

Christmas eve! A dark, dreary little room up-stairs in a noisy tenement-house. A pale, thin woman on a shabby lounge vainly trying to quiet a fretful child. The child is thin and pale, too, with a hard, racking cough. There is a small fire in the stove, a very small fire; coal is so high. The medicine stands on the shelf. "Medicine won't do much good," the doctor had said; "she needs rest and cream."

Jim's heart sank at the thought. He could almost hear the baby asking: "Isn't papa coming soon? Isn't he, mamma?"

"Poor little kid! Jim said, softly, under his breath. 'And I sha'n't have a thing to take home to him; nor Mary's violets, either. It'll be the first Christmas that ever happened. I suppose that chap would think it was ridiculous for me to be buying violets. He wouldn't understand what the flowers mean to Mary. Perhaps he didn't notice I gave him too much. That kind don't know how much they have. They just pull it out as if it was newspaper.'

The conductor went out into the snow to help the nurse, who was assisting the old gentleman to the ground. Then the car swung on again. Jim turned up the collar of his coat about his ears and stamped his feet. There was the florist's shop where he had meant to buy the violets and the toy-shop was just round the corner.

A thought flashed across his tired brain. "Plenty of men would do it; they do it every day. Nobody ever would be the poorer for it. This car will be crowded going home. I needn't ring in every fare; nobody could tell. But Mary! She wouldn't touch those violets if she knew. And she'd know. I'd have to tell her. I couldn't keep it from her, she's that quick."

He jumped off to adjust the trolley with a curious sense of unreality. It couldn't be that he was really going home this Christmas eve with empty hands. Well, they must all suffer together for his carelessness. It was his own fault, but it was hard. And he was so tired!

To his amazement he found his eyes blurred as he watched the people crowding into the car. What! Was he going to cry like a baby—he, a great, brawny man of thirty years?

"It's no use," he thought. "I couldn't do it. The first time I gave Mary violets was the night she said she'd marry me. I told her then I'd do my best to make her proud of me. I guess she wouldn't be very proud of a man who could cheat."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE.)

Music and The Drama

TONES AND UNDETERMINED.

No special preparation has been made in regard to Christmas music by the churches, and in the majority of them this part of the service will be quite the same as in previous years.

The W. H. Johnson Piano Company have inaugurated a series of recitals at their rooms on Market Square, which draw together a good many musical people. At the latest one Mrs. F. G. Spencer sang several selections in her usual charming manner.

Madame Szumowska had been engaged for the concert to be given by the Boston Women's orchestral society in Copely hall on Jan. 22.

The English critics were unanimous in their praise of Horatio W. Parker's new work "A Wanderer's Psalm" when it was produced at the Hereford festival.

The death of Sir Arthur Sullivan has had a curious effect on the audiences of "Patience" at the London Savoy. It has so stimulated interest in the dead composer's work that the audiences are exceeding the record of the first production of the opera, a score of years ago.

Sir Arthur Sullivan wrote the tenor and baritone music in his musical drama, "The Beauty Stone," for Mr. Devall and Mr. Isham, and when there was a hitch in the engaging of these gentlemen, he sent word to Mr. D'Oyle Carte that he would have no one else but them to sing it and they were at once engaged at salaries never before paid at the London Savoy.

Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman, the banker poet, in his new compilation of the works of American poets, has honored a Boston author by quoting a set of his lyrics therein. Mr. William Gardner, who received this honor besides writing for the best American composers, collaborates with Sir Alexander McKenzie of London who since the death of Sir Arthur Sullivan is considered the most eminent English musician.

TALK OF THE THEATRE.

The Christmas season promises to be a busy one [in] theatrical circles here, and we will have the novel experience of two strong companies in rival attractions. The Valentine Stock with a slight change in last year's personnel, comes to the Opera house for a four months engagement. It is headed by Miss Nora O'Brien and Mr. Everett King; concerning the latter's identity there are various contradictory rumors. The company opens in a matinee in "The Fool of the Family," followed in the evening by Hamlet. Both are strong bills and the house will no doubt be filled to give the returning favorites a warm welcome.

At what is styled the "new" Mechanics Institute a company will open on the holiday in Madame Sans Gene, a particularly strong bill, in which Miss Jessie Bonstelle will play the name part. This lady needs no introduction to St. John. When here last year she was a favorite socially and theatrically, and everybody will be glad to welcome her back. She will have the support of some well known people, and Emmett King, a man well known in the theatrical world, will be leading man. Later in the week the company will produce Denise. The company is under the personal management of W. S. Harkins.

The Christian company in which Miss Marie Furlong is playing, will open in Norfolk, Virginia, on Christmas day.

A new farce called "The Two Mrs. Homebuns," by Mr. J. H. Darnley, was produced at Eastbourne, London, the 6th of this month.

E. H. Southern who was compelled to abandon his tour on account of an injury to his foot while playing Hamlet has quite recovered and the season will re-open on Dec. 24.

