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THE CRITIC.

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The editor of THE CRITIC is responsible for the views expressed in Editorial Notes and Articles, and for such only; but the editor is not to be understood as endorsing the sentiments expressed in the articles contributed to his journal. Our readers are capable of approving or disapproving of any part of an article or contents of the paper; and after exercising due care as to what is to appear in our columns, we shall leave the rest to their intelligent judgment.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Let the bells ring out their merry, merry peals, and let the joyous spirit of the happy Christmas time have free play. Christmas comes but once a year and all should enjoy to the full the relief from care which its proper observance alone insures.

This is a season when "That great object of universal devotion, the almighty dollar," can be turned to good account. One dollar judiciously expended may brighten the Christmas in a home which otherwise might be dull, cheerless, and poverty pinched. Deposits in Humanity's Bank are safe investments, sure to yield a handsome return.

To-morrow the absent ones, the sons and daughters, the brothers and sisters, scattered far and wide in distant climes, will be remembered by those who still gather around the old fireside; their places will be vacant and their well-known faces missed, but for each and every absent one there will be a kindly wish, a warm remembrance, and a silent prayer.

Montreal has an army of travellers constantly in the field drumming up business for the enterprising firms which have their headquarters in that city. 1600 travelling agents are, to use the phraseology of the fraternity, constantly "on the road," and through them Montreal maintains her supremacy as the chief distributing centre in the Dominion.

The dangers of the deep are indeed great, but modern navigators have to face a new peril in the liability to collisions with derelicts, hundreds of which are afloat in the highway of commerce between Europe and America. It has been suggested that the sinking of these abandoned vessels would afford excellent practice for the torpedo boats of the day, while the hunting of them would give their crews an experience that can never be gained in port.

Mr. Roswell Fisher, who is a man of means, is advocating cooperative house-keeping in Montreal. He believes that with a common kitchen, a common laundry, a common staircase, and a common janitor and servants, several families might live under the same roof and enjoy for a comparatively limited expenditure all the comforts and luxuries of modern society. The idea may present itself favorably to those who have no desire to preserve family individuality or who have grown weary of the trials and vexations of house-keeping, but it appears strange that this outcome of our higher civilization should in reality be nothing more than the primitive mode of living adopted by some of the lowest tribes of savages.

The French Government is testing a new mitrailleuse which weighs only 38 pounds and discharges 600 bullets a minute.

Since the loss of her American colonies, Spain has become a second if not a third-rate power, but the present Cortes or Parliament is not willing to have her occupy the position of an effete State. \$45,000,000 is to be expended in the construction of fast cruisers and torpedo boats, and with this increase to her navy, Spain may again become one of the great powers of western Europe.

Branches of the Imperial Federation league are now being formed in all the principal cities and towns throughout Great Britain and her colonies; and these organizations are diffusing a wider knowledge of the aims of the League, and a more correct idea of the scope which their name signifies. Halifax is now to have its branch of the League, and ere long flourishing branches will be established in the more enterprising of our Provincial towns.

The British press has been doing good work during the past few months in disseminating information with respect to this country, but it is unfortunately true that the journalists, who have been devoting so much attention to the Dominion, possess but a meagre knowledge of our resources, and hence the information which they give their readers is not infrequently misleading. This is not surprising when we remember that the London "Times" and other newspapers derive their facts respecting the Dominion from American sources, which are somewhat apt to be colored.

The adoption of standard time would, it was predicted, prevent annoying delays and mistakes being made by those who are obliged to travel by railcar and steamboat; but, as a matter of fact, the introduction of standard time has added a new difficulty to those who are not thoroughly posted, as the traveller has now to familiarize himself with local standard time, eastern standard time and the actual time observed in the city or town which he is visiting. Standard time may be a convenience to the railway authorities, but to the travelling public it is an intolerable nuisance.

In the United States the question as to what is to be done with the Indians, is still one of great importance. Bishop Whipple, who is a recognized authority in matters pertaining to the welfare of the red man, believes the only solution to the question is in the abolition of tribal reserves and the distribution of property among Indian families; in other words he believes that the individual ownership of land will raise the Indian from a semi-independent to a self-dependent position. Henry George asserts that individual ownership of land is the greatest evil in modern times. Bishop Whipple should endeavor to convert the author of "Progress and Poverty."

