

Many days his involuntary voyage continued and he grew lean and weak from fasting. At last his icy craft grounded on a coast away south and Nennook hastened to land and seek long-withheld food. And the people of that country, soon discovering that some strange monster was preying on their flocks and herds, organized a hunt which ended the career of Nennook, the exile, erstwhile the great white terror of the north.

With the coming of spring the mother bear and her cubs forsook their cramped winter quarters. Long fasting had made the old one recklessly savage and she did not hesitate to attack even Aiviuk, the walrus, who with his mate and their little one sunned himself on a jutting point of ice. Nothing less than gnawing, compelling hunger and a mother's desire to provide food for her offspring could have made the bear forgetful of the terribly overwhelming odds against her in attacking a walrus family party. At her first onslaught the mother walrus hurriedly took her baby on her broad back and splashed with it into the safety of the water, but Aiviuk remained to fight the intruder on the ice.

The battle was a fierce one. But the white bear was no match for the walrus. True, she was incomparably more agile, but to what avail her speed and multiplied attacks when even her own sharp claws could not inflict serious injury on the thick,

tough hide of her adversary? There was no possibility of remaining at close quarters for any appreciable length of time, for Aiviuk, while clumsy enough in moving his huge bulk around, knew how to use his long curved tusks with promptitude and effect. And the lean, hungry bear was too worn with the winter's fasting to keep up the struggle long enough to hope to tire out the walrus. Sullenly she recognized her defeat and faced about to retreat to her cubs. It was too late. In the violence of their struggle Nennook's mate and Aiviuk had broken loose the narrow spur of ice whereon they fought and now it was far adrift from the main body of the floe. Meanwhile the noise of the conflict had brought many walrus to the scene and they hastened to assist their fellow. Some of the huge creatures sought to lever themselves on to the ice with their tusks, but the pan gave way under so much extra weight and in the water Nennook's mate speedily fell a victim to their unsparing rage.

### Extravagance

ALL extravagance may be divided into three classes—national, municipal, and personal. This is the season of the year when people are inclined to be extravagant, so that it is the proper moment for a sermon on the subject.

Municipal bodies and private persons usually choose the Christmas season to announce their extravagance. Ask an expert alderman of a Canadian city about money by-laws and he will tell you many strange things. He will undoubtedly say, "Never submit a money by-law between May and October. This is the non-spending season. What money people spend then is spent on themselves, mainly in holidays and summer amusements. The time to slip a money by-law past the people is between November first and February first. The great public is then in a jolly, good-natured, don't-care-a-hang mood, and 'the fool and his money are soon parted.'"

The Christmas season is also the time when the male human opens up his purse with the greatest readiness. There is an atmosphere of doing-good-and-being-generous everywhere. It is infectious, virulently so. The wife and the children recognize it and act accordingly. The store-keepers study it well and turn it to the utmost advantage. The hospitals appeal to the Christ-spirit and seldom appeal in vain. Even the beggar knows that at Christmas-time money is "easier."

As for national extravagance it knows no season. That is with us always—spring, summer, autumn and winter. The country spends millions as blithely as the individual spends quarters, because "millions" is a word of which none knows the real meaning.



## In the CHILDREN'S ROOM By Arthur Stringer



SINCE she has always been a child among Her children, speaking with their tongue, And telling o'er their tales, and making seem More true to life each little childish dream,

She at the last had murmured: "You must take My place with them, now, for the old time's sake."

SO he, that empty Christmas morning went, Up to the Children's Room, where she had spent Such joyous hours, such evenings intimate, Where still, it seemed, some ghost of her must wait. Then suddenly upon his spirit weighed A sense of want that left him half afraid Of all the vast house and its emptiness, Of all the ache his heart could not express.

HE, otherwise, unreconciled, austere, Combating all his grim world year by year, Had grown more cold, more scornful of his kind, And so, in toil, life's solace sought to find— A man who would not think, and could not wait, A lonely heart that built on work and hate, That sought the last but not the best of creeds, And in engulfing effort drugged its needs.

BUT in the Children's Room he stooped above The childish heads life gave scant time to love. Wide-eyed they studied him, and bravely then He struggled with the tears that iron men

Must seldom know, for, turning to the wall, There on three simple pictures chanced to fall His gaze, embittered with the ache Of all his unilluminated life's mistake.

THEY were the simple pictures She had told Strange stories of, above each head of gold, In angel evening hours and days of rain, Crooning the same tale o'er and o'er again, Until each listening child that 'round her knelt With her the beauty of the story felt— The simple history that day by day She softly told, and while she lulled away Some pressing tear, some momentary grief, She left them richer with a new belief— While he, torn with his century's disease Of restless doubt, sought never dreams like these!

ONE picture was of but a shepherd boy With gazing eyes and brow illumed with joy. His sheep he saw not, nor the wide gray waste Of mild Judean midnight, for he faced A star, a strange star in the eastern sky; And like a little wind there wandered by A breath of Peace, and o'er the troubled earth A new tranquility sighed into birth.

THE second picture showed a mother bent Above a new-born Child. She was not spent Nor worn, but gazed with ever wistful love Down on the Child. The lowly roof above Their heads was but a stable, yet the face Of him called Jesus filled that humble place With mystic glory, and the serried wings Of angels drooped to guard his slumberings.

THE last scene was that of the wise men low Before the Child. A wonder seemed to grow Upon them as they watched, and they fell prone Before the Infant as before a throne; And as the mother marveled, lo, on her They heaped their frankincense and gold and myrrh. (The wise men these, he mused, who saw afar And knew and understood their better star!)

WITH what was half self-hate and half regret The man on whom the fever and the fret Of life had left its ashes, slowly turned Back to his little children who had learned What he had lost. . . . Then to his vision came A picture like the first, yet not the same.

IT showed the Child of old with sorrows crowned: It showed a dusty cavalcade that wound By pool and rock and path, until, behold, From one high plain there suddenly unrolled The sun-bleached slopes, and on their heaving breast, In all its thousand-roofed and walled unrest, Jerusalem flashed back from tower and dome Judea's pride, the pomp that still was Rome! One dust-stained Man, with troubled eyes stood long And gazed on tower and wall and heard the song Of swarming street and life too feverish grown; And as he watched, in silence, and alone, Up o'er his brooding face a sorrow crept, And Christ, its Saviour, o'er the city wept!

AND strangely then the man who knew No child-like faith, his little children drew About his knee—"For surely on this day Christ is re-born," he murmured, "as you say!"