

Boys and Girls.

Cat's Cradle

"It's criss-cross high, and it's criss-cross flat; Then four straight lines for the pussy cat; Then criss-cross under; ah, now there'll be a deep cradle, dear grandpa! See!"

"Now, change again, and it's flat once more— A lattice window! But where's the door? Why, change once more, and holding it so, We can have a very good door, you know."

"Now over, now under, now pull it tight; See-saw, grandpa—exactly right!" So prattled the little one, grandfather's pet, As deftly she wrought. "See, now it's a net!"

"But where did you learn cat's cradle so well?" She suddenly asked, and he could not tell, He could not tell, for his heart was sore, As he gravely said, "I have played it before."

What could the sweet little maiden know Of beautiful summers long ago? Of the merry sports and the games he played, When "mamma" herself was a little maid?

What could she know of the thoughts that ran Through the weary brain of the world-worn man? But she knew, when she kissed him, dear grandpa smiled, And that was enough for the happy child.

—Mary Mapes Dodge.

The Charge of the Coldwater Guards.

(By Rev. E. A. Rand.)

"Attention, Company!" It was a voice of importance that gave this order, and six boys, each wearing a white ribbon on which the captain's sister had painted a device serving well as a fountain or a beehive, gave prompt and respectful attention.

"Coldwater Guards!" said pompous Captain Dave Fraser, "are you weapons all ready? Temperance soldiers must do something!"

Each boy here pulled out of his pocket a handful of temperance tracts.

"We are going to make a charge on Rough Alley, where a lot of drinking people live. We will break up when we get there, and one boy go on one side of the street, and another boy take the other side. Water Lane and Spring Lane we take, and—well, I'll tell you on which side two of you fellows will go and leave tracts."

"Captain Fraser," said Al Thurston, a fat, red-faced, blushing young knight, "when we get to Spring Lane, hadn't we better—well, we're waiting for a word of dignity, one equal to the occasion—hand't we better—unite—how that word tickled him—unite when we get to Spring Lane?" The blushing Lanerth they they'll lick up."

"Soldiers," replied Captain Fraser, with dignity, "we defy them!" "Good!" That's it!" Cap'n Dave will fix 'em!" were some of the expressions of delight greeting this historic challenge.

A mood of prudence, though, visited the bold captain.

"Perhaps, fellows, when we get to that Spring Lane corner, it might be well to bring our forces together."

"Yeth, yeth, bring our forthright together," said Al and—well, I'll tell you on which side two of you fellows will go and leave tracts."

As the Spring Laners had hard, dirty fists, this was thought wise.

"Now are we ready for the charge?" called out the captain. "Where are the colors?"

"Here is Snip," sang out Joe Stevens, a big boy.

A timid little fellow, with staring blue eyes and a nervous, apprehensive air, hidden behind the other boys, and carrying a small flag, here stepped forward.

"Samuel Peterson," said the captain impressively, addressing Snip, "you'll do your duty today. You keep near me! Charge, brave guards, charge!"

Away went the captain and his valiant six at a very lively rate, and soon were distributing temperance documents in the order prescribed by the captain. The color-bearer could not keep up with them. He wanted his glorious colors—a toy flag costing ten cents—to lead on to the advance, but in reality they decorated the rear, and quite a distant one.

"Oh, dear!" moaned Snip, making his short pipe-less gas as fast as possible. "There they go round the corner! N-n-n! Joe Beasley has gone in that store at the corner. I'm in the corner! I shall have somebody to keep company with."

It was Joe that went into the corner grocery to leave a tract, but, finding it was a rum-hole, prudently shot out of a door he saw ahead. This took him into a back yard. Climbing a low fence, he was in a lane that led him where the Coldwater Guards were still making their glorious advance, and at the same time closed with a big-eyed, pipe-legged Snip, his heart beating, his legs aching, entered the store where Joe had disappeared, but found nobody there. He saw, instead, a row of tall casks, two long benches, a long counter, and a variety of groceries on shelves back of the counter.

There was hardly a temperance smell to the place, and Snip at once was suspicious. His staring eyes traveled all round the place, and he started to go. He bravely resolved, though, he would do his duty.