Mr. Robert Downing appears to be making a success in Texas, with Miss Converse as his leading lady. "Ingomar" and "Richard the Lion Hearted," constitutes their repertoire.

Rudyard Kipling has dramatized his one long story "The Light That Failed," and the play has been acquired by Mr. Charles Hawtreay. It will probably be produced in the spring.

George Bernard Shaw, author of "Arms and the Man" has followed up his two volumes of "Plays, Pleasant and Unpleasant," with a third called "Three Puntanicaal Plays." In his preface he says: "On the stage, it appears people do things for reasons. Off the stage they don't; that is why your penny in the slot heroes who only work when you drop a motive in them

are so oppressively automatic and uninteresting."

Mrs. Brown Potter will commence a London engagement on Christmas Eve, when she will recite poems suitable to the season surrounded by a winter scene, including a large Christmas tree. At the matinee of the week the children present will participate in a draw for a lucky bag and the number drawn will denote the present to be received from the tree.

Save the Boston Transcript of recent date: The immediate success of the latest New England novel of country life, "Quincy Adams Sawyer," had prompted several theatrical managers to look into its possibilities for stage use. The dramatic rights, however, it is understood, were disposed of by the publishers some time



W. S. HARKINS.

Manager of the Mechanics Institute Stock Company.

before publication, and the work of dramatization is already in progress. The author, Charles Felton Pidgin, chief clerk of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics, called attention to the dramatic possibilities of his book when he dealt with his publishers, and in fact it is more than likely that he had a possible stage adaptation in view when writing the book.

The following will be interesting to St. John people inasmuch as in it is mentioned the name of Mr. Arthur Elliott, an actor well known here. The cast engaged by Wagenhals & Kemper to support Mr. Henry Miller includes Louise Thornadyke Boucicault, J. H. Stoddard, Arthur Elliott, Florence Rockwell, Lawrence Lowell, Louis Payne and Miss Jennie Eustace. Such an array of names augurs well for the success of Madeleine Lucette Ryley's new play, "Richard Savage," which is to have its first production in a few weeks. The scenes are well diversified, the several acts taking place respectively in Richard Savage's garret, in the sumptuous banquet hall of Lord Tyrconnell's mansion, in the streets of London near Charing Cross, and in the historic Debtor's Prison.

The opening night of Miss Olga Nethersole's sixth American tour in Providence was signalized by an act of coolness and courage on the part of the distinguished artist, which is worthy of chronicle. During the second act of "Sapho" an alarming fire broke out next door to the Opera House, and a rumor rapidly spreading throughout the audience that the theatre was on fire caused a commotion and threatened panic. Realizing the situation, Miss Nethersole stopped acting and stepping down to the footlights, addressed the audience, assuring them that there was absolutely no cause for alarm. She had in the meantime sent for the chief of the fire department, who happened to be in the theatre, and he stepped on the stage and confirmed Miss Nethersole's assurance. The excitement was at once subdued, and at the close of the act Miss Nethersole was rewarded with a tremendous cheer.

In the second volume of "Players of the Present," just issued by the Dunlap Society, is an account of Mrs. Henry Miller (Bijou Heron), which seems entirely new. Mrs. Miller, then a little school-girl, made a success as the child in "Monsieur Alphonse" in the season of 1873-74 under Augustin Daly's management, a success that was so marked that she continued with the great manager. The next season she played Oliver Twist in a version of Dicken's novel in which Fanny Davenport was seen as Nancy Sikes, Charles Fisher as Fagan and James Lewis as the Artful Dodger. Later in the season she played King Charles in "Faint Heart N'er Won Fair Lady," and the name part in "Nan, the Good-for-Nothing." During her third season she played Fan-Fan in Mr. Daly's revival of "The Fast Family," and took part in an interesting performance for the benefit of Mrs. Gilbert, playing Juliet to Fay

Templeton's Romeo in the balcony scene. Mr. Daly had a miniature scene and balcony built for the occasion, while the company looked on from the wings, Miss Davenport smilingly declaring that she wanted a few points. This proved such a success that shortly afterwards, when Miss Templeton had a benefit in Philadelphia it was repeated.

The London Times of November 30th has the following under the head of "The right of Theatregoers," and which will be of timely interest here because of the fact that similar occurrences have often taken place here: At the Westminster County Court, yesterday, before Judge Lumley Smith, Q. C., Mr. C. F. Pollock, a solicitor, of Bedford row, and three relatives sought to recover 25s each as damages against the Moss' Empires (Limited). Mr. Pollock said he purchased four tickets at 5s each for Oct. 26 for the London Hippodrome. They were numbered in "B" row. On his going with his aunt and two other ladies who had come up from the country he found the seats occupied, and, though he was offered a box and his money back, he contended that he was entitled to the seats he had paid for, and they ought to have been kept for him. Mr. Philip J. Rutland, for the defendants, said there was an unfortunate mistake, and as soon as it was discovered that people with tickets for "A" row were occupying the plaintiffs' seats in "B" row an effort to get them out was unsuccessful. An offer to give them a box of the value of two guineas and to return the money was refused. What Mr. Pollock wanted was that the persons occupying his seats should be forcibly ejected, but that would have caused a riot. His honor said it was very annoying to be treated like this. Unless these seats were kept there was nothing to prevent them from being sold more than once. Mr. Rutland: "We offered the box. Mr. Pollock said he objected to the box as being draughty." Mr. A. Cook, the manager, said this occurred through an unfortunate mistake of a new attendant, and as soon as it came to his knowledge he apologized and offered the box and to return the money. Subsequently he repeated the offers to return the money and to give the plaintiffs any seats on any occasion they chose. His honor said he could understand how annoying this sort of thing was, and he should find for the plaintiff in each case for £1 damages and costs.

