only four years before, had not done wondering yet. She capered up to the tree, and, pointing to one thing after another, said, "Isn't dat pooty?" A large doll had been sent to her last Christmas, and when she spied one seated among the green boughs, she gave a little shout, and cried out, "Dare is nudder dolly for Petty Poo!" She was told Aunt Jane had sent it to her, and she received it with unalloyed satisfaction. "Tank Aunt Jane," said she. "Dis dolly's eyes is b'oo, and tudder dolly's is b'ack." Well pleased with this variety in her family, she hugged it up, and seated herself on the carpet to examine the little blue rosettes on the shoes.

When Mr. Rich handed his son a handsomely illustrated copy of “The Arabian Nights,” he received it with a bow, and, turning over the leaves carelessly, said, “I wonder what Uncle Joe sent me this for! I have one edition, and I don’t want another.” Isabel took a gold bracelet that was offered her, and, slipping it on her wrist, remarked to her brother, “I don’t think this bracelet Cousin Emma has sent me cost so much as the one I sent her last Christmas.” “And see this gutta-percha watch-chain that Cousin Joe has sent me,” rejoined Frank. “You know I sent him a gold one last year.” “If you read what is written on the card,” said his father, “you will see that it was made in the Hospital, by his brave brother, Captain George.” Frank glanced over the writing, and replied, “Yes, sir; but I should rather have had a gold one.” Mary received a handsome French work-box, filled with elegant implements for sewing. She said, “I am much obliged to Aunt Jane”; but she set it aside after a slight examination, and returned to the tree again. Many more presents were distributed,—beaded nets for the hair, books, photographs, bronze dogs, Parian images, and all sorts of things. But Petty Poo was the only one who seemed to take a very lively interest. She stood by the table hugging her doll, expressing her admiration of everything by little shouts, and holding out her hand now and then to receive a paper of sugared almonds, a china lamb, or a little horse on rollers. The last thing that was taken from the tree was a small basket, containing a doll’s nightgown and nightcap. This furnished her with delightful employment. She seated herself on the carpet and undressed her doll, and when she had made her ready for the night, she said, “Now Petty Poo will go to bed, and take all her tings wid her; and dolly wid de b’ack eyes may s’eep in de drawer.” When she had been kissed all round, she was carried up stairs, and mamma followed, to have another kiss from the little darling before her blue eyes closed for the night.

When Mrs. Rich returned to the parlor, Isabel said archly, “Are you *sure*, mamma, that you took everything from the Christmas Tree?” and mamma, who knew she was about to be surprised, replied, “I believe so; but I will go and look, dear.” Among the boughs she found a rustic watch-case, an embroidered ottoman-cover, and a pretty worsted shawl, on which Frank and Isabel and Ellen had each written their names, and added, “For my dear mother.” Mrs. Rich smiled lovingly, as she wrapped the shawl about her, and put her watch in the case, and spread the cover on the ottoman, and

said the colors were beautifully arranged.

"We made them entirely ourselves," said the young folks; "and we had *such* a job to keep you from finding out what we were doing!"

"Thank you, my dear children," replied the happy mother. She kissed them all, and they clung about her, and asked again and again if she really thought the things were pretty.

"Perhaps you have not found *all* yet," said Ellen. "Please look again."

After diligent search, which was purposely prolonged a little, a box was found hidden away under the boughs. It contained a set of chessmen, a crocheted purse, and a worsted comforter for the neck, on which Frank and Isabel and Ellen had written, "For my dear father," with the names of each appended; and again they said, exultingly, "We made them all ourselves, papa."

"Thank you, my children," replied Mr. Rich. "So, Frank, these chessmen are what you have so long been busy about at Uncle John's turning-lathe." He smiled as he added, "I will not say I had rather have gold ones; for such neat workmanship done by my son is more valuable to me than gold could be. And Isabel, dear, I don't know whether this handsome purse cost so much as the skates I gave you for a Christmas present; but I certainly like it better than any purse I could buy." The brother and sister blushed a little, for they understood the rebuke conveyed in his words. But he patted their heads and kissed them, and, as they nestled close up to him, he folded them all in his arms. "So my little Ellen has made me a red, white, and blue comforter," said he. "How grand I shall feel walking down State Street with this round my neck!"

"Then you *will* wear it, papa?" said Ellen, with a glad little jump.

"Wear it? Indeed I will," replied her father; "and proud I shall be of the loyal colors, and of my little daughter's work."

"Ellen is very patriotic," said her mother. "I think papa would like to hear her play 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' "

The little girl ran eagerly to the music-stool; for she had been practising the tune very diligently, in hopes she should be invited to play. Frank and Isabel kept their fingers moving to the music, and when it ceased, papa exclaimed, "Bravo!" He was really pleased with his little daughter's improvement, and that made her as light-hearted as a bird.

While they were deciding what Isabel should play, the door-bell rang, and one cousin after another came in to talk over the Christmas gifts. Isabel glanced shyly at her father, when she said, "I am much obliged to you, Cousin Emma, for the bracelet you sent me. It is very handsome." And Frank was as red as a turkey's gills when he thanked Cousin Joe for the gutta-percha chain, and said it would be a valuable souvenir of his brave Cousin George. Cousin Max, who always thought whatever he had was better than other people could have, remarked that their presents were very handsome, but he didn't think they were equal to what they had on their tree at home.

"The worst of it is, I have so many duplicates," said Cousin Emma. "Last year I had three bracelets, and this year I had two. When I put them all on, they reach almost up to my elbow."

"My aunts and cousins, and particular friends, all take to sending me books in blue and gold," said Cousin Jane. "I get so tired of seeing those little volumes, all just alike! There they are always standing on my shelf, like 'four and twenty little dogs all in a row.' "

"But they are not all alike *inside*," remarked Uncle Rich.

"I suppose not," she replied; "but I am so tired of 'em, I never read 'em."

"Here are some new charades," said Mrs. Rich, who wished to change the conversation. They were soon laughing over the charades, and then they sang some funny catches, and bade each other "Good night."

The next evening, when little Alice went away with her nurse, after kissing them all "Good night," she peeped into the door again to say, "Dolly wid de b'oo eyes is going to s'eep in de drawer, and dolly wid de b'ack eyes is going to s'eep wid Petty Poo." They smiled upon her, and threw her kisses, and when the door closed after her, Mr. Rich remarked, "Even with Petty Poo the novelty of Christmas gifts don't last long. What part of your Christmas evening did you enjoy most, my children?"

"When I was playing to you, and you liked it," replied Ellen.

"When you and mamma seemed so pleased with the things we made for you," said Isabel.

"And you, my son?" inquired Mr. Rich.

Frank replied, that was the only part of the evening he cared much about.

"I thought so," rejoined his father. "Have any of you thought what might be the reason?"

The young folks were silent, each one trying to think what their father expected them to say.

"I will tell you how I explain it," continued Mr. Rich. "I learned long ago that it is not the *having* things, but the *doing* things, which makes people happy. You enjoyed the presents you gave us, because you had expended ingenuity and industry upon them. Nothing you could have bought for us would have given either you or us half the pleasure."

"And they were working for *others*, not for *themselves*," added their mother. "That greatly increased the charm."

Her husband smiled approvingly, as he rejoined, "You have said the best word, my dear."

The children looked in the fire thoughtfully. At last, Isabel broke the silence by saying, "When we went to bed last

night, Ellen and I said we didn't know what was the reason we felt so little pleasure, when so many had tried to please us."

Their father rejoined, "The trouble is, you have so many handsome things that the charm of novelty is lost. A poor child would feel as rich as Crœsus with one of the many things you think so little of."

Isabel looked up eagerly and exclaimed, "Papa, that makes me think of something. We will agree with our uncles and aunts and cousins, not to exchange Christmas gifts next year. We will do something else."

"What can we do?" asked Ellen. "I should admire to do something different."

"We'll give dolls and picture-books and tops to the children in the Orphan Asylum," replied her sister.

"That is a very good thought," said their mother.

"And, papa, you said it made folks happy to do things themselves," remarked Ellen. "So we'll make up the dolls and dress them ourselves; and we'll knit comforters and mittens and hoods for the poor children; and we'll make balls for the boys; and ever so many things. Won't we, Issy?"

"Where are you going to get money enough to buy the dolls' heads, and stuff to make the hoods and comforters of?" inquired Frank.

His sisters looked puzzled. Mr. and Mrs. Rich said nothing; for they wanted the children to work out their own plan and depend on their own resources. After a little reflection, Isabel said, "We could have a Fair. Not a public fair, mamma; but a sort of a pleasant party for our uncles and aunts and cousins and particular friends. We've got ever so many things laid up in our drawers, that we might sell as well as not."

"O, but that would never do," rejoined Ellen; "for they were given to us, and we couldn't sell people their own things. But if they will agree not to give us any presents next Christmas, we can buy worsted and dolls' heads with our money, instead of buying bracelets and vases for them; and they have so many they don't want them."

"That's true," answered Isabel; "and we could do without many of the things that we are buying every week."

Their father looked highly pleased, and said, "That will be another good thing, to have a generous motive for practising economy. I will buy ten dollars' worth of whatever things you make yourselves."

"And so will I," said their mother.

"You might lend us the twenty dollars beforehand, and take your pay in the things we make," said Frank. "I will make some cups and balls for the girls, and some bats for the boys."

His father looked at him with a significant smile, and said, "One thing you may be sure of, my son. The poor boys will be too glad of their wooden bats to complain because they are not gold ones."

"Please, father, don't remind me of that again," replied Frank, coloring.

"And please, father," said Isabel, "not to tell me I shall have nothing given me that costs so much as what I give away; for that was a mean little speech of mine, and I am ashamed of it."

"Very well; I won't allude to it again," rejoined their father.

Ellen, who always liked to apologize for any fault of her brother or sister, remarked, "If they hadn't have said it, I suppose they would have thought it; and you and mamma say you like to have us speak right out before you whatever we think."

"That is true, my child," replied her mother. "We never want you to feel restrained before us. But I noticed that you made no complaint about your handsome work-box."

"That was not because I was any better than Issy," said the sincere little girl; "for I did think that I had two work-boxes, and I did wish it had been something else. I didn't say so, because I thought what Frank and Issy said made you and papa look sober."

"We do not blame any of you for your thoughts, or for speaking them openly before us," said Mrs. Rich; "though I cannot deny that Frank's and Issy's remarks seemed to me in a wrong and mean spirit. But your indifference to the presents you receive is not your fault; and certainly it is not the fault of the kind relatives and friends who take so much pains to please you. The trouble is, both with you and your cousins, that you have too many things to care very much about anything. I am glad you are going to try the experiment of giving without receiving."

It was a pleasure to the parents to see how the planning of things and the doing of things waked up the energies of their young folks. Almost every morning Isabel and Ellen would bound into the breakfast-room, with eager faces, saying, "Good morning, papa and mamma. We've got a new idea." The phrase became a family joke.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Rich, when they came jumping in as usual one morning. "What's coming on the carpet next? Some new idea I suppose. What a privilege it is to have a family so full of ideas!"

"Why, papa," replied Ellen, "you know Issy acts charades beautifully. Frank has written one, and she's going to act it at the Fair, and charge the visitors five cents apiece. Perhaps we shall get as much as five dollars; and that would buy a good many dolls' heads or picture-books for the orphans."

Another morning, Isabel was in great ecstasy over a plan Ellen had suggested. "O papa, it is such a bright idea!" exclaimed she. "We are going to have a Tableau of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Petty Poo is going to be Europe, with some pearl beads on her neck and arms, and Frank's miniature ship beside her. We are going to paint little Cousin

Joe yellowish brown, and dress him up like a Chinese Mandarin, and seat him on a tea-chest. That's for Asia, you know. We are going to paint little John reddish brown, with a coronet of feathers on his head; and Frank is going to make a bow and arrow for him. That's for America. You remember that bright-looking little black girl, Kitty Jones? We're going to ask her mother to lend her to us, and we'll dress her up for Africa. Frank says she ought to be leaning on an elephant's tusk, but I don't know where we could get one."

"What's the child thinking of!" exclaimed Mr. Rich. "Why, you might as well give me a meeting-house steeple for a cane. What could such a little creature do with an elephant's tusk, five or six feet long; taller than I am?"

"Perhaps we can find a baby elephant's tusk," replied Isabel. "We shall have to charge ten cents apiece for the Tableau, it will be so much trouble."

The weeks passed on, bringing with them a succession of new projects. Many of them were nipped in the bud by adverse circumstances; but whether they ripened or not, they occupied the young brains of the children and gave their bodies healthy exercise. They were impatient for spring to come, that they might remove to their country-house in Dorchester. There they could pick up hen's feathers, and color them pink with cochineal, and blue with indigo, for ornamenting the dolls' hats. Sometimes the cockerel dropped a gaudy feather that needed no coloring, and great was their joy over the prize. Then they wanted autumn to come, that they might find moss-acorns; for mamma had given them some pieces of her brown silk dress, and promised to show them how to make little emery-balls, that would look like real acorns when they were fastened in the mossy cups. An unthought-of value was imparted to every scrap of pretty ribbon or calico, and to broken strings of beads that had long been rolling about. Even little Alice caught the prevailing spirit, and was every day bringing a doll's sash, or some other of her little treasures, saying, "Dis is for de orfins." The children of this wealthy family had never before experienced the great pleasure of turning everything to some good use; and the novelty was very delightful to them.

When relatives and friends heard the proposal not to exchange Christmas presents, they were very much surprised, and some were half disposed to be offended. The children soon reconciled them, however, by saying, "It is not because we are ungrateful for your presents, or unwilling to send presents to you. But we have thought of a new plan, and when you come to know about it, we hope you will like it." They of course perceived that something uncommonly engrossing was going forward, but could not find out exactly what; and this little air of mystery added a new charm to the enterprise.

What with lessons in English and French, and music and dancing, and all their plans for the Fair, December came round again without the children's ever having had occasion to say, "I wish I knew what to do." The large drawing-room was arranged for their accommodation on the eventful evening. At one extremity, English ivy was trained round a large hoop to form a frame-work for the Tableau. When the screen was removed, and pearl-white Alice, and yellowish-brown Joe, and reddish-brown John, and brown-black Kitty were seen grouped behind the ivy, they really made a very pretty picture. Little Joe looked very funny in his Chinese cap, with a peacock's feather in it, a little round button atop, and a long braid of hair tied on behind. Alice was charming in white muslin, with some small blue flowers and strings of pearl beads hanging among her flaxen curls. John had a coronet of turkey's feathers, and a short beaver-skin skirt, fastened round the waist with a gaudy belt of many-colored wampum. Bead-embroidered moccasons covered his feet. In one hand he carried a bow and arrow, trimmed with red and yellow ribbon, and in the other a stuffed squirrel, to represent the fur trade. Kitty Jones wore a short skirt of yellow merino. Her arms and feet were bare, with the exception of strips of gilt paper on wrists and ankles. On her head was a crown of gilt paper surmounted by an ostrich-feather. Frank had fashioned a piece of wood into the resemblance of a small tusk, and painted it suitably, that she might represent the trade of Africa in gold and ivory and ostrich-feathers. The little ones behaved very properly, till Alice spied out her white poodle snuffing round the room in search of her. Then she forgot all the instructions she had received, and called out, "Poody! Poody!" That was a very improper proceeding for Europe, with a ship by her side to represent the commerce of the world. And it made Asia laugh out loud; which was an unheard of want of dignity in a Mandarin upon a state occasion. America grinned rather too broadly for a sedate Indian chief. Africa was perfectly motionless in every muscle, and looked a little bit afraid; which Frank said was very natural, considering Europe was so near with her ship, and still carrying on the slave-trade; a remark which his sisters and cousins thought quite witty. After the little ones were dismissed with kisses and candy, Frank came tottering in, bent half double, with a white wig on his head, an hour-glass in one hand and a scythe in the other. He was followed by Isabel, handsomely dressed in the newest mode. Afterward Ellen and her mother appeared, dressed just as women and little girls dressed forty years

ago. "O how funny they look! Did you ever see such frights?" shouted the young folks. They all agreed that it was very easy to guess the first, and the second, and the whole of the charade that had been acted. When they had taken off their disguises, friends and relatives began to compliment them. Ellen, who was always ready to praise her sister, because she really thought her something uncommon, replied, "Isabel acted her part beautifully; flirting her fan, courtesying, and swinging her crinoline; but I didn't do anything only walk round with an old bonnet on my head. I never *could* act charades well."

"There is one thing she can do well," said Isabel. "She preaches beautifully."

"O Isabel! How *can* you say so?" exclaimed Ellen, blushing scarlet.

"It's nothing more than the truth," persisted Isabel. "I heard you preach a beautiful sermon at Carry Rice's party."

The company, amused at her confusion, began to say, "Ellen, you must let us hear you preach. We will give you ten cents apiece for a sermon."

This offer tempted her; for she thought of the dolls and tops the money would buy. She allowed them to place her on a stool, but when she found herself there, with all of them looking at her, she felt very much heated, and said, bashfully, "Ladies and gentlemen, I don't know what to preach about. When I was at Carry Rice's, some of the girls and boys got into a quarrel, and I preached to them from the text, 'Return good for evil.' But you are not quarrelling. Besides, everybody preaches about the war now, and I do want the Rebels to be beaten; so that text won't do; and I don't know what text to take."

"Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land, to all the inhabitants thereof," said her father, in a loud, clear voice.

