

Board of Works

The St. Andrews Standard.

PUBLISHED BY A. W. SMITH.

E. VARIIS SUPPLEMENTUM EST OPTIMUM.—No.

\$2.50 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE.

VOL. XLV.

SAINT ANDREWS, NEW BRUNSWICK, DECEMBER 25, 1878.

NO. 52.

We Meet on Christmas-Day.

The amber sky is glowing,
The leafless branches sway;
The dying breeze whistles,
The leafless branches sway;
A year has passed away,
Farewell to happy evenings,
Of summer-tinted skies,
And scented winds' low whippers,
And bending flowers' replies.
I hear the joy bells ringing—
So near, so far away—
This happy message bringing,
"We meet on Christmas-day."
And though the world be cheerless,
And though the skies be gray,
For me the air is golden,
As any summer day.
Beneath the hroning branches
Our last farewell was said,
With golden sunlight gleaming
Through leaves of golden red;
Around us all the wonders
Of nature's slow decay,
But loud as crashing thunders
Our welcome rings to-day.
Although the year is dying,
To me its death is life,
And peace to weary strife;
While every pulse is thrilling
And bounding to the sway
Of passion, madly ringing,
"We meet on Christmas-day."
I know sweet life will brighten,
And sweetest wishes burn,
And dusky lashes darken
O'er looks for which I yearn.
Of all glad hearts the gladdest
Will be my own—
"We meet on Christmas-day,"
"We meet on Christmas-day."

RISKING HIS LIFE.

A STORY OF CHRISTMAS EVE.

"It is cold enough to freeze the heart out of a miser and make the white bear dance for joy," grumbled Tom Orton, as he looked out of the window upon the snow-embowered streets. "How I wish I could be at home to-night and take care of you and the babies, Jenny. And I would only for—"
He thought of how much poverty was pinching them, and would not add the hearts of those he loved by mentioning it.
"Only for what, Tom?" asked his wife from the bed, where, ill herself, she was taking care of their two sick children.
"Only that they'll be wanting me," he replied. "You know it is Christmas-eve, and we've gotten up an extra entertainment."
"Yes, Tom; and a sorry day for us, now that I am sick, and the children wanting medicine and— she would have said "food," but could not bear to add a feather's weight to his load—"so much depends upon you."
"I know," he replied, hastily brushing the moisture from his eyes and striving to cheer his anxiety; "but I am well and strong, Jenny, and the winter is nearly over, and you'll be well again."
"But if anything should happen to you?" she questioned, with a heavy sigh.
"Don't think there is much danger," he said, repressing a sob as he thought of how desperate would be their situation—the rent due, the scanty store of provisions, the little of fuel remaining, the more than month of hard winter yet before them, the needs of a family that a poor man learns by the most bitter of experience.
"But there is, dear Tom. No one is ever safe living the life you do. There are so many chances for accident."
"Don't fear, I'll take care of myself—won't run any extra risk; and as I have nothing to do in the latter part, will be home early."
He stepped to the bedside; drew the covers more closely about his wife and children, kissed them, put more coal in the stove, attended to everything possible for their comfort, and prepared to face the cold and go to his nightly employment. Yet an moment's spell seemed to chain him. He lingered, fidgeted, glanced uneasily at the clock.
"Isn't it time you were off, Tom?" questioned his wife. "You know it is quite late."
"Yes, Jenny, but somehow I don't feel like leaving you alone."
"Oh, I am used to staying alone." So she was, poor thing! "And you said you would be home early."
"Yes, yes."
An active, sober man was he, and a skilled performer. He had been trained to the profession from childhood—knew no other, and under ordinary circumstances could easily "keep his head above water." But the "tempting money" had closed exceptionally early, the winter was hard, money was "tight," and every place of amusement suffered in consequence. To these things were added sickness, and brave-hearted as he was he could not suppress a shiver of anxiety as the future stared him in the face.
He passed along the narrow street,

Christmas in Wales.

