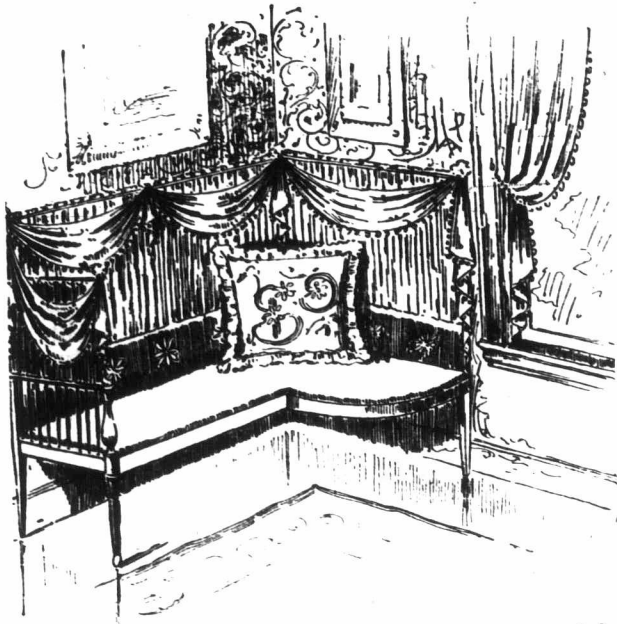


or if used should have a foundation of wood, and be fastened to the box so as not to roll off."

This corner will be found very suitable for the sitting-room or living-room of the family. Make plenty of pillows, some with soft, full frills, and others plain, but above all things, make them so that you will not be afraid to use them, for the chief attraction of a cosy corner is the fact of its being a place of rest. The need of some place to drop one for a moment and forget things is a crying one in most homes, and the value of even a comfortable old lounge cannot be over-estimated. The next time your cares and worries seem greater than you can bear, just throw yourself down on the sofa for a little while, shut your eyes and pretend you have not a care. Allow the tension to loosen, if even for a few moments, and you will arise stronger and braver to meet them. We keep ourselves so highly strung that it is small wonder the cord so often snaps and shattered nerves are left as a result.



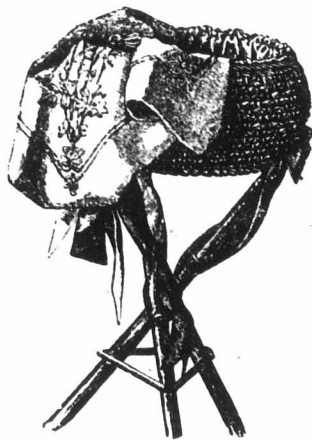
In our second illustration we have a more elaborate corner, which will be found more suitable for drawing-room decoration. The original was executed in pale blue enamel ornamented with silver, while the draperies were of harmonizing colors. Another pretty fancy is to use a curtain to drape the corner on one side, using a jewelled lamp for light, but where the room is heated by a stove or open fire-place it is not well to do so, as the drapery shuts out the heat.

#### Pretty Christmas Gifts.

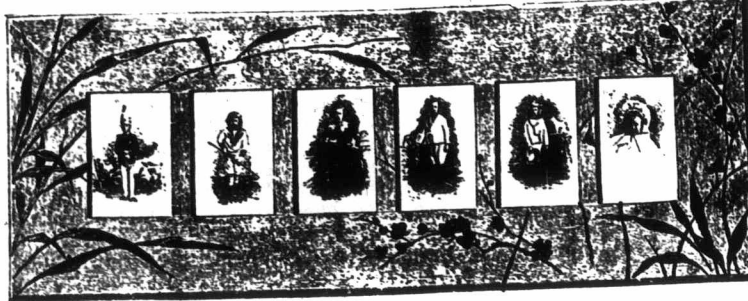
A few suggestions for making pretty trifles for Christmas will, I trust, be found useful to our many readers.