"That's a good text," said Ellen, brightening up. "Liberty ought to be proclaimed to all, because it ought to be. They say they used to whip the slaves down in Dixie for trying to learn to read and write. That was very wrong. There's little Kitty Jones, that was Africa to-night; she's as bright as a steel button. She learns her letters a great deal faster than our Alice; and it would be a sin and a shame to whip her for it. The slaveholders wouldn't like to have their children whipped for learning, and they ought to do to others as they would be done by. Besides, it would be better for the white folks down there if liberty was proclaimed to all. They wouldn't be so violent-tempered, and go round stabbing folks with bowie-knives, if they hadn't been used to beating and banging slaves about when they were boys. And if they hadn't slaves to wait upon 'em, they would find out what a great pleasure it is to learn how to do things, and to help themselves. So you see, if we beat the Rebels, and proclaim liberty to all, we *shall* return good for evil; and that text would have done for my sermon, if I had thought about it. But then I think the greatest reason why we ought to proclaim liberty to all is because we ought to. And I don't know as I have anything more to say to-night."

As she descended from her eminence, all in a flutter, her friends came up to offer their money; and Uncle Joe patted her on the head as he said, "I've heard some sermons that were not so well worth ten cents."

There was a short recess, and Isabel played lively tunes while the guests walked about and ate ice-creams, which the girls had made, under their mother's directions. Over the refreshment-table Frank had printed, in large letters, "Home Manufacture." All the articles were sold before ten o'clock; for the secret was discovered, and everybody wanted to help on the good work. The children were a little impatient to have the guests go, that they might count their money. They were greatly surprised and delighted to find they had received more than two hundred dollars. They kissed papa and mamma, and kissed each other, and said, over and over again, "Didn't we have a good time?"

When they had sobered down a little, Isabel, looking up archly, said, "Papa and mamma, I've got a new idea."

"I dare say she has," said Ellen; "she's always having new ideas."

"And what is it now?" asked their mother.

"We have got so much more money than we expected," replied Isabel, "that I think we can do two things. You know that slave woman down South, who hid Cousin George when the Rebels were after him? He wrote to us that she had a very pretty, bright little girl. Seeing Kitty Jones to-night has made me think about her. I should like to spend half our money in picture-books and toys for the freed children."

"Good! good!" exclaimed Ellen, clapping her hands.

They all agreed with her, and when their articles were collected together, they were divided into two parcels, one of which was immediately sent off to the islands of South Carolina; the other half was reserved till the day before Christmas, when they were conveyed to the Orphan Asylum. Frank procured a pretty evergreen tree, and they all went to help the Superintendent arrange the articles upon it. The little inmates of the asylum were kept in the dark about the whole affair till evening, when they were marched into the room in procession, two and two. They were very shy in presence of the strangers. A few of them gazed with wonder on the lighted Christmas Tree, and some little laughs were heard; but most of them stood with fingers on their mouths, looking down. When hoods and mittens, and balls and bats, and tops and skates, and dolls and picture-books were distributed among them, a few jumped and laughed; but most of them made little formal bows and courtesies, and said, "Thank 'ee, ma'am," "Thank 'ee, sir," as they had been taught to do. When the articles were all distributed, the Superintendent conducted them to the play-room. She returned a few minutes afterward, and said to Mr. Rich and his family, "They were constrained before strangers; but I have left the door of the play-room ajar, and I should like to have you peep in."

Such a merry scene! The orphans were jumping and skipping about, tossing up their balls and dancing their dolls. "See how high my ball goes!" shouted one. "See what a pretty dolly I've got!" said another.

"O mamma! this pays us for all our work," said Isabel.

"I thought you were paid in doing the work," rejoined her mother.

"So we were," said Ellen; "but this pays us over again."

While they were putting on their cloaks to return home, a chubby little orphan asked the Superintendent for a "fower." When asked what she wanted it for, she answered, "For de lady dat did give me de dolly." When she had received a geranium blossom, she went to Isabella and bashfully held up her flower. Isabella thanked her and kissed her, and she trotted off in a state of high satisfaction.

When the family returned to their elegant parlor, there was only ashes in the grate, the gas burned low, with a seething sound, and the gleams of the gilded paper were hidden by a veil of shadow. But the cheeks of the children glowed as they had not glowed under the brilliancy of the last year's Christmas Eve.

"O, what a pleasant world this is!" exclaimed Ellen.

Isabel took up a graceful Parian vase for one flower, and said, "Mamma, won't this geranium keep longer if I put salt in the water?"

Her mother smiled as she replied, "You are not apt to be so very careful of the flowers that are given you. But I see, my dear child, that you are learning by experience how much more blessed it is to give than to receive."

The water in the vase was changed every day; and when the blossom fell, the petals were pressed in a book, and under them was written, "The Little Orphan's Gift, on Christmas Eve."

The Fair and the visit to the Asylum furnished topics for household conversation many a day afterward. When Petty Poo was asked what she did at the Fair, she answered, "Oo-up."

"O, but you naughty little puss, you made Asia laugh," said Isabel.

"And what did sister Ellen do?" asked her father.

"Made booful preach," answered Petty Poo; and they all laughed, as if they had not heard their little darling say it twenty times before.

"And where did you send your black dolly, with the two babies in her arms?" inquired her mother; and again they laughed when she lisped out, "To ittle conty-ban."

In a few weeks they received a letter from Cousin George, in which he wrote: "Dear cousins, your box arrived safely, and the teachers distributed the things on New Year's Eve. I would have given fifty dollars if you could have looked upon the scene. Such uproarious joy I never witnessed. Such singing and shouting are never heard among white folks. I wrote to you that the slave-woman, who saved me from the horrors of a Rebel prison by hiding me under some straw in her hut, was here at work for wages. Her little Chloe is not much older than Petty Poo, and is as pretty, in a different way. Such glorious brown eyes you never saw. When the doll with two babies was given her, she jumped and capered, and danced and sung, till my sides ached with laughing. All these people naturally express their feelings in music; and little Chloe, small as she is, has the gift. She sings whatever tune comes into her head, and makes words to suit it as she goes along. It would have done your hearts good to hear her sing:

How kind de Yankee ladies is!
So kind I nebber see!
How kind de Yankee ladies is,
To gib dese tings to me!

I made a sketch of her merry little face on a leaf of my pocket-book, while she was singing, and if I had colored crayons here I think I could make you a pretty picture. It is a pity you could not have had her for your Tableau; though I have no doubt she would have laughed when the white poodle appeared on the stage, and in all probability she would have jumped down to catch him."

Not long afterward Captain George came home on a fortnight's leave of absence. And, hurried as he was, he found time to make a picture of little Chloe in colored crayons. The yellow cheeks and the great brown eyes made it look like a coreopsis blossom in the sunshine; and the face had such a happy, merry expression, that everybody laughed who looked at it. Isabel printed under it: "From Cousin George. A Souvenir of our Useful Christmas." It was framed and hung in the breakfast-room; and one day they found that Frank had pasted on the back the following inscription: "This is a commentary on the 'booful preach' Ellen made at our Fair, from the text, 'Proclaim Liberty throughout the land, to all the inhabitants thereof.' "

L. Maria Child.

FROM COUSIN GEORGE.
A SOUVENIR OF OUR USEFUL CHRISTMAS.

THE INEQUALITIES OF FORTUNE.

THIS is an abstract subject, my little friends, if you look at it simply as a subject; but the things which the words stand for are things which most of you have doubtless seen and felt, and, I fear, mourned and wondered over. At least I have known so many young people disturbed by the difference between their own lot and that of others, that I have thought a little talk about it might be useful to all our young folks.

In the first place, little friends, let us accept the facts as they are. The leg of an old bedstead is not so good to bat a ball with as a real bat, broad where the ball is to be hit, and narrow and slender where you are to take hold of it; and if your well-shaped bat is also polished and carved and marked with your name in gay letters, why, it may not win you the game, but it is prettier to look at and easier to keep.

You, little girls, love to adorn yourselves with whimsical devices. You delight in stabbing your hair with long pins, whose great, round white heads your envious brothers tease you by calling eggs and cannon-balls. You fasten white beads around your necks, with red, white, and blue streamers fluttering behind you, “a large cloth-yerde and more.” All right, young people, stream away as much as you like. Your brothers will soon get tired of teasing you, and doubtless you can find something equally absurd to tease them about. Nothing is more harmless than beads and bows. I regret that there are some little girls who can only look with wistful eyes at the fluttering ribbons of their friends, without hope of attaining any such delights themselves. Not that I think they would be more beautiful with them than without them, —but I like to see children have what they want when their wants are innocent. Here is a little boy who read the prospectus of the “Young Folks,” and scarcely gave it a thought. He knew he could have it by saying a word; his mother would be only too glad at the slightest symptom that he was developing a taste for reading. Another boy lay awake nights, trying to think whether there could be any hope of his subscribing for it, and considers himself very happy in clubbing with three other boys and taking it together. He does not mind that he gets it a week after it is out, and slightly battered at that. When a little girl who wears calico and walks to church is playing with a little girl who wears silk and rides in her carriage, and a third little girl comes by and invites the latter into her garden and says nothing to the former, she feels slighted and unhappy, and it is quite natural she should.

But, little friends, be comforted. You who see the fashions come and go, and are not able to follow them, you who cannot get “a-quarter” just for the asking, you whose clothes are a little faded, and perhaps patched here and there, you who see the toys and the candies in the hands of other children and not in yours, you who live in the plain, small, and perhaps unattractive houses, let not your hearts be troubled.

There are many reasons why they need not be, some of which you can understand and some you cannot. I will begin with one that you cannot understand, and you must simply take my word for it.

You should not be troubled, because, although you may miss many good things, you can always have the best things. Character is of more consequence than clothes. If you are a gentle little girl, if you speak in soft, pleasant tones, if you are kindly in your acts and generous in your feelings towards all, whether they are dressed better or worse than you, if you are respectful to your elders, and especially to your parents, if you are truthful and obedient, and do not talk when there is company,—why, it is not of the smallest consequence whether you have a string tied around your neck or not. If you are a brave, honest, manly boy,—if you are polite to your mother, and take good care of your sisters, even if you do tease them a little, as I am confident you do,—and not a very little either,—if you scorn a meanness, and are not afraid to apologize when you have, in a passion, said or done a wrong thing,—then you may consider yourself extremely well off in the world, although you have no pony, and are rather bashful, and must work when other boys are at play, and your jacket is short-waisted. Every good thing I have mentioned you may possess, whether you are rich or poor. If you have not these things, riches will do you no good,—and if you have them, poverty will do you no hurt. I mean, if a girl is rough in speech and coarse in manners, she will be disagreeable to all those whose good opinion is worth having, even though she wear a new hat every day with feathers floating all over it; and a well-bred boy will be liked, and favored, and helped on in the world, whether he wear broadcloth or blue overalls. This is not merely what the books say, but it is true in life.

Let me tell you a short story to illustrate another reason.

Two boys living next door to each other were playmates and friends. Henry’s father was rich, and Robert’s father was poor. Robert often used to wonder in his own mind why it was that Henry should have so many fine things and himself so few. When Henry rode by on his pony, Robert had hard work not to feel envious and unhappy. Time passed on, and Robert left his native city. He had been a good boy, and he became a good man, and a learned man, and a rich man. He drove his own horses, and lived in a handsome house, and associated with the best people. One day he was walking along the beach during a short visit at home, and he met a man whom he half recollected, and who half recollected him. “Is this Henry?” “Is this Robert?” And very glad they were to see each other.

“And how goes the world with you?” asked Robert

“Miserably enough,” replied Henry, sadly. “I am a pauper!”

Robert was shocked, and hardly knew what to say, but Henry went on frankly: "You had nothing but your energies to rely on. You went abroad, and have made yourself a name and a fortune. I had plenty of money. My friends were unwilling to have me leave them. I had no genius to impel me from within, and no necessity to force me from without. I led an aimless, useless life. I fell into extravagance from sheer listlessness. I was too lazy to *rush* into anything. I had barely sense enough left to see that my property was disappearing while there was yet a pittance remaining. Then I turned upon my steps, took care of the rest, and am now subsisting upon it, with no hope in this life and but little interest in the next."

And yet, dear children, this boy gave apparently as fair promise as the other. And now I give you the second reason why you should not be over-much troubled if you are poor,—that poverty seems to be favorable to the best mental and moral training of a vast majority of persons. Remember that this is not universally true. Many who are the sons and daughters of rich men are eminently fit for you to follow, by the grace of their manners, the wisdom of their minds, and the goodness of their hearts. The beauty of their daily life cannot be surpassed. But I think you will find that a large majority of those who are eminent for their talents, their virtues, and their usefulness were not born in costly houses, did not wear rich clothes in their childhood, and were not provided with numerous servants, elegant carriages, and expensive toys.

Let me tell you also another thing. Your standing in the world is not going to be affected by these things. You will be appreciated when you are grown up according to what you are, and not according to what you have. Does your schoolmate slight you now because you dress plainly and have little money to spend? He is a silly child for doing it, and you are a silly child for minding it; but we do not blame either of you a great deal, because we do not expect children to be very wise. But when you shall be grown up, the time for such things will have gone by. No gentleman or lady will slight you for not possessing those things which are not essential to a gentleman or lady, and it is impossible to be slighted by any one else. When you are grown up, we expect you to know this, and if you could find a little comfort in it now I should be very glad.

Above all things, my little friends, do not be envious. Be as willing to see good traits in your rich companions as in your poor ones. Because your schoolmate comes with a new dress every week, do not try to make out that she is proud. Because a boy has a pony, do not insist that he tells lies. Be just and generous towards rich and poor. Think the best you can of every one, make the most of everything you do possess, enjoy the pretty things which your friends have, even though you cannot get them yourself, and you will be as happy and contented as if you owned all the silk-worms and ponies in the world.

Gail Hamilton.

THE TALE OF TWO KNIGHTS WHO FOUGHT THE GIANT SHAM.

ONCE upon a time the world rang from zone to zone with the praises of two brave knights, who rode through it armed *cap-a-pie,* hacking lustily with their two-edged swords at all that was wrong, and crowning with sweet flowers all that was virtuous and good. I said "once upon a time"; but the strain that arose then has been ringing through the world ever since, and its vibrations will continue to be heard, sweet and low, to the end of all time.

It was the rising sun that threw far and away over the greensward the shadows of the two stalwart knights, as they rode forth to their task,—shadows so long, and so broad, that they stretched to every part of the earth, kissing tenderly the light clouds that lay on the far western horizon. Two very stalwart knights were they, indeed, and very gallant they looked as they rode side by side along the broad highway,—Sir William with his lance ever couched for coming foeman, and Sir John with a shield so bright that it glanced like a meteor as he rode: and a brilliant meteor it was, truly, though only too brief in its transit athwart the world.

And if the lance of Sir William was adorned with a wreath of *immortelles*, had not some fair hand entwined with forget-me-nots the hilt of Sir John's rapier? The lance and the sword are vanished now, but the flowers will bloom forever, and I have sprigs of them on my desk as I write.

And lo! the weird figures that follow in the train of the two knights! Two singular dwarfs, I declare,—little fellows, but amazingly strong, if you may judge by the breadth of their shoulders, and the play of their muscles as they go. See how nimbly one of them leaps forward at a beck from the finger of Sir William! What a grotesque figure he is! All nerve, and muscle, and pluck, and grasp; Stylus his name, and squire to the valiant knight Sir William is he. His face tapers to a pen of the keenest nib. You can see that ink is his wine, and that he dips his nose in it very often. He is a wonderful combination of strength and activity. He will knock the legs from under some mean rascal at his master's bidding, and then, planting in the ground the weapons of the fallen wretch, will throw summersaults over them without so much as scratching a finger. He plays with his jokes as a juggler does with cannon-balls, and if he thinks you are a deceitful person, and trying to impose on him, the chances are he will let one of them drop heavily on your favorite toe.

Side by side with him jogs Plumbago, squire to the courtly and handsome knight Sir John, at whose right hand he is always ready for active service. A quaint and swarthy imp is Plumbago, very frolicsome in his disposition, and gifted with a humor of the rarest and most pleasant kind. You can tell, to look at him, that he is a jovial companion by the way. He has more queer adventures to relate to you, and incidents, and accidents, and what not, than would go to the making up of a thousand comedies of the drollest kind. Probably Plumbago made more people merry in his lifetime than all the comedians that ever lived; but this was only when he liked his company, and saw that it was good. When he fell in with the dissolute, or the foolish, or the mean, or the insolent, or the hypocrite, or the quack, he detected them at once, and would wither with a look any of them that were so unlucky as to thrust themselves in his way. He could make them so ridiculous that people jeered them, and pointed with the finger at them when they dared to appear in the streets. Bad people came at last to be terribly afraid of Plumbago, who had a way of setting the street boys upon them, and worrying them like rats. And then he would play leap-frog over their backs, and drive their hats down over their eyes, always eluding their attempts to catch him, until they became so ashamed of themselves that they slunk into the by-ways, and kept out of sight. But the little boys and girls loved him for the good playfellow he was, and the fun he made for them when they gathered flowers together by the woodside, or shells upon the shore, or danced merrily in the hall at evening, or on the velvet lawn. He was a wonderful little fellow, was Plumbago, and one who made his mark, I can tell you.