Christmas has fairly begun in Wales a week or two before Christmas day. The wags were patrolling the streets of Cardiff last year as early as December 6th, and Christmas festival was held as early as December 19th, at which Christmas-trees were displayed, and their boughs denuded of the toys and trinkets and lollipops, in which the juvenile heart delighted. After Christmas day the festival continues I know not just how long, but apparently for weeks.
The characteristic diversions of the Christmas season are, in the main, alike in all Christian countries. In Wales many curious old customs are retained which in other parts of Great Britain have disappeared, such as the mummers, the wails, carols, bell-ringing, etc. Not only do the well-singers of the several churches throughout the principality do their handiwork on their own particular bells, but there are grand gatherings at special points of all the bell-ringers for leagues around, who vie with each other in showing what feats they can perform; how they can astonish you with their majors, bob-majors and triple bob-majors, on the brass changers of the steeples. At Cowbridge last Christmas thirty-five ringers came together from Aberdare, Penarth, St. Fagans, Llantrisant, Llanblethian and other still more unpromising places, and, after they had rung till the six above the town was black with flying cloths and quivers from the steeples, they all sat down to a jolly Christmas dinner at the Bear. The bands of wails, or pipers of the early morning with their carols, are heard in every Welsh town and village. In some towns there are several bands, and much good-natured rivalry. Regularly organized and trained choirs of Welshmen perambulate the Cambrian country, chanting carols at Christmas-tide, and bands of musicians play who, in many cases, would not discredit the finest military orchestras. Carols are sung in both Welsh and English; and, generally, the wails are popular. If their music is not good, they are not tolerated; irate gentlemen attack them savagely, and drive them off. Not exactly that boot-jacks and empty bottles are thrown at them, but they are excoerated in "letters to the editor," in which strong language is hurled at them as intolerable nuisances, ambulatory distributors of the night's quiet, and inflictors of suffering upon the innocent. But such cases are rare. The music is almost invariably good, and the effect of the soft strains of melodiously-warbled Welsh coming dreamily to one's ears through the darkness and distance on a winter morning is sweet and soothing to the ears.
The Welsh poor are really in clover at the Christmas time. They are never neglected then, no matter what their lot at other seasons. The out-door poor of every parish are visited with the baskets of benefactions in the hands of the well-to-do. A species of festivity, arbitrarily termed a "tea treat," at which all poor people may come and sit down who will, is spread in Wesleyan chapels and like places. The Wesleyans do not adorn their places of worship with flowers and evergreens, but they spread these tables for the poor with most liberal hands. Windows, mantels are left open, after all have eaten who will, are given in baskets to those who ask for them. There is no distinction made in the matter of religion—enough that you are hungry; it is the Christmas day; eat and be filled. So, seven hundred people ate at a Christmas dinner—for such it was—at the Wesleyan chapel near their home in Cardiff last Christmas. In the mining town of Merthyr Tydfil they give a Christmas dinner to the poor, which is perhaps the best patronized in Wales. For seventeen years past, the rector of Merthyr tells me, they have never dined fewer than two thousand people at their Christmas table.

Christmas in Wales.

Meanwhile he was hurrying to business. More time had been occupied in the rescue than he thought possible, and though applause was dear to him (as to all), yet he could not stay to listen, and as for risking life for money, he had not even dreamed of such a thing.
Out of breath, he dashed into the dressing-room, and was received with reproof for being late.
"Couldn't help it," he replied, "I saw a pair of fiery horses running away with a sleigh and a woman and two children—thought of my Jenny and the children, and had to stop and save them."
He told the story very briefly and modestly fancy getting ready—didn't seem to fancy he had done anything wonderful, and soon was dashing around the arena upon a spirited steed, "wishing the world with wondrous horsemanship."
The audience applauded to the echo, and carried away by the excitement, he rashly determined to execute his most daring act—those given only upon the greatest occasions, forgetting that the horse he rode had not been trained to them—was young and wild.
The result was soon painfully apparent. Though some were accomplished in safety, yet when he attempted leaping over a banner the fluttering frightened the horse, he bolted suddenly, and Tom Orton was hurled heavily on the ground.
He endeavored to rise and make light of pain, but a strange sickness came over him, the lights flickered and grew dim, he gasped for air, and he knew nothing more until somewhat revived in the dressing-room he heard familiar voices.
"Oh God! what will become of Jenny and the babies," he gasped faintly.
"I am done for, and—"
"Don't fear for them, Tom," said a dozen hearty voices, and as many grasped his hands as could obtain hold, "we'll see that you are taken care of."
"Thanks, thanks," murmured the injured man. "But tell me the worst."
"A broken leg is all that appears serious," answered a grey-headed man—a strange physician who had been summoned. "Though I cannot account for the marks upon your side, my man."
"Probably he hurt himself when he stopped the runaway horses," was suggested, and the story told.
"Humph! A very dangerous business—next to foolhardy; not one in ten thousand would have escaped alive," replied the physician, with pursed lips and flashing eyes. "Well, all that can be done now is to get him home. Then I will make a more minute examination."
Very tenderly was the noble-hearted fellow taken to his humble abode, and the scene, when he was laid upon the bed, side by side with his sick wife and children, caused every eye to overflow with tears.
"Tom, dear Tom," said Jenny, as well as she could for her pitiful sobbing, "what will become of us—the children? We shall all starve and die together."
"Not while we have hands," replied his associates, and every heart was touched and every arm nerved to do the utmost toward relief.
They all looked around anxiously for the physician—had supposed he had accompanied them. But he was not to be seen, and their grumbling became loud and deep.
"I can bear anything," said Tom, "but for you, Jenny, and the children, and he entirely broke down."
"And I could curse that doctor for an unfeeling wretch," blurted out one of the most passionate. "But it is ever thus. We give our lives freely to please the public, and when anything happens they care nothing for us."
Tom Orton groaned heavily. The sound awoke his little girl. She raised up in bed, strained her eyes, clasped her tiny hands, and shouted in true childish glee and wonder:
"Mamma! Papa! See—an angel!"
All eyes were turned in the direction she pointed, and in the doorway stood a beautiful woman, leaning upon the arm of the physician.
"Yes, an angel had come to them. Tom Orton had risked his life to save that of the daughter of Doctor Armistead and his grandchildren, and the merest chance had given them the knowledge who it was."
But never was an equestrian feat better rewarded, and never a more cherub-like angel appeared upon earth, even upon the day when alike from hill-top and valley is proclaimed: "Peace upon earth and good will to men."
Since 1848 they were thirty-seven attempts against the lives of rulers and kings.

