

UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES:—

It has been suggested by some of the puzzlers that we get up a souvenir photograph of all those who have interested themselves in that department during the past few years. Therefore I make this proposition:—That all those who desire to be numbered in this group forward their photos to me, and with them we shall have one large group made, from which copies will be taken, so that every puzzler may have one at the mere cost of production. I hope you will all join heartily in this. I shall be glad to see the pictures of my dear nephews and nieces, and you will see Uncle Tom (not that he is much to look at), and it will form a pleasant memorial of the happy times we have had together. Let me have your photos as soon as possible, please.

The prize selections of poetry will appear again in our next, as well as the names of those who send correct answers to January puzzles.

UNCLE TOM.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

E. H. CHASE, IN THE HOUSEKEEPER.

"Love to the world," were the last words of the aged poet as, at the dawn of a beautiful September morning, he passed to a higher life. "Love to the world" was the thought that lay warm at his heart, and stirred and nerved the gentle soul to action in behalf of humanity, through a long and beautiful life. Who shall doubt that when the recording angel "writes the names of those whom love of God has blessed," the name of our beloved national poet and friend will be very near the head of the list?

Gentle, unassuming, and naturally inclined to shrink from contact with strangers, yet Mr. Whittier early became the champion of an oppressed race, lecturing and writing in their behalf, and throwing his influence with a very small minority, against a popular and wealthy majority. His letters, at this time, to prominent men, were many and urgent that they would use their influence to better the condition of the slaves of our southern states, and yet, unlike so many earnest workers in that cause, he was able, in his broad charity, to separate the sinner from the sin, and to work in a spirit of tolerance and love.

We know the life of John Greenleaf Whittier almost as we know our own lives. It has been lived among us, and has overflowed to us. We can follow him from the time he was a bashful boy, on a New England farm, attending the district school summer and winter, working at shoemaking, and, later, teaching, to pay his way for a term or two at Haverhill Academy. He was modest to such a degree that he shrank from facing William Lloyd Garrison to submit his first poem, and contented himself with pushing it under the editorial door.

We know many of the little incidents of his first attempts at editorial work, to which he was called when he was barely twenty; and of his later return to the farm, at his father's death, to care for the loved ones that remained; and many of us can remember the part he took for ten years prior to the first clash of arms that heralded the civil war, and can date our first real knowledge of him from that time.

Among his most earnest and soul-stirring poems are those on slavery. Strong, courageous, Christian, they shall live when the blot that caused them to be written shall have faded except from the page of history.

The poem "South Carolina to Massachusetts" has in it a power, searching, strong, and bold, yet just, that shows Mr. Whittier to have been a man of clear perceptions, sound judgment, and manly courage.

The later years of retirement, prosperity, and peace, have given the American people no cause to think of Mr. Whittier as other than a strong man, and a faithful friend; and to him is accorded the merit of having been one of the leading spirits in seeking to crush not only the evil of slavery, but the other evils of our age.

In saying that he was a leading spirit in seeking to crush slavery, it must also be said that, with many another sincere worker, he was a devotee of peace, and had his own convictions of the manner in which this should be accomplished. Mr. Whittier was truly of the people, and in touch with them, and the press all over the land, not a one in our own country, but in Europe as well, is filled with tributes of love to him who proved himself so worthy of all love and praise.

His poems for liberty, and for the truth, were struck off at a white heat, and every line rings with patriotism and strong conviction of right. His songs of peace show his passionate love of Nature, and his intimate acquaintance with her in her most secret haunts. His Snow-Bound is an idyl, complete, true, and picturesque, showing his love for the beautiful in common things. To the real New Englander, it is a fadless picture of the dear, old home.

His ballads are most felicitous and smooth-flowing, with a perfect simplicity of form and language that is their own peculiar charm; and his poems of friendship, most of which are loving tributes to friends on some noteworthy occasion, pour out the warmth of a loving and true heart.

It seems but yesterday that there came to us the beautiful lines of his greeting to Oliver Wendell Holmes on his birthday, and yet, to-day, the hand that penned them is still, and the Christian soul whose faith was so strong has gone to a higher life.

Whittier's poems were not all of his writings. There are many prose works, as well, and through them all there speaks the deep life and the upspringing faith of a truly Christian man.

These later years have been years of devotion, and strong growth in spiritual life, and we have reached to him for comfort and encouragement, which was sure to come.

As a man he was strong and true; as a poet he was prophetic and inspiring, yet, after all, it was his simple, loving spirit, the spirit of the Master whom he served, for which we loved him.

Mr. Whittier died at the dawn, whose breaking, for

years, he had loved to watch, and which, while his brief illness lasted, he had loved each day to see creep over the hills, and as the light came into his window, proclaiming the birth of a new day, his niece stooped to catch the last words which the tender lips just parted to give. "Love to the world," came to her ears almost as the spirit took its flight to the morning land.