It was a lovely summer morning as the two knights, thus accoutred and followed, took their way along a winding road that led over a thousand hills and through a thousand valleys. Yonder lay the sea, purple and amber in the floods of morning splendor. Towns stood darkly out against the sky, or nestled down in the wooded nooks. The castle frowned from the rock. The blue smoke from the lowly cottage went spirally up until it was lost in the clear expanse above. The meadows were starred with golden flowers, and the lowing of the cattle went over them like a sonorous hymn of praise. From every hedge and thicket came the carols of a thousand joyous birds, and the swallows gleamed like mail-clad warriors as they chased the burnished insects through the air. Small music was heard in the grass, too, for the grasshopper and his reedy band were there, and the cricket tuned his pipe. Nature has her holidays, sometimes, and this was one of them, proclaimed by the glad things whose voices were heard on every side.

"Isn't it a pity to think that there should be misery and wickedness in such a lovely world as this?" said Sir William, as they rode along. "The clinking of my sword jars harshly with the music around. Hark to the glad voices of the birds! but remember that a hawk may yet redden his talons in the blood of the sweetest singer of them. I wish we warriors might live without blood-letting; but duty calls us, and the word is 'Onward, march!' "

"It is a question between letting blood sometimes, or letting evil triumph over good," replied Sir John, with a thoughtful smile. "See!" added he, "look what a beautiful brook comes tumbling down through yonder glen; and, O my! what splendid speckled trout those are leaping from the pool at the foot of the fall! Yonder is the miller too, lolling over the hand-rail of his bridge, and I hear his ringing laugh as he jeers the stout old gentleman who fishes up to his knees in water in the pool. O, I should like to linger in this tranquil spot the whole day through, and cast my fly over the ripples

for the yellow trout. But there is work before us, and our motto is, ‘Onward, march!’ ”

And onward they went, on and on, until they saw a town that lay at some distance on the plain before them. And they knew it was a gala-day there, for past them on the road hurried a throng of people, various in dress and manners, many of them laden with merchandise for the fair. There was a crusty old lord in his chariot and four, and his wheels raised such a cloud of dust as he passed that Stylus called him names while he was yet well within hearing, and Plumbago made a face so like the old lord himself, that even the impudent footmen behind that nobleman’s carriage could not help laughing. But then he twisted himself ludicrously into the very semblance of the footmen, and they did not laugh any more. Lovely girls cantered past on splendid horses, escorted by their cavaliers, and Sir John kissed his hand to them, for they were friends of his and loved him greatly. Here came a couple of skulking knaves, at whom Sir William’s horse lashed out his legs when they came behind him; and here a market-cart, with a rustic driver, and an old woman smoking a pipe, and some small children toddling along the roadside, among whom was a little golden-haired girl, so pretty that Sir John lifted her up to his saddle-bow, and carried her all the rest of the way to the market-town.

The great square was thronged with people when the two knights arrived,—so thronged that they had some difficulty in making their way to the centre of it. “Now, Plumbago,” said Sir John, “wind a blast upon your bugle-horn, and proclaim to the assembled people that here in the market-place I hang my shield, in order that all who are so disposed may come and see themselves reflected in it.”

Sweet and mellow the bugle-notes rang out in the clear air, and, when the two squires had cleared a space in the middle of the throng, the shield of Sir John was placed there,—a burnished disk of silvery radiance, in which the passing events were reflected as clearly as the night-sky in some placid lake. Nay, were not things of the past shown also in that magic mirror? and were there not those who looked for the future in it, and saw it there too, and took their counsel on it, likewise, as they went their way?

It was curious to observe the deportment of those who stopped to have glimpses in the shield. There came a sweet young girl, with such eyes and a smile so arch, and she laughed when she saw her pretty self in the shield, and danced before it and made shapes; but she blushed a little too, for she wondered how she ever could have got her hair trussed up after a fashion so extravagant. And then she let down her flowing tresses, and wound them into a knot simpler and more modest, as she tripped laughingly away.

The crusty old lord, whose chariot-wheels had raised such a dust upon the road, was there too; and, as he gazed upon his image in the shield, he wondered at first what it was, and grinned and gibbered at it amazingly. But when it grinned and gibbered back at him, he saw that it knew him, and away he tottered on his bad old legs, afraid to face the truth.

See what hosts of beautiful children dance and gambol before the shield, laughing to see themselves imaged in it! And their fathers and mothers laugh too at the pretty sight, though they look somewhat grave when they behold their own reflection, and see how much stouter they are growing as the years pass, and some of them a little bald too.

Old ladies and gentlemen, made up to look young, pause but a short time before the shield, because the moment they look at it they feel their wigs coming off, and the paint running down through the wrinkles of their false faces. And so it is with numbers of ill-looking personages who pass before it,—quacks and impostors of all sorts; and soon a panic seizes upon all these, and they rush wildly away from the spot, as if they felt that truth was tearing after them like a troop of wolves.

Then Sir John braced his buckler once more upon his arm, and the two knights rode on stately through the town, the people making way for them and saluting them as they passed. Out into the country again, until they came to a wide plain, far away upon the horizon of which there towered an immense black rock. On the summit of this a castle with notched battlements and many towers loomed awful and dark in the clear air. Paths, crooked and stony, and half choked with briers and noxious weeds, branched in every direction from the dark rock. There was no song of birds along those dreary hedges, and the grasshopper was silent in the lanes, though the hissing of serpents might have been heard there. Huge spiders hung their nets upon the thorns, and lay in ambush for the death-watches and other insects of ill omen with which the place swarmed. The ground sounded hollow to the tread of those who ventured upon these dismal tracks, along which there straggled many strange figures, all with great hollow heads like those worn in a pantomime, on their way to and from the castle.

“Before us lies our work,” said Sir William, as the two knights reined up their horses and gazed upon the scene; “for yon gloomy castle that frowns upon the plain is the fortress in which dwells the giant Sham. We must get rid of that fellow ere the sun goes down, for he is the greatest tyrant in all the land. So now look well to your weapons, for the cry is ‘Onward, march!’ ”

Charles Dawson Shanly.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE TINY MAHOGANY BOX:

A CHRISTMAS STORY FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

DEAR little bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, laughing children, I am going to tell you a Christmas story. It will not be about giants or dwarfs, or genii or dragons, or ogres or fairies, for stories about such things are for the most part untrue; and I want to tell you something that is as true—as true—as that you love mamma better than anybody in the whole world. Mind you, I said, "for the most part untrue," for I don't want you to think for a moment that I don't believe in fairies. Bless you, *I* know as well as you do that in every beautiful flower God has given us lives a wee, wee fairy, whose duty it is to take care of her flower-home.

Now the fairy of the red rose must get up early in the morning, before you little children, early risers as you are, have opened your bright eyes, and she must wash the fragrant blossom with the clearest dew-drops she can find—after washing her own face, of course; no real lady-fairy would neglect that.

And the fairies that live in the lilies,—they are constantly swinging to and fro, shaking the dust from the dainty flowers, which the mischievous wind, spiteful fellow, has thrown upon them. Don't you think it must be pleasant to have a sweet white lily for a cradle? O dear! now that I *have* begun talking about fairies, I find it so hard to stop. It's so cunning to think of them, with their little bonnets made out of young blue-bells, and their lovely cloaks made out of butterflies' wings, and—but this has nothing to do with my story. That is about two little children, and is to help to teach you to love and obey your parents when living, and to remember *faithfully* their last wishes when God calls them to heaven.

These children were named Elsie and Pearl. They lived in a small white house in the country, and a very nice little house it was too. In the summer time the gay morning-glories and the scarlet runners and the honeysuckles crept all up the front and all over the windows, so that they didn't need a bit of a curtain. How you would have liked it, wouldn't you? Curtains of lovely green, all spangled with sweet-smelling flowers! In the front garden grew tall hollyhocks, and lady-slippers, and dahlias, and roses, and marigolds, and tulips, and more pretty flowers than I can spare time to tell you about.

The mother of Elsie and Pearl was a poor widow, who owned nothing in the world but this cottage, a cow, some chickens, and a small strip of land which served her for a vegetable garden. She took care of herself and children by selling in the village market all the cabbages, tomatoes, turnips, carrots, beets, radishes, and the like, which she could spare; beside this, she sold milk and eggs in the summer-time to the rich people who came to stay a few weeks in the country.

But this year the rich people didn't come at all. They went to Saratoga, Newport, or some such place, I dare say, where they saw a great deal of fine dress, but no country. And the poor woman did not prosper with her garden vegetables either, and so Christmas Eve, which I suppose you all know comes on the 24th of December, found her without any money to buy a Christmas dinner, let alone any presents for Elsie and Pearl. Wasn't it *too* bad? Not a penny on Christmas Eve, of *all* times in the year!

The children had gone to bed, and the poor mother sat alone in the room which served for both parlor and kitchen. And very sad she was, for there hung the little empty stockings, one on each brightly scoured andiron, and empty they were likely to remain too. Perhaps you would like to know how this room looked. I will tell you. On the floor was a nice rag-carpet, and who do you think made it? The widow and Elsie and Pearl. Wasn't that splendid? Why, little Pearl could not have been more than four years old when she began sewing. I wonder if any of you would have patience enough to piece together hundreds and hundreds of little strips of old calico! I hope so, if your dear mother needed a carpet, and was poor, like this poor woman, and had no money to spare to buy one.

Ranged around the room against the whitewashed wall stood four wooden chairs, (the chair the widow was sitting in was an old-fashioned rocking-chair, with a cushion in it, made, no doubt, out of one of the widow's old gowns, and pretty old it must have been, too, or Elsie or Pearl would have had a dress, or apron, or something of that sort, instead of the rocking-chair having a cushion,) and beside the chairs there was a wooden table, scrubbed until it was as white as new milk; and on the wall, just over the table, hung a queer little looking-glass, the frame of which was nearly hidden by Christmas green, dotted with bright elder-berries. The mantel-shelf was very high, and on it stood a couple of candlesticks, a clock, and a tiny mahogany box. A wood fire was blazing on the hearth, and, as I told you before, Elsie's and Pearl's stockings were hanging one on each andiron.

They had gone to bed thinking that the good old Santa Claus would come as soon as the clock struck twelve and bring them some nice presents. At the very moment their mother was grieving about not being able to go to the new store in the village, about a mile off, and buy them some pretty things, they were smiling in their sleep, and dreaming of whole handfuls of sugar-plums, and all sorts of beautiful toys.

"Ah!" said the widow to herself, (some people talk a great deal to themselves when they have no one else to talk

to,) "how well I remember, when I was a little girl, waking up early Christmas morning and running directly to my stocking. O my dear mother, how kind she was! and to think *I* love my Elsie and Pearl just as well as she loved me, and yet I can buy them *nothing*! And that's not the worst of it. We'll none of us have even a Christmas dinner. I declare I could cry." And she *did* cry, throwing her checked apron over her head and leaning back in her rocking-chair. Just then the clock struck seven, and five minutes after the tired woman, who had been washing all day, fell fast asleep. And she had a beautiful dream, and this was the dream. The little room was suddenly lighted with a great light, and her dear mother stood in the centre, looking exactly as she looked some twenty years before. The same sweet smile was on her lips, and the same love-look shone in her eyes. A wreath of light twined about her head, and her dress was as white and pure as a snow-flake before it touches the earth. She came right up to her daughter, and took her hand just as your mothers take your hands often when they wish to chide you gently for something wrong you have done. "Why, child," she said, and her voice was *very* sweet, "you forget that God is watching over you. He smiles upon all those who have been good and obedient children, and *you* were always a kind and dutiful child. Do you remember the little box I put in your stocking many long years ago? It was locked, and I told you never to open it unless you became *very, very* poor. You promised to obey me, and so faithfully have you kept your promise, that you have never even thought of opening it. I have come to tell you that the time has arrived for you to unlock the box; and *never* again lose faith in your Father above." She kissed her daughter, and then the great light disappeared, and the widow awoke, and saw nothing but the big fire on the hearth, the clock on the mantel-shelf, and everything just as it was when she fell asleep. But she remembered all her mother had said; and, rising, she took down the tiny box, (which, true enough, she had never thought of opening, because it was her mother's last gift, and she kept it sacred,) placed it on the table, and, lighting a candle, began to look for the key. It was a long time before she could find it; but at last it tumbled out of an old black-silk bag which she found in a corner of her trunk. She quickly unlocked the box, and *what do you think she saw in it*? A whole row of gold pieces, lying on a soft bed of cotton, and sparkling as brightly as your eyes, little readers. For a moment the widow could not move, she was so surprised; but the next, she fell upon her knees and thanked God for his goodness.

Just then the clock struck eight, and she remembered that she had plenty of time to go to the village store and back again before ten. So she put on her thick hood and cloak and stout shoes, (for it was snowing, as it almost always does about Christmas time,) and, kissing Elsie and Pearl, she took a lantern and set out.

When she came back she not only had her arms full, but a bundle tied on her back, and the clock struck ten just as the poor, tired woman fell fast asleep again.

O, what a happy little house that was on Christmas morning! Elsie and Pearl were awake at daylight, running around in their white night-dresses; they wouldn't even wait to put their shoes and stockings on, so eager were they to see what Santa Claus had brought them. Each stocking was filled so full with sugar-plums, cakes, and oranges, that it looked as though it would burst. And two of the wooden chairs were placed close together, and on the back of one hung a new cloak for Elsie, and on the back of the other a new cloak for Pearl. And on the seat of one lay a new pair of shoes and a nice crimson delaine dress for Elsie, and on the seat of the other, new shoes and a crimson dress for Pearl. And that was not all. On the white wooden table lay a plump little turkey waiting to be roasted, some nice large potatoes waiting to be baked, and a plum-pudding waiting to be boiled. And the market-basket! bless your hearts, there was no use in that basket having a cover,—no use at all,—for the cover wouldn't and couldn't fit on, because of the parcels of raisins, tea, sugar, flour, and everything nice with which that basket was crowded!

So you see, dear little children, how the widow was rewarded for being a good child. Had she broken her promise to her mother, most likely the money would have all been spent, (for money is the hardest thing in the world to keep,) and she would have had no Christmas dinner, and Elsie and Pearl no Christmas presents.

Margaret Eytinge.

A SUMMER IN LESLIE GOLDTHWAITE'S LIFE.

I.

"Nothing but leaves—leaves—leaves! The green things don't know enough to do anything better!"

Leslie Goldthwaite said this, standing in the bay-window among her plants, which had been green and nourishing, but persistently blossomless, all winter, and now the spring days were come.

Cousin Delight looked up; and her white ruffling, that she was daintily hemstitching, fell to her lap, as she looked, still with a certain wide intentness in her eyes, upon the pleasant window, and the bright, fresh things it framed. Not the least bright and fresh among them was the human creature in her early girlhood, tender and pleasant in its beautiful leafage, but waiting, like any other young and growing life, to prove what sort of flower should come of it.

"Now you've got one of your 'thoughts,' Cousin Delight! I see it 'biggening,' as Elspie says." Leslie turned round, with her little green watering-pot suspended in her hand, waiting for the thought.

To have a thought, and to give it, were nearly simultaneous things with Cousin Delight; so true, so pure, so unselfish, so made to give,—like perfume or music, which cannot be, and be withheld,—were thoughts with her.

I must say a word, before I go further, of Delight Goldthwaite. I think of her as of quite a young person; you, youthful readers, would doubtless have declared that she was old,—very old, at least for a young lady. She was twenty-eight, at this time of which I write; Leslie, her young cousin, was just "past the half, and catching up," as she said herself,—being fifteen. Leslie's mother called Miss Goldthwaite, playfully, "Ladies' Delight"; and, taking up the

idea, half her women-friends knew her by this significant and epigrammatic title. There was something doubly pertinent in it. She made you think, at once, of nothing so much as heart's-ease; a garden heart's-ease,—that flower of many names; not of the frail, scentless, wild wood-violet,—she had been cultured to something larger. The violet nature was there, colored and shaped more richly, and gifted with rare fragrance—for those whose delicate sense could perceive it. The very face was a pansy-face; with its deep, large, purple-blue eyes, and golden brows and lashes, the color of her hair,—pale gold, so pale that careless people who had perception only for such beauty as can flash upon you from a crowd, or across a drawing-room, said hastily that she had *no* brows or lashes, and that this spoiled her. She was not a beauty, therefore; nor was she, in any sort, a belle. She never drew around her the common attention that is paid eagerly to very pretty, outwardly-bewitching girls; and she never seemed to care for this. At a party, she was as apt as not to sit in a corner; but the quiet people,—the mothers, looking on, or the girls, waiting for partners,—getting into that same corner also, found the best pleasure of their evening there. There was something about her dress, too, that women appreciated most fully; the delicate textures,—the finishings—and only those—of rare, exquisite lace,—the perfect harmony of the whole unobtrusive toilet,—women looked at these in wonder at the unerring instinct of her taste; in wonder, also, that they only with each other raved about her. Nobody had ever been supposed to be devoted to her; she had never been reported as "engaged"; there had never been any of this sort of gossip about her; gentlemen found her, they said, hard to get acquainted with; she had not much of the small talk which must usually begin an acquaintance; a few—her relatives, or her elders, or the husbands of her intimate married friends—understood and valued her; but it was her girl-friends and women-friends who knew her best, and declared that there was nobody like her; and so came her sobriquet, and the double pertinence of it.

Especially she was Leslie Goldthwaite's delight. Leslie had no sisters, and her aunts were old,—far older than her mother; on her father's side, a broken and scattered family had left few ties for her; next to her mother, and even closer, in some young sympathies, she clung to Cousin Delight.

