

## UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

## MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES:—

"The round moon comes from the distant seas,  
With a silvery softness in her light,  
And the dusky trunks of the forest trees  
Gleam, pillars of marble, tall and white.

"The hill crouches down 'neath the sky's cool calm,  
With its tawny mane of ripened wheat,  
Like a lion under a towering palm,  
After its chase in the desert heat."

How beautifully descriptive of "harvest moon-shine" is the above quotation! And what a pleasure to be able to see, not the mere word-picture, but the more charming reality! Who can adequately describe the beauty of your country homes, surrounded now by the golden harvest? And yet how few of those so blest realize the greatness of the blessings they enjoy; how many long for the advantages of city life, while totally ignoring those of their own!

It is very pleasant to drive along where the "tawny mane of ripened wheat" is, by the almost magical touch of the self-binder, being converted into golden sheaves. The roomy old barns, the children's rainy-day play-grounds, are fast filling with the fruits of the summer's labor, and ere long the busy hum of the thresher, that all boys like so well to hear, will replace the sound of reaper and binder.

What wonderful advancement has been made in the last half century! Many of you have heard your parents tell of the time when all the harvest was cut by cradle and sickle, and then bound by hand; while now you may sit at ease and drive around, and lo! all is done at once. But they had plenty of fun in those days, for "bees" were fashionable, and these usually terminated with a dance. The husking bees were perhaps the favorites, and the "husking frolic" at night even more so.

June is called by the poets "Queen of the year," but, to her, Nature does not offer all her homage; many of her fairest flowers and much of her wealth of harvest are laid on August's altar. In the nooks formed by the homely old rail fence, flourish the gaudy plumes of the golden-rod; while the lavender of the wild phlox, and here and there a late daisy or buttercup, enhances the beauty of the scene.

The mention of golden-rod reminds me of a little legend pertaining thereto, and also the fact that one of my nieces requests me to give the legend of the rose. There are, I believe, different ones, but I know only that of the moss rose, and that I have much pleasure in giving you:

The angel of the flowers one day  
Beneath a rose tree sleeping lay;  
That spirit to whose charge is given  
To bathe young flowers in dew of heaven.

Awaking from his light repose,  
The angel whispered to the rose:  
"For the sweet shade thou'st given to me,  
Ask what thou wilt, 'tis granted thee."

The rose replied, with heightening glow:  
"On me another grace bestow."  
The angel paused in silent thought,  
"What grace was there that flower had not?"

'Twas but a moment—o'er the rose  
A veil of moss he lightly throws,  
And clothed in nature's simplest weed,  
What other flower can this exceed?

This is the legend of the golden rod:  
Once upon a time the fairies had a ball, and when Queen Titania was dancing, her cavalier awkwardly stepped on her robe of gold, and tore therefrom a piece, which fluttered down to earth, and there became transformed into a beautiful flower, which was thenceforward called "Titania's golden-rod." I shall also give you the story of the Haw tree:

A gnarly old Haw tree, ugly and dark,  
Stood in the midst of a grand old park;  
He longed for beauty and grace each day,  
His heart was heavy, he tried to pray.  
At last a fairy—the pretty dear—  
Sat down in his arms so crooked and queer,  
She fell asleep in his twisted lap,

And took a long and delicious nap.  
When she thanked him, as was her duty,  
He begged of her the gift of beauty;  
So she tapped his branches left and right,  
And covered them thick with blossoms white.  
The Haw was happy as he could be,  
That he, at last, was a lovely tree.  
The children told me this pretty thing  
About the gift of the fairy spring.  
And I've told it to you that you may know  
What covers the Haw with wreaths of snow.

I am pleased to know that the legends in a former issue gave you so much pleasure, and I hope you will like these equally well. If any of you know any other rose legends, Uncle Tom will be glad to hear them.

The word competition has met with a warm reception, if we may judge by the number of letters piled on Uncle Tom's desk. It has not been an easy task to choose the winning one, and many who have sent good lists, but not the best, will be disappointed, as it has been a great trouble to prepare them. But those who have failed to win the prize have really gained something, as they will have learned the use of many words of which before they were ignorant.

I am delighted to see so lively an interest being taken in this competition. Perhaps later on we may think of some other instructive pastime, for, that we may not only amuse, but also improve our readers, is the wish of

UNCLE TOM.

## A Coster's Version of "the Merchant of Venice."

During the run of "The Merchant of Venice" at the Lyceum, a coster, who had witnessed the production, was explaining the plot to a less fortunate confrere.

"Dyer see?" said he, "it's like this 'ere. There's a cove what's fell in love, but 'e don't like to go courtin' without bein' toggged up a bit; so 'e goes to a pal and asks 'im to lend 'im a trifle. His pal says 'e ain't got no 'ready,' but is willin' to go bail for 'im."