We yet require fifteen new railways in this Province, in order that our people should have first class railway facilities. These are the missing links between Annapolis and Digby, a road from Shelburne to Annapolis and another from Liverpool to the same place, thus making old Port Royal an important railway centre. The Nova Scotia Central will have to be completed and the proposed road from Berwick to Kingsport constructed. Then there are the Musquodoboit and Stewiacke valley railway; the Londonderry and Parrsboro road; the Joggins and Advocate Harbor line; the North shore air line; the Pictou branch and the Guysboro road. In addition there are the Cape Breton Central, the Port Hood line and the Baddeck and Margaree railway. If this bill of fare is not long enough, Barrington, Lockeport, Port Medway, Goldenville, and St. Peters may put in their claims. This is a railway age and he who would be a success in politics cannot afford to ignore this fact.

CHRISTMAS.

Christmas Day is the most thoroughly enjoyed, most widely celebrated, and most beloved of all anniversaries. Ever since the year 138, the whole Christian world has on this day, by joyful home gatherings, by time honored festivities, by increased efforts towards peace on earth, good will to men, kept in hallowed remembrance the first dawning of the sun of civilization and Christianity. Every Christian land, nearly every district of every Christian land, has developed some traditional form of enjoyment for this gladdening, heart warming season. In the old world especially, the proper soil for peculiar local customs and traditions, many are the curious and interesting forms of Christmas-keeping. In Italy, during the last days before Christmas, the Calabrian minstrels come down from their mountains and make a pilgrimage to Rome or Naples, saluting the numerous figures of the Virgin along their way, to cheer her for the event which Christmas commemorates. In the Protestant countries of Northern Europe, the day has come to be regarded as the children's own festival. Our beloved, mysterious Santa Claus is only an imagined substitute for the real, substantial German Knecht Rupert, who actually does the work at the request of the parents. In some small villages of Germany the presents intended for all the children are sent to a certain person, who, in long flaxen wig, high buskins, mask, and white robe, calls at the door of each peasant, inquires into

the conduct of each child, and then bestows the gifts. The custom of distributing presents from the Christmas Tree also prevails in the Protestant districts of Germany. The wide-spread custom of decking houses and churches with evergreens is a relic of the Druid religion. It was believed that sylvan nymphs would take refuge in these evergreens, and thus find protection from the cold of winter.

In the middle ages, the celebration of Christmas was characterized by the complete laying aside of personal dignity. It was the favorite season for the Mysteries and Moral Plays, those crude precursors of the modern Drama. In the houses of the nobility a lord of misrule held sway, and all were bent on mirth and jollity. On the hearth blazed and roared the Yule log to keep out the cold.

England was merry England when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft would cheer
A poor man's heart through half the year.

The modern celebration of Christmas in England and her colonies is not characterized by the same boisterousness as formerly. It now unites the features of a religious commemoration to those of a joyous festival. The increased refinement of modern life has materially altered the mode of observing this festival, without diminishing its charm. The enterprising shop-keeper vies with his neighbors in the purchase and display of handsome Christmas goods; the mail-bags are swollen with their precious burden of cards and presents; the air resounds with hearty good wishes; on all sides are hand-shaking and laughter. The Christmas spirit is abroad in inspiring both our readers and ourselves with kindly feelings one towards the other. We may never have seen each other; and yet there has been between us a close communication of mind with mind. A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU, AND MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY.

HOLIDAY AND WINTER EVENING AMUSEMENTS.