"Why will you lose your soul?" Then he aimed at the entrance door, but a sudden gust of wind swept through the store, bringing a powerful anti-temperance odor to Snip's nose, and at the same time closed with a slam the very door by which he had entered. He went to it, but alas! it had a spring lock that held it fast, and the mysteries of this lock Snip could not master. He had heard another door unlock. Frantically he ran to it. It was that by which Joe had gone out, and another spring lock,

when Snip rushed to it, defied him there.

His heart went fast now. He was a prisoner, and caught in a rum-hole!

He had caught the name "Gridern" on a sign as he entered. He recalled it now as "Gridiron"—and what if the proprietor should now appear, a gridiron-red-hot, and charge him with trespassing—stealing, say—and propose to give Snip a toasting?

Snip trembled. What had he better do? He thought hard and fast.

The little color-bearer could do one thing, and it was something he was handy at. He could pray. It did not seem as if he could do anything else. He dropped down beside a bench and bowed his head, the flag of the Coldwater Guards half fallen out of his hands. Would't God make a way out of this rum-dungeon for Sammie Peterson? He made a way once for Peter, when he was in prison.

Simon Gridern, the rum-seller, had gone upstairs. Hearing those heavy door-slams, he started from the rooms where he and his wife lived to return to his dirty shop-haunts. Simon Gridern was not a bad man all through and through. He had not sold rum all ways. His wife Sallie, a praying, woman, often wondered why he sold rum at all.

It came about in this way. He once had a boy, a bright little fellow, Sammie. It was Sammie's body now fast asleep in the beautiful cemetery out-side the town. His soul was with God. It might have seemed as if that trouble would have taken Simon, the father, to God. Simon allowed it to take him the other way. He grew hard in his feelings. He thought God had wronged him. He grew careless in his business ways, and into his store were rolled the tall, ponderous rum-casks. But his feelings toward the sleeping little body of his boy remained ever tender. As his business increased, the lot in the cemetery grew more and more beautiful. The store grew dirtier and darker, the rum-casks multiplying; the cemetery lot, though, was brighter in its decorations of flowers. A sign of Simon's prosperity in rum-selling was the more and more tasteful appearance of the grounds around Sammie's grave. Recently Simon had placed there a beautiful little form of white marble. Simon was very proud of that statue.

I seem to see it in my dreams," he often told himself.

He told this to his wife Sallie. She said nothing outwardly. Within she thought: "I wish that 'ere Prayin' Sammie, which he sees in his sleep might frighten him into bein' a better man."

Simon Gridern was now coming down the stairs leading from his house to his store. He came very softly slipped, and his creaking feet made no noise. When he entered the store he saw Snip.

"I'll go softly. Mebbe a thief is here."

"But what was it—the white object he saw on a bench? He stooped, picked it up, and read: 'Why will you lose your soul?'"

He started and shook his head. At first he thought he would throw this pestiferous piece of paper out into the back yard. In one corner, though, he saw the word "Sammie," and he knelt down and kissed it.

But what did this softly-stepping man see next? He drew back at the sight of a little fellow in a white blouse and duck pants, kneeling.

"Why, that's the kneelin' Sammie in the cemetery," murmured Simon. The kneeling figure stirred now and looked up in awe to see a big, red-faced man staring, and holding up his hands.

"W-h-why?" gasped Simon, firing off a battery of questions. "Who is this? What you here for? What you doin'? What is your name?" "Sammie."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Simon, as if he had been struck again and again. He was thinking of the eyes, just like those of his Sammie, but closed now, in the cemetery.

The soldier belonging to the Coldwater Guards was frightened, but he was of just the stuff martyrs are made of, and he got up and tremblingly handed out another tract, "Why will you lose your soul?"

Sammie must, as one of the Coldwater Guards, make his charge. Simon sank back upon the bench nearest him.

"Oh, oh," he gasped, "what—you—want—here?"

The little color-bearer, still trembling, told of the work of the Coldwater Guards.

"But what were you doin' when I came down here?"

"I was prayin' for you, sir."

"If it don't stir me up, and make me feel I ought to be a better man, tryin' to make people temperance people—are ye?" "Well, I know I ought—"

"Oh—do!" broke in a tearful voice.

It was Simon's wife, Sallie, who had followed him downstairs, seeing and hearing everything.

The rum-seller was all broken down, and there, in his rum-den, he vowed he would lead a better life.

