Weekly Colonist.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1886.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

Centuries ago on this day in Bethlehem of Judea a spectacle was presented which filled the hearts of all the beholders with holy joy. The scene was a lowly stable where it was ordained from all time that the Christ should be born. The picture was the Virgin and Joseph with the newly born Jesus, who was to be the Saviour of mankind. All the incidents of that wondrous birth are so realistic, and withal so beautiful, as they are presented to us in the Bible as to form a grand poem which has rolled down the centuries unequalled by any which the greatest song writers of the world have breathed. In spirit, as we read the marvellous record of that auspicious event, we go back with the angels who heralded the nativity and see Mary and Joseph, and the Magi with their offerings of gold and frankinsence and myrrh, adoring Him who was to be the Light of the World. The earth was glad that day, and sweet peace was ordained for the world. It was a merry day, too, a glad Christmas tide. Why should it not have been? Why should not the children of men be joyous when He who was to take away the sins of the world beamed upon it in all His Innocency and glory? Why should they not be happy when their Redeemer, for whom they had looked so long, had come to bring them the glorious message of salvation? It was a right merry day, and we can well imagine that the sun shone brightly and that all nature smiled at the coming of the blessed Babe. It has been a merry day ever since. It never grows old, and never will until time shall be no more. In sacred shrines to-day the "Gloria in Excelsis" will be chanted with the same reverence and the same heartfelt joy as it was so many centuries ago, for to offer glory to God has never ceased since that first Christmas day to be duty as well as as the delight of men. Dear old Christmas! What a mystical spell is wreathed around the world! What reunions there will be throughout the land to-day! The children's smiling faces will tell of the never failing visit of Santa Claus. The jolly old fellow will never die—he has quaffed the elixir of life, and lives only to do good. This is a day for casting off dull care. There is no place for it in the homes of the people. It is to-day an out-cast and will find no breathing place while Christmas lasts. The grandsire sits to day smiling at the head of the ample board, around which are gathered the happy family, gathered in from all quarters, and the old story of the "Hanging of the crane," is again re-enacted. The thousand Christmas delights will be enjoyed to-day and hearts will be made glad everywhere. Severed friendships should to-day be re-united, and "Peace on earth, good-will to men" be the watchword of all. And when seated around the fireside, when the curtains are drawn, and fun and frolic run riot, let there be a thought for the poor and the lonely, and let blessed charity have full sway. A merry Christmas to all! May the day be one of the keenest pleasure, of whole-souled good cheer and rollicking merriment! To all our readers we extend the compliments of the season, and wish for them many happy returns of the day.

SECESSION AND BLAKE.

The liberals have found a panacea for Nova Scotia ills. Mr. Blake is to bring the wandering lamb back into the fold in that dim future when he shall be returned to power. When the Fielding party, as the Montreal Star says, opened the secession campaign in Nova Scotia they evidently did not take into account the complications into which it would lead them. True, it carried them into power as the Riel agitation did for Mr. Mercier in the province of Quebec. But, like the Riel agitation, it furnished a favorite, and to a great extent, justifiable text for the conservatives to raise a cry against their opponents of race and disruption. Edward Blake and the liberal party of Canada were held responsible for the wild schemes of their allies in the lower province. The silence which gave consent has at last been broken. The Hon Mr. Anglin, who was speaker of the Dominion commons during McKenzie's liberal administration, speaking at Halifax, it may be inferred with Mr. Blake's full sanction and approval, made the following important statement:

> While Ontario liberals sympathized with any grievances Nova Scotia had, they preferred that the province should remain in the confederation, and Mr. Blake, if he came into power, would remove all grievances and make it easy for Nova Scotia to stay in. The liberals would not stand on the dignity of the country, but would obtain reciprocity with the United States, for where there was a will there was a way. They would sweep away the national policy and rearrange tax tion, although it would be impossible to reduce it, increase subsidies to all the older provinces to meet present needs, and have the new arrangement sanctioned by the imperial government as a final settlement. He believed the liberals would attain power next election, and that five years hence the repeal cry would not be heard in all the land. But if the tories were again returned, heaven help this unfortunate country.

This then is the liberal panacea for Nova Scotia's ills. It is an ambitious programme, and Mr. Blake is promising a great deal when he is pledged to remove all grievances. Under present circumstances, too, it would take more than a wave of the hand to sweep away the national policy. A reciprocity treaty would be a great advantage, but the United States will have something to say in that matter, and from its past attitude the outlook is not by any means hopful. But at all events, however much the feasibility of the remedies suggested may be disputed, it is at least satisfactory to have a clear and precise statement of the liberal policy. The electorate can now form some kind of an idea of how the question stands, and having heard both sides be in a position to decide which policy will be most to the country's advantage. The liberals appear to be sanguine of gaining office at the forthcoming election, but it strikes us that it would be just as wise to restrain this natural ardor and to refrain from such effusions as that with which Mr. Anglin closed his remarks. "Heaven help this unfortunate country if the tories are again returned." This unfortunate country, we believe, will go ahead whether the tories or grits are in office. In a great many cases it is about six of one and a half a-dozen of the other.

The Practical Side.

TO THE EDITOR:—I read in your contemporary a few days ago that he was opposed to sewerage because it would never pay the interest on the money invested. I am a ratepayer and own a house and lot. I have a privy in the rear of the dwelling. I have been three years lacking two months in my present residence. The privy has been cleaned twice during that time at a cost to me of $32.50. The lot on which the house stands has a frontage of sixty feet. Had the frontage scheme been adopted I would have paid just $18, instead of $32.50, besides having had every particle of kitchen slops carried off without further cost or endangering the health of my family. I am for underground drainage first last and all the time. I never lived in a town before that did not have it. C. R.

HOPPITY'S CHRISTMAS BLESSING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DOLLY'S GOLDEN SLIPPER'S," ETC.

"Well, Hoppity, what makes yer so dumpish?" asked a scarecrow of a lad of ten or twelve, taking his stand at a certain crossing, with his wares, which happened to be Lent lillies—the pretty, yellow-coated daffodils of the country, where the spring breezes were romping and making merry the livelong day.

But in smoky, shadowy, many-sided London, the winds swept around street corners with a keenness which meant more than mirth. Hoppity and he who addressed him shivered in theirscanty garments. Hoppity was a pitiful mite of deformity, impotence, and puniness, leaning on a crutch, with a shoulder which told what the crutch had done for him; but rejoicing in the office of crossing-sweeper. if that was anything in which to rejoice.