No. 1.—Penwiper and paper weight combined. It is three and a-half inches square at the base and one and a-half at the top, and two inches in height. Make a box of pasteboard, according to these dimensions, covering the bottom with any plain silk or bronze morocco, and the sides with rich brocade, chamois, or plain satin, and either paint or embroider the pieces. Join the pieces together with neat overhand stitches; fill the inside with fine gravel or shot, and stuff the opening with rolls of fringed chamois or strips of silk or old kid pinked on the edges. Never make a penwiper with woolen stuff of any sort, as infinitesimal threads are sure to catch upon the pen.



No. 2.—A work-stand made of a round basket lined with yellow india silk, and fastened to supports of bamboo twenty-three and a-half inches long. A square of silk to match or harmonize with the lining and ribbons is gayly embroidered to serve as a cover. Any round basket can be used for this, and a square one be made similarly with four rods instead of a tripod. The little bamboo canes are very pretty for the purpose.



No. 3.—For this pretty photograph-frame a thin board is required about one yard long and thirteen and a-half inches wide. If the home carpenter is not skilful enough to cut the openings for the photographs, the "Handy Andy" of the village must be called upon for this part of the work. The wood is finished with enamel paint, either ivory or a delicate pearl-color, and afterwards decorated with a few grasses and blossoming twigs, painted. The same design can be easily carried out for a simple *passe partout* frame by using heavy water-color paper as a mat and decorating it as in the illustration. Put glass over the mat, and use stout cardboard for the back, fastening all together with a narrow band of bronze or gilt paper pasted smoothly over the edges.

No. 4.—Half a yard of satin, velvet or plush, lined with a pretty contrasting color, will make a bag both odd and graceful if put together in the following way:—Say you use plush of silvery light blue, and line it with pale gold satin, finishing the edges neatly. Now fold over and join one side only; then gather the other side, drawing it toward the top; this will form a three-cornered bag, as shown in the illustration. Tie the gathered end with ribbon to match the lining, carry it across and fasten neatly on the other side, thus making a loop by which to suspend. Select the prettiest of your small shells, and drill a tiny hole in each with the point of your penknife. Sew these along each side, allowing them to fall loosely like a fringe, and if you wish something really exquisite, paint on each shell a delicate bud or blossom. Another appropriate decoration would be a delicate tracery as of sea-weed, done with the needle and silk thread. This bag was designed to hold photographs, but it may be placed to various other uses.



#### UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

##### MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES:—

Again the ground is covered with its ermine robe, and once again we hear the merry sleighbells as they "tinkle, tinkle, tinkle in the icy air of night," and a very pleasant sound it is Jack Frost, too, has been going his rounds, for there is his autograph on the windows, and what a clever artist he is.

"Morning! Each pane is a garden of frost  
Of delicate flow'ring as quickly lost,  
For the stalks are fed by the moon's cold beams,  
And the leaves are woven like a woof of dreams  
By night's keen breath, and a glance of the sun,  
Like dreams, will scatter them every one."

But, what care you for the frost and cold? Why it is just what you want to convert that fine pond into a sliding-place. And even the smallest among you knows that soon after old mother earth dons her white mantle, there is something else to be looked forward to—something that fills all our hearts with joy. If each of you were asked what you are thinking of just now, I know in most cases the answer would be that something to which I allude—Christmas, beautiful Christmas, so old and yet so new. With the poet, Miller, we may say:—

"What though on Xmas' hoary head  
Have fallen many a winter's snow,  
His wreath is still as green and red  
As 'twas a thousand years ago!  
For what has he to do with care?  
His wassail bowl and old arm-chair  
Are ever standing ready there,  
For Christmas comes but once a year."