Soon, nailed to the door, appeared a shingle bearing this announcement, "Coldwater Guards, Reformed."

When the shop was opened, the tall rum-casks had disappeared; the dirty loafing-benches had gone; new innocent goods were everywhere, and so bright was the store after a vigorous scrubbing and cleaning.

The stockkeeper had been cleaned out, too. So much for the charge of a small soldier in the Coldwater Guards!—The Sunday School Times.

A Sacrifice of Little Red Shoes. It was William Durry who found Miss Lorne's fur cape and got the \$2 in reward. She said she did not consider it quite upright to take rewards, it was too much like a price for being honest. Not that she grudged the two dollars, she was merely stating a principle. Durry did not see it in that light. He was glad he found the cape, glad he had overcome the tendency to the pawn shop with it, and glad about the two dollars. Two dollars at once and about Christmas time and outside of the money one gets for carrying trunks, is no small item. Durry was a member of the "one lung brigade," in a city of refuge for pulmonary complaints, and he had found relief, but he had also found that man can not live by bread alone. And there was so little to do in Chicago there was

work. You had to "hustle," and you can't "hustle" very well with one lung, but it paid. It supported a family.

It was the week before Christmas that the cape was found, or the two dollars. It was the dollars that interested Durry; though he admired the cape and his wife had not resisted an inclination to try it on, over her call. It snuggled her neck and gave her a sudden sensation of comfort she had not felt since she left the region of high wages and base-burners for a warm climate. But the children wanted something, and she turned away. There was no white-faced cripple in the chair by the window whose large eyes won smiles from the passer-by. This is not that kind of a Christmas story. There were no appetites in this family that needed tempting, quite the contrary; they were young and hearty and played out of doors all day, these appetites did, and they didn't need caviare, they were glad of a round steak.

Mrs. Durry caught up the baby, and then it was that she made the remark again about the little shoes. The baby was old enough to walk, and about four hours Mrs. Durry observed that she must get down town and get some shoes for the baby so he could stand alone; his little ankles turned so in his bare feet. She did not admit openly that there was a question of expense, she remembered the good living Durry had always made before he had the lung trouble, and she knew he did the best he could now. So she mended and made over and made things "do" because she could not see to get down town.

Not because there was too little in the shabby old pocket-book to make the long walk worth while.

When Durry got the two dollars he thought of Christmas. The two big silver dollars gave him a good buzz. At any rate something did, it may only have been his ideas. It was then he saw the little red tasseled shoes in a window. There was something all about them that made him want them. He thought of the baby's little shoes, for he priced them and made sure there were plenty in stock—were just a dollar. Durry felt fine. He put off the actual purchase as a delight that with judicious handling would last several days. He smiled to himself, he estimated sizes of babies' feet, he dropped remarks about the baby's power of pedestrianism. He did not mention the two dollars, though he increased having in the pocket-cape. He said it was hard to hold in altogether. He said he did not think they could afford the baby's shoes just now. Durry had pride, and did not, as a rule, waste words on the pecuniary situation.

Then came the day before Christmas, the day of the day before Christmas, as the sun went down, and Durry buttoned up his coat. He had the sunny corner of the street, and during the day he had never been cold again. That is the way with the California climate, and it works you every time. The best rule is, not to take a wrap when you go out of a chilly morning and always to take one when you start out in the hot afternoon. Never! It was hard to hold in altogether that the day was practically over, and that he could do his shopping and get home a little early. He wished he had not said quite so much at home, and he could only hope they had not understood and that his Christmas plans would be truly a surprise.

He unclasped the hitching strap and with each eye he caught sight of that old Hooker came across. His express wagon stood on the other side and the men sometimes exchanging chevas. Hooker cleared his throat and "Good evening, Durry," he said. He looked pale and thin, and his horse was not too well fed. The Durrys, one and all, prided themselves on a comfortable-looking horse. Finally Hooker, after watching operations to get under way, said, "Well, Durry, gettin' a little late for the day before Christmas."

He couldn't help the little Christmas note in his voice.

"Well, I felt like gettin' home," said Hooker. "I'm sorter down on my luck, and I'm afraid they ain't much to get out of it. Fact is, they ain't any thing to get out of, and I hate to ask it, Durry, but I wouldn't let me have a dollar for over Christmas."

