-- A -- Christmas Story.

Written for The Planet Junior by Blanche Mays, Chatham, and Awarded Honorable Mention by the Judges.

The cold chilling winter had set in and

"The footsteps of the snow as white and meek

As angel travellers were everywhere
Browning the old earth's furrowed griefs and scars." The ice was frozen solid and the icicles hung like crystal trimmings from roof and fence.

Down a long, narrow, alley where only a track of small feet had been made in the deep, glistening snow, stood a miserable little hut with broken panes of glass stopped up with old rags, a bent in roof and a door sagging on its hinges. In this poor little home lived two orphans, Noel and Dolors Pierson. Their parents had died when Dolors was seven and Noel nine years of age. Ever since that sad time the boy had been delivering "The Daily Planet" and the kind proprietor, seeing his wretched condition would frequently give him some help, but he had many expenses to meet and was in consequence frequently in need of food and clothing for himself and his sister.

One night on which it was so bitter cold that even the well-clad people had to make great exertion to keep themselves warm, Noel felt hungry and wornout and sat on the steps of The Planet office. He was soon overcome with fatigue and traveled far off to dreamland. He dreamed that he was a pupil of one of the city schools and had written a grand composition and handed it in to the "Planet Junior," and now he was the proud possessor of a handsome gold watch. How brightly it shone in the electric light as he walked along the streets admiring it! Oh, how happy he was! The thought struck him,—"A watch is of no use to me in this condition; I will sell it and purchase many useful things for our Christmas." But, alas! the biting cold soon aroused him from his pleasant wanderings and he arose and with stiffened limbs and aching heart turned his steps towards his cheerless home.

The days sped swiftly by and Christmas Eve at last arrived. The streets of the Maple City were crowded with happy, well dressed people. The merry sound of sleigh bells and the joyful laughter and shouts of children filled the crisp December air. Noel thought that since he was unable to buy anything for poor Dolors he would at least take her up town to see the beautiful things in the shop windows, for she was an unselfish girl and if she could not get nice things, it rejoiced her heart to know that others were better off than she.

After viewing all the beautiful windows together, Noel went off for his papers and Dolors went home to prepare the scanty supper. She was hurrying around trying to make things as pleasant as possible when her attention was called by a rap at the door. At first she was frightened, but she soon picked up courage and answered the call. She was much surprised to see a very well dressed gentleman standing before her. He looked so kind and good that she at once asked him to enter, but he refused, saying that he must have mistaken the place. Then he asked her if she had any idea where the two children, Pierson by name, lived, saying that he had been searching for them for several days. Poor Dolors thought that some terrible misfortune was about to come to them and and the tears rushed down her large blue eyes, but she frankly told the gentleman that she was one of the children, and that her brother would soon be home. "How old were you when your mother died?" inquired the gentleman. "I was seven when my mother died," she said; "the only thing I have to remember her by is a locket she gave me when she called Noel and me to her bedside and made me promise never to part with it. I will go and get it." She ran to an adjoining room and soon returned with a pretty gold locket. The gentleman no sooner looked at it than he dropped it to the ground, "My dear niece," he said, clasping her in his arms, "that is the very locket I gave your mother, my only sister, on her sixteenth birthday."

That very night seated comfortably on a train, bound for the city of Toronto, were Noel, Dolors and the good uncle. You may imagine what a merry Christmas they had in their new home, for their rich uncle adopted them as his own children.

BLANCHE MAYS,
Senior Fourth Class, St. Joseph's Separate School, Chatham, Ont.

Short Stories

Something to Interest the Boys and Girls.

INTERESTING DESCRIPTION OF COSSACK BREDGES.

Perhaps the most remarkable bridges in the world are the kettle bridges in Russia and Siberia, of which Cossack soldiers are expert builders. They are built up of the soldiers' lances and cooking kettles. Seven or eight lances are placed under the handles of a number of kettles and fastened by means of ropes to form a raft. A sufficient number of these rafts, each of which will bear the weight of half a ton, are fastened together and in the space of half an hour a bridge is formed on which an army may cross in confidence and safety.

* * *

AMBIGUOUS PRAISE FROM TWO GREAT MEN.

It is sometimes difficult to express truthfully, appreciation of undesirable gifts.

Lord Beaconsfield's reply to an author who presented an impossible book to him is historical: "Many thanks; I shall lose no time in reading it." Oliver Wendell Holmes made a reply somewhat of the same ambiguous nature. After showering complimentary adjectives on a book, he added: "I am lying under a sense of obligation."

* * *

MAN IN FIGURES.

