

fortune (not to mention many kind friends) so bountifully provided for them. Swords and guns, dolls and books, Punchinellos and trumpets, boxes of bonbons, candies and toys of every size and shape and description gave delight to the children, and not much less pleasure to the giver. You, my dear young friends, I hope, have had a glorious Christmas night of it! Santa Claus has visited you all, I trust, in kind remembrance. As you danced and played round the tree, and sang your Christmas carols you earnestly wished no doubt that the joy and pleasure would last for ever. But Time does not stay on Christmas night—even on that happy night the hour of departure comes and all smiles and laughter and joy you went out where the beautiful snow lay in its spotless purity and went home with your hearts full of thankfulness and gladness. Ah, those Christmas Trees! What bright spots in the dreary waste of life are they! May the peace they bring remain in your young hearts!

#### A HERO ON CRUTCHES.

You have all heard of the Tay Bridge disaster—that sudden and awful catastrophe by which so many souls were hurled into eternity. You can recall, most of you, the story of the dark night, the howling wind, the hurrying train, the broken bridge, and then that last horrible plunge of the doomed carriages and their human freight into the river below.

In all countries wherever the story was told words of sympathy rose to men's lips, and pity as well as horror was largely evoked.

Among the Germans, when the

sad news was related, the name of "Carl Springel" rose frequently to the lips. My object is to tell you something about him, and how it was that the Tay Bridge accident recalled his story.

Carl Springel was the lame son of a railway official in South Germany. His father's duty was to keep watch on stormy nights over a bridge which spanned a cleft in the rocks two hundred feet wide and a hundred and fifty feet deep. This bridge was called the Devil's Gulch Bridge. Below, in summer, a little stream struggled on into the valley, which, however, in stormy, rainy seasons, and in the depth of winter, became a torrent of great force and height.

On the night of the 19th November, 1869, after twenty hours of continued storm and rain, such a swell took place, and the mountain current became a roaring, dashing river. That night Carl Springel set out with his father's supper, for he had been on duty all day, and could not leave his post. In the dark night the lame boy struggled on while the storm raged and the fierce wind blew, and at last he drew near the bridge. But as he did so a stronger blast than usual made him totter on his crutches and a terrible crash was heard above the fury of the storm. Carl felt it must be the bridge, and in fear and terror he pushed on, calling loudly, "Father, father."

Soon he was on the rail track; there was his father's truck, with the red light still burning. Beyond it the glare of the lantern showed the awful gap over which the bridge had been, but nothing remained save shattered timber and tottering masonry and the boiling