

Uncle Tom's Department.

The Beggar Who Beguiles Us.

Such a pretty little beggar
As waylaid me on the street!
Such a state of the exchequer
When at last I beat retreat!

She had but to hold her hand out,
And the dollars seemed to go
As tho' drawn there by a magnet,
And despite the debts I owe.

Not in rags and not in tatters,
With a voice that told of tears,
Did my beggar girl beguile
But with diamonds in her ears.

Not with weeping and with wailing
Of her woes did she assail
A poor helpless man and brother;
But from out a dotted veil,

Two bright eyes did execution
On my pocket and my heart;
One was empty, 't'other missing
When she exercised her art.

True, she asked but for my money;
But my heart I'll swear she took,
Tho' mayhap she didn't know it,
With the first appealing look!

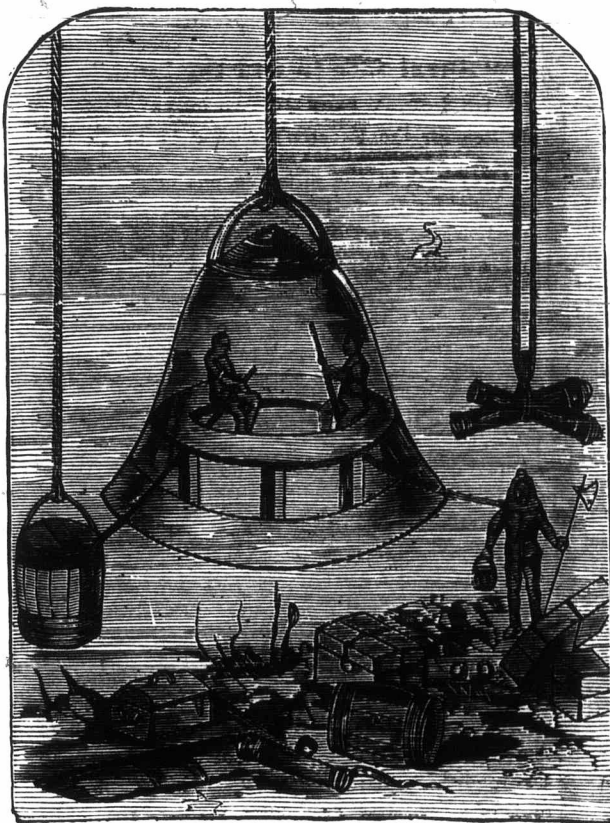
Yet she cared no more for me than
For the little bird a-perch
On her pretty winter bonnet—
She was begging for the church!
—Boston Globe.

MY DEAR NIECES AND NEPHEWS,—A whole month of the new year has already gone, and rough old February, with his frost and ice and snow, with his skating and his freezing, his drifting and his sleighing, his snow-shoeing and his curling, is upon us. With him, too, closely following the trail of his pure snow mantle, comes the warmer and stronger sunshine—bright harbinger of coming spring days. To be sure old March comes yet, but his rough days cannot affright us, for we know there is too much that is warm and kindly within him, even though his looks be stern.

The other evening I heard some of my little grandchildren repeating over the old, old rhymes we knew when even Uncle Tom was a child: "Old Mother Hubbard" came first, and her poor dog had not yet got his bone; then came "Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep" and neither had they come home, "bringing their tails behind them." And, as I listened, I wondered at the truth of the old rhymes they glibly repeated. How many who have said that, have gone, at the closing of life, to look over treasured memories in the cupboard of the past, to find only shelves empty of all that made it pleasant to look within? There were lost opportunities and many "might have beens," but few golden treasures of good deeds done and happy hours made for others. Some of my nieces and nephews, too, who, once in awhile, think they know better than father or mother, or elder sister, who, looking forward to manhood or womanhood, think the good old home ways old-fashioned and slow, and long for life and gaiety and freedom, so called. They, too, after facing the world alone and getting wounded in the strife, will, like Bo-Peep's sheep, "come home" to the good old ways of truth and honesty and godliness, and find therein "a peace which the world can neither give nor take away." Then, carrying me back again to childish days, when the old clock sweetly and softly told that eight o'clock had come, that another day had passed away down the stream of time, and that it was bedtime, came the quaint rhyme of:—

"Wee Willie Winkie runs through the town,
Upstairs and downstairs in his night-gown.
He taps at the window and touches the lock;
Are the wee ones in bed, for its now eight o'clock?"