Durry blushed, and he knew how he needed, and Durry had surmised hard times for them before. He felt in his pocket for the silver dollars and took them out. He counted them over, but he didn't see it; to him the piece in his hand was a pair of little red shoes. He tried to remember just what he hoped that he hadn't been rash; and had given his family reason to expect a Christmas dinner, and that of course he couldn't do that.

Hooker took the money with perceptible relief; and Durry tried to feel glad he could accommodate him. Then he wished that business would just rush till late so that he could not have been so late. He counted the money, but he was the trouble all around; business had not rushed for months not since he had been able to do anything and he turned homeward.

This is all Christmas passed and they made the most they could of it. It was in the family all right, but there was an indefinite lack yet no one knew where to place it. Durry did, Durry hardly touched the baby but he knew the money was there. A fortune he will still remember that her babyhood passed without that pair of little red shoes.—The Interior.

The Goblins and the Fairies. Oh, Peterkin Pout, and Gregory Groul.

Are two little goblins black! Full of fun from my house I've driven them out.

But somehow they will come back. They clamber up to the baby's mouth. He can't see them, but he can hear them. They perch about on the baby's brow, And twist it into a frown.

And one says "Shall!" and t'other says "Spant!"

Oh, Peterkin Pout and Gregory Groul, I pray you, now, from my house keep out!

But Samuel Smite and Lemuel Laush And two little fairies light. They're always ready for fun and chaff.

And sunshine is their delight. And when they creep into baby's eyes, Why, there the sunbeams are; And they're deep through her rosy lips.

Her laughter rings near and far. And one says "Please!" and t'other says "Do!"

And both together say, "I love you!" So Samuel Smite and Lemuel Laush, Come in, my dears and carry a white.

—St. Nicholas.

C. P. VILLIERS, "Father of the British House of Commons," recently celebrated his 94th birthday. He enjoys good health and his interest in politics is as keen as ever. He has just entered upon his 61st year of Parliament. He was born in Wolverhampton in January, 1835. Previously, in 1826, he had contested Hull.

With the Poets.

LEAN HARD.

"Child of my love, lean hard; And let me feel the pressure of thy care."

I know thy burden, child; I shaped it—Poised it in mine own hand—made no proportion Of its weight to thine unaided strength;

For even as I laid it on, I said— I shall be near; this burden shall be mine.

So shall I keep my child in the encircling arms Of mine own love. Here lay it down, nor fear To lean it on a shoulder which upholds The government of worlds. Yet closer come—

Thou art not near enough; I would embrace thy care, So I might feel thy child reposing on my breast.

Thou lovest me? I know it. Doubt not, then, But, loving me, lean hard."

ADESTE FIDELES.

This is that Holy Night—O World, be still— Surely, if we but listen we shall hear That Song that all the luminous dark could not hush.

The Choir of Angels chanting soft and clear, "Glory to God and on the Earth Good-will!"

Now with the eager Shepherd let us run Across the starlit plains, 'mid shadows dim, To that poor shelter where the Mother Ere break of day her first-born glorious Son

Within a narrow crib adoring laid, Because His people found no rest for O mighty Love, that we require so ill, How often wilt Thou deign to seek Thine own, Who give thee here manger for Thy throne!

Come all ye Faithful—let us watch a space; Mary and Joseph will for us make That we may look on Him whose radiant face

Like some fair flower in all its lovely bloom, With light and glory fills this lowly place.

Lo! we have traveled from a country far, Through years of failure, deserts sad and wild, And even as of old, came Eastern Kings, With costly treasures, led here by Thy Star.

We, too, would bring Thee our poor offerings, O Word Incarnate! Bethlehem's Holy Child, Accept our gifts and us of Thy great grace.

Myrrh of our Sorrows, Frankincense for Faith, And Gold for Love that is more strong than Death!

—Christian Burke.

THE CHANGELESS STARS. That self-same stars are in the sky, That shone when I was young and die, Unchanged in place not one can die, In heaven's high archway swung.

All else we know becomes so strange, Forests and fields are fled, In heaven alone there is no change, The same light's overhead.

Our house may crumble and decay, Men, things will disappear, Like loving hearts stars send a ray Eternal, steadfast clear.

The sky is like parental love; However far we roam, One brooding ray is still above To draw us toward our home.

So near, yet far, each silent star With earth can sympathize, As though good spirits blended are Forever with the skies.