This is the home season, the season when the individual members of families must seek and find within the home circles that amusement and recreation which is so conducive and so necessary to the well-being of us all. Our books, if properly selected, are, generally speaking, our best friends, our best companions; but if our recreation be confined entirely to reading, the mind soon becomes satiated, and the pastime is tiring from its very monotony. Men and women, as well as boys and girls, cannot tolerate a life of tedious sameness, and hence it is advisable, especially during the long winter evenings, that our amusements should be as varied as our circumstances will allow; and most families, we believe, could greatly deepen their sources of enjoyment, were each individual member to make his or her best endeavor in this direction. Without amusements, in which others participate, we are all inclined to become selfish in our aims, and narrow in our ideas. But indoor pastimes which are purely intellectual do not recommend themselves with the same force as those in which the participants can enjoy a hearty laugh together, and such, when properly and fairly conducted, always make home more attractive, and prevent the young people from seeking elsewhere in less desirable places that amusement for which the youthful mind craves. Among the popular round games of the day, which deserve to be more widely known, are those of "Discover My Thought," "Historical Pictures," "Spella," "Completed," "Buzz," "Yes or No," "What it is Like, and Why," "Acting Words," etc. In "Discover My Thought," the propounder states that he is thinking of a word which rhymes with, say, "think." The company then ply him with questions; one asks if it is an animal? He replies it is not "mink," and so on until his thought is discovered. "Historical Pictures" is a game in which any number can join. Each person pencils on paper a well-known scene in history or fiction. These are in turn displayed to the company, the person who first guesses what the picture represents counting one; the game may be fixed at 10 or 20, as desired, and the winner be awarded a suitable prize. In "Spella," a long word with several vowels is taken, the players being given five minutes in which to write down as many words as can be made out of the letters in the chosen word, commencing with the first letter. These are then read out in turn, each person making out any word read by another, after which each player counts up those still left upon his paper, the one having the greatest number counting one; the game then proceeds as before, the words written commencing with the second letter of the chosen word. "Completed." In this game one of the party chooses a letter, which is spoken aloud, his neighbor adds another, and so on with the third, fourth, and it may be the fifth or sixth player. Upon any word being found by the combined letters, the company shout "Completed," and the person who announced the last letter is said to have lost one life; each player continues in the game until he or she has lost three lives, when they are ruled out. "Buzz" is interesting. The company alternately count, but instead of 7 or any multiple of 7, buzz is substituted thus: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, buzz 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, buzz, etc.; whoever misses is ruled out. "What is it like and why?" is quite puzzling. One leaves the room, those who remain select a word with various meanings. The exile is recalled and asks the question, "What is it like and why?" to each one. For instance, if the word "ball" is chosen to the question one may reply, "It is like an orange, because it is round." Another may say, "It is like a railway station, because there are many trains there," etc. If unable to discover the word after asking once around, it is permissible to ask around again. "Yes or No." The object of this game is to find out what any one person in the company is thinking of, in twenty questions. Having selected his subject, to every question he replies merely "Yes" or "No." The subject to

which he guessed must be well-known by hearsay, books or otherwise, to every person present—such as Cinderella's Glass Slipper, Noah's Ark, etc. But if a little more frolic is wanted, "acting words" will suit the merriest. Divide in two companies, one-half leave the room, the remainder select a word, then, opening the door, tell the banished ones what the selected word rhymes with. For instance, "sat" may be chosen; we say it rhymes with "mat." After consulting together, the exiled members think it may be "cat," so all enter the room, and when well in, take different positions and begin to "mew." This being wrong, they are clapped out, to try again till the right word is found. Then the companies change places.

These holiday amusements can be entered into and enjoyed by young and old alike, and may serve to profitably while away many a stormy winter's evening, when the snow is piled high in the roadway, and the cutting wind rattles the windows in their casements and whistles down the chimneys.

OUR BANK DIRECTORS.