Lucy Lacom, Sarah Orne Jewett, and other friends were remembered in his will, and all his manuscripts and letters were left to Samuel T. Pickard, a very dear friend, than whom none could have been selected who would accept the trust more lovingly, nor carry out the wishes of Mr. Whittier more faithfully.

Gaining and Losing a Day.

A QUEER FACT EXPLAINED IN A VERY SIMPLE MANNER.

You often hear some one who thinks himself "cute" telling how sailors in circumnavigating the globe "gain" a day. Such persons, says the St. Louis Republic, almost invariably mention the "gain," but it is seldom you hear of the "lost" day, which can also be dropped out of the existence in making a trip around the world. The facts are these: If he goes to the east he gains a day; to the west he loses one. It comes about in this way: There are 360 degrees of longitude in the entire circle of the earth. As the world rotates on its axis once in each twenty-four hours, one twenty-fourth of 360 degrees, which equals 15 degrees, corresponds to a difference of one hour in time. Now, imagine a ship sailing from New York to the eastward. When it has reached a point 15 degrees east of the starting point the sun will come to its meridian, or noon line, one hour sooner than it does at the point from which the ship sailed. When the ship has reached a place 30 degrees east of the sailing point it will be noon two hours sooner on shipboard than it will 30 degrees to the westward, and so on until when the ship has reached a point 180 degrees from the place of sailing it will be 1 o'clock, say Tuesday morning, with the people in the ship when it is only 1 o'clock in the afternoon of Monday with the people at home; in other words, the ship has sailed just one-half the distance around the world (180 degrees), and has gained exactly twelve hours. Double this and you can readily understand how the day is gained in sailing around the world to the eastward, and you will soon find the root of the mystery of the "lost" day which is dropped out of the calendar by a person who crosses the total 360 degrees with his face constantly turned to the west.

From the Scissors.

Did you ever take the trouble to look up the history of the curious little bell-shaped indented piece of metal you wear on your finger when sewing, and which you are content to call your "thimble"? It is a Dutch invention, and was taken to England in 1695 by one John Lofting. Its name was derived from the words thumb and bell, being for a long time worn on that member, and called the thumbel; only within the last 150 years has the word "evolved" into thimble. All records say that the thimble was first worn on the thumb, but we can scarcely conceive how it would be of much use there. Formerly it was made of brass and iron only, but of late years steel, silver, gold, horn, ivory, celluloid, and even pearl and glass have been used in its manufacture. A thimble owned by the queen consort of Siam is shaped like a lotus, of solid gold, thickly studded with diamonds, which are so arranged as to form the lady's name and the date of her birth and marriage. Queen Victoria has a very valuable gold and diamond-set thimble, upon which are engraved many historical scenes from English history.

To Test the Purity of Water.

Test for Lime.—Into a glass of water put two drops of oxalic acid and blow upon it. If it gets milky, lime is present.

Test for Hard or Soft Water.—Dissolve a small quantity of good soap in alcohol. Let a few drops fall into a glass of water. If it turns milky, it is hard; if not, it is soft.

Tests for Iron.—Boil a little nut-gall and add to the water. If it turns grey or lake, black iron is present. 2. Dissolve a little prussiate of potash, and if iron is present it will turn blue.

Test for Acid.—Take a piece of litmus paper. If it turns red, there must be acid. If it precipitates on adding lime water it is carbonic acid. If a blue sugar paper is turned red it is a mineral acid.

Test for Carbonic Acid.—Take equal parts of water and clear lime water. If combined or free carbonic acid is present, a precipitate is seen, to which, if a few drops of muriatic acid be added, an effervescence commences.

Test for Magnesia.—Boil the water to a twentieth part of its weight, and then drop a few grains of neutral carbonate of ammonia into a glass of it, and a few drops of phosphate of soda. If magnesia be present it will fall to the bottom.

Test for Earthy Matters or Alkali.—Take litmus paper dipped in vinegar, and if on immersion the paper returns to its true shade the water does not contain earthy matter or alkali. If a few drops of syrup be added to a water containing an earthy matter it will turn green.

Wise Words and True.

Better three hours too soon than one minute too late.

Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath.

Good taste rejects excessive nicety; it treats little things as little things, and is not hurt by them.

One gains courage by showing himself poor; in that manner one robs poverty of its sharpest sting.

A false friend is like a shadow on a dial; it appears in clear weather, but vanishes as soon as a cloud approaches.

The mind of the scholar, if you would have it large and liberal, should come in contact with other minds. It is better that his armor should be somewhat bruised by rude encounters even, than hang forever rusting on the wall.

Love Lightens Labor.

Selected.

KINDNESS OF MISS ELLEN HARRIS, DUNGANSBORO, ONT.