She'd rather starve than have a ribbon she couldn't pay for.

He rang up a dozen fares with a steady hand. The temptation was over. Six more strokes—then mine without a falter. He even imagined the bell rang more distinctly than usual, even encouragingly.

The car stopped, Jim flung the door open with a triumphant sweep of his arm. He felt ready to face the world. But the baby—his arm dropped. It was hard.

He turned to help the young girl who was waiting at the step. Through the whirling snow he saw her eager face, with a quick recognition lighting the steady eyes, and wondered dimly, as he stood with his hand on the signal strap, where he could have seen her before. He knew immediately.

"There was a mistake," she said, with a shy tremor in her voice. "You gave us too much change and here it is." She held out to Jim the piece of silver which had given him such an unhappy quarter of an hour.

He looked at it a little dazed. Would the young lady think he was crazy to care so much about so small a coin? He must say something. "Thank you, miss," he stammered as well as he could. "You see I thought it was gone—and there's the baby—and it's Christmas eve—and my wife's sick—and you can't understand—"

"But I do," she said, simply. "I was afraid of that. And I thought perhaps there was a baby, so I brought my Christmas present for her, and something else dropped into Jim's cold hand."

"What are you waiting for?" shouted the motorman from the front platform. The girl had disappeared in the snow.

Jim rang the bell to go ahead, and gazed again at the two shining half dollars in his hand.

"I didn't have a chance to tell her," he explained to his wife late in the evening as he sat in a tiny rocking chair several sizes too small for him, "that the baby wasn't a her at all, though if I thought he grow up into such a lovely one as she is I don't know but I almost wish he was."

"Poor Jim!" said Mary, with a little laugh as she put up her hand to stroke his rough cheek. "I guess you're tired."

"And I should say," he added, stretching out his long legs toward the few red sparks in the bottom of the grate, "I should say she had tears in her eyes, too, but I was that near crying myself I couldn't be sure."

The little room was sweet with the odor of English violets. Asleep in the bed lay the boy, a toy horse clasped close to his breast.

"Bless her heart!" said Mary, softly.

"Well, Miss Williams," said Walter Harris, as he sprang to meet a snow-covered figure coming swiftly along the sidewalk. "I can see that you found him. You've lost the first number, but they won't scold you—not this time."

The girl turned a radiant face upon him. "Thank you," she said, shaking the snowy crystals from her skirt. "I don't care now

struck a huge pile of casting, bounced off and hit the boiler with a crash like forty bass drums all being beaten at once. Exactly where the others landed I can't say, for by that time I was beating a rapid retreat; but it seemed to me that it was raining cannon balls for at least five minutes. Several of the visitors were bowled over like ninepins, and everything in the engine room was more or less damaged except the target. That escaped unscathed. Geisemann himself had crawled into an ash pit at the first fire, and when he was dragged out he was a pitiable looking object. He was weeping bitterly, but stuck to it that he had simply made an error in his 'calculation of curves' and that the gun was all right.

"I never saw it again, and supposed it was consigned to the scrap heap. If I ever attend another centrifugal gun exhibition, I shall insist on a conning tower four feet thick as a cogn of vantage."

A Christmas Matinee.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO.

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if they do. I should have lost more than that if I had stayed."

A Mountain Accident.

A serious-seeming accident with a fortunate termination is reported by a Western exchange.

A man and his wife, while driving along a mountain road in Oregon, met with a curious mishap. The wagon was overturned and the occupants fell out. The woman dropped into the branches of a tree fifty feet below, and the man went, sliding and bumping, fully three hundred feet to the bottom of a ravine.

When he recovered his senses, he was comparatively unharmed, and went to his wife's rescue, but it was an hour before he could extricate her from where she hung by her skirts.

Mamma (in Boston)—We had a great deal of trouble with little Emmerson last night. His nurse told him something about a bugaboo—

Friend—Was he frightened?

Mamma—not at all; but he cried bitterly because she couldn't show him the bugaboo.

Yes, that Billikins who used to be regarded by most of the people around here as being a little off has struck it rich. They say he's made over \$100,000 during the past year.

Holy smoke! What did he do? Write a historical novel or get out a new goose book for children.

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