

## UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

## MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—

Already one snowy page of our new book bears the ineffaceable tracery that time is ever tirelessly but noiselessly inditing, and soon we shall cease to speak of this as the New Year. I am delighted to notice an increase of interest in the puzzle column; and while it affords me much pleasure to see new faces (or rather names), I am always glad to welcome the old contributors, another of whom makes his appearance this issue, bringing with him a friend. That the cousins have not forgotten the art of "posing" is evident from the good puzzles I have received.

I am glad to hear from you again, T. W., and thank you for bringing your friend. If each of the boys and girls would do as much, we would soon have a large and merry family once more.

I will try and have the Illustrated Rebus again, Lily, since some of our readers miss it.

You are a very clever boy, J. S. C.; only nine years old, and in the Fourth Reader! I hope to often hear from you.

No, indeed, Chris, I have no intention of neglecting my boys and girls, but will try to have my usual chat with them every month, as I would feel quite lonely without it, and in return I hope they will not quite forget their old uncle, but will send him a letter occasionally. Letters for me may be sent with the puzzles, and will reach me later on, thus saving additional postage.

Some time ago I mentioned that we might have some other contests during this year, but as I have not yet decided what they will be, I have concluded to ask you all to write and tell me what sort of contest you would like. This department is specially intended for the entertainment of the younger folks, and I wish to make it as interesting as possible. Now, you can aid in so doing by writing and telling what you would like best; if there be any new features you would like introduced; and whether you prefer money or book premiums. I also ask the puzzlers to mention whether they prefer to have the prizes awarded quarterly, as at present, or yearly, as formerly. Don't be afraid to offer criticisms or make suggestions; the first will not offend us, and, whenever practicable, we will try to carry out the latter. Would you like to have shorter letters from me, and the space devoted to "chit-chat" with contributors? Awaiting the opinions of all my young readers, I remain,

Your devoted old—UNCLE TOM.

## My Cat and I.

Just at dusk, at my study door,  
Four little white feet stand on the floor,  
Four little white feet leap to my knee,  
And a beaming face looks up at me.  
Oh, full many a love I've known,  
But never a heart so much my own,  
Never a grateful soul like that—  
And this is the way I love my cat.

Every day, through storm or shine,  
This rapturous greeting still is mine;  
Every night on my knee she lies,  
Watching my face with her crystal eyes;  
Through fame well gained, or a lost renown,  
If stocks go up or if stocks go down,  
Faithful forever as faith can be—  
That is the way my cat loves me.

Oh, my pussy! the world is round;  
In it full many a friend I've found.  
When I was rich they bent the knee,  
And when I was poor they frowned on me;  
But, rich or poor, you have loved me still;  
You share the good as you shared the ill;  
So, while we live, and when we die,  
May we be together, my cat and I!

—Mary Field Williams.

## Tests of Pronunciation.

The following composition, according to a writer in the *Homiletical Review*, came from a teachers' institute in Pennsylvania. He asserts that not one in fifty will read it correctly at sight. Submitted to bishops, editors, professors, authors, etc., it has never been read, in his hearing, with less than five errors, while he has known ministers of considerable prominence to miss twenty-eight of these common words:—

A sacrilegious son of Belial, who suffered from bronchitis, having exhausted his finances, in order to make good the deficit, resolved to ally himself to a comely, lenient and docile young lady of the Malay or Caucasian race. He accordingly purchased a callopie, and a necklace of a chameleon hue, and, having secured a suite of rooms at a leading hotel near the depot, he engaged the head waiter as his coadjutor. He then dispatched a letter of the most unexceptional caligraphy extant, inviting the young lady to a matinee. She revolted at the idea, refused to consider herself sacrificable to his designs, and sent a polite note of refusal; on receiving which he said he would not now forge fetters hymeneal with the Queen. He then procured a carbine and a bowie-knife, went to an isolated spot behind an abode of squalor, severed his jugular vein, and discharged the contents of the carbine into his abdomen. The debris was removed by the coroner, who, from leading a life in the culture of belles-lettres and literature, had become a sergeant-at-arms in the Legislature of Arkansas.