A good wife rose from her bed one morn,
And thought with a nervous dread
Of the piles of clothes to be washed, and more
Than a dozen mouths to be fed.
There were meals to be got for the men in the field,
And the children to fix away
To school, and the milk to be skimmed and churned;
And all to be done that day.

It had rained in the night, and all the wood
Was wet as it could be,
And there were puddings and pies to bake
And a loaf of cake for tea.

The day was hot, and her aching head
Throbbled wearily as she said,
"If maidens but knew what good wives know,
They would be in no hurry to wed."

"Jennie, what do you think I told Ben Brown?"
Called the farmer from the well;
And a flush crept up on his bronzed brow,
And his eye half bashfully fell.

"It was this," he said, and coming near,
He smiled, and stooping down,
Kissed her cheek,—" 'twas this, that you were the best
And dearest wife in town."

The farmer went back to the field, and the wife,
In a smiling and absent way,
Sang snatches of tender little songs
She'd not sung for many a day.

And the pain in her head was gone, and the clothes
Were white as foam of the sea,
Her bread was light, and her butter was sweet
And golden as it could be.

"Just think," the children all called in a breath,
"Tom Wood has run off to sea!"
He wouldn't, I know, if he only had
As happy a home as we."

The night came down, and the good wife smiled
To herself, as she softly said,
" 'Tis sweet to labor for those we love—
 'Tis not strange that maids will wed."

Too Thin.

The phrase "too thin," is generally regarded as an instance of American slang, and is supposed to find its proper place only in works devoted to that important branch of philology. In support of this theory one occasionally sees newspaper stories obviously manufactured for the purpose of explaining this expression. And it has even been called in the English press, "a notable Americanism." The truth is, it has a most reputable English paternity, having been used by Lord Chancellor Eldon, in an opinion delivered in the case of Peacock against Peacock. The point under discussion was whether "partnership, without any provision as to its duration, may be determined without previous notice." The eminent jurist decided that the question was one for the court and jury to act upon, summing up his opinion in these words: "I cannot agree that reasonable notice is a subject too thin for a jury to act upon; as in many cases juries and courts do determine what is reasonable notice." Here the expression was applied in what we term its slang sense. But Dr. Wm. Cave more than half a century earlier uses the expression in the following connection, in his "Life of St. Athanasius." "For procuring a synod to be called at Antioch, Eustathius is charged as heterodox in the faith because they knew that it was too thin to hold water."

For Roughness of the Skin.

Cold cream of almonds is one of the best preparations for roughness of the skin produced by wind or sunburn. To make this, mix together four ounces of oil of almonds, half an ounce of white wax, and half an ounce of spermaceti. These ingredients should be put in an earthen jar. Set the jar in a saucepan of water and mix the ingredients thoroughly together. When the mixture is a smooth liquid; stir in two ounces of orange-flower water; mix well and pour the mixture into any ornamental earthen jars which you may possess. Simple olive-oil is also an excellent unguent to use on the skin. There is no danger from the use of vegetable oils. A great many persons with a naturally dry skin use a little simple oil after bathing, and for this purpose a vegetable oil, like oil of almonds or olive-oil, is to be preferred to anything else. Camphor ice which is made with olive-oil is an old and tried family remedy for chafed hands, and so easily made that it should always be at hand. Take three drachms of camphor, three of white bee's-wax, and three of spermaceti; add two ounces of sweet olive-oil. Put the mixture into an earthen pot, set in a saucepan of boiling water, and let it melt into a smooth consistent mass. It will be white and almost translucent when cold. While it is in a liquid form, pour into little ornamental jars.

Color and Quality.

Those who associate color with quality have almost invariably regarded red as the symbol for strength and for warmth, for all its shades are more or less full of vitality, while nothing is more emblematic of the strength and warmth of youth, with all its hopes and purposes, than that modification of red known as rose color. Blue, again, is universally felt to be the symbol of coldness, the ancients considering the disembodied spirit to be of a blue tint; and while red is a physical color, blue—the color of the air, of distance, of space, of the heavens—is an ethereal and intellectual hue. Yellow, on the other hand, has had two entirely different symbolical meanings. In its deep golden tinge—the color of the sun—it was the emblem of virtue, as in the halo of the saints, while in its more crude and glaring tint it has always been used to signify baseness; Judas is often represented in old works of art in that form of the color, and it is to-day the color of the dress of a certain class of convicts. Green, again, has always been connected in the public mind with jealousy; purple, with royalty; white, with purity and joy; gray, with sobriety, and black, with grief. The system of heraldry has made great use of the symbolical meaning of colors—gules, azures, sable, vert, and purpure being their designations. With all this, the varying civilizations, or semi-civilizations, have never agreed on the color to be worn in mourning—these mourning in black, those in white, others in yellow, and kings in scarlet.—Harper's Bazar.