With this diversion, we will go back, now, to her, and to her thought.

"I was thinking," she said, with that intent look in her eyes, "I often think, of how something else was found, once, having nothing but leaves; and of what came to it."

"I know," answered Leslie, with an evasive quickness; and turned round with her watering-pot to her plants again.

There was sometimes a bit of waywardness about Leslie Goldthwaite; there was a fitfulness of frankness and reserve. She was eager for truth; yet now and then she would thrust it aside. She said that "nobody liked a nicely pointed moral better than she did; only she would just as lief it shouldn't be pointed at her." The fact was, she was in that sensitive state in which many a young girl finds herself, when she begins to ask and to weigh with herself the great questions of life, and shrinks shyly from the open mention of the very thing she longs more fully to apprehend.

Cousin Delight took no notice; it is, perhaps, likely that she understood sufficiently well for that. She turned toward the table by which she sat, and pulled towards her a heavy Atlas that lay open at the map of Connecticut. Beside it was Lippincott's Gazetteer,—open, also.

"Travelling, Leslie?"

"Yes. I've been a charming journey this morning, before you came. I wonder if I ever *shall* travel, in reality. I've done a monstrous deal of it with maps and gazetteers."

"This hasn't been one of the stereotyped tours, it seems."

"O, no! What's the use of doing Niagara or the White Mountains, or even New York, and Philadelphia, and Washington, on the map? I've been one of my little by-way trips; round among the villages; stopping wherever I found one cuddled in between a river and a hill, or in a little seashore nook. Those are the places, after all, that I would hunt out, if I had plenty of money to go where I liked with. It's so pleasant to imagine how the people live there, and what sort of folks they would be likely to be. It isn't so much travelling as living round,—awhile in one home, and then in another. How many different little biding-places there are in the world! And how queer it is only really to know about one or two of them!"

"What's this place you're at just now? Winsted?"

"Yes; there's where I've brought up, at the end of that bit of railroad. It's a bigger place than I fancied, though. I always steer clear of the names that end in 'ville.' They're sure to be stupid, money-making towns, all grown up in a minute, with some common man's name tacked on to them, that happened to build a saw-mill, or something, first. But Winsted has such a sweet, little, quiet English sound. I know it never *began* with a mill. They make pins and clocks and tools and machines there now; and it's 'the largest and most prosperous post-village of Litchfield County.' But I don't care for the pins and machinery. It's got a lake alongside of it; and Still River—don't that sound nice?—runs through; and there are the great hills—big enough to put on the map—out beyond. I can fancy where the girls take their sunset walks; and the moonlight parties, boating on the pond, and the way the woods look, round Still River. O, yes! that's one of the places I mean to go to."

Leslie Goldthwaite lived in one of the inland cities of Massachusetts. She had grown up, and gone to school there, and had never yet been thirty miles away. Her father was a busy lawyer, making a handsome living for his family, and

laying aside abundantly for their future provision, but giving himself no lengthened recreations, and scarcely thinking of them as needful for the rest.

It was a pleasant, large, brown wooden house they lived in, on the corner of two streets; with a great, green door-yard about it on two sides, where chestnut and cherry trees shaded it from the public way, and flower-beds brightened under the parlor windows, and about the porch. Just greenness and bloom enough to suggest, always, more; just sweetness and sunshine and bird-song enough, in the early summer days, to whisper of broad fields and deep woods where they rioted without stint; and these days always put Leslie into a certain happy impatience, and set her dreaming and imagining; and she learned a great deal of her geography in the fashion that we have hinted at.

Miss Goldthwaite was singularly discursive and fragmentary in her conversation this morning, somehow. She dropped the map-travelling suddenly, and asked a new question. "And how comes on the linen-drawer?"

"O Cousin Del! I'm humiliated,—disgusted! I feel as small as butterflies' pinfeathers! I've been to see the Haddens. Mrs. Linceford has just got home from Paris, and brought them wardrobes to last to remotest posterity! And *such* things! Such rufflings, and stitchings, and embroiderings! Why, mine look—as if they'd been made by the blacksmith!"

The "linen-drawer" was an institution of Mrs. Goldthwaite's; resultant, partly, from her old-fashioned New England ideas of womanly industry and thrift,—born and brought up, as she had been, in a family whose traditions were of house-linen sufficient for a life-time spun and woven by girls before their twenty-first year, and whose inheritance, from mother to daughter, was invariably of needfully stored personal and household plenishings, made of pure material that was worth the laying by, and carefully bleached and looked to year by year; partly, also, from a certain theory of wisdom which she had adopted, that when girls were once old enough to care for and pride themselves on a plentiful outfit, it was best they should have it as a natural prerogative of young-lady-hood, rather than that the "trousseau" should come to be, as she believed it so apt to be, one of the inciting temptations to heedless matrimony. I have heard of a mother whose passion was for elegant old lace; and who boasted to her female friends, that, when her little daughter was ten years old, she had her "lace-box," with the beginning of her hoard in costly contributions from the stores of herself and of the child's maiden aunts. Mrs. Goldthwaite did a better and more sensible thing than this; when Leslie was fifteen, she presented her with pieces of beautiful linen and cotton and cambric, and bade her begin to make garments which should be in dozens, to be laid by, in reserve, as she completed them, until she had a well-filled bureau that should defend her from the necessity of what she called a "wretched living from hand to mouth,—always having underclothing to make up, in the midst of all else that she would find to do and to learn."

Leslie need not have been ashamed, and I don't think in her heart she was, of the fresh, white, light-lying piles that had already begun to make promise of filling a drawer, which she drew out as she answered Cousin Delight's question.

The fine-lined gathers; the tiny dots of stitches that held them to their delicate bindings; the hems and tucks, true to a thread, and dotted with the same fairy needle-dimples; (no machine-work, but all real, dainty finger-craft;) the bits of ruffling peeping out from the folds, with their edges in almost invisible whip-hems; and here and there a finishing of lovely, lace-like crochet, done at odd minutes, and for "visiting-work";—there was something prettier and more precious, really, in all this, than in the imported fineries which had come, without labor and without thought, to her friends, the Haddens. Besides, there were the pleasant talks and readings of the winter evenings, all threaded in and out, and associated indelibly with every seam. There was the whole of David Copperfield, and the beginning of Our Mutual Friend, ruffled up into the night-dresses; and some of the crochet was beautiful with the rhymed pathos of Enoch Arden, and some with the poetry of the Wayside Inn; and there were places where stitches had had to be picked out and done over, when the eye grew dim and the hand trembled while the great war-news was being read.

Leslie loved it, and had a pride in it all; it was not, truly and only, humiliation and disgust at self-comparison with the Haddens, but some other and unexplained doubt which moved her now, and which was stirred often by this, or any other of the objects and circumstances of her life, and which kept her standing there with her hand upon the bureau-knob, in a sort of absence, while Cousin Delight looked in, approved, and presently dropped quietly, like a bit of money into a contribution-box, the delicate breadths of linen cambric she had finished hemstitching, and rolled together among the rest.

"O, thank you! But, Cousin Delight," said Leslie, shutting the drawer, and turning short round, suddenly, "I wish you'd just tell me—what you think—is the sense of that—about the fig-tree! I suppose it's awfully wicked, but I never could see. Is everything fig-leaves that isn't out and out fruit, and is it all to be cursed, and why *should* there be anything but leaves when 'the time of figs was not yet'?" After her first hesitation, she spoke quickly, impetuously, and without pause, as something that *would* come out.

"I suppose that has troubled you, as I dare say it has troubled a great many other people," said Cousin Delight. "It used to be a puzzle and a trouble to me. But now it seems to me one of the most beautiful things of all." She paused.

"I can *not* see how," said Leslie, emphatically. "It always seems to me so—somehow—unreasonable; and—angry."

She said this in a lower tone, as afraid of the uttered audacity of her own thought; and she walked off, as she spoke, toward the window once more, and stood with her back to Miss Goldthwaite, almost as if she wished to have done, again, with the topic. It was not easy for Leslie to speak out upon such things; it almost made her feel cross when she

had done it.

"People mistake the true cause and effect, I think," said Delight Goldthwaite, "and so lose all the wonderful enforcement of that acted parable. It was not, 'Cursed be the fig-tree because I have found nothing thereon'; but, 'Let *no fruit* grow on thee, henceforward, forever.' It seems to me I can hear the tone of tender solemnity in which Jesus would say such words; knowing, as only he knew, all that they meant, and what should come, inevitably, of such a sentence. 'And presently the fig-tree withered away.' The life was nothing, any longer, from the moment when it might not be, what all life is, a reaching forward to the perfecting of some fruit. There was nothing to come, ever again, of all its greenness and beauty, and the greenness and beauty, which were only a form and a promise, ceased to be. It was the way he took to show his disciples, in a manner they should never forget, the inexorable condition upon which all life is given, and that the barren life, so soon as its barrenness is absolutely hopeless, becomes a literal death."

Leslie stood still, with her back to Miss Goldthwaite, and her face to the window. Her perplexity was changed, but hardly cleared. There were many things that crowded into her thoughts, and might have been spoken; but it was quite impossible for her to speak. Impossible on this topic, and she certainly could not speak, at once, on any other.

Many seconds of silence counted themselves between the two. Then Cousin Delight, feeling an intuition of much that held and hindered the young girl, spoke again. "Does this make life seem hard?"

"Yes," said Leslie, then, with an effort that hoarsened her very voice. "Frightful." And as she spoke, she turned again quickly, as if to be motionless longer were to invite more talk, and went over to the other window, where her bird-cage hung, and began to take down the glasses.

"Like all parables, it is manifold," said Delight, gently. "There is a great hope in it, too."

Leslie was at her basin, now, turning the water-faucet, to rinse and refill the little drinking-vessel. She handled the things quietly, but she made no pause.

"It shows that, while we see the leaf, we may have hope of the fruit,—in ourselves, or in others."

She could not see Leslie's face. If she had, she would have perceived a quick lifting and lightening upon it. Then, a questioning that would not very long be repressed to silence.

The glasses were put in the cage again, and presently Leslie came back to a little low seat by Miss Goldthwaite's side, which she had been occupying before all this talk began. "Other people puzzle me as much as myself," she said. "I think the whole world is running to leaves, sometimes."

"Some things flower almost invisibly, and hide away their fruit under thick foliage. It is often only when the winds shake their leaves down, and strip the branches bare, that we find the best that has been growing."

"They make a great fuss and flourish with the leaves, though, as long as they can. And it's who shall grow the broadest and tallest, and flaunt out with the most of them. After all, it's natural; and they *are* beautiful, in themselves. And there's a 'time' for leaves, too, before the figs."

"Exactly. We have a right to look for the leaves, and to be glad of them. That is a part of the parable."

"Cousin Delight! Let's talk of real things, and let the parable alone a minute."

Leslie sprang, impulsively, to her bureau, again, and flung forth the linen-drawer.

"There are my fig-leaves,—some of them,—and here are more." She turned, with a quick movement, to her wardrobe; pulled out and uncovered a bonnet-box which held a dainty headgear of the new spring fashion, and then took down from a hook and tossed upon it a silken garment that fluttered with fresh ribbons. "How much of this outside business is right, and how much wrong, I should be glad to know? It all takes time and thoughts; and those are life. How much life must go into the leaves? That's what puzzles me. I can't do without the things; and I can't be let to take 'clear comfort' in them, as grandma says, either." She was on the floor, now, beside her little fineries; her hands clasped together about one knee, and her face turned up to Cousin Delight's. She looked as if she half believed herself to be ill used.

"And clothes are but the first want,—the primitive fig-leaves; the world is full of other outside business,—as much outside as these," pursued Miss Goldthwaite, thoughtfully. "Everything is outside. Learning, and behaving, and going, and doing, and seeing, and hearing, and having. 'It's all a muddle,' as the poor man says in Hard Times."

"I don't think I can do without the parable," said Cousin Delight. "The real inward principle of the tree—that which corresponds to thought and purpose in the soul—urges always to the finishing of its life in the fruit. The leaves are only by the way,—an outgrowth of the same vitality, and a process toward the end; but never, in any living thing, the end itself."

"Um," said Leslie, in her nonchalant fashion again; her chin between her two hands now, and her head making little appreciative nods. "That's like condensed milk; a great deal in a little of it. I'll put the fig-leaves away now, and think it over."

But, as she sprang up, and came round behind Miss Goldthwaite's chair, she stopped, and gave her a little kiss on the top of her head. If Cousin Delight had seen, there was a bright softness in the eyes, which told of feeling, and of gladness that welcomed the quick touch of truth.

Miss Goldthwaite knew one good thing,—when she had driven her nail. "She never hammered in the head with a

punch, like a carpenter," Leslie said of her. She believed that, in moral tool-craft, that finishing implement belonged properly to the hand of an after-workman.

Author of "Faith Gartney's Girlhood."

AN OLD LEGEND.

FOR THE YOUNG.

THE snow came falling fast and fair
Down through the wintry night;
The Christmas lights shone everywhere,
The city streets were bright;
And loud the sweet cathedral bells
Chimed praises and delight.

But out amid the falling snow,
Forsaken and alone,
A little child went wandering slow
And making piteous moan;
For his father and his mother dear
Up into heaven were gone.

He saw the fruitful Christmas-trees
Spread out their gracious boughs:
He saw between the curtains red
The children's shining brows,
And the little Christ-child sitting high
To hear their thankful vows.

Then loud he cried, and sobbed full sore:
No mother dear had he
To fill his apron from her store,
And take him on her knee.
He cried till a rich woman heard,
And came outside to see.

"O lady! give me fire and food,
I am so starved and cold,
Please do the little orphan good,
For God has sent you gold!"
But she said, "Begone, thou beggar boy!
My house no more can hold."

She shut him out into the night,
And went among her own;
She sat upon a cushion bright,
He on the stepping-stone,
And his tears made little drops of ice
As he sat there alone.

But down the wide and snowy street
He saw another child,
With silver sandals on his feet,
Float through the tempest wild,
His snow-white garments shining fair,
As if a sunbeam smiled.

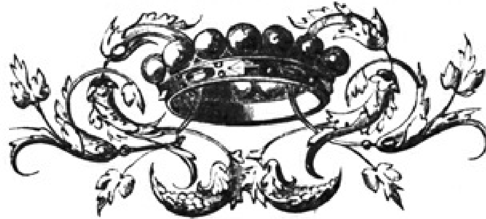
Right onward to the orphan lad
Down the wide street he came,
And in a voice full sweet and glad
He called him by his name,
And the little weary child grew warm,
Forgetting pain and shame.

"Thou hast no home, thou little one,
But thou shalt go with me:
I saw thee sitting all alone,
And I came after thee.
Now look up to the heavens above,
Behold thy Christmas tree!"

The boy looked up to heaven above,
His tears forgot to flow;
For the Christ-child with his looks of love
Had charmed away the snow,
And on a tree all set with stars
Angels went to and fro.

"Come up! come up, thou little boy!
Come up to heaven on high!
Thy Christmas-tide shall dawn in joy."
He clasped him lovingly,
And the Christ-child and the orphan lad
Kept Christmas in the sky.

Rose Terry.



THE HEN THAT HATCHED DUCKS.

A STORY.

Once there was a nice young hen that we will call Mrs. Feathertop. She was a hen of most excellent family, being a direct descendant of the Bolton Grays, and as pretty a young fowl as you should wish to see of a summer's day. She was, moreover, as fortunately situated in life as it was possible for a hen to be. She was bought by young Master Fred Little John, with four or five family connections of hers, and a lively young cock, who was held to be as brisk a scratcher and as capable a head of a family as any half-dozen sensible hens could desire.

I can't say that at first Mrs. Feathertop was a very sensible hen. She was very pretty and lively, to be sure, and a great favorite with Master Bolton Gray Cock, on account of her bright eyes, her finely shaded feathers, and certain saucy dashing ways that she had, which seemed greatly to take his fancy. But old Mrs. Scratchard, living in the neighboring yard, assured all the neighborhood that Gray Cock was a fool for thinking so much of that flighty young thing,—that she had not the smallest notion how to get on in life, and thought of nothing in the world but her own pretty feathers. "Wait till she comes to have chickens," said Mrs. Scratchard. "Then you will see. I have brought up ten broods myself,—as likely and respectable chickens as ever were a blessing to society,—and I think I ought to know a good hatcher and brooder when I see her; and I know *that* fine piece of trumpery, with her white feathers tipped with gray, never will come down to family life. *She* scratch for chickens! Bless me, she never did anything in all her days but run round and eat the worms which somebody else scratched up for her!"

When Master Bolton Gray heard this he crowed very loudly, like a cock of spirit, and declared that old Mrs.

Scratchard was envious, because she had lost all her own tail-feathers, and looked more like a worn out old feather-duster than a respectable hen, and that therefore she was filled with sheer envy of anybody that was young and pretty. So young Mrs. Feathertop cackled gay defiance at her busy rubbishy neighbor, as she sunned herself under the bushes on fine June afternoons.

Now Master Fred Little John had been allowed to have these hens by his mamma on the condition that he would build their house himself, and take all the care of it; and, to do Master Fred justice, he executed the job in a small way quite creditably. He chose a sunny sloping bank covered with a thick growth of bushes, and erected there a nice little hen-house, with two glass windows, a little door, and a good pole for his family to roost on. He made, moreover, a row of nice little boxes with hay in them for nests, and he bought three or four little smooth white china eggs to put in them, so that, when his hens *did* lay, he might carry off their eggs without their being missed. This hen-house stood in a little grove that sloped down to a wide river, just where there was a little cove which reached almost to the hen-house.

