



DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

VOLUME XIX., No. 24.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, DECEMBER 15, 1884.

SEMI-MONTHLY, 30 CTS. per An., Post-Paid.

WHILST THE SNOWFLAKES FELL ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

CHAPTER I.

The snowflakes came floating down softly—swiftly—silently, alike in origin, alike in nature, alike in form and hue, but, on reaching this planet earth, becoming wonderfully unlike in position. For some of the shining particles were arrested in their downward course by lofty mountain or towering steeple. Others descending lower, rested on snug manor-roof or farm-house, or still lower, whilst the greater number found their level on the wide-sweeping plain. Snow-flakes, however, being indifferent to position, it mattered little to them whether they fell high or low; and not a bit prouder, happier, or whiter looked such, for instance, as happened to light on the turreted dome of Castle Dermott, than their millions of kindred that lay in fair pretty confusion on the terraced slopes below.

But even "pretty" things gain scanty admiration when they are as common as snowflakes on the 24th of December; indeed, "tiresome," "odious," "vexatious," were these special "snow-flakes" successively termed by Annette Dermott, who had intended spending the whole afternoon superintending the Christmas decorations in the church; but in consequence of the weather and a recent cold had been forbidden by mother to venture out of doors. "It is so disappointing!" she repeats for the fiftieth time, viewing despondingly the whitening world through the window-panes, which seem all tufted over with tiny feathers. "I had quite set my heart on having the church really prettily decorated this year, and now, I am sure the wreaths will be hung badly, and probably half the letters turned upside down! Is it not a very provoking storm, Ronald?" And Annette turns appealingly to her brother—a schoolboy of fourteen, who had just returned from gathering a bundle of holly, and was now enjoying a rest in the biggest easy-chair in the room.

"Yes, very. But any one can stick little bits of holly about," he answers.

"Stick little bits of holly about! How very stupid schoolboys are!" resents Annette. "I could have carried out my idea beautifully but for this horrid snow!"

"If it freeze to-night, how nice it will be walking to-morrow on the hard crisp ground!" ventured little Effie, the youngest sister, glancing up from the manufacture of a doll's bonnet, in which she had been absorbed for some time.

"Freeze!—and spoil the St. Stephen's hunt, the best fun in the whole vacation!" objected Ronald, now thoroughly in earnest.

"But a white Christmas would beso pretty—and I only remember black, wet ones," remonstrated Effie, quoting from her brief experience of nine years.

"Black Christmases! Did anybody ever hear such nonsense?" said Ronald. "I hope we may have a regular downpour of rain. Rain won't prevent Santa Claus coming, you

which was meant for dolls, to make up their own hideous frisettes and false 'shigs' expounded Ronald, contemptuously. You'll be stealing your dolly's hair to do the same by-and-by, Effie."

Effie rather indignantly refuted this cruel prophecy as the sitting-room door was opened, and the servant addressed Miss Dermott,—

"The little boy, Martin Daly, ma'am, is returned from the church, and has brought

Christmas is really a most tiresome season—now isn't it, cousin Charlie?" she added, addressing the fourth and much senior occupant of the luxurious apartment, who, invalidated by an accident, reclined upon a sofa opposite the window, an open book in his hand. He did not immediately reply.

"Oh, don't expect an answer from cousin Charlie, he's dreaming as usual," laughed Ronald. "However, I'll settle the question by giving my own opinion thereupon, which is, that, except for vacation, Christmas is decidedly tiresome. I am sick of Christmas presents and Christmas trees; and as to Christmas cards—" Ronald paused, unable to call up a strong enough adjective.

"I wish we could invent a new way of spending Christmas," half sighed Effie.

"Christmas without presents, trees, cards, or even holidays!" put in cousin Charlie, suddenly rousing himself. "Would that be the 'way,' Effie?"