If there is one thing more than another that Halifaxians should be proud of, it is the soundness of their financial institutions. In these days of insolvent banks, speculative presidents and careless directors it is a great thing to be able to point to a clean record, and to say, as we are able to, that such a public calamity as a bank-failure has never disgraced this city. In its immunity from financial disasters of this character, we believe that Halifax stands alone, as compared with any other community on this continent where banks have been established. The record is a noble one, and reflects great credit on the presidents and directors of our local banks. Many thoughtless persons rail at our bank directors, and seem to think that their offices are mere sinecures; that they have the use of the bank's funds in their business enterprises; or, that they have their own particular pets, whom they favor with almost unsecured loans. If these railers would only pause to think, or could be initiated into the details of bank management, they would soon change their opinions, and would come to the correct conclusion that a bank director has most difficult, responsible, and trying duties to perform. He, like all other men, has his circle of friends and relatives whom he would like to assist with a timely loan, but he has to sink all personal feelings, and look solely at the value of the security offered, or at the financial responsibility of the would-be borrower. But while he, guided only by the great responsibility of the trust reposed in him, sinks all personal feelings, and unflinchingly does his duty, the rejected applicant for a loan too often makes a personal matter of the refusal, and the conscientious director turns an old friend into a bitter enemy. Then there are innumerable risks to be guarded against. There are risks from thieves and burglars, from dishonest and negligent officials, and from sharpers and swindlers of high and low degree. In the matter of loans and discounts themselves, there is always an uncertainty whether the money loaned will ever be returned; there are not wanting instances where advances upon collateral have been found, in time of need, to be less amply secured than was originally supposed. Occasionally, such things as mercantile failures occur, and the banks come in for more than a fair share of the losses. Nor is the benefit arising from the relation of banker and depositor altogether on the side of the former. The depositor obtains a place of safe keeping for his active capital, and the bank acts as his agent in a class of transactions he could not possibly conduct for himself without great trouble and expense; and last, but by no means least, the bank aids him largely in making advances of ready money, being oftentimes in this respect the friend in need that is a friend indeed. Another erroneous but widely prevalent view is that the bank holds the depositor's money as a kind of trust fund, whereas, the correct view is, that the relation between a bank and its depositors is simply that of debtor and creditor.

The stockholders of a bank appoint their directors mainly on account of their ability and fitness for the position. The directors then choose one of their own number as president, and upon him devolves the active management of the bank. In making their selection, the directors act with the utmost care and circumspection. It is a simple truism that every enterprise must have a head, and banking is no exception to the rule. The directors have not the time to familiarise themselves with all the details of the bank's work; their part is to advise with the president on the general policy of the bank, and to aid him in every way in the discharge of his delicate and responsible duties. When they find it necessary to constantly govern and over-rule the president, his usefulness is at an end. The confidence of men in one another is the very essence of the banking business—the corner stone of the whole structure. Confidence may be misplaced, or it may be abused and betrayed; but it cannot be dispensed with. The history of our banking institutions proves that our bank directors and bank presidents have never abused the confidence placed in them, but that they have conducted the institutions given in their charge with an ability and honesty that has entirely averted disaster. If they have erred in any way, it has been in being over cautious, but no one can accuse them of having neglected their duties.

A recent issue of a comic weekly, published in the United States, treated its readers to a representation of a supposed interview between a bank president (about to leave for Canada) and the board of directors. The artist's wit and humor were shown in representing the members of the board in the guise of various dumb animals, listening with open mouths to the remarks of the worthy head of the institution. We can afford to laugh at the humor of the cartoon, and the more so as it has no application to our bank directors. When we take into consideration the amount of work performed by our directors, coupled with the unmerited abuse they receive, we are safe in saying that, like a policeman's, a bank director's "lot is not a happy one," and that the responsibilities are out of all proportion to the advantages which his position is supposed to ensure.

CHUCKLES.

Protested notes.—Those of the organ grinder.
 The rule of three.—For the third person to clear out.
 The mariner's compass has done some of the most important needle-work in the world.
 Motto that Russia would fain write across the map of Europe.—“ Bear and for Bear.”
 “ He handled his gun carelessly and put on his angel plumage,” is the latest obituary notice from Arkansas.
 When the curtain at the theatre takes a drop the majority of the males in the audience immediately go out to follow suit.
 China and Japan buy Yankoe dried apples freely. Thus does American industry help to swell the population of the Orient

Kansas school teacher: “ Where does all our grain go to?” “ Into the hopper.” “ What hopper?” “ Grass-hopper!” triumphantly shouted a scholar.

A comic paper says: “ The festive oyster now gets into stews and broils.” Probably, like others, he would avoid these difficulties if he kept his mouth shut.

