

Uncle Tom's Department.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES.—It is just a year ago since I sat in my studio, with the twilight shadows gathering about me, as the last hours of 1886 ebbed solemnly into the "irrevocable past." A year, with its indelible and eternal record, has been added to the beyond—its trials and its triumphs, its good and its ill, its hours of weakness and its moments of "overcoming," its days of gladness and sadness are forever gone—the last sunset has faded from our vision, and with subdued thought we turn to welcome the roseate dawn of the Happy New Year. In the midnight hour, when men are sleeping and good angels hover near, we would again draw aside the curtain which a year ago dropped over our picture, "The Dawn of Thought." Behind it the work has been going silently on—an unseen hand has been deepening the tints—bringing some phases of the picture out in bold relief, softening others, and throwing over the whole the impress of a master brush. I gaze upon it, and again, face after face appears before me. I recognise many of them—the fine forehead, the bright eye, the curling hair, are to me familiar, while here and there a new face appears. The longer I look the more plainly I can read the faces before me. Here is one—more thoughtful than in the last picture; there is less of the mischievous school boy and more of the earnest student in that face poring over his books. That curly-headed young rogue there, who is not often head of his class, but who is the first to find anything that is lost on the farm, and who even now is capable of taking charge of some portion of the farm work, gives greater promise than ever of being one of the sturdiest, staunchest, tidest yeomen of his community. The next one there, with frank face and honest eyes, with knife in hand, looking for "something to make something of," is the coming carpenter. And let me tell you, honest eyes, as I heartily wish you success in the calling you have chosen, that, looking at you, these words come to my mind, "Is not this the carpenter—the son of Joseph?" As you work at the bench, with saw and plane, will you not in all your life, work follow in the footsteps of Him who was in very deed a carpenter, and the Son of the lowly Joseph? Yes, my boy, it was *His* calling—then it is no mean one. I look again, and thought that in that calm, resolute, noble face before me I can look into the future, and see a man standing, even though it be alone, yet standing bravely, independently, fighting the battle of progress, around him fields of golden grain, waving in the sunlight, and meadows rich with greenest verdure, his flocks and herds testifying to the almost unlimited possibilities of what one man's work may be. Beside the boyish yet manly form is a sweet girlish face and figure. She, too, like her brother, aspires to noble things, and in her we can see the foreshadowing of a woman who would be fulfilling part of her mission in the world were she to find herself "absolute monarch" of a school of rollicking children. That maiden beside her will yet shine forth, the star of home, the attentive daughter, the kindest of elder sisters, while we can almost see a third, with thoughtful, serious face, carrying in her hand the missionary's Bible. Thus the faces throng about. Dimly I can see, as away through the years, one pleading at the bar, another relieving suffering humanity, another telling "the old, old story"—each and all earnest in the work he or she has chosen. The old clock above the mantel-piece is about to strike; with the stroke of the clock the curtain must fall, and it is with a feeling of sadness I gaze upon the picture again; for do I not see some faces which promised well last year, away in the background now, weak and indistinct; the pure sweet faces of some of my girls are scarcely recognizable in the pert face and curling lip which now meets my eyes. The honest faces of some of my boys have been supplanted by faces whose expression means, "I shall do as I please, and no one has any right to interfere with me." My boys and girls, before angel hands draw the curtain—the first chime of the midnight bell has rung, and soon you will pass from my vision—let me plead with you to come back to your ranks, and fighting bravely for the right, earn the highest reward that lips divine ever uttered, "She hath done what she could." I said the midnight bell rang once—it rings again—again—four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. The curtain has been drawn, and we leave our picture, "The Progress of Thought," to the silent working of the unseen Hand for another year, while the bells merrily ring "A Happy New Year, a Happy New Year.—Farewell, 1887; welcome 1888."

UNCLE TOM.

DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES.—The prizes for 1887 are awarded as follows: For best puzzles, 1st, Edward A. Fairbrother, Copenhagen, Ont.; 2nd, Ada Armand, Pakenham, Ont.; 3rd, Henry Reeve, Highland Creek, Ont.; 4th, Arthur T. Reeve, Highland Creek, Ont.; 5th, Louisa F. Redmond, London, Ont. For best and most answers to puzzles, 1st, W. B. Anderson, Ottawa, Ont.; 2nd, Emma Dennee, Bath, Ont.; 3rd, Brusilla A. Fairbrother, Copenhagen, Ont.; 4th, Amos Hawkins, Somerville, Ont.; 5th, Russell Boss, Athol, Cumberland Co., N. S.; 6th, Helen Connell, Harriston, Ont. The competition has been very keen between a few; I am sorry that more do not keep up the contest; many begin in earnest, but for lack of industry or patience soon begin to fall off. Now, I want every nephew and niece I have got to enter in the competition for 1888; I will offer the same prizes as last year, viz., \$15 to be divided as follows: For the best original puzzles, I will give five prizes of \$3, \$2.50, \$2, \$1, and 50c.; and for the most correct answers to puzzles, six prizes of \$2, \$1.50, \$1, 75c., 50c., and 25c. The rules are as follows: The puzzles must be wholly original; answers to accompany each puzzle; address in full with each communication. All letters must be sent in by the 25th of each month, and must be neatly written. Now, let me hear from you all, and look for your names in the February issue.

UNCLE TOM.

Puzzles.

1—CHARADE.
I am one, I am two; I can join, I can sever,
Now you will guess this charade if you are very clever.

ARTHUR T. REEVE.

2—TRANSPOSITION.
Reeth ear srateruse rof het nollye,
Chihw eth dantrese laif of nild;
"Strehe a nath fo tsew facefnoit
Gindbin reanifd fo rinkked dimn,
Ew yam pear eth sthcole lessinbgs
Morf teh roots efp tol sin desag.

3—DROP VOWEL.
Th-n k n-t-th-str-ggl-th-t dr-w sn-r
T-t-r-r-bl-f-r m-n-n-r-f-r
T-m-t-th-f-r
N-r-l-t-th-n-bl-sp-r-t-gr-v-
-ts-l-f-f-gl-r--s-f-m-t-l-v-
-n-r-rth-b-l-w.

L-DRF-II--
HENRY REEVE.

4—ILLUSTRATED REBUS.



5—CHARADE.

Gentle, sweet and loving should my primal be,
Second bright and wavy, a treasure deemeth she;
Rambling through the woodland on a little knoll
I found a bunch of flowers, and 'mong them was
the WHOLE.

ADA ARMAND.

6—ANAGRAM.

Years ago a tiny mortal I did o'er puzzle corner
And wonder could I pass the portal leading to that
happy place.
Yes; I entered, and contented, many happy mo-
ments spent,
Writing riddles, squares and cross-words, which to
Uncle Tom were sent.
Now I've many little troubles, and although it gives
me pain,
I must say, Good-bye, dear cousins, here I send my
"Rise not gain."

ADA ARMAND.

7—ANAGRAM.

An anagram; O, yes! Let me see,
What did you say the answer might be?
You will guess it right, I'll be bound,
If you find an Orator quite renowned.

"Uncle Tom" solutions from all will receive,
So try and the answer to this one perceive;
Now, while you are at it, others collect,
And send me those by mail direct.

FAIR BROTHER.

8—ENIGMA.

Oh! how many tales of me could be told
By the young and the old, the rich and the poor,
For I never do good wherever I am.
Although I have been from creation of man,
No legs have I got, yet how swift do I go,
And often I cause the bleakest of woe;
But if you transpose me a man's name I show,
A scriptural one, I would have you to know.

HENRY REEVE.

9—DROP VOWEL.

W-c-n-l-w-y-s-m-k-h-m-ch-r-l,
f-th-r-ght-c-r-s-w-b-g-n;
W-c-n-m-k-th-m-n-t-a-b-p-p-y,
-nd-th-r-tr--st-bl-s-n-gs-w-n,
-t-w-l-m-k-th-sm-l-r-m-br-ght-r
-f-w-l-t-th-s-n-sh-n-n.

ARTHUR T. REEVE.

10—NUMERICAL ENIGMA.

I'm sure that letters 6, 3, 5, 4,
To take dinner is and nothing more.

I went exploring, and all alive
I found a bear in my 6, 4, 5.

You bring a forest tree into view
By setting in rank my 1, 3, 2.

But if for a well-known plant you strive,
Why place in a row my 1, 4, 2, 5.

Now if a companion you would fix,
Arrange in order letters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

FAIR BROTHER.

Answers to December Puzzles.

1—True friendship's laws are by this rule ex-
pressed:
Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.

2—
P
M U M
M A Z E D
P U Z Z L E R
M E L O N
D E N
R

3—
B E D
H E L E N
B E N E F I T
E L E V A T E
D E F A M E D
N I T E R
T E D

4—
Stronger than steel
Is the sword of the spirit;
Swifter than arrows
The light of the truth is;
Greater than anger
Is love that subdueth,