

There also used of the metals, iron, steel, brass, white metal, gun metal, and lead. There are in the same instrument of seven and a half octaves, when completed, 214 strings, making a total length of 787 feet of steel wire, and 500 feet of white (covered) wire. Such a piano will weigh from 900 to 1,000 pounds, and will last with constant use (not abused) fifteen or twenty years. The total manufacture of pianos in New York alone, averages 15,000 per annum.

**CATCHING MUSKRATS.**—It may have puzzled many of our readers to tell how muskrats, beavers, and other animals, are able to stay so long under water, apparently without breathing, especially in winter. The way they manage is, they take a good breath at starting, and then remain under water as long as possible. Then they rise up to the ice and breath out the air in their lungs, which remain in a bubble against the lower part of the ice. The water near the ice is highly charged with oxygen, which it readily imparts to the air breathed out. After a time, this air is taken back in the lungs, and the animal again goes under the water, repeating this progress from time to time. In this way, they can travel almost any distance, and live almost any length of time under the ice. The hunter sometimes takes advantage of this habit of the muskrat in the following manner: When the marshes and ponds where the muskrat abounds are first frozen over, and the ice is thin and clear, on striking into their houses with his hatchet, for the purpose of setting his trap, he frequently sees a whole family plunge into the water and swim away under the ice. Following one for some distance, he sees him come up to recover his breath, in the manner above described. After the animal has breathed against the ice, and before he has time to take his bubbles in again, the hunter strikes with his hatchet directly over him, and drives him away from his breath. In this case he drowns in swimming a few rods, and the hunter cutting a hole in the ice, takes him out. Mink, otter, and beaver travel under the ice in the same way, and hunters have frequently told of taking otter in the manner described.

## Poetry.

### STARS.

The golden glow is paling between the cloudy bars;  
I'm watching for the twilight, to see the little stars.  
I wish that they would sing to-night, their song of long ago;  
If we were only nearer them, what might we hear and know!

Are they the eyes of angels, that always wake to keep  
A loving watch above us while we are fast asleep?  
Or are they lamps that God has lit, from his own glorious light.  
To guide the little children's souls whom he will call to-night?  
We hardly see them tremble in any summer night,  
But in the winter evenings they sparkle clear and bright.

Is this to tell the little ones, hungry, cold and sad,  
That there's a shining home for them, where all is warm and glad?

More beautiful and glorious, and never cold and far,  
Is He who always loves them,—the bright and Morning Star.  
I wish those little children knew that holy, happy light!  
Lord Jesus, since on them, I pray, and make them glad to night!

*Sacred Song for Little Singers.*

### THE OLD STORY.

"The sails are set and the breeze is up,  
And the prow is turned for a northward sea:  
Kiss my cheek and vow me a vow  
That you will ever be true to me!"

"I kiss your cheek, and I kiss your lips:  
Never a change this heart shall know,  
Whatever betide—come life, come death—  
Darling, darling, I love you so!"

Oh, but the northern nights are keen!  
The sailer clings to the frozen shrouds:  
A kiss burns hot through his dreams of home,  
And his heart goes south through the flying clouds.

The maiden laughs by the garden gate—  
Dreams of love are the soonest o'er!  
Kisses fall on her lips and hair,  
And the world goes on as it went before.

*—Lippincott's Magazine.*

### A SCHOOL GIRL OF THE PERIOD.

Geography? Yes, there's a lesson each day,  
But it's awfully hard to remember.  
We've been in South Africa nearly a month;  
Perhaps we'll go north by November.

What history have we? Its quite a big book,  
Without and pictures—the bother!  
To-day I was told I'd sustained a defeat  
In the battle of something or other!

Arithmetic? O, its the bane of my life!  
No matter how hard I may study,  
My knowledge of dividents, fractions and rules  
Continues unchangeably muddy.

Proficient in spelling? I hope that I am,  
Though I shine less as a writer than talker;  
And don't mind confessing how often I use  
A pocket edition of Walker.

I write composition? Of course, one a week—  
We've such a dull subject to-morrow!—  
I manage to spin out a page and a half,  
Though lots of girls copy and borrow.

You ask which lesson of all I prefer?  
You'll think my reply quite alarming;  
In French we've a *gentleman* teacher, you know,  
And somehow, it's perfectly charming!

*—Harper's Magazine.*