Some years ago a clever French anatomist presented the following statistics to the Paris Academy of Science:

A man, during 50 years of life, sleeps away an aggregate of 6,000 days, and works away the same period. The time occupied by him in eating amounts to 2,000 days, in walking 800, and he is ill, on an average 500 days. During his half century he absorbs 77,000 pounds of bread, 22,000 pounds of meat, 5,000 pounds of vegetables, and washes all this down with 6,800 gallons of liquor.

Contentment is the best cure for wrinkles.

We've invented a new guessing game.

What is it?

Why, we get out in the park, throw away the almanac, and try to guess the season of the year from the weather.

Children's Ideas of Santa Claus

Written for The Planet Junior by Mabelle Dillon, Raleigh, and Awarded Honorable Mention by the Judges.

Very few people ever experience the joys that the poor enter into on Christmas Day. They are perfectly happy, on account of our Lord being born on that day, and his life was one of poverty.

Some time ago, away in Scotland, in the little village of Rosebank, lived two little children with their father. Their mother was dead, and this left them very poor and almost alone in the world, yet they really never knew what a loss it was to be without a mother.

Their house was old and racked, their clothing was tattered, still they were contented; only one thing ever troubled the dear ones, this was their long desire to see mother and Santa Claus. Christmas had come and gone yet they were happy and enjoyed the day except their disappointment was in never having Santa Claus visit them.

This year Christmas came on Monday, the snow was falling in large, beautiful flakes from the heavenly skies, on the mountains, in the valley, and into their roofless house.

The day before Christmas their father went to the town and left them alone, a thought came to the little ones of how nice it would be to go in search of Santa Claus, for they supposed he lived up in the heavens and if he could be found they were satisfied.

So they stirred up a warm fire, put on their father's old coats, turned back the cuffs, so as to let out their little hands, tied on some old bonnets on their heads, then put some potatoes on the stove to bake, for their father would be cold and hungry when he returned.

Then closing the door behind them they started out in the world to look for Santa Claus. The wind blew and the air was cold and cheerless, the snow had them almost covered when they began to plough up the side of the mountain. When they reached the summit they were lost—kneeling down on the top of the mountain begged of God to find them Santa Claus. Then, coming down they wandered on till they could not see their home. It was late in the afternoon, and a young lady seeing them took the dear ones to her home, where everything was comfortable and they could hear and smell the goose roasting in the oven. They remained there till their father came in search of them. When he found out why they had left home it melted his hard heart, and he secretly promised Santa Claus would come that night.

He took them home and putting them to bed thought it over. Next morning, when they came down stairs Santa had been to see them. In their stockings hung two lovely large dolls nearly the size of themselves. The children were loud in the praises of Santa Claus who had not forgotten to call at their house last night. But that Santa Claus was really that kind young lady, whose heart went out in sympathy to the two orphan waifs whom she had perhaps, by her charity, saved from a snowy grave by the dreary roadside. This was their first Christmas present and they never forgot it, for, kneeling down with eyes full of tears, they thanked God who had granted them their prayer. No one could ever describe or imagine the happiness that reigned in that little home on that Christmas.

MABELLE DILLON.

This composition is written by Mabel Dillon, who has passed the Public School Leaving, but who continues to be a pupil of mine.

ANNA FLYNN.

MESMERIZE OLD HAT

Provide yourself with an old hat, giving it to someone in the audience, and an ordinary black pin bent in the shape of the letter C. Put the hat on a table, crown upwards, and secrete the pin in your right hand. You will borrow the hat from your confederate. On receiving it, take it in your left hand, and while walking to the table, place the right hand inside the hat, quickly push the point of the pin up through the crown and stand the hat on the table. You make a few passes over the hat as if you were mesmerizing it. Slip your second finger in the hook and slowly lift the hat from the table. After this bring the hat to the table, remove the hand, and in returning the hat, you can easily withdraw the pin.

THE NURSERY ELF.

Dear little feet, how you wander and wander
Like twin truants so fleet!
Dear little head, how you ponder and ponder
Over the things that you meet.

Dear little tongue, how you chatter and chatter
Over your innocent joys!
Oh, but the house is alive with your clatter,
Shaking, indeed, with your noise!

Can't you be quiet a moment, sweet rover?
Is there no end to your fun?
Soon the old sandman will sprinkle over
Then the day's frolic is done.

Come to my arms, for the daylight is dying,
Closer the shadows creep;
Come, like a bird that is weary of flying;
Come, let me sing you to sleep.

OUT FOR BARGAINS WAS THIS SHOPPER.