This situation inspired one of Master Fred's boy advisers with a new scheme in relation to his poultry enterprise. "Hullo! I say, Fred," said Tom Seymour, "you ought to raise ducks,—you've got a capital place for ducks there."

"Yes,—but I've bought *hens*, you see," said Freddy; "so it's no use trying."

"No use! Of course there is! Just as if your hens couldn't hatch ducks' eggs. Now you just wait till one of your hens wants to set, and you put ducks' eggs under her, and you'll have a family of ducks in a twinkling. You can buy ducks' eggs, a plenty, of old Sam under the hill; he always has hens hatch his ducks."

So Freddy thought it would be a good experiment, and informed his mother the next morning that he intended to furnish the ducks for the next Christmas dinner; and when she wondered how he was to come by them, he said, mysteriously, "O, I will show you how!" but did not further explain himself. The next day he went with Tom Seymour, and made a trade with old Sam, and gave him a middle-aged jack-knife for eight of his ducks' eggs. Sam, by the by, was a woolly-headed old negro man, who lived by the pond hard by, and who had long cast envying eyes on Fred's jack-knife, because it was of extra-fine steel, having been a Christmas present the year before. But Fred knew very well there were any number more of jack-knives where that came from, and that, in order to get a new one, he must dispose of the old; so he made the trade and came home rejoicing.

Now about this time Mrs. Feathertop, having laid her eggs daily with great credit to herself, notwithstanding Mrs. Scratchard's predictions, began to find herself suddenly attacked with nervous symptoms. She lost her gay spirits, grew dumpish and morose, stuck up her feathers in a bristling way, and pecked at her neighbors if they did so much as look at her. Master Gray Cock was greatly concerned, and went to old Doctor Peppercorn, who looked solemn, and recommended an infusion of angle-worms, and said he would look in on the patient twice a day till she was better.

"Gracious me, Gray Cock!" said old Goody Kertarkut, who had been lolling at the corner as he passed, "a'n't you a fool?—cocks always are fools. Don't you know what's the matter with your wife? She wants to set,—that's all; and you just let her set! A fiddlestick for Doctor Peppercorn! Why, any good old hen that has brought up a family knows more than a doctor about such things. You just go home and tell her to set, if she wants to, and behave herself."

When Gray Cock came home, he found that Master Freddy had been before him, and established Mrs. Feathertop upon eight nice eggs, where she was sitting in gloomy grandeur. He tried to make a little affable conversation with her, and to relate his interview with the Doctor and Goody Kertarkut, but she was morose and sullen, and only pecked at him now and then in a very sharp, unpleasant way; so, after a few more efforts to make himself agreeable, he left her, and went out promenading with the captivating Mrs. Red Comb, a charming young Spanish widow, who had just been imported into the neighboring yard.

"Bless my soul!" said he, "you've no idea how cross my wife is."

"O you horrid creature!" said Mrs. Red Comb; "how little you feel for the weaknesses of us poor hens!"

"On my word, ma'am," said Gray Cock, "you do me injustice. But when a hen gives way to temper, ma'am, and no longer meets her husband with a smile,—when she even pecks at him whom she is bound to honor and obey—"

"Horrid monster! talking of obedience! I should say, sir, you came straight from Turkey!" and Mrs. Red Comb tossed her head with a most bewitching air, and pretended to run away, and old Mrs. Scratchard looked out of her coop and called to Goody Kertarkut,—

"Look how Mr. Gray Cock is flirting with that widow. I always knew she was a baggage."

"And his poor wife left at home alone," said Goody Kertarkut. "It's the way with 'em all!"

"Yes, yes," said Dame Scratchard, "she'll know what real life is now, and she won't go about holding her head so high, and looking down on her practical neighbors that have raised families."

"Poor thing, what'll she do with a family?" said Goody Kertarkut.

"Well, what business have such young flirts to get married?" said Dame Scratchard. "I don't expect she'll raise a single chick; and there's Gray Cock flirting about fine as ever. Folks didn't do so when I was young. I'm sure my husband knew what treatment a setting hen ought to have,—poor old Long Spur,—he never minded a peck or so now and then. I must say these modern fowls a'n't what fowls used to be."

Meanwhile the sun rose and set, and Master Fred was almost the only friend and associate of poor little Mrs.

Feathertop, whom he fed daily with meal and water, and only interrupted her sad reflections by pulling her up occasionally to see how the eggs were coming on.

At last, “Peep, peep, peep!” began to be heard in the nest, and one little downy head after another poked forth from under the feathers, surveying the world with round, bright, winking eyes; and gradually the brood were hatched, and Mrs. Feathertop arose, a proud and happy mother, with all the bustling, scratching, care-taking instincts of family-life warm within her breast. She clucked and scratched, and cuddled the little downy bits of things as handily and discreetly as a seven-year-old hen could have done, exciting thereby the wonder of the community.

Master Gray Cock came home in high spirits, and complimented her; told her she was looking charmingly once more, and said, “Very well, very nice!” as he surveyed the young brood. So that Mrs. Feathertop began to feel the world going well with her,—when suddenly in came Dame Scratchard and Goody Kertarkut to make a morning call.

“Let’s see the chicks,” said Dame Scratchard.

“Goodness me,” said Goody Kertarkut, “what a likeness to their dear papa!”

“Well, but bless me, what’s the matter with their bills?” said Dame Scratchard. “Why, my dear, these chicks are deformed! I’m sorry for you, my dear, but it’s all the result of your inexperience; you ought to have eaten pebble-stones with your meal when you were setting. Don’t you see, Dame Kertarkut, what bills they have? That’ll increase, and they’ll be frightful!”

“What shall I do?” said Mrs. Feathertop, now greatly alarmed.

“Nothing, as I know of,” said Dame Scratchard, “since you didn’t come to me before you set. I could have told you all about it. Maybe it won’t kill ’em, but they’ll always be deformed.”

And so the gossips departed, leaving a sting under the pin-feathers of the poor little hen mamma, who began to see that her darlings had curious little spoon-bills, different from her own, and to worry and fret about it.

“My dear,” she said to her spouse, “do get Dr. Peppercorn to come in and look at their bills, and see if anything can be done.”

Dr. Peppercorn came in, and put on a monstrous pair of spectacles, and said, “Hum! Ha! Extraordinary case,—very singular!”

“Did you ever see anything like it, Doctor?” said both parents, in a breath.

“I’ve read of such cases. It’s a calcareous enlargement of the vascular bony tissue, threatening ossification,” said the Doctor.

“O, dreadful!—can it be possible?” shrieked both parents. “Can anything be done?”

“Well, I should recommend a daily lotion made of mosquitoes’ horns and bicarbonate of frogs’ toes, together with a powder, to be taken morning and night, of muriate of fleas. One thing you must be careful about: they must never wet their feet, nor drink any water.”

“Dear me, Doctor, I don’t know what I *shall* do, for they seem to have a particular fancy for getting into water.”

“Yes, a morbid tendency often found in these cases of bony tumification of the vascular tissue of the mouth; but you must resist it, ma’am, as their life depends upon it”;—and with that Dr. Peppercorn glared gloomily on the young ducks, who were stealthily poking the objectionable little spoon-bills out from under their mother’s feathers.

After this poor Mrs. Feathertop led a weary life of it; for the young fry were as healthy and enterprising a brood of young ducks as ever carried saucepans on the end of their noses, and they most utterly set themselves against the doctor’s prescriptions, murmured at the muriate of fleas and the bicarbonate of frogs’ toes, and took every opportunity to waddle their little ways down to the mud and water which was in their near vicinity. So their bills grew larger and larger, as did the rest of their bodies, and family government grew weaker and weaker.

“You’ll wear me out, children, you certainly will,” said poor Mrs. Feathertop.

“You’ll go to destruction,—do ye hear?” said Master Gray Cock.

“Did you ever see such frights as poor Mrs. Feathertop has got?” said Dame Scratchard. “I knew what would come of *her* family,—all deformed, and with a dreadful sort of madness, which makes them love to shovel mud with those shocking spoon-bills of theirs.”

“It’s a kind of idiocy,” said Goody Kertarkut. “Poor things! they can’t be kept from the water, nor made to take powders, and so they get worse and worse.”

“I understand it’s affecting their feet so that they can’t walk, and a dreadful sort of net is growing between their toes; what a shocking visitation!”

“She brought it on herself,” said Dame Scratchard. “Why didn’t she come to me before she set? She was always an upstart, self-conceited thing, but I’m sure I pity her.”

Meanwhile the young ducks throve apace. Their necks grew glossy, like changeable green and gold satin, and though they would not take the doctor’s medicine, and would waddle in the mud and water,—for which they always felt themselves to be very naughty ducks,—yet they grew quite vigorous and hearty. At last one day the whole little tribe waddled off down to the bank of the river. It was a beautiful day, and the river was dancing and dimpling and winking as the little breezes shook the trees that hung over it.

"Well," said the biggest of the little ducks, "in spite of Dr. Peppercorn, I can't help longing for the water. I don't believe it is going to hurt me,—at any rate, here goes";—and in he plumped, and in went every duck after him, and they threw out their great brown feet as cleverly as if they had taken rowing lessons all their lives, and sailed off on the river, away, away among the ferns, under the pink azalias, through reeds and rushes, and arrow-heads and pickerel-weed, the happiest ducks that ever were born; and soon they were quite out of sight.

"Well, Mrs. Feathertop, this is a dispensation!" said Mrs. Scratchard. "Your children are all drowned at last, just as I knew they'd be. The old music-teacher, Master Bullfrog, that lives down in Water-Dock Lane, saw 'em all plump madly into the water together this morning; that's what comes of not knowing how to bring up a family."

Mrs. Feathertop gave only one shriek and fainted dead away, and was carried home on a cabbage-leaf, and Mr. Gray Cock was sent for, where he was waiting on Mrs. Red Comb through the squash-vines.

"It's a serious time in your family, sir," said Goody Kertarkut, "and you ought to be at home supporting your wife. Send for Doctor Peppercorn without delay."

Now as the case was a very dreadful one, Doctor Peppercorn called a council from the barn-yard of the Squire, two miles off, and a brisk young Doctor Partlett appeared, in a fine suit of brown and gold, with tail-feathers like meteors. A fine young fellow he was, lately from Paris, with all the modern scientific improvements fresh in his head.

When he had listened to the whole story, he clapped his spur into the ground, and, leaning back, laughed so loud that all the cocks in the neighborhood crowed.

Mrs. Feathertop rose up out of her swoon, and Mr. Gray Cock was greatly enraged.

"What do you mean, sir, by such behavior in the house of mourning?"

"My dear sir, pardon me,—but there is no occasion for mourning. My dear madam, let me congratulate you. There is no harm done. The simple matter is, dear madam, you have been under a hallucination all along. The neighborhood and my learned friend the doctor have all made a mistake in thinking that these children of yours were hens at all. They are ducks, ma'am, evidently ducks, and very finely formed ducks I dare say."

At this moment a quack was heard, and at a distance the whole tribe were seen coming waddling home, their feathers gleaming in green and gold, and they themselves in high good spirits.

"Such a splendid day as we have had!" they all cried in a breath. "And we know now how to get our own living; we can take care of ourselves in future, so you need have no further trouble with us."

"Madam," said the doctor, making a bow with an air which displayed his tail-feathers to advantage, "let me congratulate you on the charming family you have raised. A finer brood of young, healthy ducks I never saw. Give claw, my dear friend," he said, addressing the elder son. "In our barn-yard no family is more respected than that of the ducks."

And so Madam Feathertop came off glorious at last; and when after this the ducks used to go swimming up and down the river like so many nabobs among the admiring hens, Doctor Peppercorn used to look after them and say, "Ah! I had the care of their infancy!" and Mr. Gray Cock and his wife used to say, "It was our system of education did that!"

Harriet Beecher Stowe.

TWO WAYS OF TELLING A STORY.

Who is this? A careless little midshipman, idling about in a great city, with his pockets full of money. He is waiting for the coach; it comes up presently, and he gets on the top of it, and begins to look about him.

They soon leave the chimney-pots behind them; his eyes wander with delight over the harvest-fields, he smells the honeysuckle in the hedge-row, and he wishes he was down among the hazel-bushes, that he might strip them of the milky nuts; then he sees a great wain piled up with barley, and he wishes he was seated on the top of it; then they go through a little wood, and he likes to see the checkered shadows of the trees lying across the white road; and then a squirrel runs up a bough, and he cannot forbear to whoop and halloo, though he cannot chase it to its nest.

The other passengers are delighted with his simplicity and childlike glee; and they encourage him to talk to them about the sea and ships, especially Her Majesty's ——, wherein he has the honor to sail. In the jargon of the sea, he describes her many perfections, and enlarges on her peculiar advantages; he then confides to them how a certain middy, having been ordered to the masthead as a punishment, had seen, while sitting on the top-mast cross-trees, something uncommonly like the sea-serpent,—but, finding this hint received with incredulous smiles, he begins to tell them how he hopes that, some day, he shall be promoted to have charge of the poop. The passengers hope he will have that honor; they have no doubt he deserves it. His cheeks flush with pleasure to hear them say so, and he little thinks that they have no notion in what "that honor" may happen to consist.

The coach stops; the little midshipman, with his hands in his pockets, sits rattling his money, and singing. There is a poor woman standing by the door of the village inn; she looks careworn, and well she may, for in the spring her husband went up to London to seek for work. He got work, and she was expecting soon to join him there, when, alas! a fellow-workman wrote her word how he had met with an accident, how he was very bad, and wanted his wife to come and nurse him. But she has two young children, and is destitute; she must walk up all the way, and she is sick at heart when she thinks that perhaps he may die among strangers before she can reach him.

She does not think of begging, but seeing the boy's eyes attracted to her, she makes him a courtesy, and he withdraws his hand and throws her down a sovereign. She looks at it with incredulous joy, and then she looks at him.

"It's all right," he says, and the coach starts again, while, full of gratitude, she hires a cart to take her across the country to the railway, that the next night she may sit by the bedside of her sick husband.

The midshipman knows nothing about that; and he never will know.

The passengers go on talking,—the little midshipman has told them who he is, and where he is going. But there is one man who has never joined in the conversation; he is dark-looking and restless; he sits apart; he has seen the glitter of the falling coin, and now he watches the boy more narrowly than before.

He is a strong man, resolute and determined; the boy with the pockets full of money will be no match for him. He has told the other passengers that his father's house is the parsonage at Y——, the coach goes within five miles of it, and he means to get down at the nearest point, and walk, or rather run, over to his home, through the great wood.

The man decides to get down too, and go through the wood; he will rob the little midshipman; perhaps, if he cries out or struggles, he will do worse. The boy, he thinks, will have no chance against him; it is quite impossible that he can escape; the way is lonely, and the sun will be down.

No. There seems indeed little chance of escape: the half-fledged bird just fluttering down from its nest has no more chance against the keen-eyed hawk, than the little light-hearted sailor-boy will have against him.

And now they reach the village where the boy is to alight. He wishes the other passengers, "Good evening!" and runs lightly down between the scattered houses. The man has got down also, and is following.

The path lies through the village church-yard; there is evening service, and the door is wide open, for it is warm. The little midshipman steals up the porch, looks in, and listens. The clergyman has just risen from his knees in the pulpit, and is giving out his text. Thirteen months have passed since the boy was within a house of prayer; and a feeling of pleasure and awe induces him to stand still and listen.

"Are not two sparrows," he hears, "sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

He hears the opening sentences of the sermon; and then he remembers his home, and comes softly out of the porch, full of a calm and serious pleasure. The clergyman has reminded him of his father, and his careless heart is now filled with the echoes of his voice and of his prayers. He thinks on what the clergyman said, of the care of our Heavenly Father for us; he remembers how, when he left home, his father prayed that he might be preserved through every danger; he does not remember any particular danger that he has been exposed to, excepting in the great storm; but he is grateful that he has come home in safety, and he hopes whenever he shall be in danger, which he supposes he shall be some day,—he hopes that then the providence of God will watch over him and protect him. And so he presses onward to the entrance of the wood.

The man is there before him. He has pushed himself into the thicket, and cut a heavy stake; he suffers the boy to go on before, and then he comes out, falls into the path, and follows him. It is too light at present for his deed of darkness, and too near the entrance of the wood; but he knows that shortly the path will branch off into two, and the right one for the boy to take will be dark and lonely.

But what prompts the little midshipman, when not fifty yards from the branching of the path, to break into a sudden run? It is not fear,—he never dreams of danger. Some sudden impulse, or some wild wish for home, makes him dash off suddenly after his saunter, with a whoop and a bound. On he goes, as if running a race; the path bends, and the man loses sight of him. “But I shall have him yet,” he thinks; “he cannot keep this pace up long.”

The boy has nearly reached the place where the path divides, when he puts up a young white owl that can scarcely fly, and it goes whirring along, close to the ground, before him. He gains upon it; another moment, and it will be his. Now it gets the start again; they come to the branching of the paths, and the bird goes down the wrong one. The temptation to follow is too strong to be resisted; he knows that somewhere, deep in the wood, there is a cross track by which he can get into the path he has left; it is only to run a little faster, and he shall be at home nearly as soon.

On he rushes; the path takes a bend, and he is just out of sight when his pursuer comes where the paths divide. The boy has turned to the right; the man takes the left, and the faster they both run, the farther they are asunder.