At any rate, his wan, worn face was not at all jubilant this morning; it certainly was, as his companion expressed it, dumpish and sorrowful.

"Don't yer know?" responded Hoppity, leaning on his broom, his arm on his supporting crutch, and scanning with sad-eyed pride a scrap of crape tied around his sleeve.

"No—yer don't mean to say some of yer folks have gone and died?" quoth the other blankly,

"I do—mother's gone." Hoppity's eyes filled with tears—beautiful tears they were—all tender thoughts seemed ever to be crowding in their grey depths.

"And the kids?"

"Oh! them comes to me."

Poor Hoppity!

"As a *legacy*?" said the other comically.

"Oh! don't *larf*, Tom," pleaded Hoppity, pathetically.

"I ain't a-larfin, I'm a-sympathisin' with yer, as the swells say."

At this juncture Tom had a grand stroke of business to attend to, a family of sunny-haired girls coming up, and each buying a bunch of his flowers; while their mamma dropped a penny into sad-eyed Hoppity's palm, as he bowed his best bow, and stood aside in waiting. Trade seemed slack with him, now those dry, harsh breezes were come; sloppy, slushy weather was the time when people remembered the poor crossing-sweepers. Well, all trades and crafts have their ebb as well as their flood-tides.

"There are three, aren't they—and one a werry little kiddy?" asked Tom, after this.

"Yes, she's three month's old," spoke Hoppity, with the grave air of a precise mother.

"And where are the blessin's now?" queried Tom, disposing of another bunch of flowers, and returning to the subject, with the jaunty air of a good salesman.

"Ay, blessin's they are—that's what mother called 'em when she was alive, and I'd like to keep up the name," returned Hoppity, as if speaking to himself.

"Well, and where are them?" asked Tom again.

"At home; I locked 'em in."

"How do yer know so much?" queried Tom; and no wonder, for there, coming up behind them, were the identical *kiddies*, as Tom put it, the elder toiling along as best she could under the weight of the three-months-old baby.

Two ill-clad laddies of five and three, though with a touch of genteel poverty about them. The baby was wrapped in an old woolen shawl, on the corners of which her nurse stepped perilously, every few steps. And the miniature little woman was using her lungs, too; such pettish screams issued from the enfolding shawl, as they came toddling up to Hoppity from behind.

"Well, well, my head never does save my heels; now I thought I locked that door, and I didn't!" ejaculated Hoppity, as the weakling of a nurse dropped his charge from sheer weariness at his brother's feet.

"She wouldn't keep quiet, nohow, Hoppity," pleaded the culprit in excuse for his presence there, while his brother picked up the small, ruffled bundle in the shawl, scarce knowing which was head and which foot thereof. And didn't she scream, in spite of Hoppity's "Hush-a-by, hush-a-by," and croonings over her, after the manner of an old, accustomed nurse!

"Now, I should slap that temper out of her, if I had her," remarked Tom.

"No, you wouldn't," dissented new-comer number one.

"I should; and you into stayin' at home with the ugly little nuisance."

"She ain't ugly," snapped the undaunted tongue.

"She is—she's as ugly as—as my grandmother."

At this astounding assertion both wee brothers ejaculated "Oh!" and Hoppity answered with mock indifference—

"That's all yer knows about it."

It truly was no fair specimen of babyhood; its cheeks were a trifle too hanging and flabby, its eyes of a pale, watery blue, its mouth not at all the cooing little rosebud such as rapturous mothers rejoice over. But then, its setting of garments was so poor and unbecoming; and fine feathers make fine birds, as all the world allows, so the truism ought to extend to babies.

"Binie, Binie," chirped the fond brother over the motherless wailer, while Tom disposed of his daffodils with the air of one who neither saw, heard, nor owned acquaintance with the bevy standing on his beat, as he termed the spot where they were.

"Well, I shall hook it, if this 'ere's to be the game every day," averred he, ungraciously enough, after a lady asked him, to his utter disgust, if those were his brothers and sister there.

"Well, I'm sorry to put yer out; still, this was my crossin' long afore yer took to it as yer corner; I'm a-thinking as 'twere I as interduced yer here," spoke Hopperty, with spirit. Then shouldering his crutch as best he could with that refractory baby, who would persist in crying, giving the elder of the two wee laddies his broom, he beat a retreat to No. 9, toy room in Giles's Court, where they nestled, and called the poor place home.

"'Twere better in mother's days, and better still in father's days," often sighed Hoppity, with regret over their fallen fortunes, the burden and heat of which were well-nigh too much for him. Father's days were the happy dream-life spent in the country, before that mania seized the fickle bread-winner which sent him to London. Poor little Hoppity was Jemmy then, and the hurt to his poor twisted leg happened during the latter days of his stay there; that depressing sobriquet was what the city gave him, till his poor toiling mother called him by it, and almost forgot his other name.

"Well, father came up and got lost—mother never could find him, when she came after; and, whiles after, Binie was born—called Binie after a young lady mother knew in the country. Folks said 'twere Binie killed her—her and hard work—but 'tweren't that; 'twere her cryin' all night, and eatin' nothink in the day, as did it. Old Sally Green said 'twere like burnin' a candle at both ends, cryin' by night, and eatin' nothink by day; and that's why she went off so sudden. No, she weren't ill—but just pined a day or two, and then died."

"'Mind and be honest, and not take nor keep what isn't your own, and mind and look to Binie and the laddies, and say "Our Father," mornin' and night, 'cause He is your Father—them's her last words."

Thus Hoppity was wont to tell the story of what had been in his life, his sweet grey eyes a marvel of tender, wistful lights. Times went "bobbish" with him, he confessed, though, to one or two of his contemporaries in age and occupation. These three mites entrusted to him by his mother were a dead weight to his getting on in life, said the outside world, and advised him to consign them to the workhouse till time looked up a little.

"What! put little Binie, the *beautifulest* little *angel* as ever wanted nursin', into the workhouse—no, not her, the Prairie Flower," was his protest.

Ah! well, t is thus the palm of beauty is accorded; half the subtile glamor, if not more, lying in the eyes of the beholder, as some far-seeing people own. And thus the poor cling together, love leading noble spirits from among the waifs and strays of gutter life, to play their part so loyally and well that surely the angel who joyed over the birth of that pattern Child of so long ago and of to-day, must touch their harps anew, seeing the pitiful up-stretching hands reaching after a higher estate. Many an errand did Hoppity and his crutch run; ay, once and again he held a horse so carefully and well, that the owner rewarded him with a double fee; and then he ran with "*newses*," as he said. "Oh, a Jack-of-all-trades I be," he averred, with a blitheness which surely comes as a compensation to such weaklings as he.

