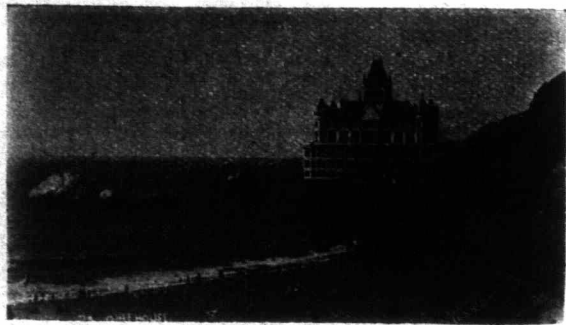




Travelling Notes.

SAN FRANCISCO.

The scenery in all these far-off regions is so grand, so overpowering, that the city sights seem to pale into insignificance. In spite of broad and handsome streets and palatial buildings, it is the scenery and ever the scenery. There are so many delightful drives, so many wonderful places to be seen, that it is difficult to know where to begin and quite as difficult to know when to leave off. One charming excursion is to the Cliff House, of which the illustration here given is very good. It lies on the western shore of the city, at the south head of the Golden Gate, and is built like an old French chateau of the 17th century. There is an enclosed balcony all round the building, from which one can see to perfection the harbor and shipping. The elevator takes you up to the highest tower, where you can lunch and enjoy such a sea view as one can scarce imagine. You can sit on the veranda and watch the sea lions basking in the sun and swimming round the rocks, and on a clear day one can see well the Farallone Islands 26 miles out. It is of interest to know that the largest of these



Islands (nearly 1 mile in diameter) has a lighthouse station on it with a curious fog whistle or horn. A huge horn is inserted at its larger end, in one of the many caves on the island and as the waves rush into the aperture, they force the wind into the horn, thus making the whistle. Large herds of sea lions, sea gulls, etc., make their homes here. The Seal Rocks, seen in the picture, are about 300 miles from the Cliff House. Big seals, medium seals, and little seals, climbing up and down, hundreds of them, and they never cease barking day or night. They are protected by law, so we did not try to catch them! They are not peculiar to this spot, but are to be found in many parts along the Pacific Coast. One could sit for hours enjoying the antics of these seals, and especially when all the surroundings are of such beauty. On the bluffs above the Cliff House lie Sutro Heights. They are really the private grounds of the Hon. Adolph Sutro (of Sutro Tunnel fame), who also owns the Cliff House, but he has generously thrown the Heights open to the public. You enter by a gateway, on either side of which is a statue of a huge lion, and drive along Palm Avenue, bordered its entire length by palms



and flower-beds. Beautiful statues are everywhere. There is a lovely grove of trees and a fine grass lawn, where stands Mr. Sutro's residence. As can well be imagined, the aspect from these Heights is most magnificent and extends miles and miles. A fine view of the grounds can be had from the rotunda, reached through a long passageway between rows of trees. Then there are the Sutro pleasure grounds, with Firth wheel, mystic maze and haunted swing, etc., all relics of the great Midwinter Fair. The Sutro baths are the most superb bath houses in the world. On the first floor is a collection of curiosities from all parts of the world, including "Ben Butler," the largest sea lion known. He was monarch of the rocks, but was one morning found dead on the beach. His weight was 2,000 lbs. Potted flowers and trees are all over the building. On the main floor, or upper balcony, is a restaurant, where you can get a light lunch quite reasonably. On this floor the bathing suits are obtained, also there are various amusements, photographs, etc.

The main tank is on the western side of the building and contains the sea water in its natural state and is four to ten feet deep. Other tanks are heated to various degrees. One is especially reserved for ladies and children. There are trapezes, swinging rings, spring boards and everything suitable for aquatic gymnastics. The baths are 490 ft long and 25 ft wide, and hold 1,804,962 gallons of water. These numbers have nearly taken our breath away, so we'll only just add that 100,000 feet of glass covers roof and sides, 270,000 cubic feet of concrete in building and tanks generally, 517 dressing rooms, besides club-rooms and shower-baths. Then, to wind up, there is a huge breakwater 400 feet long, 25 feet wide at top and 20 feet high, which protects the baths on the west from encroachments by the sea and another breakwater affords protection at the end. How is that for a bath? The London Sulphur Baths and other celebrated bathing resorts will have to look to their laurels.

Another wonderful place we visited was Mount Tamalpais, on the coast range, north-west of the city. You go by what is called the "Scenic Railway," and one can hardly deny the right which calls this "the grandest mountain railway ride in the world." This "Scenic Railway" is another of those engineering feats by which you can be taken to this mountain summit, 2,592 feet above the sea, by such easy travelling that you hardly feel you are moving. You steam easily and safely over eight miles of tortuous windings. At the Double Bowknot the track parallels itself five times. Steam traction locomotives of a special kind are used, the trip up taking about one hour and a half, and down, less than one hour. After about a mile along Blythedale Canyon, the ascent begins, and up you go, rising above tall redwoods, laurels, oaks, madronas, etc. When these are passed, the scenery gets more and more magnificent, and you also begin to catch sight of the celebrated hotel, "The Tavern of Tamalpais," about 210 feet below the bold turreted rock crowning the summit. The vast panorama expands and expands, and just as one thinks that surely this or that view is the grandest of all, another comes into sight, and we can only again feel that there is literally no limit to Nature, and that she has fresh surprises for us at every turn. It is at the "Double Bowknot" that the specially superb views commence, for here we first see the great ocean expanse, with mountain upon mountain rising over the horizon, and lower and lower sink San Francisco and heights which seemed enormous when we were on them. The sunrise from Mount Tamalpais is of such surpassing grandeur that many people stay over night at the "Tavern of Tamalpais" on purpose to behold the glorious sight. From the verandas of this cosy hotel one can take in these wonders of nature, comfortably seated in the time-honored rocker, and if you have time for any thought beyond the magnificence before you, you can give a sigh of thankfulness that you live in an age when everything is made so easy, so comfortable, for travellers, although, perhaps, somewhat of romance is lost. The moonlight on the ocean, the shadows in the valleys, and (on a dark night) the lights in the distance, San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley, San Rafael, the Farallones, the gigantic Mount Diablo (3,848 feet) form a scene which must stay forever in our memories.