The white owl still leads him on; the path gets darker and narrower; at last he finds that he has missed it altogether, and his feet are on the soft ground. He flounders about among the trees and stumps, vexed with himself, and panting after his race. At last he hits upon another track, and pushes on as fast as he can. The ground begins sensibly to descend,—he has lost his way,—but he keeps bearing to the left; and, though it is now dark, he thinks that he must reach the main path sooner or later.

He does not know this part of the wood, but he runs on. O little midshipman! why did you chase that owl? If you had kept in the path with the dark man behind you, there was a chance that you might have outrun him; or, if he had overtaken you, some passing wayfarer might have heard your cries, and come to save you. Now you are running on straight to your death, for the forest water is deep and black at the bottom of this hill. O that the moon might come out and show it to you!

The moon is under a thick canopy of heavy black clouds; and there is not a star to glitter on the water and make it visible. The fern is soft under his feet as he runs and slips down the sloping hill. At last he strikes his foot against a stone, stumbles and falls. Two minutes more and he will roll into the black water.

“Heyday!” cries the boy, “what’s this? O, how it tears my hands! O this thorn-bush! O my arms! I can’t get free!” He struggles and pants. “All this comes of leaving the path,” he says; “I shouldn’t have cared for rolling down if it hadn’t been for this bush. The fern was soft enough. I’ll never stray in a wood at night again. There, free at last! And my jacket nearly torn off my back!”

With a good deal of patience, and a great many scratches, he gets free of the thorn which had arrested his progress when his feet were within a yard of the water, manages to scramble up the bank, and makes the best of his way through the wood.

And now, as the clouds move slowly onward, the moon shows her face on the black surface of the water; and the little white owl comes and hoots, and flutters over it like a wandering snow-drift. But the boy is deep in the wood again, and knows nothing of the danger from which he has escaped.

All this time the dark passenger follows the main track, and believes that his prey is before him. At last he hears a crashing of dead boughs, and presently the little midshipman’s voice not fifty yards before him. Yes, it is too true; the boy is in the cross track. He will pass the cottage in the wood directly, and after that his pursuer will come upon him.

The boy bounds into the path; but, as he passes the cottage, he is so thirsty, and so hot, that he thinks he must ask the inhabitants if they can sell him a glass of ale.

He enters without ceremony. “Ale?” says the woodman, who is sitting at his supper. “No, we have no ale; but perhaps my wife can give thee a drink of milk. Come in.” So he comes in, and shuts the door; and, while he sits waiting for the milk, footsteps pass. They are the footsteps of his pursuer, who goes on with the stake in his hand, and is angry and impatient that he has not yet come up with him.

The woman goes to her little dairy for the milk, and the boy thinks she is a long time. He drinks it, thanks her, and takes his leave.

Fast and fast the man runs on, and, as fast as he can, the boy runs after him. It is very dark, but there is a yellow streak in the sky, where the moon is ploughing up a furrowed mass of gray cloud, and one or two stars are blinking through the branches of the trees.

Fast the boy follows, and fast the man runs on, with his weapon in his hand. Suddenly he hears the joyous whoop —not before, but behind him. He stops and listens breathlessly. Yes, it is so. He pushes himself into the thicket, and raises his stake to strike when the boy shall pass.

On he comes, running lightly, with his hands in his pockets. A sound strikes at the same instant on the ears of both; and the boy turns back from the very jaws of death to listen. It is the sound of wheels, and it draws rapidly nearer. A

man comes up, driving a little gig.

"Hilloa!" he says, in a loud, cheerful voice. "What! benighted, youngster?"

"O, is it you, Mr. D——?" says the boy; "no, I am not benighted; or, at any rate, I know my way out of the wood."

The man draws farther back among the shrubs. "Why, bless the boy," he hears the farmer say, "to think of our meeting in this way! The parson told me he was in hopes of seeing thee some day this week. I'll give thee a lift. This is a lone place to be in this time o' night."

"Lone!" says the boy, laughing. "I don't mind that; and, if you know the way, it's as safe as the quarter-deck."

So he gets into the farmer's gig, and is once more out of reach of the pursuer. But the man knows that the farmer's house is a quarter of a mile nearer than the parsonage, and in that quarter of a mile there is still a chance of committing the robbery. He determines still to make the attempt, and cuts across the wood with such rapid strides that he reaches the farmer's gate just as the gig drives up to it.

"Well, thank you, farmer," says the midshipman, as he prepares to get down.

"I wish you good night, gentlemen," says the man, when he passes.

"Good night, friend," the farmer replies. "I say, my boy, it's a dark night enough; but I have a mind to drive you on to the parsonage, and hear the rest of this long tale of yours about the sea-serpent."

The little wheels go on again. They pass the man; and he stands still in the road to listen till the sound dies away. Then he flings his stake into the hedge, and goes back again. His evil purposes have all been frustrated,—the thoughtless boy has baffled him at every turn.

And now the little midshipman is at home,—the joyful meeting has taken place; and when they have all admired his growth, and decided whom he is like, and measured his height on the window-frame, and seen him eat his supper, they begin to question him about his adventures, more for the pleasure of hearing him talk than any curiosity.

"Adventures!" says the boy, seated between his father and mother on a sofa. "Why, ma, I *did* write you an account of the voyage, and there's nothing else to tell. Nothing happened to-day,—at least nothing particular."

"You came by the coach we told you of?" asks his father.

"O yes, papa; and when we had got about twenty miles, there came up a beggar while we changed horses, and I threw down (as I thought) a shilling, but, as it fell, I saw it was a sovereign. She was very honest, and showed me what it was, but I didn't take it back, for you know, mamma, it's a long time since I gave anything to anybody."

"Very true, my boy," his mother answers; "but you should not be careless with your money; and few beggars are worthy objects of charity."

"I suppose you got down at the cross-roads?" says his elder brother.

"Yes, and went through the wood. I should have been here sooner if I hadn't lost my way there."

"Lost your way!" says his mother, alarmed. "My dear boy, you should not have left the path at dusk."

"O ma," says the little midshipman, with a smile, "you're always thinking we're in danger. If you could see me sometimes sitting at the jib-boom end, or across the main-top-mast cross-trees, you *would* be frightened. But what danger can there be in a wood?"

"Well, my boy," she answers, "I don't wish to be over-anxious, and to make my children uncomfortable by my fears. What did you stray from the path for?"

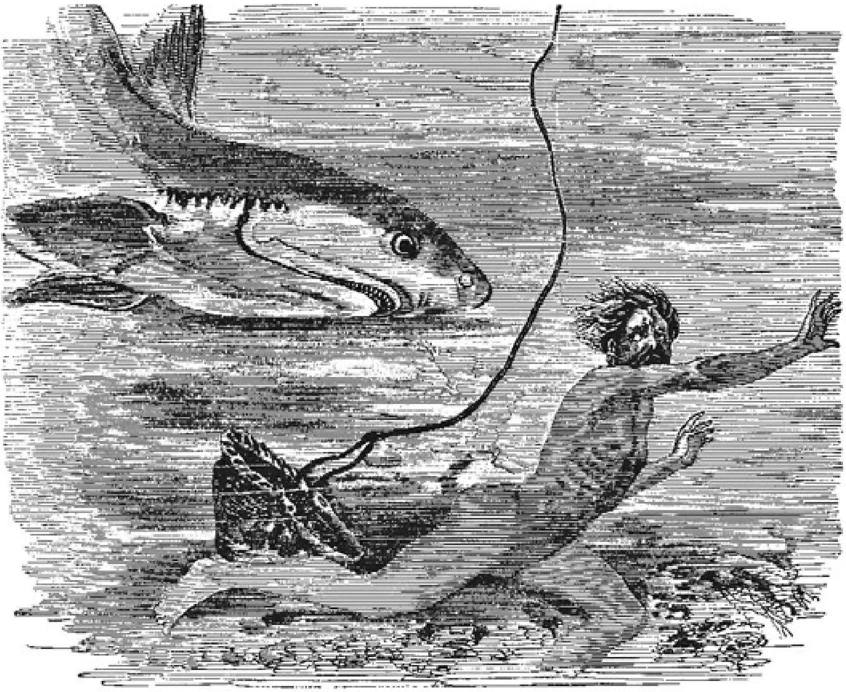
"Only to chase a little owl, mamma; but I didn't catch her, after all. I got a roll down a bank, and caught my jacket against a thorn-bush, which was rather unlucky. Ah! three large holes I see in my sleeve. And so I scrambled up again, and got into the path, and asked at the cottage for some beer. What a time the woman kept me, to be sure! I thought it would never come. But very soon after Mr. D—— drove up in his gig, and he brought me on to the gate."

"And so, this account of your adventures being brought to a close," his father says, "we discover that there were no adventures to tell!"

"No, papa, nothing happened,—nothing particular, I mean."

Nothing particular! If they could have known, they would have thought lightly in comparison of the dangers of "the jib-boom end, and the main-top-mast cross-trees." But they did not know, any more than we do, of the dangers that hourly beset us. Some few dangers we are aware of, and we do what we can to provide against them; but, for the greater portion, "our eyes are held that we cannot see." We walk securely under His guidance, without whom "not a sparrow falleth to the ground"; and when we have had escapes that the angels have admired at, we come home and say, perhaps, that "nothing has happened,—at least, nothing particular."

It is not well that our minds should be much exercised about these hidden dangers, since they are so many and so great that no human art or foresight can prevent them. But it is very well that we should reflect constantly on that loving Providence which watches every footstep of a track always balancing between time and eternity; and that such reflections should make us both happy and afraid,—afraid of trusting our souls and bodies too much to any earthly guide or earthly security,—happy from the knowledge that there is One with whom we may trust them wholly, and with whom the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. Without such trust, how can we rest or be at peace? but with it we may say with the Psalmist, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety!"



AN ADVENTURE IN THE VERMILION SEA.

In reading the newspaper reports of the Titanic contest lately carried on by the armies of America, and now happily come to a close, ever and anon have been brought under my notice the names of old comrades who had shared with me in the perils of the Mexican campaign of 1846-48, which, with no slight conceit, we were wont to designate the "Second Conquest of Mexico." Alas! many of these have since fallen upon another field, and are now slumbering with the dead, the victims of a fraternal strife of which I—at that time an impartial observer—could not detect either sign or seed!

In the Mexican expedition there was no quarrelling between the sons of the North and the sons of the South,—no trace of sectional jealousy, beyond that slight feeling of rivalry such as in our own land exists between Saxon and Scot, and occasionally expends itself in the interchange of a harmless badinage. If the volcano then slumbered, it was too deep for the detection of one who was a stranger to both sides, and alike the friend of both before the breaking out of the quarrel.

It is pleasanter to record that many of my quondam comrades still survive, and that many of them who were simple subs when the writer of this was a "full-pay captain" are now brigadier, major, and lieutenant-generals. Nor does the reflection detract one iota from the pleasure of the record. All honor to my former associates, who have pursued the path, by me forsaken, in obedience to the dictates of destiny.

Of one, among others, who has since risen to a high reputation,—so high that I may not trifle with his name,—I have a vivid remembrance. Despite the wide war experience he has since undergone, he will scarce have forgotten me, nor that campaign, so romantically picturesque, that terminated in our sojourn in the "halls of the Montezumas." No doubt he will remember that night when he sat by my side under the Peruvian pepper-trees, by the edge of the *Pedrega*, through which chaotic tract of country we had succeeded in scrambling. It was the night that preceded our first action in the actual Valley of Mexico. On the following morn, as the cocks of San Geronimo began to crow, we entered that quince-growing village, and cleared it of the enemy, capturing the intrenched camp of General Victoria, with thirty pieces of cannon, and half his *corps d'armée*, while the writer of this sketch, then a believer in military fame, had the felicity of enscarfing his shoulders with a battle-flag, snatched by his own hand from the enemy's ensign, who tried hard to retain it. They are not adventures of his own he is now about to relate; nor was he even an eyewitness of them.

They were the deeds of Lieutenant, now General C——, communicated under the shade of the *mollé*, where both of us, on picket-guard, had taken shelter from the dews of the night.

"How sharply those mosquitoes bite!" I remarked to my comrade, after rubbing my cheeks into a state of fire. "I've never felt them half so bad down in the *tierra caliente*. One would suppose they could not sting so violently up here in the cold table-lands."

"It's not that," answered he. "Haven't you been pulling some of these pepper-berries and squeezing them between your fingers?"

"Why—yes—I believe I have."

"Then you've been adding fuel to the flame. It's the juice of the pimento that has added irritation to the sting. Stay a bit! Perhaps I can find something here that will relieve you from the pain, and something else that will secure you against further molestation."

"And yourself?"

"O, I never suffer from such things. Mosquitoes don't sting me."

His remark did not cause me any surprise. I knew that two persons may be seated or standing side by side, even sleeping in the same bed, and that in the morning one of them may be spotted with mosquito punctures, while the other shows a skin into which the poisonous proboscis has not been once inserted.

I made no rejoinder, as C—— had arisen from his seat, and strolled off into the *chapparal*. In a short time he returned; and, although it was a dark night, I could see that he carried something in his hands.

"I've got two plants here," he said, crouching back under the branches of the pepper-tree. "One is a cure, the other a preventive. Rub this over your cheeks, and it will take out the sting of the mosquitoes before you can count sixteen."

I did as desired, applying to my skin some succulent leaf,—a species of cactus, I think,—which C—— had split open with his knife. I felt relief almost instantaneously.

"Now the other!" said he, extending his hand towards me. "Give your skin a smearing of that, Captain, and I'll lay three months of my pay-roll against one of yours,—which is about two to one,—that you won't be bitten by another mosquito before to-morrow night."

Once more I yielded obedience to my subaltern, though this time less ignorant of the remedy administered. The smell of the plant that was to act as a preventive was not new to me; it was the *pennyroyal* of the Americans, a weed well known in the Southwestern States under a still more eccentric appellation. My companion had collected a handful of leaves, which he directed me to crush between the palms of my hands; and afterwards to rub the sap thus extracted over such parts of my skin as were exposed to the attacks of the insects.

I followed his instructions. The recipe proved a perfect success; and often afterwards, when every contrivance—spirits of turpentine, camphor, tobacco-smoke, and the like—has failed, I have seen the mosquito hosts routed and put to flight by a single drop of the essence of pennyroyal. I have never known this remedy to fail.

The little incident led me to a series of reflections, of which C—— was the subject. He was one of the most singular of my comrades. He had entered the company I commanded as a private soldier; but that was nothing strange. It did not preclude the probability of his being a "born gentleman." There were many well-educated young fellows, sons of planters, professional men, and merchants, who shouldered the musket alongside of him. And yet he was not one of them. Notwithstanding a handsome person, and a certain elegance of air that proclaimed aristocratic descent, he was but imperfectly educated; and what was stranger still, he knew not where he had been born, and could scarce tell how or where he had been taught the little of book-learning he knew. He only remembered that his early life had been spent aboard ship, and that he had tossed about from one port to another, until he had completed the circumnavigation of the globe. He was a true stray. At New Orleans he had joined the corps of "Rifle-Rangers," in which he was soon promoted to the highest rank its commander could bestow upon him,—that of first sergeant. His conduct at the battle of Cerro Gordo brought him under the notice of higher authority, and obtained for him the commission of lieutenant.

"You have seen much of the world, Mr. C——," said I, after smearing my cheeks with the sap of the pennyroyal. "I've heard that you've been a good deal to sea; and, if report speaks true, a good deal *under* the sea."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed my subaltern; "you allude to my having once been a pearl-diver? O yes, that is true enough."

"Come, give me an account of your experiences in the submarine world; and if you have an adventure to relate, it will help to while away the hours. Notwithstanding the relief I have obtained from your soothing syrup, I don't think I shall sleep to-night; especially since we know that, instead of the fife and drum, our *reveillé* will be the boom of the cannon."

"With all my heart, Captain; you are welcome to an account of my pearl-diving experiences. I shall relate one that I suppose may be fairly entitled to the name of adventure. The scene, as you will have anticipated, lies in the Gulf of California; for it was there that I practised plucking the precious gems from 'the dark, unfathomed caves of ocean.' "

I made no rejoinder; but lighting a cigar, and inviting my comrade to do the same, I left him free to continue his narration.

“How I came to visit California will scarce interest you. I chanced to be aboard of a whaling-ship that had entirely failed to strike cachalots in the Pacific, but had got short-handed by a sort of virulent scurvy that in a week carried off two thirds of the crew. Our captain, a thorough Yankee, had no idea of going home with an empty ship; and, from some information he had received, took a fancy into his head that he could make his fortune by collecting pearls in the Gulf of California. Thither he steered; and, after rounding Cape St. Lucas, entered the famed Sea of Cortez, and came to anchor between the islands of Cerralvo and Espiritu Santo.

“To understand my motive for becoming a pearl-diver, it will be necessary to give you some account of this calling, which is both precarious and perilous. As you may know, the pearl-oyster beds—by the Mexicans called *placeres*—are found in several parts of the Californian Gulf; but only along the shores of the peninsula itself, or around the islands. On the coast of the Mexican mainland they have not been discovered; in all likelihood owing to the strong sou’-westers that keep the surf in constant commotion. The pearl-oyster is the inhabitant of a tranquil sea; and as the other side is sheltered by the elevated mountain range running longitudinally throughout the peninsula, it there finds the sort of bed it delights to lie upon.