Thus he fared, all through the first radiant summer-time of his hand-to-hand fight for his "little 'uns," as he called them, His needle work was his worst trouble, if anything relating to Binie and the boys were accounted as such by him. He was bound to keep his place at his crossings at all times and seasons, or another would step into it; and a lucrative post it was, seeing clerks, "swells," and business men generally, came that way, he would have told you, and liked to go neat-footed to their offices. Well, he was obliged to be abroad, doing this and that, during the day; then there was washing and drying to be done of evenings—of course he was not an adept at clear-starching; still, he did what he could. But to patch and mend by the light of a dip candle, of an evening, was beyond his powers; it generally ended in his falling asleep, he, his work, and the candle, coming to grief together, to the rousing up of Tod and Jep, and that self-assertive small maiden, Binie. So, in the hot, fervid days of summer, he took his needle-work with him to the crossing, with Binie and the two lads—the latter to catch the spirit of street-faring life.

"Well, Mother Hubbard, how's the cupboard gettin' on?" questioned that Tom whose speech began our story, one fair autumn morning, when the harvest of the sweeper was coming on, with cold nights and mornings. and radiance and hazy beauty holding sway in park, square, and even in grimy alley.

"Oh! that's all right, thank ye," spoke Hoppity, cheerily, stitching away at a nether garment of Tod's, Binie in his lap. A very refractory young damsel was she this morning, now reaching up for a handful of her nurse's hair, now cooing and trying to nibble the very needle in his deft fingers.

"'Tis all along of her teeth," exclaimed Hoppity, as his friend laughed, and called her a young monkey.

"Why, ye're gettin' a real old 'oman, with yer sewin', and yer babbies, and knowing all about teeth and that," was the boy's rather slighting remark.

"Well, a old 'oman ain't half a bad thing," returned Hoppity.

"Well, I ain't a lookin' to the bad or the good, I'm lookin' at the fun of the thing—why, ye're the larfin' stock of the place," quoth Tom.

True; for a party of careless schoolboys were trooping past in hot haste at the moment, but found time to titter at our poor hero.

"Well, let them *larf* as loses; them as wins 'll be sure to *larf*; and I'm the winner, for 'twill save me a sight of expense a-sewin' the little 'uns garments together."

Thus spoke the brave little heart; thus he felt—there are no limits to love, true love, such as his. He could but be cheerful, and hope that the winter fight for a living would not be harder than the summer fight had been. Ah, me! cold, wet, blustering days set in, quite a sweeper's harvest; but that little despot Binie would not be left within doors; if she were, she screamed herself ill, and her fat cheeks seemed to shrink away, her pale blue eyes, so beautiful to the brother, became leaden—and, dear, dear! Tod and Jep owned to slapping her, she cried so. Thus, the boy took her out, wrapped in the old shawl, and did his best to nurse and sweep too; perching her down, when his arms waxed too weary and aching for endurance, in his old corner, where he used to sit. Ay, once he left her there, when the funds were low, to run the length of the street on an errand, his heart quaking with fear all the time, lest on his return he should find the mite stolen. No, the little bundle was all right—but, ah me! this life was never intended for babies; at any rate, it did not suit Binie. She caught a severe cold, which threatened hard to change to bronchitis; and so Hoppity found himself compelled to remain for hours together in the old garret, nursing her back to convalescence.

A whole week he was absent from his crossing, and when, one wet, slushy day, he returned to it, from sheer starvation, lo, and behold! Tom was in his place and refused to abdicate. He even came to jostling poor, positive Hoppity, whom necessity would not allow to be vanquished and ousted thus; but a gentleman proved his champion, seeing how fast the lame boy was going to the wall.

"Come, hands off!" cried he, as Tom sent Hoppity reeling. "What's the grievance?" And Hoppity told him.

"No, Master Tom, this is the other boy's crossing, by the right of long possesson; and if you dare molest him, I'll call in the police to settle it," threatened he, giving Hoppity the accustomed penny, and glancing back when far up the street, to see how matters were standing.

"I'll be even with yer; I'll steal your precious Binie," was supplanter Tom's threat.

"No, no, yer won't," averred Hoppity good-humoredly, "'cause yer wouldn't think her worth stealing; and I'd not mind so much givin' up to yer about the crossin', if 'tweren't for the stravin' little 'uns."

Hoppity was very down-hearted to-day. Starvation is a most depressing evil, fight with it as he might, and, somehow, it was too wet for many passers-by—luck seemed very far away. Towards evening, an old gentleman passed, and as Hoppity touched his cap and waited, he drew from his pocket what he supposed to be a sixpence and slipped it into the eager, grasping hands. Another step or two, and away he went in an omnibus, while Hoppity gazed, now at the coin, now at the whirling vehicle, like one moon-struck. A half-sovereign, and no mistake. No more starvation with such a mine of wealth; firing through the winter, and, perhaps, boots for Tod and Jep; a weight, such as only the indulgent can know of, seemed to drop from the boy's heart, as he realized what he held in his possession. A few more pence, and then his day's work was done. There were items to purchase for the evening meal, and then away to Giles's Court.

Somehow, as he dived back into the dreary court, he fancied he heard his mother's voice say, as when she lay dying, "Be honest; never take nor keep what isn't your own," and instinctively Hoppity's fingers closed over the half-sovereign deep down in his trousers pocket. But this was his; the gentleman had given it to him; how was he to know he had made a mistake? So his poor craving heart answered that voice, the voice of his dead mother re-echoed by conscience, and hop—hop—hoppity—hop went his sounding crutch, while he struck up a blithe whistle. Ah! Hoppity, conscience is not thus whisted down.

After he had fed Binieland heard Tod and Jed say "Our Father," he tucked them in their pallet bed, and he and his conscience held parley together. It was a blustering, cold night, but the garret seemed stifling to Hoppity in his struggle, all that was good and noble rising up within him to combat what starvation tried to convince him was right. Eleven, twelve o'clock struck, out in the city, and still the knotty question was not settled—whose was the half-sovereign, his or the gentleman's? Out into the windy court he went, round and round, in the slush and gloom, and then the victory was gained, gained by looking up at the cloudy sky; for there, through a rift in the watery vapor, shone one little star, high up in those mysterious heights where he supposed his mother to be. It seemed that he heard her voice, thrilling with tears, as in the old days, and it said, "*Never, never* take nor keep what isn't your own." Yes, the half-sovereign was not his to keep; did mother know how near he was to doing it? It was all a mistake; it must be given up. Poor little Hoppity's hands were clammy with moisture, and beads of perspiration stood on his forehead as he spoke, "I will, mother," as to a living presence. Then the star passed under a cloud, the rain came down, and Hoppity stole back to his bed in the garret, and sobbed himself to sleep, though the right had conquered.

