

Uncle Tom's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES AND NEPHEWS:—

In this month of ingathering there is much to which one's mind turns. To the white-haired fathers of the families now, alas! growing few, the "harvest home" brings many memories—some tender and some sad—of the days now gone forever, when the little "clearing" returned its reward for the efforts made thereon. Then the household was unbroken, and they toiled—yes, and suffered—all as one. Then, with the growing clearing, came separations; when the log shanty grew too small and the rough corduroy road was made smooth, and jolting over roots and stumps no longer pained the delicate sufferer, worn with fever and ague, or consumption, who

will only be too glad to give you the reins when you prove worthy of holding them. This habit of wanting *my way*—how much harm it does! It does harm in the politics of a country, in the professor's chair, at the editor's desk, in the pulpit and the school room, in the office, and in the home where "sisters dwell and brothers meet, where quarrels should never come." Dogmatic, they call it. It is simply my *own way*, and it shows itself very early in life. It seems to be a part of our nature, and, if Uncle Tom succeeds in this letter in calling the attention of his nieces and nephews to the fact, and getting them to count how often in a day they like to take their way, and how often so doing makes trouble, this letter will not be written in vain.

The story is told of a celebrated man who, walking with his little son, showed him a very

top, and the old mill at the side. What tales those old mills tell! The sound of their business, how it mingles with the past. Standing now silent, almost in ruins, by the water's edge, they call up memories almost "too deep for tears." How many references we have in literature to millers and mills, and how many of our artists have drawn and painted the mills of the past.

George Elliot—she who, in prose, rivals Shakespeare in poetry, has forever immortalized "The Mill on the Floss" with an artist's pen; she truly has pictured not only the "mill," but all about it in her beautiful story.

Goldsmith, too, in rhyme, has told us of "the busy mill" in his "Deserted Village" of Auburn. Who has not heard of the "Miller of the Dee," and, indeed, who does not know of a mill in which sometime in life he or she had great in-



THE OLD MILL.

was borne over them. Then there was a burying ground, and a lot, and a grave, which the autumn woods strewed with yellow and crimson leaves, and the long green grass and the violets and wood flowers covered over in spring and summer time. Then there were others laid quietly to rest, and, as the ripened harvest falls before the reaper in its rounds, so thoughts of the lives he has seen ripen for death come to the old farmer. Do you children wonder why the tear gathers in father's or grandfather's eye, or the voice grows husky when he speaks of the old days and the old times? Are the old ways hard to change? and are the new ways what you want? Have patience, boys; let father have his way. He had suffered and striven and worked longer than you have now, before you were born; and so, hasty youth, listen and *be* and *act*, even against your will, and if you have good judgment and are willing to take counsel, father and mother

crooked tree, and asked him what he thought made it so. He was answered at once—somebody must have stepped on it when it was little. So, my boys and girls, we bear the impress of wanting *our own way*, even into grown-up life, if not to its end; and this one habit cripples and maims and dwarfs minds, for by looking to self they look not beyond to higher and better models.

When the August of life, the ingathering time of life's harvest, comes to my nieces and nephews, what will it yield? Not, from misspent hours and years, which make up life, to return a crop of weeds, I trust; but a rich and bountiful harvest return of busy and well-spent years.

Allow Uncle Tom to call attention to our illustration this month—the quiet scene, the large shady trees, so suggestive of cool and quiet enjoyment these warm days, the cooling waters, with the swans so gracefully gliding over the

terest, even if the days are gone, which have been celebrated in local verse of twenty years ago.

"When boys did ride barebacked to mill,
A dozen miles or so,
And hurried off before 'twas day,
Some twenty years ago."

It would be an interesting literature lesson for my young readers to find out the many references to "mills" in our best poetry and prose writers, and keep selections.

Hoping all of you are enjoying the last month of vacation, and that your thoughts when thus "fancy free" are such as you could tell a sympathizing friend like
UNCLE TOM.

P. S.—I have much pleasure in awarding the special prize offered by Miss Ada Armand for the best original puzzles sent in by those who have never won a prize in this paper, to Master T. Plant, York Mills, Ont. The prize is a handsomely bound book, entitled "The Squire's Grandson." Now I hope to hear from many of you for the September number. UNCLES TOM.