

Uncle Tom's Department.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—Thanks for the many charming letters this month. I see a number of you are now working in real earnest for the prizes; two more months will decide, so send in some good original puzzles for Xmas; and now some one asks for an explanation of Hallowe'en. It is the name popularly given to the eve of All Hallow or festival of All Saints, which, being the 1st of November, Hallowe'en is the evening of the 31st October. In England it was long customary to crack nuts, duck for apples in a tub of water, and perform other harmless fireside revelries, while in Scotland the Hallowe'en ceremonies partook more of a superstitious character. Here is a story of another Uncle Tom:

UNCLE TOM'S SORROW.

The boys had just returned from an afternoon's shooting, eager to show Uncle Tom what good sportsmen they were—Uncle Tom, who had come from the East to pay a long promised visit, and whose coming had been the great event of the year.

Yet kind as he was to them, full of interest in their studies and their games, they were not a little puzzled by this same Uncle Tom. All of their mother's stories of her early life were full of her favorite brother, who had seemed a very spirit of fun and merry mischief, of the wild pranks he had played, the joyous times they had had together. And now that he was here, they found him a grave and silent man. Only two years older than their bright and cheery little mother; his dark hair was yet full of silver threads; his eyes had a look of patient suffering; his whole manner was that of a man acquainted with sorrow.

What had been his history? He was sitting now on the front porch with the other members of the family, Birdie, the one little, darling sister, standing by his side. The boys threw down their trophies—a dozen beautiful quail, three cotton-tails, and a "jack-rabbit."

Ned, the eldest of the three, in mere fun and thoughtlessness, raised his gun and pointed it at his little sister.

"There is another bird for me to shoot," he said.

The child only laughed, without a thought of fear. Mother said, warningly:

"Ned, Ned!"

But to the astonishment of all, Uncle Tom sprang to his feet.

"Put that gun down, sir!" he shouted in a tone of terrible excitement. "Put it down instantly!"

And then, as Ned looked at him in blank amazement, he sank back in his chair, his face ghastly pale and his hands trembling.

"Well," said the boy, "what is the matter? I have not loaded the gun since I shot that rabbit. It's as harmless as an old stick."

But his mother motioned to him to be silent, and going to her brother, she softly smoothed his hair with a caressing touch, as she said:

"Dear Tom, I am very sorry Ned's thoughtlessness should have given you such a shock."

"Never mind," he said, with a shudder; "it was only the old pain. I forgot myself for a moment. But you had better tell them, Mary;" and slowly rising, he took Birdie by the hand and walked away into the orchard.

"What is it, mother?" said Ned, not a little amazed by what seemed to him a very unnecessary fuss.

"As your uncle wishes it," said his mother, "I will tell you of a very sad chapter in his history, which will explain what has just occurred. Years ago, when we were children, in Jersey, Tom had a friend whose name was Aleck Martin. Even as boys their affection for each other was something wonderful, and as they grew older it only increased. They were inseparable companions at school, at college, and afterwards, when they had both become active men of business. Even Aleck's marriage made no difference, for his wife was a cousin of our own, who loved Tom as though he had been her brother, and he almost lived in his friend's pleasant little home.

"Often the two would take a holiday and go off on some short excursion together; and it was on

one of these trips that the accident occurred which has darkened your uncle's whole life. They were staying at a hotel in New York, and before Aleck was up in the morning, Tom went out for an early walk. Seeing in a shop window a very pretty little pistol of a novel make, he went in and bought it. As a matter of course, when he returned to the hotel he went to Aleck's room to show off his purchase. Pointing it at his friend in the merest fun—as you did just now with your gun, Ned—he said: 'Get up, you lazy fellow.'

"'Don't Tom!' exclaimed Aleck, who had a nervous dread of firearms.

"'Pooh! it has never been loaded,' said poor Tom, pulling the trigger.

"'Alas! alas! unknown to him there was a cartridge in one barrel. A sharp report, a groan from Aleck, and then you can fancy all the rest; your uncle calling help, landlord and servants rushing into the room. All the terror and distress that followed.

"'Was he dead?' whispered Joe, the youngest of the boys.

"'No; he lived to be taken home, even to leave his bed and to crawl about in a feeble way for five long years; but from that hour he never knew a moment of health or comfort. He had been so proud of his strength, poor fellow, of his youthful, vigorous manhood; after that he was a weak and helpless invalid. But never once did he utter a word of reproach or complaint. Your uncle's bitter and unavailing grief seemed harder for him to bear than all his own sufferings. Tom gave up his business and devoted himself to the care of his beloved friend. Night and day he watched over him with unwearied tenderness, but always, as he has said to me, with a sword through his own heart. Gladly would he have laid down his life

8. John, Eva and Mary went to the pic-nic yesterday. HARRY A. WOODWARD.

3—DROP VOWEL PUZZLE.

P-t-nc-s-v-rt-
P-ss-ss-t-fy-c-n
T-ss-ld-mf-nd-nw-m-n
L-ss-ft-n-f-nd-n-m-n

CHARLIE FLEMING.