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"Well, what have yer lost, or what found—is it a serpent?" questioned Tom over Hoppity's shoulder, coming up just as he had espied that careless gentleman of the evening before.

"No, 'twere a gentleman I see, as I wanted to give a half-sovereign to," spoke ungarded Hoppity, like one in a dream.

"Ay; what's up?" queried Tom; and the other told him.

"No? Seein's believin'—let me see 'im," said wily Tom, when the budget was out, and Hoppity opened his hand.

"'Tis mine now," quoth that worthy, snatching it, and away he scudded, diving under horses' heads by the dozen, while the lame lad stood in a maze of misery.

Well, he was gone; he had fulfilled his threat of being even, and now the gentleman would never know but that Hoppity was as bad as a thief, and mother would never know that he intended to do the right. He might tell her about it some day, if so be he ever found her in that very indistinct spirit dream-world beyond the stars—but the time would be so long first. Very bitter tears did the boy shed that day, quiet, dreary tears, such as the aged shed, without rush, heat, or passion, by reason of the pressure of care and trouble on his poor little soul.

But, somehow, the pence came in abundance on the next day, and the next, while the half-formed resolution awoke within him that he would save up and restore that unfortunate half-sovereign. Of one thing he was glad—once and again he espied the gentleman, on the other side of the street, and, seeing him, his purpose grew. No need his going and lling his story, and his intention; he would not believe him; but when he went with the money in his hand, then—ah! Hoppity's heart beat well-nigh to bursting at the thought of that supreme moment. But though the peace came in, and fortune seemed to smile upon him from the day of Tom's escapade, it was hard work to hoard and save ten shillings, each made up of twelve pence. More, Hoppity had another dream—the boy's head was full of dreams and fancies—he was bent on giving his "young 'uns" a Christmas-tree at Christmas, the same as he had espied through a window, at the West End, last Christmas, when Binie was a wee stranger among them, only a few days old. Yes, a Christmas tree. "Only a tiny dot of a thing, 'cause we ain't tip-toppers, and can't have tip-top things;" so he mused in his simple way, as the days went circling round toward Christmas—and he stinted and saved, well-nigh starving himself while his "little 'uns" had bread. His scanty clothing hung upon him in his thinness; his poor wan face wore a pinched wistfulness sad to see; but his eyes were like summer-stars, full of all tender, loving thoughts, going and coming, and living his noble life. A hacking cough harrassed him, too—that was when the December days were flying apace, and the half-sovereign was complete. A shop round the corner had given him gold for his change, and now his Christmas store was growing fast. Oh! for the supreme moment of giving the gentleman back his own; but he never saw him now—no, not for days. As for Tom, a coolness had come between the two; they seldom met or spoke. Hoppity did not really bear him any malice, knowing he was down on his luck, and almost starving when he played him his wicked trick. Still, he felt a soreness about the matter, and Tom—we will hope that Tom was ashamed.

Now it was Christmas Eve, the shops were ablaze with light, and decked as London shops are wont to be decked. Hoppity had had his "young 'uns" out all the day, for Binie was teething, and so pining that she could not be left to the tender mercies of Tod and Jep. So these young gentlemen took charge of her when Hoppity could not. And anon it was evening, and Hoppity's Christmas store of money was complete. He had bought a very uninteresting twig of a tree, the evening before, and planted it in an old jug without a handle. Now for the precious fruits—the pretty odds and ends, the sweeties, the oranges, the tapers. The Christmas fare, too, was to be purchased. The happy boy was almost sinking with weakness and weariness; his cough, too, exhausted him more; still he went bravely trudging away to the shops he knew of, Binie tucked up in one arm, and leaning over his shoulder, the boys close at his side. That money not his own was a burden to him. It seemed to burn a hole in his pocket. How he wished he could restore it this evening; it would be like a Christmas blessing to him, as he heard a happy girl say of something pleasant come to her, in passing over his crossing, that very morning. But it was not likely he would see him, here in the network of streets he was now threading; he had never seen him here. The brave boy dived here and there, to buy this and that, the two laddies outside, Binie in his arms, too small to heed what he bought; he wanted to surprise them, his head was in a whirl with the gladness of his dream coming true.

"There, now for the Christmas dinner, and then home," said he, coming out of a sweet-shop, to the two laddies who waited outside.

Ah! there was his gentleman, the owner of the half-sovereign, across the street, a stream of cabs and carriages between them.

"Here, Tod, stand here, you two, and mind Binie," said he, thrusting that cold-fisted young damsel into the boy's arms; and pushing the three into a recess by a doorway, he darted away.

Surely he was Hoppity to-night, leaping, bending and bobbing, in and out among the well-trained London cab-horses, the half-sovereign in his hand.

But he never reached the other side; he and his crutch were down together, knocked down by a cab. A policeman snatched him from death, but it was a poor, maimed little mite they placed on a shutter, a crowd gathering to peep and wonder.

"And what has he in his hand?" asked one.

"That's my half-sovereign, as isn't mine, but a gentleman's, as I thought I see," panted the suffering child; "don't take it from me."

"Give it to me, my boy; 'twill be safe with me," said a policeman, and the weary little fingers yielded it up.

One face peered down on him, which he knew, ere they bore him away—it was that of pilferer Tom.

"Why, if it ain't poor Hoppity!" cried he, in genuine pity.

"Ay, it's me, Tom," replied Hoppity.

"What can I do for yer? They're saying ye're done to death," blurted out Tom.

"Death means goin' to mother; perhaps that's my Christmas blessin'; and—and not——"

The child was growing faint.

"What can I do for yer, old chap? I'll do it, right out, and not rob yer, as I did last time," whispered Tom.

"The little 'uns are over yonder, Tom; take 'em home, and don't let 'em starve wi'out me—and, Tom, they were to have a Christmas tree——"

A smile broke over the wan little face—ah! that cough, how it harrassed him.

"Ay, I'll see to 'em, never fear, old chap," was the last the boy heard, for they bore him away to the hospital.

"To which 'un, I'd like to know?" said poor Tom.