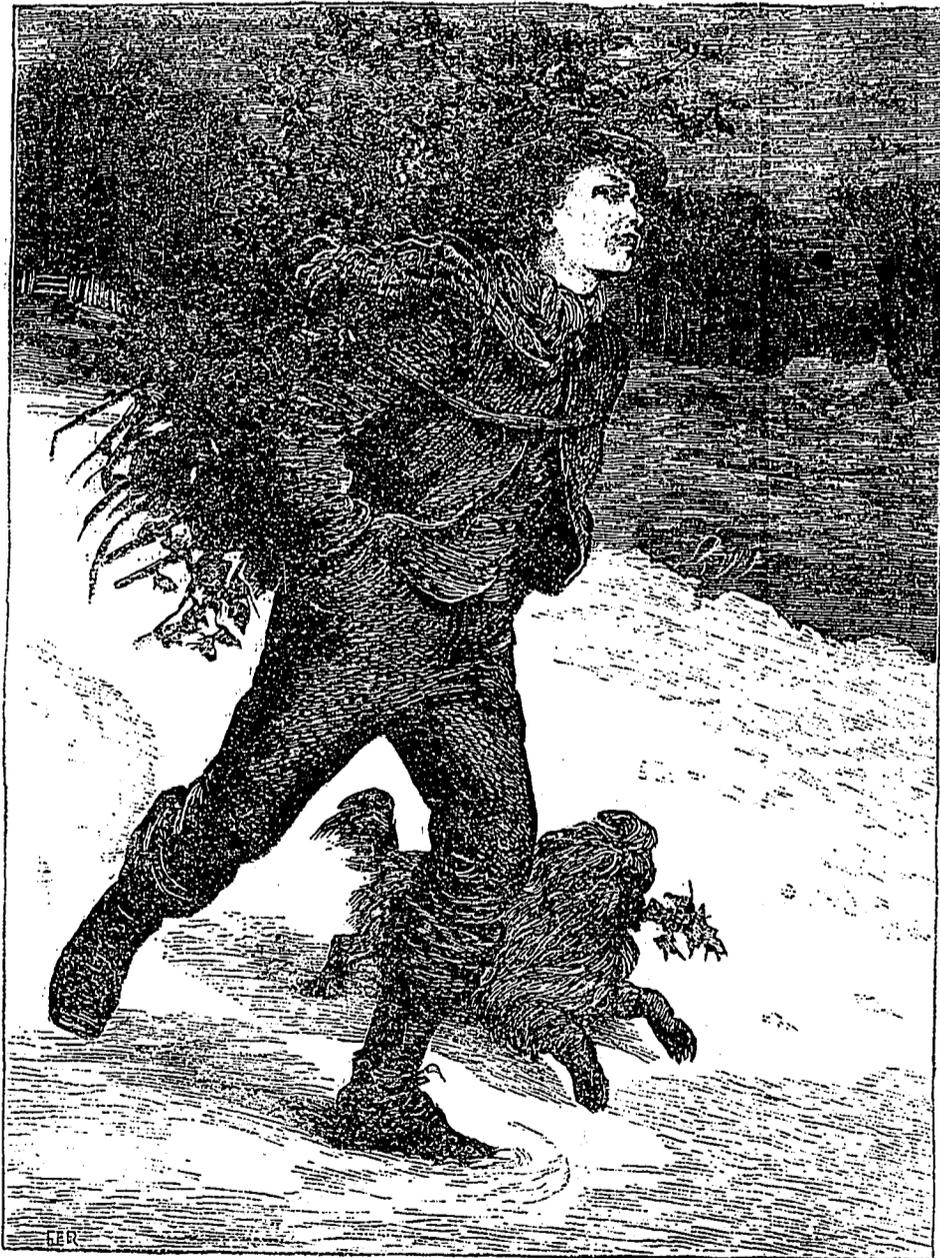
"Oh, no! for then it would be only like any other part of the year, and it ought to be quite unlike, you know. But if we could think of a new, pleasant, nice way!"

"I wonder how little Martin Daly spends Christmas," went on cousin Charlie; "or if he was ever tired of trees, or Santa Claus, or—"

"Martin Daly!" interrupted Annette, rather haughtily. "How could he? Of course he never even heard of Santa Claus; but then, he is quite different from us."

"Quite differently placed in the world, you mean." And cousin Charlie was silent again, whilst his eyes, this time raised from his book were fixed on the snowflakes, which still continued their swift, pretty descent. "How similar to each other those white atoms are!" he resumed presently. "Perfectly similar in every respect, yet what varied situations they happen to fall upon! Some, lighting on the high bank, will rest there undisturbed till gradually melted by the warm sun; others, descending but a couple of feet lower on the terraced walk, will be crushed into moisture by the heel of the first passer-by, or possibly Effie's own little feet to-morrow. Human beings are very much alike. It is only a mere matter of position or circumstances makes them apparently 'quite different.' High or low, rich or poor, they think and feel, suffer in pain, rejoice in happiness."

Annette glanced quickly at her cousin, then out at the snowflakes. And as she, too, read the parable the unconscious particles unfolded, a humbled, softened expression,



MAKING FOR HOME.

know, Effie; and that's all you care about."

"I don't care much for anything Santa Claus can bring me this time, unless it be a doll with blue eyes to match exactly this bonnet." And Effie holds up her wee specimen of millinery. "Blue eyes, and real hair that I can curl myself every day, like what mother says her dolls used to have; all mine have only flax and I cannot fix it."

"That's because women get all the hair

up the 'greens' that were over, as you desired him."

"Returned is he? Then the church must be finished!" Annette half rises from her chair, but quickly reseats herself. "No; I shall not ask him how it looks as I know his answer would only vex me. Bid him leave those evergreens in the servants' hall and run home,—and here, give him this shilling, as it is Christmas time, and such a bad day,

GALTON QUE  
AUBERT