I wander among mountain peaks, Through deserts vast and drear, Each star serene to me it speaks I follow without fear.

I sail across the ancient sea, The stars come out and beckon me Toward home and native land.

Mathematics when the earth shall fade, The shining stars will not deceive The homing dove that flies.

—Geo. M. Kellogg, in the Interior.

IN THE ARCTIC REGION.

Everybody Has a Big Appetite and Driks Gallons of Oil.

"I hear everybody kicking about the cold weather this morning," said a big man, without an overcoat, this morning. "Here I am too warm in cotton underwear, and everybody else shivering in all kinds of wraps."

Strange, but ever since I came from the polar regions it seems to me that when the mercury is anywhere above zero, the birds should be singing and the men in bloomers should be out.

"My appetite here is no stronger than any other man's. I do not eat more than any man of my bulk, but I give you my word that while I was on march in the north my daily rations were sixteen pounds of blubber and a gallon of whale oil. I have seen Lieut. Peary drink half a gallon of whale oil at one draught. The capacity of the Esquimaux for food is past belief, judged from what a white man will eat in New York."

We had two big natives in our party who seemed never to get enough to eat, although there was unlimited provisions, and Peary concluded to test them. We had been on a hard, long march, and everybody was near famished when we went into camp. Peary thought the time had come to see how much those men could eat. He ordered them to build a snow hut for their own use, where he could keep tabs on them. He put them into it, and gave them 100 pounds of blubber and 40 pounds of tallow. Twenty-four hours later we took out the block of snow which served for the hut's door. There were the two fellows asleep, and not an ounce of blubber or tallow visible. That's a fact, as sure as I live."

"I shall never forget a Christmas eve I passed in an Esquimaux hut, and that I had with an Esquimaux baby—a fun about 2 years old. He was stark naked, standing on a deer-skin by the fire, and he was the most grotesque-looking brownie imaginable, for he was all stomach. I cut a thin strip of blubber, about an inch wide, and put

the end of it in his mouth. He rolled his round eyes and began to chew. I knew it wouldn't hurt him, and I continued to feed it into his mouth and out more blubber, until, I promise you, I had fed that young one, by actual measurement, sixteen feet of blubber. Now, what do you think of that? And it's true, too."—New York Mail and Express.

Floral Hints and Helps.

Flowers on the Table—Consulting the Note Book—Looking Ahead.

(By Narcissus, for the "Advertiser.") Fill soft and deep, O winter snow! The sweet Azalea's oaken dells, And hide the bank where roses blow And where swine azure bells.

O'erlay the amber violet's leaves. The purple aster's brookside home, Guard all the flowers nature gives A life beyond their bloom.

—Whittier.

It is gratifying to see how general the custom is becoming of placing flowers on the table at meal times. Nothing gives a more dainty finish to a well-spread table than a few flowers placed carefully in a vase so that they may droop gracefully in their own sweet way. It is noticeable, too, that most people are beginning to find out that the leaves belonging to the flower suit it better than any other; and that a few flowers loosely arranged so as to look as natural as possible is far prettier than the old style of packing a great quantity together in a stiff bouquet that looks more artificial than real. The simpler the arrangement the better. A bright colored vase should never be used, as it calls attention to the receptacle rather than the flowers; plain clear glass, or some unobtrusive neutral color that will harmonize with the foliage is best. A very small expenditure at the florist's will enable one to have some kind of flower on the table all the time. They are such wonderful peacemakers and general promoters of joy and happiness that it is a misfortune to be without their gentle influence.

NOTING PAST FAILURES. In the comparative leisure time of winter, when we have no work to do out of doors, it is well to bring out the note book and see where we made mistakes last year, and lay out our plans for the coming season. Any plants or seeds that did not prove satisfactory or suitable to our particular needs should be avoided in the future. Those that were a success should be put down in the list of "must haves" for this year. The spring catalogues will soon be here, and all their tempting display of novelties. We need to be careful in sticking to those varieties we know something about. If we noticed anything new in our friend's garden we might set it down on our list for this season. Study the floral magazines, there are so many of them now, and they are so cheap and we may get no other of most valuable hints from them.