"St. Thomas's—it lies——" began a policeman.

"Ay, I knows where it lies." Then Tom went across to the desolate "little 'uns," in their lonely corner, and took them home.

The bells rang out their happy Christmas song. Hoppity heard them as he lay on his clean, comfortable hospital bed, comfortable save for the pain, which no bed could ease. They had set his leg, that poor, twisted, contracted leg, which had been of so little use before, and bound up his head. No, he was not delirious, but he kept whispering.

"Well, this be a queer Christmas blessin', it be; and yet if it carries me home to mother, 'twill be all right—only there'll be the little 'uns; they'll want me," the nurse heard him say once.

They had found his pockets stuffed with sweeties—the very tapers were there.

"Who are the 'little 'uns?'" asked the kindly woman.

"Tod, and Jep, and Binie, as mother left me to mind when she died."

"And were the goodies you had in your pockets for them?"

"Yes, for their Christmas-tree"—a wan smile came with the words. "Now they'll never know, when I'm dead." The smile was gone now.

"Dead, my boy! Who talks of dying?" It was a new doctor come to look at him.

"Why — why — why ——" Hoppity tried to start up in bed, but pain kept him prone. That was the old gentleman who had given him the half-sovereign by mistake. Hoppity would have told him so, only he laid his finger on the child's lips.

"No, not to-night, my boy, no talking to-night." So he hushed him, and gave him a sedative draft, and when he awoke therefrom, it was Christmas morning.

But anon the good doctor heard his story, and Hoppity heard his in return—that with skill and patience, the boy's maimed leg, now injured anew, could be brought into use, and that he intended to try and do it.

Before the day was gone Tom came, and reported the "little 'uns" all right. Then Hoppity entrusted him to take home the things for the Christmas-tree, decorate it, and set it alight; he also gave him a mite of money to buy a Christmas treat, and Tom humbly carried it out to the letter. Poor, faulty Tom, with a kindly heart hidden under the ignorance and sin which were his heritage.

So, this was Hoppity's Christmas blessing, to lie long weeks in a hospital, away from his "little 'uns," and to go out, Hoppity no longer, but Jemmy Brown, without his cough, without his crutch. His shoulder was deformed, his frame weakly.

"But you'll grow out of that," quoth the good doctor, the donor of a new life for Hoppity and his "little 'uns" in the country—Hoppity as serving-boy, the "little 'uns" in a charity school hard by.

Tom took to Hoppity's broom, his crossing, and his honesty—so who shall say that Hoppity's Christmas blessing was not Tom's as well?

A CHANGED PURPOSE.

CHAPTER I.

It was a substantial looking cottage, built of the rough stone common to the district, superior to most dwellings of the same class, for it possessed several outbuildings, and had a large well-stocked kitchen garden, besides a considerable piece of land which had been enclosed as a paddock, and afforded pasturage for a goat, also forming a happy hunting ground for the poultry, of which there was usually a large stock at Mooreside Cottage. This was the home of David Clarke, his wife, and their granddaughter, Gladys, whom they had adopted as their own child. She had been early left an orphan, for both parents had died when she was too young to realize their loss; happily she never had realized it in all her young life. Her grandparents had devoted themselves to her, their last living darling. So far as their worldly means would allow, "the winds of heaven had never been allowed to visit her cheek too roughly." Gladys Clarke had received an education far above the average of what was considered needful for country maidens in those days when school boards were not. The years when little Gladys was growing up had been the years of her grandfather's prosperity, for he had then occupied one of the thriving Dale farms, and it was presumed that the world was going very well with him. His first stroke of adversity had been the unexpected failure of the bank to which he had truste! his life's savings. This misfortune was soon followed by others. A time of unusual commercial depression followed several seasons of bad crops. The result was that the ruined man was unable to hold his ground, and found himself stranded among many other unfortunates who had found the tide set against them. It was like David Clarke to struggle manfully to his feet, and make the best of things by bravely facing the evil fortune which had come upon him. He accepted his altered position, and tried to adapt himself to it with some show of cheerfulness, for the sake of his old wife and their little Gladys. This was the reason the large farm had to be given up. The impoverished family had found a home in the Moorside Cottage, which had been let to them on a few years' lease at a moderate rent. in consideration of its being much out of repair from being long untenanted. As time passed the value of the property was considerably increased by the persevering industry of the new tenant. His landlord was one Ralph Rushton, an eccentric, miserly old man, who was said to have made his fortune as a money lender and land agent. He had retired from active business, but was still known to lend out money to needy people at usurious interest. Ralph Rushten and David Clarke had been schoolmates, natives of the same town; and they had kept up a sort of intimacy in later years, though the two men had nothing in common, their characters being entirely opposite. There was, however a link of association in the attachment which had been formed between Gladys Clarke and Ralph Rushton's only son, Paul, who had been appointed first mate in the fine merchant vessel in which he had served for some years with great credit to himself, as well as satisfaction to his captain. Whatever might be David Clarke's objection to the father, there could be no question about the warmth and sincerity of his regard for the son, who in himself was everything that he could wish as a husband for his darling.

The day had been unusually bright for October. The sunshine had crowned with beauty the rugged peaks and silent hills, rippling down into the low green vales, and resting warm and golden upon the broad stretches of brown moor. The afternoon was closing in; already the grey mists were creeping up; but the soft light still lingered in the sky. where lines of purple and gold marked where the sun had gone down. It was the hour between the lights. Old Mrs. Clarke, in her chintz-covered easy chair, had dropped her knitting and fallen into a doze, after the fashion of grandmothers, while the big, old-fashioned clock, which had been for generations in the family, ticked tranquilly in the corner, and the sleek, fat tabby cat sat blinking and purring before the fire.

Outside all was quiet. Keeper, the dog, was asleep in his kennel, and the poultry had gone to rest. There was not even the clucking of a wakeful hen to disturb the stillness, when Gladys finished watering her flowers and passed into the paddock, from which a little wicket gate opened into a wild, unfrequented path skirting the moor. It seemed a pity that there were no admiring eyes to look at Gladys as she stood at the gate alone in the gloaming. She made a beautiful picture, with that bit of moorland scenery for a background. A slight, lithe figure, not tall nor stately, but so full of airy, girlish grace, that no one could have wished it other than it was. The russet-brown head had no protection against the chill of the evening, except what was afforded by a small scarlet kerchief. which had been hastily tied under her chin. This supplied an effective bit of color—just what was wanted to throw out in stronger relief the charm of the fair face. She was in truth a lovely moorland flower, fresh and sweet as any blossom that grew. Gladys lingering a few minutes, looking round as if in search of something, then raised to her lips a small silver call and waited the result. It was answered by the tinkling of a bell, presently followed by the appearance of a goat, whose neck was adorned by a blue ribbon, to which a small bell was attached. The animal came rushing on, butting playfully now and then, and stopping within a few yards of the gate, where she stood still, as if coyly waiting for her mistress to advance. Gladys laughed as she went forward and aid her hand on the ribbon, say-ing—

"Floss, Floss, you naughty thing! why didn't you come home before? I ought to be very angry with you, but you don't seem to mind a bit. I have spoiled you, Floss."

