

CHRISTMAS EVE WITH OUR EXCHANGES.

Christmas Eve! The exchange editor lolling in his chair is not quite certain whether he is awake or asleep. In any case he is dreaming. He has just been reading the *Christmas Carol* for the half-dozen time, and the picture of old Scrooge wandering about the city and country under the guidance of the spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Future is fixed in his mind. If he could only take a similar trip to-night, wouldn't it be jolly! Why he could visit all the other X-men and give them an X-mas greeting! Hollo, who's this at my elbow? A Christmas ghost? Not much—ghosts are shadowy, indistinct sort of personages if there be any truth in history and my strange visitor is quite a substantial reality. "*Bon soir, Monsieur,*" he says with a smile which reveals a pleasant mouth usually hidden in a thick black beard, and his eyes are laughing at my amazement. "You—you—have the advantage of me, sir," I stammer. "Ah, yes," he answers still smiling, "that is true, but permit that I present me—M. Jules Verne," placing one hand on his heart while he bows low, "who is at your dispositions." The name is familiar enough to my ears but how or why its possessor comes to be in my room I am yet at a loss to understand. I mutter something, what, I scarcely know, perhaps it is, "You have done me a great honor, M. Verne, won't you sit down;" offering him my solitary chair and proceeding to seat myself on a trunk. "I thank you much," he replies, "but there is not the time. Do we not go to visit your brothers—what they call themselves—ex-men?" He moves towards the window and I follow. Now for the first time I perceive that the bright moonlight which had been pouring in on the floor can no longer be seen, for some dark object is hanging before the window. My strange visitor opens the sash and steps out, but instead of landing on the ground forty feet below seems to find a firm footing somewhere on a level with the window. Emboldened by curiosity I also step forth to find myself on what seems to be the deck of a ship. A perfect forest of masts rises upwards each masthead being terminated in a very large fan. Suddenly everything is brilliantly lit up as with electric light, a sound

of machinery is heard, all the fans begin to move and the marvellous ship (for such it is) which had been stationary before my window begins to glide smoothly and rapidly through the air. M. Verne's voice says beside me, "Is it that you now commence to understand, my friend?" And at last I can answer yes. For I remember having read of a wonderful craft constructed by M. Verne for some American scientists, in which they journeyed all over the world and viewed the unknown portion of the earth. And the great Frenchman with an intuition of my admiration for himself and his works has given me the use of his latest invention in order that I may be able to make the Christmas visits I desire.

The night is clear and starlit. We are but a few hundred feet from the earth and the city is distinctly visible. As we sail over the Parliament buildings M. Verne admits that he has done them an injustice once before which he is now willing to repair. We cross the Ottawa river, and are moving in an air line towards Montreal at an extraordinary rate of speed. Soon we are descending in the neighborhood of McGill College and I proceed to hunt up the exchange editor of the *University Gazette*. "That was rather a hard rap you gave us last month, old man, but 'peace and good-will' is the motto of the season. Shake!" In less time than it takes to tell it we are off again and bound for Fredericton. As we glide over northern Maine I am thinking regretfully that this territory should belong to Canada, but doesn't. The *University Monthly* is at home and glad to see us, but we can delay only long enough to wish him the compliments of the season. Now we draw near that naughty place we have sometimes in profane moments requested others to go to—Halifax. The atmosphere has become moist and briny by the time we reach the office of the *Dalhousie Gazette*, but the editors generously provide us with an antidote to chills. A moment later we are floating over Windsor, a town which is laved by the Avon, stream of poetic memories. The *Record* man wants to have us stay over, but we convince him it is impossible, and with a "Merry Xmas" we are off again. To cross the Avon from Windsor to Wolfville doesn't take a half minute; the *Athenaeum* people must have had some idea that we were coming, for