

**Uncle Tom's Department.**

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES:—

As the last of the snow-banks melt away in the April sunlight, and the grass around them grows green, Uncle Tom takes up his pen once more to write you all. Although the frosts of age have hoared his hair, and his step is less firm and light than yours, he has not forgotten the spring gladness which comes to merry, laughing boys and girls. The warm spring rains washing away the winter's scum, the delightful warm air, the earliest flowers peeping up like smiles from old earth at the foot of the leather-wood tree or in some sheltered nook, are well remembered. You all feel glad in the thought of coming spring. The house looks gloomy after the sunshine and feels close after the refreshing run in the warm spring air. Surely spring is the children's season. Everything in nature seems springing to life.

The frogs have begun their music, and the school boy has his wind-mill on the angle of the barn. The pigeon-house is growing interesting. Lambs are playing; calves look out on an untried world. The scholars coming home from school dam back the water on the swollen brook, and listen far off to hear its music.

O dull not your ears to the musical voices around you, my children. Listen to them while you can hear them, before the clamor and the worry and the business of life come upon you.

O could I banish from your minds that feeling of unrest which comes to too many of my nephews and nieces as they grow older. These April days pass away as dreams, and they seem more memories than realities when life is filled with other things.

When we older folk hear that of which the poet writes, we find our ears have grown so heavy that we cannot hear as in the bright, happy days of innocence and truth, of youth and home. He says:

"The softly-warbled song  
Comes from the pleasant woods, and colored wings  
Glance quick in the bright sun, that moves along  
The forest openings.

"Sweet April!—many a thought  
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed;  
Nor shall they fall, till, to its autumn brought,  
Life's golden fruit is shed."

As you sow your garden seeds and plant your bulbs, there is one thing I wish you all to remember. It is, *as you sow, so will you gather*. With the seeds you are cultivating your characters. Are you sowing truth and honesty and honor in little things? If David had not been found at the work he was sent to do, when he was called to be anointed by Samuel, do you think he would afterwards have been king of Israel? Away up in the ranks of life there are places waiting for trustworthy and competent boys and girls. Who is going to fill them? This poor old world is much looked down upon for its favorites of fortune, but that same world

knows pretty well where the genuine article is brought for work, and there is always room for him or here.

Take for example Edison, whose name is known to you all; a Canadian of whom the world is proud. A little country village in Ontario claims to be his birth-place. His work still goes on. Electric light is only one of the many, many wonders he is showing to the world. Of the steps in his ascent of life's ladder, perhaps none is more remarkable than that one where, when he was tested, he showed he had mastered telegraphing—that he was competent to fill the position for which he applied.

Among my nieces and nephews there is talent enough. In the years to come we shall see how the opportunities are grasped and the faculties developed, or, if we do not see it, the world may yet know. We expect much from you, and may you each one make up your mind not to disappoint your

UNCLE TOM.



ILLUSTRATION FOR COMPETITION STORY.

P. S.—I now propose to try an entirely new feature in Uncle Tom's Department, and I hope many of my boys and girls will be pleased with the idea, and will work with a will to obtain a prize. Each month I will give you a picture of some thrilling adventure and offer a prize of \$2 for the best story descriptive of it, or the best story of which the picture would be a good illustration. To give every one a chance, the distant subscribers as well as those not far off, I will produce the picture this month and request the stories to be in our office by the 15th May, and so on, always allowing a full month to intervene. Now, I shall expect something very good upon this exciting scene.

UNCLE TOM.

"What made Sampson weak?" asked the Sunday-school teacher.

"A home-made hair-cut," promptly replied a boy in the front row.—*Puck*.

**Artistic Music.**

We have read about the newly imported German tenor who on an Easter morning electrified a "heavily mortgaged congregation" by singing over and over again, "He will raise ze debt, He will raise ze debt, in ze twinkling of an eye." But the following musical incident is related by one who recently attended a fashionable church. The choir started with a reference to the lilies of the field, and after singing the changes on the word "consider" until all idea of its connection was lost, they began to tell the congregation through the mouth of the soprano that "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed." Straightway the soprano was reinforced by the basso, who declared that Solomon was most decidedly and emphatically not arrayed—was not arrayed. Then the alto ventured it as her opinion that Solomon was not arrayed, when the tenor without a moment's hesitation sang as if it had been officially announced, that "he was not

arrayed." Then when the feelings of the congregation had been harrowed up sufficiently, and our sympathies all aroused for poor Solomon, whose numerous wives allowed him to go about in such a fashion, the choir at length, in a most cool and composed manner, informed us that the idea they intended to convey was that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed "like one of these"—these what? So long a time had elapsed since they sang of the lilies that the thread was entirely lost, and by "these," one naturally concluded that the choir was designated. Arrayed like one of these? We should think not, indeed! Solomon in a Prince Albert or a cutaway coat? No, most decidedly. Solomon in the very zenith of his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Despite the experience of the morning, the hope still remained that in the evening a sacred song might be sung in a manner that would not excite our risibilities or leave the impression that we had been listening

to a case of blackmail. But again off went the nimble soprano with the very laudable though startling announcement, "I will wash." Straightway the alto, not to be outdone, declared that she "would wash." And the tenor finding it to be the thing, warbled forth that he would wash. Then the deep-chested basso, as though calling up his fortitude for the plunge, bellowed forth the stern resolve that he also would wash. Next a short interlude on the organ, strongly suggestive of the escaping steam or the splash of the waves, after which the choir individually and collectively asserted the firm, unshaken resolve that they would wash. At last they solved the problem by stating that they proposed to "wash their hands in innocence."—*Cathedral Chimes*.

The New York Medical Times gives this:—A chemist says equal parts of dilute lactic acid and glycerine applied to the face will remove moths and freckles without injury to the skin.