“The fishery is carried on at different points of the coast, extending from the Bay of Molexe to Cape Palmo. Of late years the most celebrated placeres have been those of the harbors Pichelingo and La Paz, the isles Cerralvo and Espiritu Santo, Point Lorenzo, and the Bay of Molexe itself. But a placer resorted to one year may be shunned in the next, or become the place of general rendezvous, according to the repute it may have gained by its products of the preceding season.

“In the olden time, when the Spanish colonists prosecuted this branch of industry with more energy than their Mexican descendants, there were other placeres of grand repute. One of these was the island of Tiburon, farther up the Gulf. That many pearls were obtained there is proved by the vast mounds of shells and the remains of washing-tanks still seen upon the shores of the island. It is supposed that the placeres of Tiburon are still rich in the precious bivalve; but the present divers have no knowledge of the fact beyond their conjectures. They dare not land on the island, or even approach its shores, through fear of the Ceres Indians,—a warlike and hostile tribe,—who make it their occasional home.

“But few of the men who engage in the Californian pearl-fishery belong to the peninsula itself. Nearly all come from the seaports on the opposite coast of Sonora. There is a master, termed *armador*, who is sometimes owner of the vessel and outfit. Sometimes he is only a supercargo intrusted with the commercial department of the undertaking, its real owner being a merchant, resident in Guaymas, Mazatlan, or some other Pacific port.

“The armador finds the vessel, a schooner of twenty to forty tons, the diving-boats, the provisions required for a three months’ sojourn among the placeres, with all the implements required in the calling. Both these and the food provided are of the simplest kind; the latter consisting of dried figs, some sun-dried beef (*tasajo*), with a quantity of Mexican beans (*frigoles*), and maize meal to make the universal dish called *atolé*. The armador is also provided with cash to purchase their share of the pearls from his divers; but he finds a more profitable currency in a keg or two of *aguardiente*, distilled from the wild *maguey*, or mezcal plant.

“He has nothing to do either with the management of the craft or the actual diving for the oysters. The first is in charge of a skipper, called the *arraez*, who has four or five not very expert sailors to assist him. These are mostly half-caste Mexican Indians; though white men, and sometimes negroes, form a portion of the crew.

“The ‘buzos’ or divers are nearly all full-blooded Indians of the Yaqui tribe, the most powerful in Sonora. They are men who have practised diving until they are almost as much at home under the water as upon its surface. They commonly follow their perilous calling for about three months in the year, that is, while the fishery lasts. When it is over, they return with their gains—not very heavy—and betake themselves to other occupations; for the Yaquis, besides being one of the most warlike, are also an industrious race. Many of them take their women along with them to the fishery, where they are also accompanied by the crones or sorceresses of the tribe, who are supposed to have the power of insuring success in their enterprise.

“As the ‘buzos’ are by no means of prudent habits, at the outset of each expedition they look to the armador for their outfit. It consists of a knife, a yard or two of coarse baize (*bayeta*) to wrap their loins in, and a few trifles required in their simple *cuisine*. This outfit is considered in the light of an advance of wages, to be deducted from the first product of their industry.

“At whatever time the different vessels may start from their ports of embarkation, they all arrive about the same time at the common rendezvous. Of these there may be several more or less frequented, according to the popularity which the placeres have obtained in the preceding year. There is no monopoly as to the ground. The oyster-beds are not preserved; though they are not quite so free as the ocean itself, since a tax of twenty per cent on the ‘take’ is demanded by the government. In former times, when the Spaniards held sway in these parts, and the Virgin was more revered, she too came in for her *diez mo*. This religious tribute is now abolished, to the great chagrin of the Californian fathers of the Church. The divers are not paid in cash, but in pearls, or more strictly speaking, in oysters. When they have fished up a certain number, and before the shells are opened, the partition is made. One fifth goes to the custom-house, whose

officer is upon the spot to guard against contrabandism; though in his own dealings with the government he is less particular. The residue is divided into two equal portions; one half for the armador, the other remaining the property of the divers. The pearls rarely stay long in possession of these. The unsettled score for advanced wages, and the yearning for *aguardiente*, soon tempt the precious pearls out of the pockets of those who have procured them with so much toil, and at so great risk of life; and the Indian too often returns to his native village as poor as when he left it.

"He is himself not so very innocent; he will secrete a pearl whenever he can find the chance, and dispose of it upon opportunity. This he has no difficulty in obtaining; since one half the employment of the arreos and armadors consists in the purchasing of pearls that have been surreptitiously abstracted from the shells by the buzos in their boats,—each supercargo trading with the divers belonging to some rival owner. The arreo is sometimes paid a regular salary by the week or month, and so also is the armador, who is not the owner of the vessel he is in charge of. Often, however, both share in the enterprise, or are allowed to take a number of divers on their own account. The daily routine of the pearl-diver is sufficiently monotonous, unless when it is varied by some perilous adventure with a shark, a *manta*, or other monster of the deep.

"The men have their breakfast of *atolé* (a sort of gruel made of Indian meal) along with roast or stewed tasajo. At eleven they are rowed out in their boats,—small craft without decks. Each is provided with a stick of about twelve inches in length, pointed at both ends,—the points having been hardened by fire. It is the *butaca*, the buzo's only weapon for defence against the sharks. He carries it stuck behind his girdle of cotton stuff, the sole garment he deigns to wear while engaged in diving. If attacked, he simply inserts the butaca inside the jaws of the shark, placing it transversely between them, just as they have opened to swallow him. The monster becomes its own destroyer. But the buzo occasionally encounters an enemy against which his pointed butaca is but a poor means of protection. This is a species of ground-shark called the *tintorero*, far more formidable than the common kind,—far more voracious and cunning of fence. Fortunately he is of rarer occurrence than his gray congener; and when he makes his appearance upon a placer, there is a general combination among the divers to give chase to and destroy him. Another monster, yet more rare and more dreaded, is the *manta*, or blanket-fish, sometimes called *marrayo*,—an enormous species of *polypus*, which enwraps the diver in its vast floating folds, and drags him down to the dark caverns of the deep.

"The diver's toil is too severe to be long continued. It is over by the hour of two; when he is rewarded by his dinner of tasajo and frigoles. The afternoon is spent in the distribution of the spoils. The armador sees that his shells are placed in a pile exposed to the sun; where, after a time, the rough valves relax their sinewy contact, and are easily opened. The process of washing is then performed in tubes or tanks constructed for the purpose: and the precious pearls come glistening forth to gratify the eyes that stand anxiously expecting them. When one larger than common appears, a valuable *viuda* (widow),—for by this name are known those of deep purplish color,—then may be witnessed the usual signs of rejoicing; the fortunate proprietor fancying for the time that he has been richly rewarded for his toil. It is, in fact, a similar excitement to that experienced by the gold-digger who has discovered a nugget, or the gambler who has won a grand stake; and in this may be found the charm of the pearl-diver's life; otherwise it would be an existence so tame as to become intolerable.

"You will think I am a long while in coming to the promised adventure?" said my lieutenant, after completing his extended account. "It is possible I may have talked you asleep, Captain."

"On the contrary, you have kept me awake. I have been very much interested in all you have said. I pray you go on."

"Well, I told you the Yankee whaler carried his diminished crew, of whom your humble servant was one of the survivors, to the pearl placeres. He had no difficulty in finding them. He knew there were some near Cerralvo, where he had once been before; and on sighting this island we saw the assembled fleet of the regular pearl-fishers, for it was in the season of the *buzeo*. We dropped anchor in their midst, our craft, although only a two-hundred-ton schooner, appearing like a leviathan among them.

"Once on the ground, however, our skipper did not see his course so clear. What was he to do for divers? There wasn't a man among his crew who could have brought up an oyster from the bottom; few, indeed, who desired to engage in such an undertaking. I was myself—I don't say it with any intention of boasting—the best swimmer aboard,—the best diver too; but in that I should have appeared a novice among the Yaquis, who were plunging about the place. Our skipper tried to detach a number of them from the service of their legitimate masters, but without any success. Partly from natural jealousy, and partly that they were bound by contract, they resisted his bribes; though he offered them a percentage far exceeding that which they were obtaining.

"On his purpose becoming known to the Mexicans, we found ourselves in a hornet's nest. The arreos and armadors, backed by their motley crews, united in a body against us; and we were in danger of being mobbed in the middle of the ocean. We were allowed to land; but our stay upon shore was not desirable. Whenever we went among the huts and tents of the buzos, we were followed by a crowd of scolding crones; who, regarding us in the light of interlopers, poured every imprecation upon our heads.

"You would suppose that our skipper would have given the thing up, and sailed back to the Pacific in search of

cachalots. He was not the man to yield so easily. He had come into the Gulf of California to fish for pearls; and for pearls he would fish. So did he declare his determination. He appealed to his crew of whalers, myself among the rest. Stung by the slighting treatment we had received from the Mexican fishermen, and a trifle stimulated by their jeers, we were but too willing to assist him; and we at once determined to have a try at the trade of diving for oysters.

"As it chanced, there were two or three independent buzos upon the island. These, secured by a golden bribe, consented to become our instructors.

"I shall never forget the sensation I experienced in making my first descent to the bottom of the great deep. I had often been under water before; and thought nothing of taking a header from the bulwarks of a ship or the parapet of a bridge. But then I only went down to come up again as soon as I could, and as soon as the pressure upon the ears became painful. I had never gone to that depth where the drum of your ear seems suddenly to burst, with an explosion as of a cannon fired close to your head, and followed by an instantaneous cessation of the pain!

"Directed by one of the divers, I underwent this experience. With arms joined overhead, I made a somersault out of one of the ship's boats, going down at the first plunge as far as the impetus would carry me. At the depth of three or four fathoms I felt the water grow colder; and the pain both in my eyes and ears was then excruciating. I was prepared for this; and also to find that I could not go deeper without making an exertion of my arms and limbs. I felt light as a cork, with a constant tendency to 'bob' up again to the surface.

"There was much to make me yield to this tendency. There was the fear of going too deep, but more than that did I dread at such a depth to encounter the sharks or other monsters who might be down below. My confidence had not been confirmed by what I had heard before taking the dive. While standing by the gunwale of the boat, I had listened to the talk of the Mexican fishermen, who, amidst jeering shouts, also gave voice to a cry of more unpleasant significance: '*Guarda te los tintoreros! Guarda la manta!*' 'Beware of the ground-sharks! Beware of the blanket-fish!'

"But while their cries had done much to terrify, they had also done something to fortify me in my determination to reach the bottom. At four fathoms depth I remembered them; and knowing the reproaches that would hail my sudden reappearance, I once more kicked energetically upwards, and with head downward continued my descent. I soon after felt that indescribable sensation, that tapping of the tympanum, accompanied by its unearthly report, preceded by excruciating pain, and followed by a proportionate pleasure, such as one feels on escaping from the shock of a shower-bath!

"This over, I no longer dreaded going down; and, renewing my exertions, I soon found myself at the bottom of the sea. I did not stay to look for oysters; the most precious pearl could not have detained me. I felt that I had done enough for one dive; and ceasing to battle against the buoyancy of the water, I was carried back to the surface without making the slightest exertion. Blood was oozing from my ears, eyes, and nostrils. But there was no pain; and my instructor comforted me with the declaration, that the triple hemorrhage was always experienced in such cases, at the same time assuring me against any evil results.

"On my next attempt at diving, I brought up an oyster which chanced to contain a very large pearl of the kind known as *viuda*. I felt no little elated by my success,—scarce attributing it to chance.

"We—that is the crew of the whaler, skipper included—had been all along under the belief that the pearl-oysters were deposited in 'beds' at the bottom. We supposed they would be found strewed over the sand or pebbles as thickly as shells upon a sea-beach. My first dive showed me the incorrectness of this belief, and that 'beds' applied to the depositories of the pearl-bearing bivalve is a misnomer, arising from its application to the banks whereon are found the oysters of the common species. Instead of a sandy or pebbly bed, I found the bottom of the Californian Gulf—at least that part where we had set about collecting the pearls—to be an incongruous chaos of rocks; with here and there dark fissures between them a foot or two in width, and often running down to the depth of eight or ten feet. To these rocks, both on their sides and top, the shell-fish were attached, clinging to them with their threads, like barnacles to the copper of a ship. The light at such a depth—eight fathoms it was—glimmered dim as twilight; but I had no difficulty in discovering the oysters. Though not set thickly over the rock, I could see several at a time, and with sufficient distinctness to know that they were the objects for which I had gone down. They appeared of great size,—so much larger than those I had observed in the hands of the buzos above,—that for the moment I fancied myself the fortunate finder of some rich placer, for a long time left undisturbed. I was then unacquainted with a very simple phenomenon: the magnifying power of light, or rather semi-darkness, at that great depth. On seizing hold of a shell-fish, one of the largest that was near me, I was not undeceived. Strange to say, it *felt* to the *touch* just as it *appeared* to the *eye*,—proving how one of our senses may lead the other astray. It was not till after I had got back into the boat and examined my treasure, that I perceived it was no bigger than several others already there; although, as above stated, it contained one of the largest and most precious of pearls.

"I afterwards ascertained that the size of the shell is no criterion either of the bulk of the enclosed pearl, or its value in other respects. Often a medium-sized oyster is fished up, producing a pearl of high price, while some of the largest shells are found altogether wanting in that portion of their contents so much coveted. Very small shells, however, being those of young fish, are scarce worth the trouble of washing.

“During my first spell at diving I was cured of another misconception, as were also my fellow-whalesmen. I had been under the impression that the shells only needed ‘picking up,’ and bringing along with one to the surface. Picking up, indeed! It required all my strength to detach them from the stones to which they clung by their broad beard-like fringe, as firmly fixed as if the air had been pumped from under them. Several times, while in the act of tugging at a shell, I was compelled to let go, or else have my fingers lacerated by the sharp spinous protuberances set all over its exterior. Letting go too abruptly was followed by a sudden ascent to the surface,—just as if one had been holding on to the projection of a cliff, and by relaxing his hold had fallen gently to the bottom. It was like reversing the order of gravitation, and, instead of downwards, making a *descent upwards*!

“To all these phenomena—strange at first—we soon became accustomed; for our Yankee skipper, instead of giving up in despair, had determined to continue the fishery. We were not so unsuccessful, either. The *buzeo* of that year chanced to be unusually profitable, the whole placer yielding well; and, despite our clumsiness, we came in for a fair share of the products. Several other independent divers from the mainland had enlisted in our service, until we at length formed a respectable cohort. Moreover, our skipper possessed a certain advantage over the Mexican armadors. In his purse there was some cash, and in his cabin a stock of Yankee ‘notions,’ which found favor in the eyes of the Yaquis. Into that same cabin soon made their way the *surreptitious* pearls, though the purchase of these was above-board and open; since it was the practice of every armador in the fleet.

“We remained at Cerralvo during the whole of the pearl-collecting season. Most of our men, from clumsy whalers, had become transformed to adroit divers, and could have gained a living anywhere that pearls are to be obtained,—in the Bay of Panama, at Cubagua, or Ceylon. For myself, I had grown to regard a subaqueous life as quite a natural state of existence. I could remain several minutes below the surface; could swim, and tack, and turn under the water; could go down to any depth inside eleven fathoms, either perpendicularly or diagonally; could maintain myself at the bottom, or midway between top and bottom, without being buoyed up against my will; could stand erect, walk, crawl, or lie still, upon the ocean’s bed,—in short, perform all those feats that are the boast of the buzos. I had become as fearless as they, not only of the deep itself, but of its monsters. Armed with my two-pointed stick,—in the use of which I had been well instructed by one of the independent divers, who took great interest in me,—I would swim among the sharks with as much carelessness as though they were but minnows. Twice had I encountered these creatures in their own element, twice in deadly strife, and on each occasion had I succeeded in spitting them upon my *butaca*.

“As yet I had not been brought face to face with the *tintorero*. I had heard a great deal about these dreaded ‘tigers of the sea,’ for they, with the *marrayos*, were the constant theme of the pearl-diver’s conversation, as the grizzly bear is that of the Rocky Mountain trapper, or the lion that of the traveller across the South African Karoo. I had seen one or two of them at a distance, or rather their luminous track as they glided by; and had witnessed the dread which even this inspired among the native divers, who have scarce any fear of the common shark. It is fortunate for them that the tintoreros are at best but scarce animals, and at most times shy,—this last characteristic being attributable to the universal hatred in which they are held, and which leads to their more energetic persecution. Were they as plenteous as the common sharks, the pearl-oyster might sleep undisturbed on his stony bed. When they do make their appearance upon the placeres in pairs,—and they usually hunt in such companionship,—the whole community of divers becomes excited, and, whatever their previous rivalries, unite to attack the tintorero. All know that, so long as these monsters remain in the proximity of the placer, the fishery must be suspended; else any one of the divers, and at any moment, may become food for the phosphorescent fish. Against the tintorero the two-pointed stick is no protection. His jaws open wide enough to swallow both it and its holder. It is safe only to attack him from the boats, by harpoons, spears, javelins, or such other weapons as may be used at a distance. Some of the more daring of the divers will meet the tintorero in his own element, using in the combat the long-bladed Spanish knife. But these encounters are of rare occurrence, and shunned except under the stimulus of public applause.

“I had become curious to make the acquaintance of this famed tyrant of the placeres, though with no desire to be introduced to him under water. The glances I had obtained were too slight and casual to satisfy me of anything more than his existence, and I had come to regard the general dread of him as a sort of fanciful fear,—such as is felt for many innocent animals that have obtained an evil reputation. An opportunity at length arrived in which I not only had my curiosity gratified, but my scepticism so completely removed, that from that hour I never doubted the dangerous character of the tintorero.