A dealer advertises “ Lightning Fruit Jars.” They may be a new brand, but for lightening fruit jars there is nothing more successful than the small boy and solitude.

Eyes yet they see not—potatoes. Ears yet they hear not—corn. Mouths yet they speak not—rivers. Hands yet they feel not—clocks. Brains yet they think not—dudes.

“ Are you well acquainted with your mother tongue, my boy?” asked the school teacher of a new scholar. “ Yes sir,” answered the lad timidly. “ Ma jaws me a good deal, sir.”

Excited Sister.—I wish I was a June bug.
 Parson.—Whaffor, Sister Snowball?
 Sister.—So I could fly ter de heavenly mansions.
 Parson.—Fool niggah, woodpucker ketch yer befoah you gits outen de woods.

Grandma—Clara, do you think your mother would approve of your sitting up so late? Clara—Why, grandma, it was only half-past ten when Frank left last evening. Grandma—Clara, your grandma happened to be awake just as Frank was leaving, and didn't she heard him say: “ Now, Clara, just one.”

PLEASANT FOR THE HOSTESS.—Bridget (who has been sent to crack some nuts in preparation for Mrs. Blank's little dinner party, to be held during the evening, enters with a few badly cracked upon a plate): “ An' indade, Missus Blank, Oi'il lose no place before Oi break me tatho a-tackin' any more of thim nuts. Me jaw's all lame now, as it is, so it is” —*Lit.*

MAKING THE BEST OF IT.—The Squire: “ Well, Mould, how about that horse I sold you? Was he quiet enough?” Undertaker: “ Well, sir, he *did* give us a little trouble at first. We put him in one of the mourning coaches, you know; and parties don't like to be shook up in their grief. But we've put him in the *coarse* now—and we hav'n't 'eard any complaints so far!” —*Punch.*

“ George, dear,” said a very young wife to her husband, “ I've had a talk with the servants this morning, and have agreed to raise their wages. They said every thing was so dear. rent so high, and meat and butter and things had risen to such a fearful price—that—everything considered, especially as you have often said the same yourself—I thought it was but reasonable, you know.”

A brakeman in the employ of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company is a very obliging person, and thoughtful withal. An excursion party, which included many young men and women, recently made the trip from Albany to Lake George, and as the train would near a tunnel—of which there are a good many on the line—he would call out, in stentorian tones—“ Gents, choose your partners for the tunnel.”

Doctor—Well, Pat, my friend, do you notice any change for the better since you have been under my treatment.

Pat—Begorra, doether, an' I don't. The troot is, doc, I can't follow your directions. It is no use. I've tried it tree or four times an' its no use nt all.

Doctor—What is the difficulty, Pat? Which part of the directions do you find yourself unable to follow?

Pat—Why, you know, doether, you say on the bottle of the medicine what you gave me: “ To be taken tree times a day, afther sitin' in wather.” I got in a tank of wather, like the fish man in the dime mooseum, but the divil a bit could I ate. I like to d'rowned intirely. It's no good to try to ate tree times a day in wather. Faith, I couldn't do it onco a munt. I ain't no mermaid.

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Martell's Brandy.
 150 cases Martell's * and ** Brandy. Just received per S. S. Avlona from Charente.

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NEWS OF THE WEEK.

Subscribers remitting Money, either direct to the Office, or through Agents, will find a receipt for the amount enclosed in their next paper. All remittances should be made payable to A. M. Fraser.

It is now over two years since THE CRITIC was established. Its readers have had a good opportunity to judge of the tone, character, enterprise, and worth of the journal, and if they deem its merits are worthy of their continuance and support, we ask their co-operation in still further increasing its circulation. Any subscriber renewing his subscription will, upon forwarding to this office \$2.50, be entitled to two copies of THE CRITIC for the ensuing year, one to be mailed to his own address, the other to any person he may desire. Ask your neighbor to club with you for THE CRITIC when you next renew your subscription; or, if you have a brother, son, or relative, resident in any other part of Canada or the United States, send in your order for two copies, and we will send the absent one THE CRITIC for the next year, post paid.