"So they go to an old joker in the City, an' 'e lends 'em some oof. Then they says: 'What int'rest?' and he says, 'Garn away! You're all right. If yer don't pay me at all I shan't summons yer; only, if yer don't, I'll have a pound off yer chest!' 'e says, like as if he's jokin'. Then they laughs, 'cause they've got some stuff a comin' over what's bound to turn up in time for the market, as they thinks."

"But it don't turn up, an' the old fakir comes down on 'em, an' won't settle it without the pound of flesh."

"Well, this girl what was agoin' to marry the bloke, w'en she 'ears as 'e's in trouble, makes it up with the solicitor for the defence, takes his place, gets 'er 'air cut, an' appears in the trial at the Law Courts, 'cause she's got something up her sleeve."

"Then the jury gives a verdict of guilty, an' the judge says the prosecutor is a outsider."

"Up jumps the gal, an' says: 'Ain't yer goin' to give 'im a chance?'"

"An' the old fraud says: 'No, I 'ate 'im!'"

"Then she says: 'Very well, go on with yer performance. But,' says she, 'this yer case don't say nothin' about the danger of the entertainment. Now, if you draw one drop o' blood we shall come on yer for damages, an' sell yer up!'"

"Well, Bill, w'en she says that, you never see Irvin' look so took down in all your life."

Do not flatter yourself that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into a relation with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become.—Wendell Holmes.

One reason why we go to a banquet, when we get an invitation, is best stated in the story of a temperance lecturer who was caught by a disciple, after he retired, taking a hot whiskey-punch. Said his shocked follower:—"I thought you were a total abstainer!" "So I am," said the lecturer, "but not a bigoted one."

## Mother's Room.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

The core of the house, the dearest place, the one that we all love best,  
Holding it close in our heart of hearts, for its comfort and rest,  
Is never a place where strangers come, nor yet where friends are met,  
Is never the stately drawing-room, where our treasured things are set.

Oh, dearer far, as the time recedes in a dream of colors dim,  
Breathing across our stormy woods like the echo of a hymn,  
Forever our own, and only ours, and pure as a rose in bloom,  
Is the centre and soul of the old home nest, the mother's darling room.

We flew to its arms when we rushed from school, with a thousand things to tell;  
Our mother was always waiting there, had the day gone ill or well.

No other pillow was quite so cool, under an aching head,  
As soft to our fevered childish cheek, as the pillow on mother's bed,  
Sitting so safely at her feet, when the dewy dusk drew nigh,  
We watched for the angels to light the lamps in the solemn evening sky.

Tiny hands folded, there we knelt to hush the nightly prayer,  
Learning to cast on the Loving One early our load of care,  
Whatever the world has brought us since, yet pure as a rose in bloom,  
Is the thought we keep of the core of the home, the mother's darling room.

## Puzzles.

## PRIZE PUZZLE.

## 1—TRANSPPOSITION.

He once was respected and loved by all,  
But now he's despised by great and small;  
And ONE drink was solely the cause of his fall.

He once went to church and sang in the choir,  
But now SECOND alone is his desire,  
And he never looks up to anything higher.

He once had a wife and home of his own,  
But now on the street he THREE alone,  
And her resting place is marked by a stone.

Oh! What a terrible curse is drink;  
If people only would stop and think,  
But they draw the FOUR till they cannot wink,  
And rush on to their own destruction.

CHARLES EDWARDS.

## 2—ENIGMA.

The beginning of man, his ambitions and all nature—what is it?  
ADA ARMAND.

## 3—ILLUSTRATED REBUS.



## 4—NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

I am a word of eight letters.  
"5678" Not Imaginary.  
"324" A small animal.  
"4716" Mild.  
"23" A preposition.  
"34" A word expressing denial.  
"864" To permit.  
"74" Near by.  
"754" Cunning.  
"674" To take food.  
My whole is a Canadian city.

IRENE M. CRAIG.

## 5—ANAGRAM.

A little boy one day did try  
A rabbit house to build,  
In this he did succeed,  
Although he was unskilled.

So when he'd made it snug and tight,  
And lined it well within,  
He tried and tried, but all in vain,  
To drive his DEAR PETS IN.

GEO. W. BLYTH.

## Answers to July 1st Puzzles.

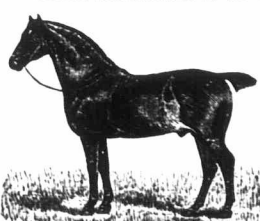
1—The letter A. 2—Scales. 3—Cast-a-net. 4—Pig-tail.

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13-y-om



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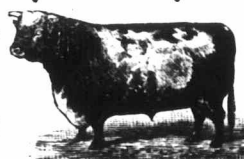


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