We left this glorious California with regret, and by the time our readers see this account we shall be on our way to far Australia, so good-bye to our beloved continent for a time.

UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,

As we should not only make good resolutions at the beginning of the new year, but also put them in practice, I must endeavor to practise what I preach. I shall therefore devote this letter to a business chat, for business should always precede pleasure. I am pleased to note that we have a large number of contributors to our puzzle column, and I think we should strive to make this a banner year, by raising our standard of excellence. It should be the aim of every contributor to aid in doing this, by sending only his best efforts and by introducing novel features when possible.

The cross-word and numerical enigma (though the latter may occasionally be varied so as to prove interesting), drop-letter and transposition puzzles are rather old-fashioned, and are much less attractive than many other forms. Good riddles, conundrums, anagrams, charades, squares, etc., are much more interesting. It must be remembered that all should be strictly original—a fact we have found difficult to impress upon some of our readers. A form of puzzle much admired nowadays is called the Palindrome: it consists of a phrase or part of a phrase which spells the same backwards and forwards, e. g., "Tis in a motto, nan, on an ottoman I sit." The "palindrome" is usually brought in in an appropriate verse, although it could as well be given in prose. The key given to the solver is usually every second letter, somewhat as follows: -i-i-a-o-t-n-n, etc., the words being spaced as in ordinary printing. While puzzles in rhyme may sound more pleasing, the author should not sacrifice sense to sound, as sometimes happens, some lines being positively misleading to guessers, for the sake of a rhyme. If one has not the faculty of expressing one's ideas in tolerably good metre and rhythm, it is much better to give them in prose. Orthodox arithmetical problems are scarcely in order, as they

can be so easily found in school arithmetic books; on the other hand, those of catchy nature will do much to sharpen the wits of solvers.

As our space is limited, it is advisable to arrange your work as compactly as possible—circumlocution is never a recommendation, while "Brevity is the soul of wit." I, too, must be brief, but I trust the above suggestions will be carried out, and that we may make 1900 an unprecedented success. Wishing you all a happy and prosperous New Year,

Your loving, UNCLE TOM.



The Dragon Tamers.

(Continued from page 671.)

John ran as hard as he could into the town, and found the mayor and corporation.

"There's a dragon in my dungeon," he said. "I've chained him up. Now come and help to get my baby away. But they all happened to have engagements for that evening; so they praised John's cleverness, and said they were quite content to leave the matter in his hands. So John went sadly home again, and told his wife some of the tale.

"Now," he said, "I'm going down. After I've been down you can go, and if you keep your head the boy will be all right."

So down went the blacksmith, and there was the dragon purring away with all his might to keep the baby quiet. "Hurry up, can't you?" he said. "I can't keep this noise up all night."

"I am very sorry, sir," said the blacksmith, "but all the shops are shut. The job must wait till the morning. And don't forget you've promised to take care of that baby. You'll find it a little wearing, I'm afraid."

The dragon had purred till he was out of breath, so now he stopped, and as soon as everything was quiet the baby thought everyone must have settled for the night, and that it was time to begin to scream. So it began.

"Oh, dear," said the dragon, "this is awful."

He patted the baby with his claw, but it screamed more than ever.

"And I am so tired, too," said the dragon. "I did so hope I should have had a good night." Then he tried to quiet the baby as if it had been a young dragon. But when he began to sing "Hush-a-by, dragon," the baby screamed more and more.

"I can't keep it quiet," said the dragon; and then suddenly he saw a woman sitting on the steps. "Here, I say," said he, "do you know anything about babies?"

"I do a little," said the mother.

"Then I wish you'd take this one, and let me get some sleep," said the dragon, yawning. "You can bring it back in the morning before the blacksmith comes."

So the mother picked up the baby and she and her husband went to bed happy, for they had caught the dragon and saved the baby.

Next day John went down and explained carefully to the dragon exactly how matters stood, and he got an iron gate with a grating to it and set it up at the foot of the steps. Then tourists came and paid twopence each to go down the steps and peep at the rusty dragon in the dungeon; and it was threepence extra for each party if the blacksmith let off colored fire to see it by, which, as the fire was extremely short, was twopence halfpenny clear profit every time. And the blacksmith's wife provided teas at ninepence a head, and altogether things grew brighter week by week. The baby, called Johnnie, began presently to grow up. He was great friends with Tina, the daughter of the whitesmith. She was never tired of hearing the story of how Johnnie, when he was a baby, had been minded by a real dragon.

At last one day the mayor and corporation, hunting the hare in their gold gowns, came screaming back to the town gates with the news that a lame, humpy giant, as big as a tin church, was coming over the marshes towards the town.

"We're lost," said the mayor. "I'd give a thousand pounds to anyone who could keep that giant out of the town. I know what he eats, by his teeth."

No one seemed to know what to do. But Johnnie and Tina were listening, and they ran off as fast as their feet would carry them. They ran through the forge, and down the dungeon steps, and knocked at the iron door.

"Who's there?" said the dragon.

"It's only us," said the children. And the dragon was so dull from having been alone for ten years that he said, "Come in, dears."

"You won't hurt us or breathe fire at us or anything?" asked Tina. And the dragon said, "Not for worlds." So they went in and talked to him, and told him what the weather was like outside, and what there was in the papers, and at last Johnnie said: