

Uncle Tom's Department.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—We have watched the last struggle of the dying year, and ushered in the new one with its unknown future. What will it bring to us? Who can tell? How many that were with us last year are with us now? And who knows how many of our friends will wish us a Happy New Year in 1882? How uncertain is the future! Although this is a time of rejoicing, yet it is with a feeling of sadness that we reflect on the departed years (wasted by many of us) and lost opportunities, for who has not sometimes to regret? How many of our good resolutions have been kept? But I think I will leave the remainder of my sermon to be delivered from the pulpit (I am sure it will prove more efficacious and be listened to with less ennui), while I shall proceed to more interesting topics. First, I will commence by wishing you a very Happy New Year, with many pleasures, and hope you may live long to enjoy them. At Christmas all endeavored to meet again at the "dear old home." How pleasant it is to welcome the return of a long absent brother, or a dear sister; we all try to have the brightest of smiles and best of wishes with which to greet the wanderer.

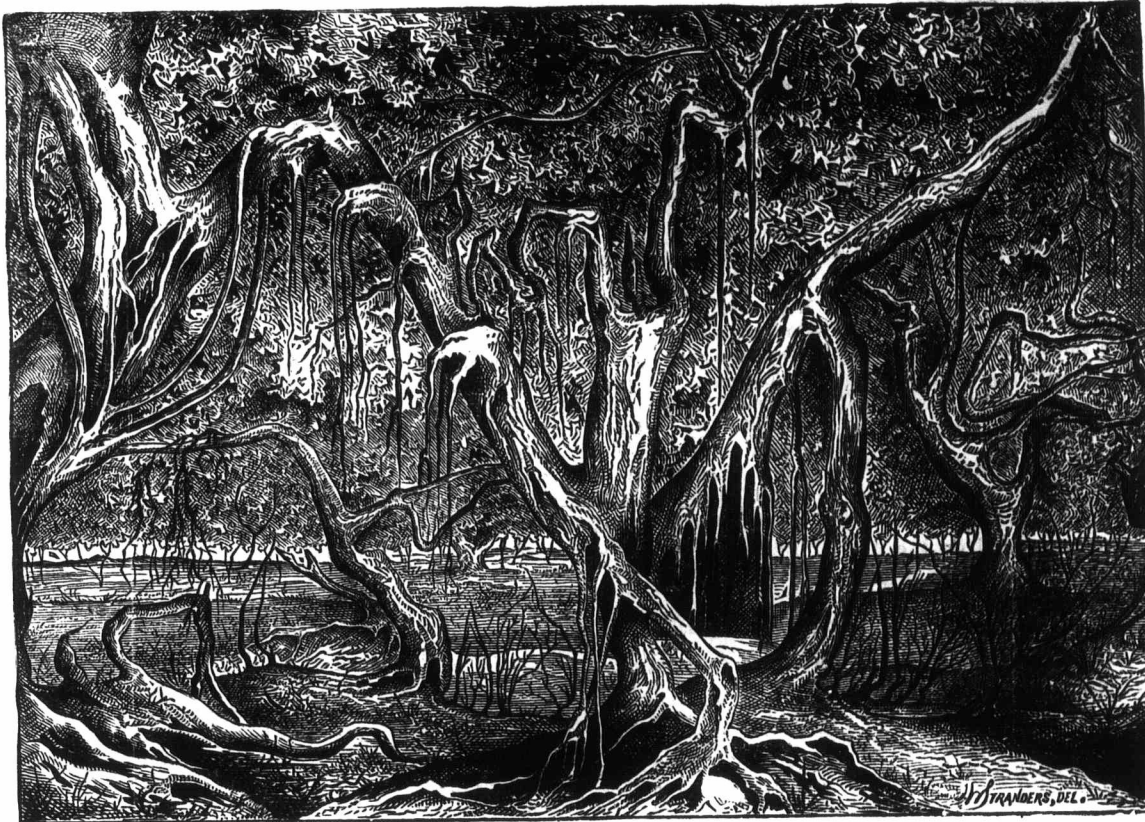
The custom of decorating our houses is not so universally observed in Canada as in England; still it is a pretty one, and makes home appear unusually attractive. Cedar, hemlock, spruce, and the berries of the mountain-ash, make very pretty decorations. In England, holly, ivy, and mistletoe are used. Kissing a fair one under the mistletoe and wishing her a Happy New Year as you present her with one of the berries is the custom there. It may be that some of my readers do not know what the mistletoe is, and if they do it will be useful to know more about it. It is a parasitic plant, found wild in England, very rarely in Scotland and nowhere in Ireland. It grows luxuriantly upon crab and apple trees, but rarely upon oaks; it is evergreen winter and summer, and bears a white, glittering berry, and is utterly different from the plant upon which it grows. The mystic uses of the mistletoe are traced to pagan ages; it has been identified with the golden branch referred to by Virgil, and is affirmed to have been used in the religious ceremonies of the Greeks and Romans. I shall now give you a few hints in regard to New Year's calls. It is a charming way of beginning the year, and is a French custom brought to us by the early settlers of Canada and the States. Visits are made from ten or eleven in the morning till about the same time in the evening. Unless a gentleman feels that he is on sufficiently friendly terms with the ladies of the house to make his call welcome on any day of the year, he has no right to call on New Year's Day; but some latitude is allowed in the case of gentlemen who are making calls together, as they are permitted to bring their companions to the houses of their respective friends. Such introductions, however, need seldom be afterwards acknowledged. Hats are always carried into the drawing-room, and cards are usually left in the receiver for as many ladies as are in the house. A lady need not shake hands with strangers who come in with