“From a man residing in La Paz—its *alcalde* in fact—our skipper had discovered—or fancied he had discovered—a *secret*. At about a league’s distance from where the fishery was going forward there existed a rich placer of *las margaritas* (the pearls). It was a sunken shoal of rock, or rather one grand rock, ten fathoms below the surface of the sea. It had formerly been famous among the divers, but of late years lost sight of,—the alcalde knew not why. He believed that it was through dread of the tintoreros and marrayos, that were said to surround the shoal in countless numbers, as if guarding its precious treasures against the invasion of human hands.

“The honest alcalde acknowledged himself unacquainted with the exact situation of this priceless placer. He could only say that, from what he had heard, it was about a league due northward from the island of Espiritu Santo; and

surely a skilled hydrographer like the Capitan Americano could soon discover it by his soundings?

"It was not the flattering speech that induced us to make the trial. There was some probability that the alcalde's statements were true. One of the buzos had already told our skipper a similar tale. In consequence of this evidence, the schooner's anchors were taken up. We steered towards the spot where it was supposed the placer existed, and there commenced taking soundings. We were not doomed to disappointment. Sure enough a sunken shoal was discovered, corresponding to that described by the alcalde, and confirmed by the statement of the diver. The lead proclaimed it ten fathoms under water, and covering about an acre of the sea's bottom. A rock, or a shoal, it mattered not which; in either case a likely spot for the pearl-oyster to repose upon. The schooner ceased to take soundings. Her anchor was dropped, her boats lowered, and we proceeded to inspect—more minutely than had been done by the lead—the position of the placer.

"The divers were ordered down, myself among the rest,—not all in one place, but from different boats, at different points around the sunken rock. Armed in the usual manner I went *below*,—I confess with some slight feeling of fear,—to cause which both the alcalde and buzo had contributed by their tales of tintoreros and marrayos. To neutralize it, I had the stimulus of cupidity; for, although I have not said it, I, as also my whaler comrades, were *diving upon shares*. Who could tell how many 'widows' were below,—rich widows, who in the pearl markets of Mexico or Guadalaxara would command a fabulous price? Excited by the prospect of achieving great riches, I plunged in head foremost, cleaving my downward way through the jelly-like liquid, like an arrow projected from its bow.

"I was soon at the bottom, and commenced reconnoitring around me. I saw it was no shoal, but a sunken rock, spreading over a vast superficies, and rising some three or four fathoms above the bottom of the sea. I had made my descent close to its edge, and could see the black mass towering above me. I was soon gratified by the sight of shell-fish. Having made these observations, I determined on returning to the surface; but not without taking along with me a specimen of the pearl-oyster. Grasping that which was nearest, I wrenched it from the rock, and was ready to make the ascent.

"Chancing to look up, I saw something that caused me to change my intention. Right over me was the form of a fish, but such a one as I had never seen before. It was shark-shaped, but I saw it was not the common shark. Its body appeared silvered, or coated, with a slimy phosphorescence. Its eyes were shining like balls of burnished brass. Though I had never seen it at close view before, I could have no doubt as to what it was,—a *tintorero*. It was midway between me and the surface, resting horizontally along the water; but I could tell by the vibratory movement of its pectoral fins, that it was ready to change position at the shortest notice. I saw that it was soaring above me, like a falcon over the form of a hare.

"My first thought was to fling the shell-fish away, and feel for my butaca. My next, that the stick would not be of the slightest service. Those frightful jaws, opening and closing, as if the monster in imagination already tasted me between them, could not be gagged by a butaca. My third thought was to drop the useless implement, and use all my alertness in attempting to escape by sheer speed. I was admonished to this course by the consciousness that I could not remain much longer under water. Already had I begun to pant for breath, and yearn for a free inhalation of air.

"There was no time to be expended on thoughts of strategy. Where I stood clinging to the rock, there was the certainty of being suffocated. If I ascended vertically, there was an equal certainty of being swallowed by the shark! By instinct I chose the diagonal line, and commenced ascending towards the surface. I had not got two fathoms above the bottom, when I saw it was of no use. The water became darker around me. The tintorero had changed place. I was still under the shadow of the shark, that hovered directly above me!

"I checked my ascent, and returned to the base of the rock. Along this I crawled, until I had accomplished a score of paces; and then once more attempted the ascent. Once more was my retreat intercepted by the tintorero! As before, he was above me. I lost patience,—temper. I felt as if I could grapple with the slippery monster, and fight it out in sheer desperation. At that moment I should have given all the pearls I had procured for the possession of a knife. I was altogether unarmed,—without weapon of any kind. Even the butaca I had abandoned.

"What was to be done? There appeared only two alternatives. To stay where I was and be drowned, or ascend toward the surface and be devoured! I was actually contemplating which would be the easier mode of 'departing this life,' when a thought flashed across my brain that promised a chance of escape from both horns of the dilemma. While crawling along the edge of the rock, I had noticed that, instead of a pebbly bed, my feet moved amidst mud. There was a sediment of some kind quite different from stone or sand. I afterwards discovered it to be the guano wash from a neighboring islet,—the resort of thousands, ay, millions of birds. I knew nothing of this at the time. I only knew that, as my footsteps disturbed the sediment, it rose towards the surface, so clouding the water that for a time I was spared the spectacle of the hideous tintorero. The circumstance was suggestive. If I could not see the shark, surely the shark could not see me? More mud, and I might get to the surface unobserved?

"Adopting the idea thus accidentally suggested, I commenced upheaving the guano. No sugar-refiner ever stirred his pan with so much alacrity as did I the sediment around that sunken rock. I worked with hands and feet, until I could no longer go on without getting a mouthful of air. I had just enough strength left for a last effort to make a diagonal line

for the surface,—just strength enough to reach it.

"In ten seconds more I should have succumbed—if not to the tintorero—to drowning. In ten seconds more I was aboard the boat from which I had taken the plunge, with the Yankee skipper bending affectionately over me, pouring kind words into my ear, and some drops of cordial down my unconscious throat!"

Mayne Reid.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

THE portrait which is sent with this number of "Our Young Folks" is that of one of its best friends and most prized contributors, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe. The picture shows her as she sits at home in her library, close by the conservatory, where bloom the flowers and sparkle the waters of which she has so often spoken delightfully to the readers of this Magazine, and where time and again have come the visitors that she has described with such lifelike touches.

Mrs. Stowe has always been in sympathy with Nature, and with Nature's most beautiful handiwork,—little children. Born (as she writes in a note to the editors) in Litchfield, Connecticut, "a beautiful mountain town, with the loveliest lakes and hills, and the biggest snow-drifts and coldest winters on this side of Labrador," she "lived a hardy, mountaineer life,—in the woods, climbing rocks, wading rivers, in holiday times, and *made* to over-sew sheets and patch her brothers' knees and elbows, rub tables, scour knives, and clean silver for duty." Her education was begun in Litchfield Academy, where she learned most from hearing Mr. Brace, an energetic, earnest teacher, *talk* to his classes about botany, philosophy, rhetoric, and other branches of science and learning which had small place in the education of forty years ago. By this same good instructor she was "trained to write as soon as she could hold a pen, and constantly stimulated by his influence to find things which she was interested to say," and to say them worthily.

When thirteen years of age, she was sent to Miss Catharine Beecher's school in Hartford. At sixteen she became a teacher herself, and taught in Hartford Female Seminary until she was twenty, when her father, the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher, removed to Cincinnati. There she resumed her occupation, and taught for four years more; when she married, in January, 1836, the Rev. C. E. Stowe, then Professor of Biblical Literature in Lane Theological Seminary, near Cincinnati.

Since that time her life has been passed mainly in New England, many years having been spent in Andover, Massachusetts, and her present residence being a charming cottage in Hartford, Connecticut. Although the head of a household and the mother of a family, she has yet always found time to follow the pursuits of literature, which she loved so well from girlhood. From her pen have come such homelike sketches of New England as she collected under the title of "The Mayflower," domestic stories like "The Pearl of Orr's Island," strong tales of bygone years, like "The Minister's Wooing," pictures of foreign lands and people, and that wonderful miniature of slavery, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," whereupon she painted every feature of the deceitful and barbarous spirit that blighted the fame and prosperity of our dear America, and held them up to the indignation of all Christian people, of every clime and tongue. It was no vain desire to "write a book" which led her to write "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but the sense of outrage and oppression which smote upon her woman's tender heart and her high sentiment of justice, and urged her on to write those words whose simple truth compelled the world to listen, and made wicked men denounce her because they could find no honest answer to her story.

But the stormy times are past; the fury which swelled into rebellion and murder has been quelled and punished; slavery is no more, and the soldiers have come home to tread with their marching step in the paths of peace. There is no need to-day of an "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and so Mrs. Stowe busies her pen with gentler topics,—with reflections and suggestions for grown people about their ways of living and their duties to each other, while for her warm friends, the children all over the country, she tells in these pages (and delights to tell) the stories which readers and editors alike hope she may long be spared to write in the cosey comfort of her happy home.

ROUND THE EVENING LAMP.

A TREASURY OF CHARADES, PUZZLES, PROBLEMS AND FUNNY THINGS.

CHARADE.
No. 1.

Beneath the vast cathedral's dome
From which the sculptured saints look down,
The nobles of the land have come
To vest their monarch with the crown.
But when, amid the anthem's burst,
They place him on the kingly seat,
In priestly hand my sacred *first*
Renders the solemn act complete.
In Arctic seas my *first* is found,
Where icebergs sleep in frozen calm,
Yet hides itself beneath the ground,
And droops upon the tropic palm.

Over her flushed and fevered child
The mother bends with anxious gaze;
Distraught with care, with terror wild,
Hope scarcely dawns through weary days.
But could she think that of her boy
My *second* ever should be said,
'Twould touch no sweeter chord of joy
To wake some loved one from the dead.

The alchemist, in days of old,
Tried with vain toil and mystic art
To turn the baser ores to gold
And gain the idol of his heart.
But what with fruitless care he sought,
That mocking danced before his eyes,
In latter days my *whole* has wrought,
And gives to men the longed-for prize.
For, to the beggar, in a day,
Unbounded wealth it often brings,
And turns the squalid huts of clay
To palaces of money-kings.
And yet, sometimes, its silent deeps
Have swallowed riches, hopes, and health;
But when it o'er its victim weeps,
Men turn its very tears to wealth.

CLERICUS.

ILLUSTRATED REBUS.—No. 1.

C. J. S.

ILLUSTRATED REBUS.—No. 2.

A. H. C.

ENIGMAS.

No. 1.

I am composed of 18 letters.
My 9, 2, 11, 3, is a small piece of confectionery.
My 17, 13, is a denial.
My 1, 16, 15, is very useful in the study of geography.
My 7, 18, 5, 10, is a musical instrument.
My 14, 6, belongs to me.
My 17, 8, 12, 4, implies something pleasing.

No. 2.

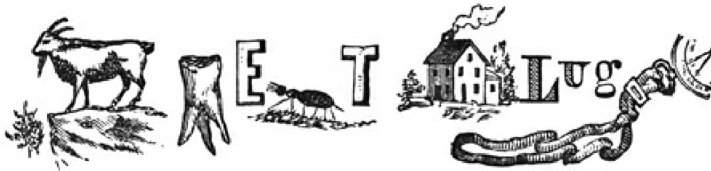
I am composed of 8 letters.
My 6, 4, 8, must have three to make it.
My 1, 8, 4, only a couple.
My 7, 4, 2, wants one to make a thousand.
My 8, 2, 5, 3, is the humblest of beings, and a “great conqueror.”
My whole, no man, woman, or child ever saw; in fact it is not, nor ever was.

C. H. W.

ILLUSTRATED REBUS.—No. 3.

C. H. W.

ILLUSTRATED REBUS.—No. 4.



C. H. W.

PUZZLE.
No. 1. (The Fisherman's.)

I once went out a-fishing,
  A-fishing in the sea,
And a very odd lot of fish I got,
  As you will shortly see.

For first I caught a sunbeam,
  And a portion of a shoe,
With a piece of moorland heather,
  And a pretty lassie too.

I caught a situation
  To which I had an eye,
And a prickly hinder portion
  That floated gently by.

I caught a cooking apple,
  And a wildling sour as well,
A tollgate from the king's highway,
  And a past tense of a smell.

An insect on a streamlet,
And a verb that disagrees,
A crooked letter listening,
And the signet of the seas.

A shoe for icy weather,
A thing to roast your meat,
Some lime-wash for your ceiling,
And a feathered creature's seat.

I caught a woman's jewel,
A letter on a card,
And the hirsute one of ocean,
Who was shod with an extra yard.

The last thing I caught was a tumble,
And that was enough for me;
So that was the end of my fishing
In the wonderful deep blue sea.

CONUNDRUMS.

1. What is that which is so brittle that, if you only name it, you are sure to break it?
2. Why is a Hebrew in a fever like a diamond ring?
3. What is the loftiest island in the world?
4. Why is an amiable and beautiful girl like one letter in deep thought, another approaching you, a third bearing a torch, and a fourth singing psalms?
5. Why do we buy shoes?
6. Why are hot rolls like a caterpillar?

ANSWERS.

Puzzles.

15. Sheridan.
16. Soldo.

Conundrums.

28. When it is reserved.
29. Because it has been repressed.
30. A-gate.
31. None,—they are all carried.

Charades.

21. I-sin-glass.
22. Mus-qui-toe.
23. Rob-in-Hood.
24. Fare-well.

Enigmas.

23. Santa Claus.
24. People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.
25. London-on-Thames.

26. Tramp, tramp, the boys are marching.
27. Chushan Rishathaim.
28. Bethlehem Ephratah.

ILLUSTRATED REBUSES.

30. Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn. [(Man's *in* human eye) *T 2* (man) make (scow) n t *less* thousands (mower) n.]
31. But screw your courage to the sticking point and you'll not fail. [(But) (screw) (ewer) (cur) (age) (tooth) e (stick) (king) (point) & (ewe)'ll[1] (knot) *f* (ale).]
32. Fancy flies before the wind. [(Fans) y (flies) (beef *o'er* tea) (he) (w *in* d).]

[1] Omitted in the drawing.

OUR LETTER BOX.

In this cosey corner we propose to have a little familiar talk from time to time with the great multitude of our dear young friends, and to make a few occasional notes, in the way of comment or reply, to such of the letters we receive as seem to require particular attention. It is quite impossible that, even here and in this brief way, *all* the letters which our kind correspondents send can be answered, or even acknowledged, for those letters amount to many hundreds every month, and a simple record of them would fill up more pages than can be spared from subjects that are more important and more generally interesting. These hosts of little writers must take it for granted that the chubby post-boy whose picture is at the top of this page brings us safely all the letters they intrust to him, and that every day we sit down and examine the big pile he tumbles out of his satchel, reading with pleasure every expression of interest that we find there, and welcoming every contribution and every offer of help gladly, although we are not able to do more than read and feel gratified with most of them. Why, the letters that come about the "Evening Lamp" each month would almost fill a half-bushel!—so let none of all the anxious and hopeful little readers wonder or grieve that their offerings are not printed. Out of such a vast number we have to select what seem to us the best, (and this is no easy task, but one which occupies many hours and much thought,) because the readers of the Magazine must have the very best which we can find for them. We are just as much obliged for the hundreds which we have to lay aside, as for the tens which we think it well to print. It is not so much the *great excellence* of what is presented to us, as the *kind-hearted desire* to give us help and their fellow-readers pleasure, although expressed in the rudest and most unpresentable way, which gives us delight in our correspondents. Let it be further remembered, O beloved young folks, that your efforts to prepare something worthy of our acceptance do you just as much benefit, if the result does not quite reach our standard of excellence, as if it were one of the best things in a whole volume; and that we all, young and old, should always try to do desirable and pleasant things for the simple sake of the good that is in them, not on account of any satisfaction or advantage that may afterward be derived from them.

THE EDITORS.

F. N. C. writes thus: "I send you a line for the 'Evening Lamp' department of your Magazine, if you deem it worthy. The curiosity of it is, you will perceive, that the letters composing it are in the same order whether read backwards or forwards: 'Hannah he won not ere we were ton; now eh, Hannah?' The sentence is correct grammatically, and contains twelve more letters than 'Lewd did I live & evil I did dwel,' the author of which offered a reward to any one who would produce a similar line." This is ingenious, but does not fulfil the conditions of the original, which could not only be read both ways, but made good sense, as this does not, being only a collection of words. Who will do better?

Irene (who does not date her letter) sends us a little story and two pieces of verse, which she hopes are good enough to be published. We wish they were, for they are quite nicely done; but Irene and all beginners must remember that they come in competition with the most skilful writers in the country when they offer us their compositions, and that they can no more expect to do as well with their *heads* as grown and practised persons, than to do as much and as efficient work with their *hands* as stout and capable men and women.

H. sends from Lancaster, Mass., a sketch called “Bessie’s Birthday,” which is very clever, but is of too personal a character for so large an audience as ours.

TRANSCRIBER’S NOTES

Obvious printer errors including punctuation have been silently corrected.
Inconsistencies and variations in spelling have been retained.

[The end of *Our Young Folks, Volume 2, Number 1*, edited by J. T. Trowbridge, Gail Hamilton and Lucy Larcom.]