Christmas in Wales.

The favorite cavalry leader of the ameer of Cabul is an Irishman named O'Donnell.
It is estimated that Colorado's gold and silver yield for 1878 will be in the neighborhood of \$45,675,863.43.
Susan's Town, named in honor of Miss Susan B. Anthony, has just been made the county seat of Harper's county, Kansas.
Some mean scamp out in Detroit, Mich., has counterfeited the cent, but has tried to avert penalty by obscenely stamping "not" in small letters over "one cent."
All the shoes for the use of the United States army are now made at the military prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., by military convicts, with the aid of modern machines. Last year 39,860 pairs were made.
There are no less than 168 separate packs of fox-hounds in Great Britain, 141 of which are maintained in England and Wales, aggregating 13,200 dogs. The largest pack is the Duke of Beaufort's, comprising 156 hounds.
The United States lighthouse establishment now maintains for the protection of life and the safety of commerce 1,386 lights (including 638 on the West-coast rivers), 471 day beacons, fifty-five fog signals, operated by steam or hot air engines, and 3,002 buoys.
Some twenty-five years ago David P. Foster, residing on the Massillon road, in Ohio, had in his possession a silver half-dollar, made in the year 1828, and that being his natal year, he cut his name on it and thought to retain it as a relic. After several years, however, he paid it out one day by mistake, along with some other money, and for twenty years it took its course. Recently he sent his little daughter to Massillon on an errand, and upon her return home she gave him some change, and with it was the identical half dollar with his name cut on it.
A Michigan bee-raiser has written a book about the "Blessed Bees," who have brought him a fair fortune. But for his statistics one would have some difficulty in believing him. He went into the business as other men go into merchandise or any other pursuit; he gave his whole time and thought to it, and so superior was his honey that he could obtain the highest market price in New York. He is a young man, and urges this branch of industry upon others with great warmth. The sum total of the capital invested was \$800.81; his income, exclusive of all expenses, was \$2,966.52.
Towed by a Whale.
Capt. Wise, of the American hotel, a Long Branch, N. J., accompanied by three old fishermen, started out fishing in a boat about twenty feet long. They had arrived on the fishing grounds about three miles from the shore, had all their lines out, and were having splendid luck hauling in codfish. Then Wright, one of the fishermen, saw the fin of a monstrous fish, and immediately the boat began to swing around. Wright shouted to the men in another boat, about 100 yards distant: "Look out, there is a whale hold of us," but before the men could move from their seats they were being towed out to sea at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour. The monster had become entangled in the long anchor rope of the boat. The pull on the boat was so strong the men thought the boat would go over every second. The men say they were very much frightened, and the sensation was the queerest they had ever known. All they could do was to hold on and let her go for a few minutes. Then they crept forward and cut the rope. They were a mile further out to sea. The fish kept right on, and they could see the wake he made for some distance, as he kept very near the surface. The rope was a stout half-inch Manila one, and attached to it was an anchor of about twenty pounds weight. The fishermen here think the monster was after the codfish, and that he came up to the anchor line with his mouth open and got the rope in his mouth and swam off, towing the boat after him so fast that the codfish lines that were hanging over the boat pulled straight out on the surface, and the heavy sinkers, weighing a pound or more apiece, were on the top of the water.
There are no less than 168 separate packs of fox-hounds in Great Britain, 141 of which are maintained in England and Wales, aggregating 13,200 dogs. The largest pack is the Duke of Beaufort's, comprising 156 hounds.
A French fashion letter in 1790 mentions two hundred styles of bonnets.