other friends, unless the gentleman offer his hand. It is always nicer to have some refreshments provided for visitors. It is not now fashionable to offer wines; cups of tea and coffee should be small, and I advise my nieces not to worry making a variety of refreshments—a few simple things nicely served in whatever manner is best suited to circumstances. Be simple and natural on New Year's Day as on every day of your life, and I trust the coming year may prove a pleasant and prosperous one to all my readers. UNCLE TOM.

PUZZLES.

99—Whole I mean to suffocate, behead and I am a parent, behead again and I mean not the same, curtail and behead and I am the definite article, behead again and I mean masculine, again and I am a vowel.

J. W. LOVERKIN.



100.—OUR MENAGERIE. HOW MANY ANIMALS CAN YOU FIND?

101.—BOTANICAL CONUNDRUMS.

1. Plant a youthful Virginian before it can walk, and what comes up?
2. Plant a piece of bunting, and what comes up?
3. Plant a wise man, and what comes up?
4. Plant a large, inclosed basin, and what comes up?
5. Plant a ruminant's lips, and what comes up?
6. Plant an egg, and what comes up?
7. Plant a color, and what comes up?
8. Plant a sea-shore, and what comes up?
9. Plant yourself, and what comes up?
10. Plant a muff, and what comes up?

A. and T. J.

102.—ENIGMA.

My first is in corn, not in grain.
My second in hail, not in rain.
My third is in lamp, not in light.
My fourth in darkness, not in night.
My fifth is in well, not in sick.
My sixth is in cane, not in stick.
My seventh in maple, not in pine.
My eighth is in back, not in spine.
My ninth is in green, not in red.
My tenth is in needle, not in thread.
My eleventh in archer, not in bow.
My whole was an emperor long ago

MAY E. T.

103.—ENIGMA.

My first is in shoe, but not in last.
My second is in heat, but not in blast.
My third is in rum, but not in beer.
My fourth is in bear, but not in deer.
My fifth is in wren, but not in owl.
My sixth is in hen, but not in fowl.
My seventh is in man, but not in boy.
My eighth is in cap, but not in toy.
My ninth is in cat, but not in mouse.
My tenth is in den, but not in house.
My eleventh is in inn, but not in bar.
My twelfth is in depot, but not in car.
My whole is a Nova Scotian river.

ELLA J. PUTNAM.

Names of Those Who Sent Correct Answers to December Puzzles.

Richard E. Osborne, Florence Gill, Tom Stevens, Frank Johnstone, Fannie Burns, Arthur Simpson, Carrie Jell, Minnie Hill, Bennie Lind, Harry Hiscott, Mary Ellis, Bertha Errington, Willie Brown, Geo. Coomers, Joseph Roe, Willie Silcox, Charlie Gordon, Lee Smith, Johnny Crawford, Jack Sims, Elsie Johnson, Michael Attwood, Maggie West, A. C. Cross, Robt. Parkins, Nelly Craig, J. J. Wells, Annie A. Rock, Jessie Cassella, Gus Gordon.

Answers to Dec. Puzzles.

94—Carlise; Car-diff; Ayr; Bath.
95—The eye.
96—Because he sets down three and carries one.
97—1881.
98—Marselle.

It is related that a Yankee who had just lost his wife was found by a neighbor emptying a bowl of soup as large as a hand-basin. "Why, my goodness, El-anthus!" said the gossip, "is that all you care for your wife?"—"Wal," said the Yankee, "I've been cryin' all the mornin' and after I finish my soup I'll cry an-

other spell. That's fair, anyhow."

Who can tell the value of a smile? It costs the giver nothing, but it is beyond price to the erring and relenting, the sad and cheerless, the lost and forsaken. It disarms malice, subdues temper, turns hatred to love, revenge to kindness, and paves the darkest paths with gems of sunlight. A smile on the brow betrays a kind heart, a pleasant friend, an affectionate brother, a dutiful son, a happy husband. It adds a charm to beauty, it decorates the face of the deformed, and makes a lovely woman resemble an angel in paradise.

At a meeting of the Onondaga Farmers' Club at which pear-blight was discussed, no one could give any reliable remedy, most of the speakers intimating that they became more and more mystified as year after year gave more experience with the evil. Mr. Geddes had lost 4,000 choice dwarf trees, but the old natural standard pear seemed exempt. Mr. L. T. Hawley had found salt useful among his pear trees as well as among his other crops. Pear trees struck with blight had recovered after the limbs had been removed by using brine liberally over them and about their roots. This seems to corroborate the view that it is a fungous infection, which salt has the power to kill or repel. Addressing of salt is said to have a good effect in preventing the rust in wheat stems, and in keeping the straw bright and clean until the grain fills and matures.