Yes, just once a year, and it is almost time for his visit now. Of this, however, I might not remind you, for already the deft fingers of my older nieces are busy fashioning the pretty presents that in a few days will gladden the hearts of their dear ones. And what a lot of shopping is being done! There comes father from the grocer's with such piles of parcels—it is easy to know that plum-pud-

dings, mince pies and other good things will soon be on the way. And mother is ever and anon storing away mysterious looking packages, while the little ones are almost dying of curiosity as to their contents. Altogether what a pleasant sense of anticipation reigns everywhere. Only twenty-four days more! How busy you will have to be, to have ready your welcome for this time-honored guest. Those who go to school are striving hard to carry off the yearly prizes, while others are preparing

their recitations for the Xmas tree entertainment. And the tree itself is already marked out from among its fellows—the tree that soon will blaze with many hued lights and bend beneath the tokens of good will so lovingly hung upon it. But of all the presents received at such a time none are so dear to the little ones as those Santa Claus puts in their stockings, so do not let St. Nicholas forget that you have little brothers and sisters. Do not quaint remarks, their enjoyment and their delight, as they draw forth one by one their treasures, afford as much pleasure to you older ones and make you wish you were as young as they? Charles Dickens, the eminent novelist, says: "It is good for grown-up people to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas," and your Uncle Tom quite agrees with him.

Pardon the digression, but have not all of you read some of his works? Those of you who have cannot have failed to notice his tenderness for children. Those who have not have missed a treat. His Christmas tales are just the thing to amuse and instruct you these long evenings when lessons are over and you sit around the fire. What a pity there are not more old-fashioned fire-places and hearths, such as he describes in these charming stories. Although in Canada it is so cold that the cricket has long since ceased to chirp, the kettle still hums, and the chimneys of the village bells ring out as of old their notes of cheer, and perhaps, if we listen closely, we too may find in them a language even as Toby did.

The coming of Christmas reminds me that it will soon be time to settle accounts with my puzzlers. But there is still one month in which to work, and much may be done in that time.

But I cannot draw my thoughts away from the approaching festival, for, like Scrooge's nephew, I think of it "as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts, and to think of people below them as if they were really fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe it has done me good and will do me good; and, I say, God bless it."

But I must leave room for the puzzles, even tho', dear boys and girls, I am loath to leave you. I would fain join with you in your merry-making, but, this being impossible, I can only wish you from my heart, a merry, merry Christmas, and conclude with the prayer of Tiny Tim—"God bless us, every one."

UNCLE TOM.  
P. S.—Uncle Tom offers a prize of \$1.00 for the best description of games suitable for winter evenings; it being understood that we are at liberty to publish any of those sent in, even if they do not win the prize. Competition closes January 8th. In the coming year we will try a new experiment in the puzzle department and give a prize each issue for the best original puzzle, instead of taking the whole year's work into account, as heretofore. Contributors must be subscribers, or members of a subscriber's family. For January we offer \$1.00; 50c. for each issue. All puzzles to be in our office 20th December.

#### UNCLE TOM'S PICTURE GALLERY.

##### Life's Reflection.

BY AGNES FIDDIS, DEANS P. O., ONT.

Far away among the flowery dells and sunny hills lies a little pond, in whose sparkling waters the gay sunbeams dance and play among the fair, sweet pond lilies. From the mossy banks the elms, tall and graceful, cast their beautiful, picturesque shadows in the clear waters beneath, the sturdy oaks rear their majestic heads above the glassy surface, while the slender poplars flutter gaily in the flower-scented breeze of rosy June. Out of its leafy recess the thrush, from its tender, musical throat, pours forth its sweetened song of love and melody, while, gaily flying from tree to tree, its bright plumage flashing in the glorious sunlight, the sweet-voiced oriole sings its song of careless joy and happy freedom.

At the foot of the little hill overlooking the tiny pond nestles an ivy-clad cottage, whose pleasant windows look out on blooming roses, delicately perfumed mignonette and sweet-scented cluster of pink-tinted apple blossoms. Peeping through the vines of the beautiful climbing rose is a fair, young face—a face in which love and truth shine forth in glorious brightness and resplendent beauty. The eyes sparkle and dance with the bubbling emotion of youth, or, anon, assume a far-away, dreamy expression, changing into a melting look of tenderest love