These were the nursery rhymes, and following them I wonder what there is in the minds of my nieces and nephews. We stand to-day, as the poet Tennyson expresses it, "heirs of all the ages in the foremost files of time," and all that has been written, said or sung is a mine into which we may explore and dig, and bring forth treasures new and old. What an array of poets, historians, novelists are ours, with their life stories of toiling, working and suffering for the name or the fame, for the love of it, or better still, for the good of others. We, who may if we will, reap the reward of their struggles. What are we doing, how using these gifts? In these long winter evenings in the family circle, before the long, busy spring and summer days of sowing and harvesting come, I trust my nieces and nephews are storing their busy minds with



HALLEY'S DIVING BELL.

beautiful thoughts which will become a part of themselves and make their lives beautiful and fragrant with sweet thoughts and good deeds, even as pleasing as the aroma of the flowers of spring, of the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley.

Wishing my nieces and nephews a great deal of play sandwiched up with school lessons, and may the mustard of enjoyment in each leave ever a good hearty appetite.

Yours, ever sincerely,
UNCLE TOM.

P. S.—No pleasanter work has fallen to my lot for some time than the reading of the little stories for which prizes were offered in January. Strange that the two prizes should be both won by girls. If the boys do not look sharp the girls will come out ahead; it was different in the puzzles. I hope to hear from a great many more this month. Either write a story or send some puzzles (see January number), and obtain some of the prizes. Write on one side of the paper only.

UNCLE TOM.

Halley's Diving Bell.

Many of the readers of the ADVOCATE have been shocked by the terrible loss of life, and have read of the wreck of the "Serpent." Illustrations of the wreck with the rocks around, and the waters dashing over her have been made familiar to us. We on land can hardly realize the awful thing it is to be wrecked, with death before, and nothing but cold, cruel waters all around. Then there are the homes of each of these, where the hour of dread and uncertainty is followed by the wail of woe, and the remembrances of the past, the last farewell, and the difficulty of realizing that life is passed away, and that on earth the dearly loved and loving will never meet again.

Our illustration shows the bottom of the sea after a wreck, trunks, boxes, barrels strewn as if by some angry whirlwind, belongings of high and low, rich and poor, all in one mighty sepulchre, while the owners each by each have passed away through that portal each of us must pass alone.

Halley's Diving Bell, like all great works, is but the added improvements of man after man, one building on the improvements of another, until now, like the steam engine, and the self-binder, we see what to us seems almost perfection.

This machine or apparatus is in the form of a bell or an inverted cup, and by its means persons—divers they are called—descend below the surface of the water and remain for some time without injury to the health while working below. Breathing is sustained by compressed air being conveyed to him. Thus mail matter which has been lost is sometimes returned, and thus the divers in the pearl fisheries bring these treasures to the light.

As the diver leaves the air and sunlight and goes under the water, he has but one object before him, obtaining that he gives the signal and again he is breathing the free air of heaven. So we, with one object in view, should dive into life's work, searching diligently as for hidden treasures, for the moments are flying, the time is almost measured, and the tale nearly told.

K. R. M.

Grains of Gold.

It is better to have a faith you can define, than define a faith you haven't got.

Vice is infamous though it be in a prince, and virtue honorable though it be in a peasant.

Temperance, by fortifying the mind and body, leads to happiness. Intemperance, by enervating them, leads generally to misery.

Nothing is so great an instance of ill-manners as flattery. If you flatter all the company you please none; if you flatter only one or two you affront the rest.

Do not hurt yourself or others by the pursuit of pleasure. Consult your whole nature and consider yourselves, not only sensitive but rational. Not only as rational but social, and not only as social but immortal.

The hope of future happiness is a perpetual source of consolation to good men. Under trouble it soothes their minds; amidst temptation it supports their virtue, and in their dying moments enables them to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"