

Uncle Tom's Department.

Our Letter Bag.

Letters from the East,
Letters from the West,
Letters from the North,
And from the South,

Is the doggerel style I have to adopt of compiling this month's letters from my nieces and nephews. So numerous are they that I regret not being able to publish them all, but must confine myself to three, keeping the rest—for they are too good to spoil—for another number, when I have more space.

I have much pleasure in complying with J. H. C.'s request and offer the two following prizes:—1st.—For the three best original puzzles (to be in by the 18th Nov.), one handsome chromo. 2nd.—For the largest number of correct answers to November and December puzzles, a beautiful chromo. These are splendid premiums, and from the keen spirit displayed on former occasions, I expect a lively competition, so those desirous of obtaining them will have to put in practice the ADVOCATE motto, *Persevere and Succeed*.

Humboldt, Neb., Oct. 2, '75.

DEAR UNCLE TOM.—Last month you requested your nephews and nieces to write you, which gives me encouragement to drop you these lines from this far west country. We have long been taking the ADVOCATE in father's family, both in Canada and here, and like it very much. Uncle, your department is full of the most amusing puzzles and comical pieces I ever read; the older you get the funnier you seem to be. Mother says—but she tells me it every month—she will not let me see the ADVOCATE, as I laugh so much the week it arrives I do not study my lessons. Well, perhaps I don't, but I make up for lost time afterwards. I am 13 years old and going to school. I keep the ADVOCATE bound up, and when friends come to see us, and time seems long, I can turn up your, or our Department—for my cousins send such nice puzzles to it—and keep them in laughter and pleasure the rest of the evening. Some of our neighbors, who occasionally borrow the paper to read, intend subscribing for the new volume in January. They think it the best practical instructor on agriculture they have read. I see you have been visiting some of my cousins during the summer; and I wish you would come over here, Uncle, and see our prairie country. We would make you welcome. But I guess I am writing too long a letter. I will tell you about the country in my next. ELLA M.

Caledonia Springs, Oct. 8, '75.

DEAR UNCLE TOM.—I presume you will have something to tell us about the Provincial Exhibition. I heard you were there. I was not there, as I had to remain and see to things while father and mother were gone. Our exhibition took place on Sept. 29th, and it was on a very small scale, the highest prize for anything being only \$5, but the admission was 25 cts., which some people considered too much. It was rather amusing to see the majority of them go over the board fence seven feet high. There were some persons guarding the fence, but with little effect. I threshed my oats that I got last spring from the Emporium, and got 20 lbs. from 4 oz. sown. As the worms cut nearly the half of it, and it did not all ripen, and the soil was rather poor, I think it was a good yield for the chance they had. I found an Early Rose potato in our field that weighed 1½ lbs., and a black potato that weighed 2 lbs., which I think is pretty good. Try and give us some prizes next month. I like the new story very well. You have my best wishes for the improvement in your column, and also for your welfare. J. H. CROSS.

Ingersoll, Oct. 18, 1875.

DEAR UNCLE TOM.—I suppose you think your niece Hattie has forgotten you, but such is not the case. I did not receive the last paper in time to write, so I postponed till this time. Uncle Tom, you gave your nieces very good advice, but supposing they did get married to a good-natured person, and when he got rather old he got ill-natured, what would they do then? Mamma says when she was first married, Papa was so good-natured, but he is getting old now. Still he is not very ill-natured, but when he is putting up stove-pipes, sometimes he gets angry, but not very often. I enjoyed my summer immensely, but I can't describe to you all the pleasures I have had. Well, I must conclude for this time. HATTIE HAVILAND.

Puzzles.

106.—Though it is cold I wear no clothes,
The frost and snow I never fear;
I value neither shoes or hose,
But yet I wander far and near.

LUCY ROBERTS.

RIDDLES.

107.—It came though I
fetched it,
When come it was gone,
It stayed but a moment;
It could not stay long;
I ask not who saw it,
It could not be seen,
And yet might be felt
By the king or the queen.

108.—You eat me, you
drink me,
Come guess if you can,
I'm sometimes a woman,
And sometimes a man.

HATTIE HAVILAND.

109.—My whole is a
town in Italy; behead
and curtail and I am a
portion of the human
frame; transpose and I
am an animal.

THOS. RUSTON.



How many figures are here?