It was a pleasant looking Irishwoman, says the Philadelphia Public Ledger, who walked into a store and asked the price of the collars she had seen displayed in the window.

"Two for a quarter," said the clerk.

"How much would that be for one?"

"Thirteen cents."

She pondered. Then, with her forefinger, she seemed to be making invisible calculationss on the sleeve of her coat.

"That," she said, "would make the other collar twilve cents, wouldn't it? Just give me that wan."

SNOW THAT FELL WITHIN DOORS

A writer tells of an indoor snowstorm on a very clear, cold evening at a party given in Stockholm, Sweden. Many people were gathered in a single room, which became so warm as to be insufferable. The window sashes were found frozen and a pane of glass was smashed out. A cold air current rushed in and at the same moment flakes of snow were seen to fall to the floor in all parts of the room. The temperature was so saturated with moisture that the sudden fall in temperature produced a snowfall indoors.

A Journal for the Little Folks

The Planet Junior

A Page for the Boys and Girls

Supplement to The Saturday Planet

VOL. I. CHATHAM, ONT., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1904 No. 23

The Planet Junior

A weekly newspaper published every week for the young people of the Maple City.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20.

THE PRESENTATION

The gold watch awarded by the judges in the Christmas Story competition will be presented to the little winner, Maggie Braddon, of McKeough School, some afternoon next week at the school.

For different reasons the presentation has been unavoidably delayed, but the watch is now being engraved at the jewelry store of VonGunten Bros., the popular jewellers, King St. East, and will be on exhibition about Tuesday. If at all possible his honor Judge Bell will make the presentation.

INTEREST APPRECIATED

The Planet Junior has received many encomiums on its work of ele-

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SOME STRANGE EXPERIENCES WHICH BEFEL SANTA CLAUS

Being the Prize-Winning Christmas Story, Written by little Maggie Braddon For The Planet Junior. For this Essay the Judges Awarded the Handsome Gold Watch.

Santa Claus was on his annual trip around the world one Christmas Eve when a band of robbers fell upon him and took him to their hut. While they were out consulting over what they would do with Santa, he thought he would amuse himself. So, taking a magic lantern from his pack he cast a picture of British soldiers on the wall just as the robbers came in. The robbers, thinking them real soldiers, took to their heels, leaving a note on the table saying that Santa should be killed.

Santa picked up his pack and went on his journey. When he reached the town, thinking his beard too long, went to the barber to have a bit of it cut off. He told the barber to cut the beard till he told him to stop. But Santa became sleepy and, dropped off into a peaceful slumber. Meanwhile the barber was cutting off piece after piece of his beard. When Santa awoke he was a clean shaven man.

He then went to a house to fill the stockings. As he was filling them the master of the house came in and caught him, and called him a thief, and said that he was not Santa Claus, because he did not have a beard and Santa Claus did. He then called the policemen and had him arrested and taken to prison. But when they got there they found that all the cells were filled; so they took him to one of the policemen's rooms and locked him there.

When the policemen left him he opened his pack and took from it a lot of toy monkeys and fastened to the necks of them on little cards the names of the policemen, and put them on the mantelpiece. He then shouldered his pack and up he went through the chimney and out onto the roof, where his reindeers were impatiently waiting for him, and in short time he was again on his journey.

MAGGIE BRADDON,
Junior III. Class, McKeough School,
Kate Garrett, Teacher.

Three Talented Young Essayists

Winners of The Planet Junior's Essay Competitions

NORMA WARDELL

Little Norma Wardell is a pupil of School Section No. 3, Raleigh, Miss Annie Russell, teacher. Her essay on the Maple City won the first prize in the initial competition of The Planet Junior.

MAC McAULEY

Mac McAuley is a pupil of McKeough School, city, Miss E. Abram, teacher. His contribution to The Planet Junior's advertisement essay competition was awarded the prize as the best received.

MAGGIE BRADDON

Little Maggie Braddon is a pupil of McKeough School, Miss Kathleen Garrett, teacher. Her original Christmas Story was accorded first place in the big Christmas competition, winning the gold watch. There were 237 competitors from all parts of the county.

LAUGH WAS ON THE OTHER SIDE.

A Scot who served an Englishman this summer as guide and friend on a fishing trip had what the London Daily Mail calls "the national weakness" for claiming relationship with all the influential families in that part of Scotland.

One day the Englishman met him on the road driving a pig, and saw a little fun.

"Well, Donald," said he, "is that one of your grand relations?"

"Oh, no," said Donald, quietly, "This is just an acquaintance—like yersel'."