A FEW HANGING BASKETS may be started this month, and these are very handy if we are short of shelf room. Avoid shallow baskets; they dry out quickly, and the plants they contain get root-bound. If you have nothing more suitable, use an ordinary flower pot with saucer attached. This can easily be suspended by binding round it some picture wire one inch from the top. The Kenilworth Ivy, with a small fascia of the winter blooming kind for a center makes a lovely combination. The "Wandering Jew," either plain or variegated, with a begonia as a center, has a pretty effect. The winter blooming Oxalis is always satisfactory and looks graceful anywhere. I have one growing in half a cocoanut shell which looks quite dainty. Any of these planted now will grow right along and give ample pleasure before now and the time for out-door work in the spring.

The Land of Vampires. British Guiana is celebrated for its vampires. All travelers in these regions and other parts of South America have borne testimony to the appalling activity of the vampires, and the word has, in our own and other languages, become proverbial for human bloodsuckers. The true vampire bat is widely distributed over the tropical and sub-tropical parts of Central and South America, from Oaxaca to Southern Brazil and Chili, and it was no doubt with this species that Charles Waterton had a whole novel experience. "I had often wished," he wrote, "to have been sucked by the vampire, in order that I might have it in my power to say that I had really been peeped to me. There can be no pain in the operation for the patient is always asleep when the vampire is sucking him; and for the loss of a few ounces of blood, that would be a trifle in the strange, but ever since I came from the polar regions it seems to me that when the mercury is anywhere above zero, the birds should be singing and the men in bloomers should be out."

Only His Clothes. An excellent story is told of Sir Henry Irving concerning one of his early visits to the Irish capital. He was acting a part which required his appearance on the stage early in the first act. Now the Dublin gallery boy is an institution by himself. There is nothing like him anywhere else. Conversations between the two sides of the gallery are spoken in loud tones, and in the distinct hearing of the actors. Sir Henry is, as everyone knows, very thin, and when he appeared with the stride which is one of his marked characteristics, one of these gallery boys shouted across to another. "Say, an' is that him?" "No," was the disgusted reply, "them is the young man's clothes; they'll shove him out later on."

An Expansive Mind. There were visitors at the school and a class was examined. "Now," said the teacher, "can you tell me anything about heat?" A small boy held up his hand. "Well, sir," said the teacher, "Heat expands; cold contracts." "Very good. Now give us an example." In summer the days are long; in winter the days are short." Great applause by the visitors, and the small boy takes his seat.

A Smile—A Laugh.

He—Give me a kiss, won't you? She—(hesitatingly)—Well, I will, if you don't give it away.

She—Why does a woman take a man's name when she gets married? He—Why does she take everything else he has?

The most absent-minded man in the world has been found in Geneva, N. Y. He went to his telephone the other day in one of his abstracted moments and rang himself up.

Morton—Strange happening at the police station this morning. Morton—What was it? Morton—Deaf and dumb man arrested and given a hearing.

Proud Father—This is a sunset my daughter painted. She studied painting abroad, you know. Friend—Ah! That explains it. I never saw a sunset like that in this country.

Teacher—Why are you late at school? Boy—The streets are so slippery I couldn't walk. Teacher—I didn't find them so. Boy—No-o, maybe not. You see, I graced my soles so I could slide.

In a rural school in Warwick township, one day last summer, the second class were asked, "Who is the greatest man in Canada?" One little bright-eyed girl replied promptly: "Uncle Joshua."

"I've been looking for my husband for the last two hours," said an agitated widow to a caller. "Don't be excited, madam," replied the latter. "I've been looking for a husband for the last 25 years."

Good old lady, to her nephew, a poor preacher—"James, why did you enter the ministry?" "Because I was called," he answered. "James, said the old lady, anxiously, as she looked up from wiping her spectacles, 'are you sure it wasn't some other noise you heard?'"

"The sun never sets on England's dominions," remarked the boasting Britisher.

"England reminds me of an old hen," responded the Yankee.

"Why?" demanded the Britisher, angrily.

"A hen's son never sets, either."

VICTORIA'S DESCENDANTS. She Is the Only English Sovereign to Have a Great-Grandchild.

A laborious genealogist announces as the result of years of minute labor that the Queen has had nine children, of whom she has lost two; 41 grandchildren, of whom eight have died; and 23 great-grandchildren, all of whom are living.

She has, therefore, 63 descendants living—27 children, 41 grandchildren, and 23 of the next generation.