The goat, thus addressed, acted with all the audacity of a privileged pet, and became very demonstrative in her show of affection. While the girl was thus engaged, her grandfather (who had just returned from the village) came slowly round the front of the cottage, calling her name in a low voice. It did not reach her ears until it had been several times repeated. She had led back the goat to the enclosure, and secured the gate for the night, when she caught sight of the old man coming towards her, and heard him calling. "Gladys! Gladys!"

"Here I am, grandfather," she answered as she hurried to meet him, feeling startled and uncomfortable, she could not have told why.

CHAPTER II.

It was something in the expression of her grandfather's face; a stricken, troubled look, such as it might have worn on that dark day when the first crash came to him in the news of the bank failure. She knew how brave and patient he had been through all; knew how much he had to bear in his daily life. Servant where he had been master; yet doing his duty faithfully, and striving always to be of good courage and thankful for present mercies. These were the qualities for which the girl dearly loved and reverenced her grandfather. When she saw the shadow on his face, her heart ached with sudden misgivings which at once took definite form. She knew that he had certain money difficulties which had lately given him much anxiety. The lease of the cottage would expire about Christmas, and from hints which the old man had received, she knew that he could not count on having it renewed on the same terms. She took one of the hard brown hands in hers and looked up wistfully in his face as she asked, "Has anything upset you in the village to-day, grandfather?"

He gave the tender fingers a loving pressure, and said with a smile which faded almost as quickly as it came, "Does my face tell such tales, Gladys?"

"I'm afraid it does, grandfather; it tells me that you have some new trouble on your mind;" and her expression was such an imploring one that after a short silence the old man spoke again. "Let us take a turn in the garden, Gladys; your grandmother was asleep when I looked in just now, and there is something I want to tell you before she wakes up. Yes, my dear lass, there is some trouble that I want to spare her as long as we can, for you know she has not been strong lately; and, after all, things may turn out better than I expect at present."

Gladys felt her heart sink once more as she followed her grandfather into the garden.

They sat together on a rustic bench under a tree, whose spreading branches made pleasant screen from the sun on warm, bright days. Suspecting the cause of the trouble, Gladys lifted up a grave face to the old man, and asked anxiously, "Is this trouble about the lease, grandfather?"

"Aye, that it is, child. I've had a letter from Ralph Rushton, himself, and he says he won't renew it to me at any figure."

Gladys uttered an exclamation of dismay, and repeated under her breath—

"Not renew the lease?"

"No," the old man answered gloomily. "He tells me that he can let the place at his own price, for he has a tenant ready for it, and he will require us to give up possession at quarter-day. As that will be Christmas Day, he'll give us a fortnight's grace, but not a day longer. It will be a sorry Christmas for us, Gladys."

"Oh, grandfather, he will never do it when the time comes! He cannot have the heart to turn you out after all you have done to make the place fit to live in. Hard as everybody says he is, I cannot believe it, even of him."

David Clarke shook his head as he said—

"I'm afraid we'll find out that he's hard enough for anything, though I'm sorry to have to think it of Paul's father. But I fear it's true what the people in the Dale say about him, that he's more of a miser than ever, and like a flint in everything that has to do with money."

"He does not deserve to have such a son as Paul," Gladys struck in, impulsively.

"That is true, child; the two are as different as light and dark. I am sorry that it is so, for Paul's sake; but I have not told you all our trouble, dearie. You remember that Mr. Rushton advanced me a bit of money about a year ago. I have kept the interest paid up, but now he writes that he must have a settlement in full. You know what that means, my Gladys—the loss of everything that makes a home."

Here the old man's voice became very husky, and he turned his head, that Gladys might not see the mist which had gathered over his eyes.

"Poor grandfather, after all he has borne!"

The girl sighed to herself as she sat with a full heart, softly stroking one of the wrinkled hands, and wondering what she could do to help. The silence lasted a few minutes, and then she said, half timidly, the tears shining in her eyes, "Grandfather, I have thought of something. I have to go over to Marsh Hollow, to take some eggs—grandmother said I might—and you knew Paul asked me in his last letter to see his father now and then. I will go to-morrow, grandfather, and try to soften his heart. I think he will hear me, for Paul's sake."

"God grant that he may, child. You may try him, but I'm afraid it will be no use. He is getting to love money better than anything else in the world."

CHAPTER III.

After their early dinner was over next day, Gladys prepared for her walk, taking care to fill a little basket with the finest and freshest eggs that she could find, This was a gift that often found its way to Ralph Rushton from the Moorside Cottage, for the old man was said to have a strong liking for new laid eggs, though he had become too penurious to indulge it at his own expense.

Gladys felt a strange sinking at her heart as she neared her destination, and the hope which had helped her to face the position so bravely gave way under the new feeling of depression which came over her, like the sudden darkening of a cloud in the sky.

Ralph Rushton's house was called Marsh Hollow; a name which had possibly some reference to its situation, for it stood on one of the tracts of low-lying meadow-land that margined the river, which was thus a near neighbor—perhaps too near to be always desirable or safe; or that same smiling stream, which looked like a band of silver, as it wound through the lovely valleys, catching the summer light and shadows on its way, was sometimes a very different thing, scarcely recognzable after some of the destructive storms not unusual to the district, when the swollen waters forced a passage for themselves, and covered the fair land with ruin and desolation.

Gladys lingered a few moments before she found courage to admit herself into the weedy wilderness of a garden which led up to the house. It was a long low building, and shared the neglected, uncared for look that pervaded everything about the place. As she passed up the grass-grown walk she was struck by the contrast to Moorside, and could not help thinking how strange it was that this rich man should be so poor in all that made the true happiness of life. As Gladys reached the door a fierce-looking dog made a rush out of his kennel, and barked and tugged at his chain in a way that would have terrified a stranger. Gladys turned and softly called his name.

