

Uncle Tom's Department.

MY DEAR NIECES AND NEPHEWS,—As I write, visions of snow and sleigh-bells, merry voices on the frosty air, toboggan slides and skates, come mingling. For has not old Winter, with hoary hair and frosted beard, stolen upon us and is here? With his bands he has bound our lakes and rivers, and they seem to crack under the strain.

In *Hiawatha*, Longfellow describes one. But when we speak of joyous winter, with its sports and frolics, its long evenings with drawn curtains, and bright lights and warm fires, and all the comforts of home, we do not think of his winter of the "famine and the fever." Hear his rhythmic music, weird and beautiful, but sweetly sad:—

"O the long and dreary winter,
O the cold and cruel winter,
Ever thicker, thicker, thicker,
Froze the ice on lake and river;
Ever deeper, deeper, deeper,
Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
Fell the covering snow and drifted
Through the forest, round the village,
Hardly from his buried wigwam
Could the hunter force a passage.

In the ghastly, gleaming forest,
Fell and could not rise from weakness,
Perished there from cold and hunger."

Yule, or Christmas-tide; how many memories are recalled! What about Christmas presents this year? Why are those three heads together so often, as John and Mary and Rob talk so earnestly? I think a present for mamma evolving there. If it were for papa, she would know, I am sure, dainty, pretty, thoughtful presents at this festive time. By thoughtful presents I mean those which can be, and are, at once, of service. A gift is more esteemed for its acceptability than its value. Then there are uncles, aunts, cousins, and all to think of, yes, and friends; but remember kindly those to whom:—

"The Christmas time no beauty brings,
To those who cherish but the strings
Of wretchedness, and want, and woe;
Who never loves great bounty know,
Whose grief no kindly hands assuage;
Whose misery mocks our Christian age."

To whom the word Christmas is but a name, who knows not the meaning of "Christ was born in Bethlehem," or the life of Him who went about *doing good*, who lived for such as they, and died to save them.

But we have wandered from Christmas presents and Christmas. Make it a happy day. How few families *all* meet, even once a year, when once separated. Life is a strange, strange dream. We come and go, meet and part, and the festive seasons come round and we dream they will continue so to do, till some day a chilling blast blights and separates or carries away. Some of you are restive, and changes will ensue. Is this Christmas your last at home? Home partings, aye, they are sad, sad things. May you, my dear nieces and nephews, long be spared to sit at your holiday feast without the vacant chair, the absent voice or the missing merry laugh, when the home-comings are subdued and quiet, and the blinding tears are brushed away before the smile shines through them.

Frances Ridley Havey has beautifully expressed it in her "Bells Across the Snow." Hear her speak:—

O Christmas, merry Christmas! is it really come again?
With its memories and greetings, with its joy and with its pain.
There's a minor in the carol, and a shadow in the light,
And a spray of cypress twining with the holly-wreath to-night;
And the hush is never broken, by laughter light and low,
As we listen in the starlight to the bells across the snow.

O Christmas, merry Christmas! 'tis not so very long Since other voices blended with the carol and the song.
If we could but hear them singing as they are singing now:
If we could but see the radiance of the crown on each dear brow—
There would be no slight to smother, no hidden tear to flow,
As we listen in the starlight to the bells across the snow.

O Christmas, merry Christmas! this nevermore can be:
We cannot bring again the days of our unshadowed glee;
But Christmas—happy Christmas, sweet herald of good-will—
With holy songs of gladness, brings holy gladness still:
For peace and hope may brighten and patient love may glow,
As we listen in the starlight to the bells across the snow.

The last month of the last year of the "eighties" is here. Let us be like the year and close up the past and be all ready to start a fresh, new page of a new book, viz., 1890, and let it be all new—with clear accounts, reading finished up,



7-ILLUSTRATED REBUS.

clothes in readiness—a clear page in every respect. With this preparation you will be the better able to appreciate a "New Year's address" by your loving

UNCLE TOM.

Puzzles.

1-A CHARADE.

* o * December's first line, if you please!
* * o * * Is here; and now sweet melodies
* * o * * From bells are wafted on the air;
o o o o o * * Turkeys and (second line, now.)
* * o * * hear,
* o * * And feel "their goose is cooked" with ours;
The maid the dining-room now scours;

For many a friend with us will dine
On Christmas day; and will (third line)
Of fowls and puddings as you may
(The fifth line) on that happy day.
The tables will, of course, (Sixth line)
(That's often said by those who dine.)
Now, Uncle Tom, come down and spend
Vacation with your Sackville friend;
And bring each nephew and each niece;
Bring down Miss Fox to taste our geese.
And I wish, too, that with Miss Fox
You'd bring Miss Nancy M. Silcox,
With Robert Wilson and George Ross;
We'll try to treat A. Russell "Boss"
If he comes down with Morley T.,
And Miss J. Morley's company
We ask the pleasure of; and I
Promise transposers lots of pitea,
And roast beef, chicken, bacon, ham,
To our fair friend from Pakenham.
Turkey we'll give the learned Reeve.
If his geography he'll leave.
Frankly, we'll ask A. Riddle true.
We want A. Little's Shaver, too;
Fair Brother may come, if he wishes.
My sister 'll make him wash the dishes.
And Copenhagen we shall play
When Eddie comes on Christmas day.
We'll feed him well, too, when he comes,
And Snowbird may have all the crumbs.

Now I shall bring this "form" of mine
To an—(please write the seventh line)—
The centrals tell this puzzle's name.—
"Tis a plum pudding!" some exclaim.
No, it is not; come, now, what is it?
Those who guess right shall earn their visit.

HARRY A. WOODWORTH.

2-TRANSPPOSITION.

Small the chances are of meeting,
So I'll send this Christmas greeting
To my cousins, every one:
Many months we've sailed together,
Through both fair and stormy weather,
While another year has run.

There's Henry Reeve and Harry Albrow,
What's your word worth in Sackville? Oh!
Beg your pardon, cousin, dear:
Mother oft says that I'm crazy,
Ada Armand, she's a daisy,
Don't you think she brings good cheer?

There are others we might mention,
Who deserves to draw a pension,
As we're climbing up the hill;
Morley, Amos, Irvine, Frank,
First to stay within the rank
With their paper, ink and quill.

Where are Clara, Annie, Lizzie,
Flora, Jessie, Katie, Libbie,
Who began to last? I mean,
Shall they swim, or go clean under?
Surely not, I've made a blunder,
They are sailing all serene.

FAIRBROTHER.

3-FARMER'S ADDRESS.

10 30 31 32 33	23
11 34 35 36 37	22 0 24
12 33	21 1 5 25
13 39 43 44	20 2 9 6 26
14 40 45 46	19 3 50 7 27
15 41	18 4 8 28 51 52
16 42	17 x x 29 53 54

This number of the *Advocate* (from 14 to 46) the year; and I have (30, 35, 14, 53, 50,) (31, 32, 33, 34, 39, 21, 51, 52) in wishing the *Advocate* a Merry Xmas and a (30, 51, 0, 37, 42, 52, 12, 17, 9, 39) New Year. From 10 to 33, something N. S. farmers find profitable; from 11 to 37, what Canada prides herself on; 30 to 42, a vegetable; 13 to 44, what the farmer says in the spring; 15 to 48, the number of lives popularly assigned to a domestic animal; 31 to 45, a goad; 22 to 24, what I hope no farmers need say to the *Advocate*; 21 to 25, an article of food often found on farmers' tables; 20 to 26, the noise that a (from 39 to 44) makes; 18 to 28, something for which great preparations are made by farmers; 47, 8, 9, 50, an animal raised on the farm; 51 to 54, what the *Advocate* is; 53, 4, a source of profit when placed in this journal; 23 to 29, what boys and girls get by reading the advice of Uncle Tom and Minnie May; 49 to 29, when to subscribe for the *Advocate*; 19 to 27, what I must now say to fellow-puzzlers of this department; 10 to 16, 17 to 29, what the *FARMER'S ADVOCATE* was, is, and always will be.

HARRY A. WOODWORTH.

4-CHARADE.

We're a happy puzzling band,
Sailing through a mystic land,
And there's room for many more, many more:
As we work *entire* the Don,
Under the banner of Uncle Tom,
We will welcome everyone that comes ashore.

We'll unfurl our banner wide,
As we all work side by side,
Solving puzzles by the score; by the score;
While the fields are white *prime* snow.
Let us skillful labor show,
For dear old Uncle Tom, whom we adore.

Ye beginners *last* the art,
Send one answer for a start.
Oh! ye posers, lend an oar, lend an oar;
Send along new puzzles, too,
And I'm sure that if you do,
You'll stay with us evermore, evermore.

FAIRBROTHER.

5-CHARADE.

Total, don't let them deceive you,
As they have the best of mankind,
Though the world may incline to believe you,
And a pacified conscience relieve you;
For they always make people talk civil
And make promises of *first-ness* no end,
Which, if not followed up, come to evil,
And proves but the wiles of the devil.
Then all through the world you will find
That the wisest and purest *second*
Without actions are scarcely worth mention.

HENRY REEVE.