## For Valentine's Day.

What though the skies be cold and gray,  
And winds be wild and shrill,  
Love's messenger shall find his way  
Across the vale and hill:  
For sunlight he shall have your face;  
For stars, two eyes that shine  
Where my heart has its dwelling-place—  
Your own, dear Valentine!

He turns to neither left nor right,  
But straight ahead he goes;  
His guide is Hope, whose footstep light  
The surest pathway knows.  
He bears my message in his scrip—  
A song whose every line  
Shall turn to music on your lip,  
My own dear Valentine!

Oh, when you hear his eager knock  
Upon the door begin,  
Make haste to lift the heavy lock  
And bid young Cupid in.  
Glad then shall gleam the skies above,  
And glad this heart of mine  
To be at last with her I love—  
With you, dear Valentine!

—Frank Dempster Sherman, in *February Ladies' Home Journal*.

## Advertisement Curiosities.

Curiously worded advertisements, which are funny without intent, are more common in the English papers, it would seem, than they are in publications on this side. An English periodical offered a prize the other day for the best collection of such announcements, and the following is the result:—

"Annual sale now on. Don't go elsewhere to be cheated—come in here."

"A lady wants to sell her piano, as she is going abroad in a strong iron frame."

"Wanted, experienced nurse for bottled baby."

"Furnished apartments suitable for gentlemen with folding doors."

"Wanted, a room by two gentlemen about 30 feet long and 20 feet broad."

"Lost a collie dog by a man on Saturday answering to Jim with a brass collar round his neck and a muzzle."

"Wanted by a respectable girl, her passage to New York, willing to take care of children and a good sailor."

"For sale—a pianoforte, the property of a musician with carved legs."

"Mr. Brown, furrier, begs to announce that he will make up gowns, capes, etc., for ladies out of their own skin."

"A boy wanted who can open oysters with a reference."

"Bulldog for sale; will eat anything; very fond of children."

"Wanted—an organist and a boy to blow the same."

"Wanted a boy to be partly outside and partly behind the counter."

"Wanted for the summer, a cottage for a small family with good drainage."

"Lost, near Highgate archway, an umbrella belonging to a gentleman with a bent rib and a bone handle."

"Widow in comfortable circumstances wishes to marry two sons."

"Wanted, good boys for punching."

"To be disposed of, a mail phaeton, the property of a gentleman with a movable head piece as good as new."

## The Little Queen of Holland—She Probably Envis Her Girl Subjects Their Unrestrained Freedom.

Arthur Warren contributes a very bright and interesting article (illustrated) on "The Little Queen of Holland" in *February Ladies' Home Journal*. He presents this almost idolized girl sovereign in a graceful pen picture, tells of her daily life, her studies, her diversions, her toys, her pets, and of her patriotically reciprocated love of her subjects. Mr. Warren has sweetly pictured her in these words: "She is a bright-faced, blonde little lassie, who passed her fifteenth birthday on August 31, 1895. She is rather pretty, and has a slender, graceful young figure. I have seen her dressed in the peasant costume of Zeeland, and she looked for all the world like one of George Boughton's dear, delightful Dutch maidens, except that her cheeks were not ruddy. She has a very delicate, clear complexion; her hair is pale brown, and long and wavy; her eyes are blue and there is a delicious twinkle in them which suggests that the young girl has a fair sense of humor. Her Christian names are Wilhelmina Helena Paulina Maria."

I suppose that if Wilhelmina I. were asked by some staunch democratic maiden of her own age, whether in the dignities of Queenship there is much satisfaction for a little girl, she would answer "No." To be sure, there is some amusement to be got out of her position, but not so much as if the girl were the daughter of a rich Dutch burgher, or of a farmer in that wonderful country where the peasants are like walking jewelers' shops, and where the land flows with canals and honey. For one thing, the playmates of the child Queen can be very few, and, as there is no bevy of brothers and sisters in the family, the girl's life has so far been spent almost entirely among persons much older than herself. There is a genuine affection for her throughout the country, and with good reason, for she is a very lovable child. The sweetness of her nature shines out through her face. She has the most winsome smile that you could wish to see. She appreciates her position thoroughly; that is to say, as thoroughly as a girl of her years can appreciate such an exceptional condition as Queenship; and she is amusingly particular about the dignities which encompass her. For all that, she is delightfully considerate of others. Her servants worship her, Dutch children adore her, and everybody who comes into contact with her speedily becomes very fond of her.