THE AMERICAN BLACK BEAR.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

110. 1. A piece of dress; 2. One who receives
usury; 3. A girl's nick-name; 4. The orb of night;
5. Attempted; 6. To become calm; 7. A river in
Asia; 8. A great gun for a battery. The initials
read upwards, and the finals downwards, name
persons of great renown. FRANK LAWSON.

RIDDLE.

111.—What is the longest and yet the shortest
thing in the world; the swiftest, and the most
slow; the most divisible, and the most extended;
the least valued, and the most regretted; without
which nothing can be done; which devours every
thing, however small; and gives life and spirit to
all things, however great?

REBUS.

112. The father of the Grecian Jove;
A little boy who's blind;
The foremost land in all the world;
The mother of mankind;
A poet whose love-sonnets are
Still very much admired.—
The initials letters will declare
A blessing to the tired.

J. SMITH.

Answers to Oct. Puzzles.

89. Marlowe, Chaucer, Xenophon, Chantrey, Van-
dyke—MCCXCV. 90. Ure, Wear, Trent, Don, Ouse, Stour.
91. Parcel, Ennui, Reform, Ultra. 92. Paris. 93. London.
94. Oxford. 95. Bristol. 96. Dublin. 97. Dover.
98. EAST. 99. ROSE. 100. S
A HOY. O VER. HAM
SO AP. SEM I. SARAH
TY PE. ER IN. MAD

101. For cattle to rub their tails against.
102. Joshua. 103. Tar-tar. 104. A ship. 105. Team-steam.

CORRECT ANSWERS TO OCT. PUZZLES.—J. H. CROSS, Caledonia
Springs; J. Richards, London; Arch. J. Taylor, Glencoe; Kate
Crenar, North East Hope; Jas. Smith, Blanshard; E. M. Sag-
new; John Quick, Montreal; E. McLeod, West Williams; Geo.
Wiley, Belleville; Esther Mountjoy, Wingham; J. McKeith,
Lima, Ohio; J. Fitzgerald, Toronto; John Hodgins, Biddulph;
Nell Nicholson, Ashbury; John Gohald, Stanley; J. McVey,
Cleveland; J. Kingsmill, London Township.

The Black Bear of America.

Young readers, have you ever studied Natural History? If not you are neglecting one of the most interesting subjects that can engage your attention. Judging from "Miss E. L.'s" letter this month, I presume your parents think I am getting too funny. In accordance with the request of several correspondents, I intend giving illustrations, and short articles occasionally, on the above subject, but not at the neglect of our comic pieces. The old folks are not going to cheat us out of our fun. In treating on this subject I do not intend to tell you a bear story, as many of you have listened to tales from your fathers about the dangers and encounters they endured in their early settlement in this country, but for want of room shall merely give a concise description of it, and its habits. I have no doubt, these articles will prove instructive, not only to the young, but to others more advanced in years.

The black bear has been found in all parts of North America, as far south as the Gulf of Mexico; and this Canada of ours, not many years since was one of its favourite haunts. They vary in size, but average about six feet in length of body.

The head is short and broad where it joins the neck; eyes small, close together; ears high, rounded; body and legs thick and clumsy; claws short, flat, incurved, calculated for climbing and burrowing; tail very short about 2 inches long; fur long, straight, and rather soft; nose fawn-colored, which color extends to the eyes; eyes and nails black; hairs on the whole body of most specimens glossy black.

Bear flesh is considered a dainty dish by epicures especially in the fall, when it feeds principally on herbs and nuts. For promoting the growth of the hair, bear grease is held in high repute, and will sell for one dollar a pound.

Many superstitions concerning the bear are entertained by the Indians, and they go through numerous ceremonies before hunting it.

It invariably hibernates in cold regions during the winter, making its den under a fallen tree by scratching the dirt away. At the beginning of a snow storm it retires to its recluse, the snow forming a warm cover. Its breath makes a small aperture in the snow by which it is discovered and frequently captured. As the seasons alternate the bear seeks a new region where suitable food may be obtained, and greater safety enjoyed. In the spring it searches for those roots, herbs and succulent plants upon which it lives during that season, along the lowlands and bordering rivers. In the summer, when berries ripen, it betakes itself to the mountains with its cubs. Being fond of honey it makes it a point to purloin every bee tree in its route, as it is a capital climber, and when it is in search of nuts it lops of the branches with much ease. But not being particular in its choice of food, it sometimes destroys pigs, calves, sheep, &c., and will attack a full-grown cow when hungry. It catches fish with much skill, which it is very fond of.