"Gruff, Gruff, why do you make such a noise, when you know me all the time?"

The sound of her low, soothing voice had an instant effect upon the dog, and converted the signs of hostility into overtures of friendliness, for he began to wag his great tail with characteristic energy.

At that moment a stout-looking elderly woman came along the bare stone passage with a pail in her hand.

Gladys recognized her as a person from the village, who did the domestic work at Marsh Hollow, giving her services for a certain time each day for a small weekly sum, which was always grudgingly paid by her master. In answer to her inquiries, Gladys was told to knock at the door of the old man's sitting room.

"You'll find him in there, Miss Gladys—as grump and cross as he can be."

This was added in an undertone. The woman was cross-grained, like her master, but she had much to try her temper. She was always civil to Gladys Clark, who was a general favorite with all the people of the village.

A few minutes later Ralph Rushton received his visitor in the little room, furnished like an office, which some of his debtors called "the bear's den." Poor Gladys! how vividly she realised that the hard old man held her father's fate in his hands. He faced her at his desk, looking up from the pages of an open ledger. There was nothing gracious or kindly in the eyes that met hers. Her heart failed her as she glanced timidly at the set, stony face, for she despaired of being able to make him change his purpose by anything that she could say.

He thanked her gruffly for the eggs, but added suspiciously, "I'm obliged to you, Gladys Clarke, but I hope they're not sent as a bribe."

The girl drew herself up, and her face flushed hotly, as she repeated, "A bribe, Mr. Rushton! you ought to know my grandfather better than that."

"Well, yes, perhaps so" (spoken with a little dry cough); "but circumstances make a vast difference sometimes, even with the best of us. But I don't want to hurt your feelings about your grandfather, Gladys, for I bear him no ill-will. He has had just and fair notice of what he has to prepare for by next quarter day, and for the rest, I've nothing more to say, except that I shall abide by my word when the time comes. Everybody has a right to look after his own interest, and if David Clarke hasn't done that, it's no fault of mine."

It was then that Gladys found courage to plead for her grandfather—that he might be allowed to live on at the cottage, which his industry had done so much to improve. She spoke from a full heart, with restrained tears in her eyes and in her voice. Any other listener would have been touched by that earnest appeal in behalf of the old people, who would be reduced to such sore extremity if he acted out his harsh purpose of evicting them from their homestead.

Ralph Rushton remained unmoved; he let her go on without interruption to the end, but Gladys knew that her mission had failed, and it made her feel heart-sick even while she continued to plead.

"Oh, Mr. Rushton, if you would only give my grandfather a little more time! He will pay all that he owes you, every fraction, if you will wait."

The money lender shook his head, as he snapped out his answer: "No use asking me, Gladys Clarke; it's only wasting my time and yours for nothing. I tell you that my mind is made up, and I cannot give a day longer than I have said."

Gladys spoke with white, quivering lips—

"Will you for dear Paul's sake? When I am his wife, I shall be your daughter. Oh, think of that! and how it will grieve him if you take these harsh measures against—against——"

She broke down. Something in her words had strangely excited the old man. He leaned forward and drew a deep breath as he repeated—

"Paul's wife—my daughter? Ah, yes! that reminds me of something I want to say to you. It's been on my mind for some time that I should like to put an end to that nonsense for my boy's sake; he ought to do better when he marries."

There was a low, startled cry from Gladys as if she had been struck and hurt. The old man looked away from her as he continued—

"Yes, he ought to do better, and I don't think you are the sort of girl to let yourself stand in his way, or be a hinderance to his prospects."

"I would give my life for Paul," she murmured.

The hard gray eyes flashed out a gratified gleam. "Ah, yes! so I thought. Well, now, I will make you an offer, Gladys Clarke. If you will give up Paul—that is, set him free from his engagement to you, and give me a line in your handwriting to that effect—I will bind myself to renew your grandfather's lease on his own terms, and also cancel his debt to me; so you will be the means of saving the old people from any more trouble."

"Is it—is it Paul's wish?" Gladys gasped in a choked voice.

Her words were evaded; he replied hastily—

"No matter whether it is or not. It will be for his good and yours—he will know that you have done it for the best—you will both get over it. Such changes happen among young people every day. Now go home like a good sensible girl, and think over my offer. I give you a week to decide."

That was the end of their interview. A few minutes later poor Gladys went slowly back to her grandfather's cottage, feeling as if she had grown years older in the short time since she left it, and every bit of sunshine and hope had gone suddenly out of her life.

CHAPTER IV.

"My poor little lass, this is worse than I expected, even from him. Give up Paul! How could he have the heart to ask it of you?" and in his agitation David Clarke passed his rugged hand over his face to hide the emotion excited by the account which Gladys had just given of her interview with Ralph Rushton.

"Oh, grandfather!" she sobbed, letting her head rest wearily against his arm, "it is cruel to force such a choice upon me—you three are all I have in the world, and I love you so dearly. You, and grandmother, and Paul." He soothed her as he would a child in pain.

"Leave things as they are Gladys; that sacrifice is not to be thought of; it would be the spoiling of two lives. Let the worst come. We need not fear even if our shelter is taken from us, for there is One who looks after the ravens and the sparrows, and he will provide for you."

That was their comfort. Before the old man went to rest that night he told his wife all about the trouble that was coming upon them, and how he had wanted to keep it from her as long as possible.

It was touching to see the tender look that came into the sweet old face, as the two took counsel together. So the gray autumn days came and went; a troubled, anxious time for the little household at the Moor Cottage. Gladys began to watch for a letter from Paul, which by some strange mischance was long overdue. Her face seemed to get paler and sadder day by day, as the suspense was prolonged.

November came in with high winds and heavy rains, which continued with little intermission throughout the month. The advent of December was very little better. Still rain, rain, transforming mountain streams into torrents, and overflowing the little brooks and watercourses until all the low-lying lands were submerged, and the turbid, swollen river filled the people of the neighboring villages with dismay, as they recalled the ravages of former floods.

There came a day when late in the afternoon Gladys and her grandfather stood at the cottage door talking excitedly together. The old man had brought news that Ralph Rushton's house (Marsh Hollow) was surrounded by deep water, being cut off from all outside communication. He had also learned that Ralph Rushton was ill and helpless with rheumatism—that he was alone and unattended, having had a quarrel with his housekeeper, whom he had summarily dismissed.

"Nobody seems to care what becomes of him, Gladys; they only talk of his closeness and hard bargains. With all his riches, he is poorer than any of us, for he doesn't seem to have made one friend."