## Puzzles.

## 1.—ANAGRAM.

From puzzling for some time I've rested,  
And my cousin's patience I have tested;  
And for some longer time 'twill last,  
So from this sport my soul must fast.  
Of the great reforms which you have made  
In the ADVOCATE, I've lately read  
Of how that artful, witty maid  
Takes Uncle Tom's cares in his stead.  
But now with my lot I must comply  
Until I can on the times rely,  
And the NAG I REST ON I am bent  
Is one on which I must be content.

T. W. BANKS.

## 2.—CHARADE.

'Tis a long time ago since first I saw  
In the columns of the ADVOCATE,  
The names of several puzzlers bright,  
Who since have met their fate.

I would like to be a puzzler  
And a nephew of Uncle Tom,  
And so help on the puzzling  
And bring it FIRST-long.

For I believe that puzzling  
Is THIRD for all mankind;  
I better pastime would not want  
Than the answers to find.

'Twas one of the cousins who asked me  
To try a puzzle or two;  
My SECOND was great, but hard I tried,  
And this is what I did do.

Although my COMPLETE at first was great,  
It much has passed away;  
I hope to see this in the ADVOCATE  
At a very early day.

H. A. BRADLEY.

## 3.—DROP LETTER.

B-t-e-t-d-s-c-i-d

A-d-u-d-d-h-y-u-o.

IRENE M. CRAIG.

## 4.—METAMORPHS.

Value of letters:—

A=500

B=300

C=100

D=500

E=500

F=40

G=400

H=200

I=1

K=250

L=50

M=1000

N=900

O=11 or 0

P=100

Q=500

R=80

S=7

T=160

U=5

W=55

X=10

Y=150

Z=2000

If 2501160500 = Kite.

What does (1) 100002507.

(2) 300002507.

(3) 160500005000.

(4) 100200500807.

(5) 30050050160 equal?

LILY DAY.

## 5.—DECAPITATION.

I FIRST began puzzling  
Myself to COMPLETE,  
And cracked a few nuts,  
The kernels to eat.

Quite pleased with my efforts,  
Emboldened I grew,  
And dreamed to become  
A puzzler too.

So, high I aspired,  
And vaguely I reckoned,  
And ere long began  
Court my SECOND.

"Success crowned my efforts,"  
You'll know by the past;  
And puzzling to me  
Has been of great LAST.

C. S. EDWARDS.

## SOLVERS OF JAN. 1ST PUZZLES.

Charlie S. Edwards, Clara Robinson.

Scene:—The bar parlor of Prince George, Brixton. Pipes and beer all round. An old salt saying: "I've got a riddle to ask you chaps. If a 'erring and a 'alf cost three farthings, 'ow many could you buy for sixpence?"

Profound silence and much puffing of pipes. Presently a voice from the corner:

"I say, Bill, did you say 'errings?"

"Yes, I said 'errings."

"Drat it, I've been a-reckoning of pilchards all this 'ere time!"

## SOCIETY SNAP-SHOTS.

Under this heading we shall be glad to receive correspondence from our friends, relating to social events of interest. Our space will not admit of lengthened details; we therefore request that the notices be brief. We think that this additional department to the ADVOCATE will prove interesting to its many readers.

All communications to be addressed to "Minnie May," FARMER'S ADVOCATE.

"Society Snap-Shots" is our elegant name,  
And we want now to chronicle every game  
That is played by the youths and the maidens fair,  
Who sing and who dance and go everywhere.

For description of dresses we haven't much space,  
So will try to imagine the silks and the lace.  
We don't mean to tell who's "engaged" and who's not,  
Because all such news might bother a lot.

We want news of all, irrespective of age—  
The old and the young, the silly and sage.  
We just want to know what is done "up to date,"  
That our readers may see in our own ADVOCATE.

## New Music.

"The Song of the Southern Maiden," an exceedingly pretty song for medium voice. Music by Albert Nordheimer. Published by A. & S. Nordheimer, Toronto.