4—WORD SQUARE.

Hasty, a tree of several species, a kind of mineral alkali, a pile.

5—DROP-LETTER PUZZLE.

A-l-s-e-l-h-t-n-s-e-l.

6—TRANSPOSITION.

Eh ahtt thifgs nad nrus yaaw,
Yam elvi ot ghif ronateh yad.

7—BEHEADINGS.

Whole I mean to go at a fast pace, behead and putrefy, behead and transpose and I am a preposition.

My first is an article of clothing, my second is a color, my whole means illwill.

Answers to October Puzzles.

- 1.—"The good are better made by ill, As odours crushed are sweeter still."
- 2.—Grate, rate, ate, tea, eat, at, a.
- 3.—Buttter-cup.
- 4.—987654321—45.
123456789—45.
864107532 45.
- 5.—Advocate.
- 6.—Thistle.
- 7.—Brides-maid.
- 8.—When the cats away the mice will play.
- 9.—Do a little well and you do much.

Names of Those who have Sent Correct Answers to October Puzzles.

John Wm. Forbes, P. Boulton, Richard Kingston, Ada V. Morse, Frank Booth, Ellen D. Tupper, Robert J. Risk, Maggie A. Rowe, Jas. Watson, Harry A. Woodworth, Geo. Barr, Maud Dennee, Charlie Fleming, Fannie Burton, Esther Louisa Ellis, Florence Gamble, Tom Montgomery, Arthur Ryan, G. H. Morgan, Nellie Fitzpatrick, Mary Marshall, Frank Jarvis, Gussie Henderson.

He Saw Widows.

Officer Button, at the Union depot, picked up the other day a memorandum book evidently lost by some one attending the State Fair. All the entries are made in a business-like manner, and some of them are readable. The first entry is:

"Shall take \$16 with me to the State Fair. Second-class hotel good enough for me. Beware of pickpockets. Keep your eye open for a good looking widow. View the animals and don't forget to take two clean handkerchiefs along."

The second entry is:

"Fair up to the average. Saw a widow in the car going up. Didn't seem to like my style. Somebody has stuck me with a bogus half dollar. Saw another widow on the grounds. Rather too stout. Viewed the animals and was kicked by a steer."

Third entry—"Good attendance. Slept on the floor. Jam on the street-cars. Passed the bogus money off on a bootblack. Saw a widow at the hotel. Most too lean. Went to the theatre last night. Saw several widows, but no chance to make an impression."

Fourth entry—"Big crowd on the grounds. Beat my way in. Saw a widow on the fence. Most too boisterous for my locality. Saw a horse race. One horse beat all the others. Viewed the machinery and was hit on the ear by a loafer. Saw a widow viewing the headless rooster. Mouth most too large for my part of the State. Slept in a barn for nothing."

Fifth entry—"Saw a widow in the post-office. Blind in one eye. No good. Big jam. Tried to beat my way in, but couldn't. Saw a horse-race. Saw a widow on the grand stand. Bowed to her. Cold cut. Viewed the big ox. Saw a widow in Honey Hall. Raised my hat. Got left. Feel blue."

As that was the last entry it would seem as if he gave up in disgust and started for home. A person supposed to be him "saw a widow" at the depot Friday afternoon, and became so obnoxious that she hit him over the head with an umbrella and two or three men reached for him with cowhide boots.



1—ILLUSTRATED REBUS.

if he could have undone that one act of thoughtless folly. But it could not be.

"Aleck went to his rest at last, leaving poor Tom a broken-hearted man. He showed me, one day, a little case he carries in his pocket. In it are two photographs of Aleck—one taken when he was in all the pride of his early manhood—such a fine, handsome, noble-looking fellow; the other as he was in his last days—a wasted invalid with the impress of death on every feature. 'I look at them every night,' he said to me, 'and always with the cry, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.'"

Mother's eyes were full of tears as she ended, and for a few moments the boys were silent. Then Ned knelt down beside her and put his arm around her waist.

"Mother," he said, earnestly, "I promise you on my word of honor that I will never again point a gun or a pistol, loaded or unloaded, at any human being as long as I live!"

And as his mother pressed her lips to his forehead the other boys standing behind him said, "And so do I." "And so do I."

Puzzles.

1—NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

I am composed of 9 letters.
My 8, 3, 4 is a liquor.
My 5, 1, 8 is to ask earnestly.
My 9, 6, 8 is to embrace.
My 8, 7, 3, 4, 2 is to reduce to powder.
My whole is a city in the British Isles.

HARRY A. WOODWORTH.

2—BURIED RIVERS.

1. Ethel, being the elder of the two, marched in front.
2. Please do not go to-night, Edwin?
3. Is Rose in Edinburgh or Glasgow?
4. That boy never meant what he said.
5. Oh! I ought to have told you that before.
6. What a rich color adorns the cheeks of that young lady.
7. Why don't you shoot that cur, Alfred?