It was then that Gladys took hold of her father's hand, and looked up entreatingly into his face, as she said hurriedly, "Grandfather, we cannot leave Paul's father to die for want of help; we must do our best to save him."

"Aye, child, and whatever is done must be done quickly. I will see about getting Rawson's boat, and I'll ask Joe Price to lend a hand—he's big and strong, and will be just the man to help—for if poor old Ralph is ill, as they say he is, he'll not have much strength of his own. I don't know how it is, Gladys, but somehow, now that I know he's lying helpless and deserted by everybody, I keep forgetting who he is, and what he is going to do to us; but no matter, child—God helping us, we'll do our best for him all the same."

"God will help us, grandfather; I feel sure He will, if we do our part," spoke out Gladys, brave and hopeful; a new light shining in her eyes as she added, "You must let me go with you, for I know I can be of use, and I am not one bit afraid of the water."

CHAPTER V.

There had been no exaggeration in David Clarke's account of the floods. At Marsh Hollow things were even worse than he had represented in his talk with Gladys, for he did not then know how desperate was Ralph Rushton's condition at the time. It was quite true that the miserly owner of Marsh Hollow had quarelled with his acid-tempered satellite, who had forthwith taken him at his word and left him to his fate. For the first few days he did not regard this as a calamity, but rather a relief. It was only when the cold wet weather visited him with a severe attack of rheumatism that he realised all the discomfort of his situation. He was glad that his bed had been moved into the sitting-room adjoining his office, for he began to get alarmed at his own increasing helplessness. At last there came a day when he found himself unable to rise from his bed. As he lay racked with pain, and powerless to help himself to food or drink, despair seemed to chill his heart, as the sense of his terrible isolation forced itself upon him. He knew that the river had risen in the darkness, that its brown, muddy waters were even then surging under his windows, and up, perhaps, to the very threshold, encroaching ever nearer like a foe that might not be resisted. What agony to know that he was forsaken in his extremity! that his own will had driven from him all human sympathy and help! He made excited efforts to raise himself from his pillow, gasping with pain, and sick with despairing fear of the doom that seemed to be awaiting him. Under his mattress was a bulky pocket-book, full of bank-notes, and close beside his bed stood a strong safe, containing valuable papers, which represented most of his invested wealth. A goodly account, but it could do nothing to save him now—could not even procure a drink for his parched lips. At last he fell into a feverish sleep, from which he awoke with a start to find the short winter day was closing in. He noticed a curious gleam upon the floor, and discovered to his horror that it was water.

"The river!" he moaned. "Who will save me from the river?"

There was a mark on the wall, high above the fireplace, which had remained as a record of the height to which a former flood had risen. This mark had a strange fascination for him, for he lay gazing at it until the gathering darkness hid it from his sight. Still that gleam upon the floor, and the knowledge that the water was so near. It was terrible to be lying there waiting for death. Suddenly a thought flashed across his mind, and he shrieked aloud in his anguish. "All my savings, Paul's money and mine, to be lost, lost——" Here his voice sank to an indistinct murmur. His ears seemed to be full of confused noises, and he felt a strange sense of suffocation. The rest became a blank.

* * * *

"He has only fainted. We are not too late. Thank God!"

The speaker was David Clarke. It was his face, full of kindly concern, that bent over the unconscious figure huddled among the tumbled bedclothes. He was followed by a burly, broad-shouldered man, who looked like a fierce laborer. This was Joe Price. After him came Gladys, with a basket of good things which had been packed by grandmother's thoughtful care. The first plan had been for Ralph Rushton's removal to Moorside Cottage. But the state of his health made the danger, from exposure to the weather, too great to be risked. So it was decided that the sick man was to be carried to one of the upper rooms; this would secure his personal safety, for in the worst of the floods, the waters had never been known to rise higher than the basement floor. Gladys elected to stay as nurse, assisted by an elderly woman, whom Joe Price was to bring from the village. This was soon settled, all the arrangements being carried out as quickly as possible. Thus it was that, by the mercy of Providence, Ralph Rushton owed his life to the humane exertions of those whom he had been about to cast homeless on the world.

There is little more to tell. It was a few days after the waters had subsided before the sick man was fit to be removed. As soon as it could be managed with safety, he was conveyed to Moorside Cottage, where he was very faithfully nursed by Gladys and her grandmother. Ralph Rushton came out of that illness a thoroughly altered man. It seemed to him a marvel that he should owe his life to those whom he had treated with such harshness, and the unselfish Christian charity which watched by his sick-bed with such devoted care seemed to him a greater marvel still.

"And this is Gladys, Paul's Gladys," he said, taking her hand; "the daughter that I wanted to cast aside. I will not ask if you forgive me, for you have proved it beyond the power of words. It must be my turn now to do what I can to make amends for the past. From this time the cottage is yours—and anything else you may like to ask for. I owe it to you and your grandfather that I did not lose all."

The general happiness was complete on Christmas eve, when an exciting event occurred, in the unexpected advent of a bronzed and bearded sailor, who made his appearance suddenly in their midst. After an unusually quick voyage, Paul Rushton had reached home before his letters, which had somehow miscarried. So he was in time to spend Christmas at Moorside and hear all his father had to tell about his darling Gladys. It is certain that when the joybells rang out on Christmas morning there were not in all the land a happier home party than that gathered round the well-spread table at the cottage. Nor was there a happier pair of lovers than Paul and Gladys, after their separation, looking forward to the closer union that would be theirs by-and-by, and rejoicing in the bright future, of which they had already received a promise in Ralph Rushton's "Changed Purpose," and in the present joy of sunshine which had followed ihe time of darkness and tears.

A well-known Irish Peer holding high office, lately turned up the corner of a begging letter, and wrote on it for the instruction of his private secretary, "Reply that there is no answer."

Mr. New was the father of eleven sons and one daughter. He ran short of names toward the end, and so the youngest son was called "Nothing New," and the daughter "Something New."

Do Not Delay.

Do not delay, if suffering from any form of Bowel Complaint, however mild apparently may be the attack, but use Dr. Fowler's Extract of Wild Strawberry. It is the old, reliable cure for all forms of Summer complaints that require prompt treatment. Ask your druggist and all dealers in patent medicines. tu-th-sat-dw

"THE WORLD went well then," by W. Besant; "The nine of hearts," by Farjeon; "Married in haste," by Blanche Rosevelt; "Traits and Stories of Irish Peasantry," by Carleton, just received at T. N. HIBBEN & Co.'s