## The Western Home Monthly

## Impressive Stationery

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unbroken, he cleared his throat and proceeded to exhort all "Good Christian men rejoice with heart and hand and voice.

He had not by any means concluded his theme, when a deep voice behind him made the boy start, and abruptly terminated his carol.

"What are you doing here?"

The child looked up at the speakera tall elderly man, with iron grey hair and a pair of piercing dark eyes, which were sternly fixed upon him from beneath the thick beetling brows.

"I was singing Christmas carols." "Oh! were you? Then don't do it mas."

"I'm sorry you don't like it." "Do you know you're trespassing in

my grounds?"
"No! I knew it was your grounds, but I didn't think trespassing counted to-night, because it's Christmas time."

"I suppose you don't think stealing would count because it's distmas time either, eh?"

"I don't know anything about stealing." The child's eyes met his, solemnly. With a non-committing grunt, the stern faced man turned and walked towards the house, while the boy, with a sinking heart retraced his steps into the darkness. He had started out so full of hope and happiness to sing his Christmas carols, and now it seemed as if no one wanted to hear them.

The man on the doorstep caught the sound of a stifled sob.

· "Come here," he commanded.

The boy returned obediently. light of the lamp shone on the aureole of rime about his fair curls-shone too, on a large tear drop coursing down his cheek.

"What do you want-money?" He produced ten cents and held it towards the boy.

"No, thank you."
"You won't take it?"

"No, thank you hot if you don't like my carols." "Why should I like them?"

"Because—well because it's Christ-"That's a bad reason. I hate Christ-

mas!" he exclaimed vehemently. "You hate Christmas?" the echoed incredulously.

"Yes! do you like it?" "Of course-I love it."

"Why?" "For everything. Good night, sir."

The boy raised his cap, and would have gone his way, but the man seemed loath to let him.

"Suppose you come in for awhile and tell me what 'everything' means, and some of the reasons that make this season attractive to people. Have you found anybody who wanted to hear your

"Not yet," the boy confessed, and keen disappointment looked out of the large blue eyes. "But I should, you know, if I went on long enough," he added cheer-

"You're evidently of a hopeful dis-position," remarked the man, opening the door with his latch key. The boy followed him into the house, feeling as though he were really entering the fairy palace he had dreamed, lay at the end of the enchanted avenue. A butler appeared and took his master's hat and coat. His well trained solidity could scarcely conceal his astonishment at the strange guest. It was many a year since a child had crossed the threshold of that house. The man led the way into a large and luxurious room.

"Don't stand there staring, Dawson; you fool," he growled, as the servant's eyes still rested with astonishment on the small figure.

"Is that your brother?" the boy in. quired.

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"My brother"—with a chuckle, as the door closed-"No, why?"

"I thought it must be 'cause you were so rude to him."

"Oh. Are you rude to your brother?" "I've not got one, but I 'spect I should be if I had one. Most fellows

The boy took an exhaustive survey of the room then solemnly scrutinized the gentleman standing on the hearth rug before him.

"This is the most beautiful house I've ever been in. You ought to be very good to live in an enchanted palace," he remarked decisively. "I hope you're

not an ogre."
"Well, I fancy opinion rather leans to the belief that I am. I'm certainly not good."

"I think very likely there's a spell over you, and when it's broken you'll find you're really a good man.'

"Oh! I have never thought of the possibility of that contingency. Have you seriously studied the question of evolution?"

"I don't know what you mean. I've read a great many fairy tales."

"I see. What's your name?"

"Terence."

"How old are you?" .

"Nine and a half." "I gather you live with your mother,

and have no brothers." "Yes," nodded the boy, "there's only

mother and me." "Your father is dead?"

"Yes, he died two years ago. He was a singer, but he got a dreadful cough, and couldn't sing any more, and he coughed for months and months, till all our money was gone and then he died. I'm waiting to grow up and earn money for mother. But sometimes I get rather tired of waiting. I did to-day, so I came out to sing carols while mother was away looking for work-she teaches music, but we haven't any pupils just now, so one gets poor, you see—and I thought if I could earn some money it would be lovely to give her a Christmas present to-morrow, as a great surprise-

and have a turkey and plum pudding."
"Christmas, ah! Yes, that was what you came in to tell about, wasn't it? Sit down."

The gentleman pointed to an easy chair in which the boy ensconced himself, while his host dropped into one on the opposite side of the fireplace.

"Well, Master Terence, please inform me for my future edification why you like Christmas."

"Because—oh, because there are such a lot of things to make one happy." "I find a lot to make me miserable."

"Do you?"—with surprise and pity. "Perhaps you don't have a Christmas

"No, I'm afraid I don't. Do you?" "Yes, we're going to have a beauty to-morrow." "Really?"

"Yes, it was mother's idea. We had a fuzzy kind of plant, and she bought five cents' worth of small candles, and she's making things out of paper to hang on, and we're going to light the candles, and pretend there are all sorts of lovely toys on the tree, and everything I can think of that I'd like. Mother's going to pretend to cut off. Won't it be fun?"

The man had grown silent, and was looking intently at the boy. "And your dinner," he said at length, "will that be all pretence, too?"

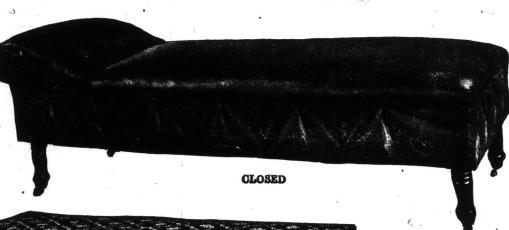


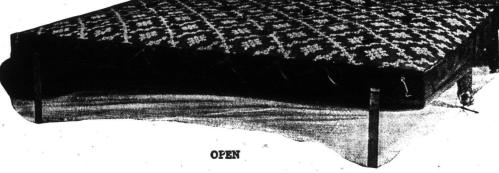
This photograph of Russian artillerymen at work was found on a Russian officer captureb dy the Germans

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