Items of Interest.

Headquarters—A pillow.
A man of letter—The postmaster.
A paper weight—When the mail is behind.
Black times, as the chunk of lime said to the water.
To remove paint from door post—Back up against it when it is fresh.
"Do eagles give milk, mother?" asked the boy. "No, my son; what made you think so?" "Because I've heard of the eagle's scream." The mother reached for her slipper, but the embryo paragrapher had vanished.
The Brier canal, among its other curiosities, presents the traveler with the extraordinary spectacle of vast schools of flying fish, which at times suddenly appear in the vicinity of the vessel and as suddenly disappear.
"Oh! where are you going, my pretty maid?" "I'm going to the lecture, sir," said she.
"My I go with you, my pretty maid?" "The subject won't interest you," she said.
"Oh! what is that subject, my pretty maid?" "The final extinction of man," she said.
When a man sends a libelous communication to a newspaper, and the editor refuses to print it, he gets mad and resolves to start a new paper in less than two weeks. But when he examines his pocketbook and finds only fifty cents and an unrecipited tailor's bill, he wisely concludes to let some other fellow start it—and thereby saves several thousand dollars.—*Northtown Herald.*
Afghanistan is known by its shuddering neighbors as the "land of sudden death." It well deserves the title. The Afghans themselves exist in the belief that Satan fell in their country when he was thrown out of heaven. The inhabitants of Cabul boast that their city holds the tomb of Cain. Tradition reports that Mahomet described the Pukta district of the Afghan tongue as the language of Hades.
When the fleshy side of the green buffalo hide is exposed to the sun the skin becomes as hard as iron. Four years ago a party of Texas cow-boys caught a horse thief on the border of the Indian Territory. As there was no tree handy on which to hang him, they sewed him up in a green buffalo hide, and left it on the plains, under the burning sun. A year afterward the hide was found. The skeleton rattled within it as do dried peas in a pod. It was cut open with a saw, and the remains of the unfortunate horse thief were identified by the owner.
Coincidences in Invention.
Coincidences in invention and discovery are the rule rather than the exception. When any notable advance is made in the knowledge of the laws of nature or in applying that knowledge, old or new, to the service of man, it is hardly ever one person alone who makes the discovery or the application. Almost always more than one claimant appears, and frequently several make good their claims to the honor of having pursued independently and to valuable results the same line of thought or experiment that has made one of their number famous by associating his name permanently with the great invention or discovery. Le Verrier and Adams almost simultaneously reasoned out the existence of the planet Neptune, and directed astronomical observers how to point their telescopes in order to find it. Professor Morse's title to distinction as the inventor of the magnetic telegraph was stubbornly contested by men who had labored with the same idea before it occurred to him. Half a dozen others had toiled upon the problem of steam navigation before Fulton solved it. Morion, Jackson and Wells were experimenting with anesthetics at the same time, and the merit of the discovery is still claimed for each of them. Bell and Gray invented their respective telephones almost at the same time. Edison and Hughes dispute each other's claim to priority in the invention of the microphone. In some of these cases probably one claimant has knowingly or unconsciously borrowed something from his rival; but those where two or more persons have pursued independently the same line of search and experiment, tending to the same result, are very numerous. Miss Hosmer's discovery and improvement of it in her magnetic engine is an instance in point. Already two persons in New York and one in Boston appear to assert their claims to an invention based upon the same or a similar principle to that which Miss Hosmer is said to have discovered. One of these, Mr. Chapman, seems to have betrayed Miss Hosmer's confidence, and tried to steal her invention. The others appear to have been bused with the same problem that has occupied Miss Hosmer, and to have made almost as much progress with it as she.—*Worcester (Mass.) Spy.*

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