Upwards of \$12,000 has been subscribed towards the purchase of new grounds for the Montreal Lacrosse Club. More than half of the amount has been paid by members of M. A. A.

The Quebec express which left Halifax on Friday evening last, collided with a freight train at Sackville Station, demolishing two box-cars and scattering their contents in all directions. The accident was the result of somebody's blunder, but whose, remains a mystery.

Halifax lawyers evidently have faith in the value of real estate, at least we might be led to suppose so from the properties bought in by them at the late sale of homesteads for non-payment of city taxes. Twenty-five properties were knocked down to cash bidders.

The directors of the Nova Scotia and Great Western railway have not abandoned the consolidation of our western railways, but it is not probable that any definite or progressive steps will be taken until the suits now pending between the W. C. railway and the government are settled.

It is reported by a member of the Dominion Geological Survey staff, investigating the coal deposits in the Saskatchewan region, that the coal supply in the Northwest is absolutely inexhaustible. The whole district lying between Rocky Mountain House and Fort Pitt is one vast series of coal-beds, both hard and soft, of the best quality.

Digby and Annapolis are now connected by a telephone wire, and the citizens of the rival towns on the basin can converse with each other whenever they desire to. Just when these towns will be connected by the railway, is a question that politicians might answer glibly, but which we would prefer not expressing an opinion on at present.

Have our City Fathers acted wisely in the selection of an oil warehouse for the storage of oil within the city? The safety of property may depend upon the storage of inflammables in remote quarters, but the demands of trade require that the common warehouse be at least get-atable, which unfortunately is not the case with the building selected as an oil warehouse by the City Council.

The pupils of Messrs. Frazee & Whiston on last evening gave these well-known principals of the Halifax Business College, a most acceptable Christmas surprise. Each of the gentlemen was a recipient of a handsome silver cake basket, and in return Messrs. Frazee & Whiston invited the pupils to a supper, which was thoroughly enjoyed. The presents were appropriate, as the Halifax Business College takes the cake every time.

We again call the attention of our subscribers to our offer to supply two copies of THE CRITIC for one year at \$2.50. The one to be mailed to the subscriber and the other to the address of any person residing in Canada or the United States. No better New Year's gift could be sent to an absent member of the family than a home journal like THE CRITIC, which is always replete with the chief items of news from all parts of Nova Scotia and the Dominion.

The Calendars for 1887, which are now being distributed by insurance and other companies, are finely executed, and are in many respects an improvement upon those of previous years. The Queen Insurance Company comes out with a Jubilee Calendar, with a finely executed print of Queen Victoria. The Calendars of A. & W. Mackinlay, the St. Croix Soap Manufacturing Co., and P. & J. O'Mullin, of the Foyle Brewery, are very tastefully gotten up.

Communications have been forwarded by the Hon. Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State, to the Governor-General of Canada and to the Colonial Governors throughout the British Empire; calling upon them to consult with their respective governments and to appoint Colonial representatives for the conference to be held in London early next year. Imperial Federation not being yet ripe for discussion, the representatives will be asked to deal with but two questions, first, the general defence of the Empire, and second, the Commercial relations and Postal and Telegraphic communication between its several sections.

Over 200 cases of diphtheria are reported in Wilkinsburgh, an eastern suburb of Pittsburgh. Defective drainage is said to be the cause.

On the 30th inst. Prof. C. G. D. Roberts, of King's College, Windsor, will deliver a lecture, entitled "Echoes from Old Acadia," before the Canadian Club, New York. Mr. Erastus Wiman is president of the club.

An abundant vanilla crop will be harvested in Vera Cruz.

Gladstone is not poverty-stricken. His rent-roll brings him in \$70,000 a year.

There is great alarm at Buenos Ayres over the spread of cholera in that city and through the country.

A stove-dealer in Boston presents each purchaser of a stove with a fat turkey to test the oven with.

James G. Blaine, Jr., has become a journalist. He starts as a reporter on the Pittsburgh Times.

Florida has voted for a new Constitution. That is what Northern visitors go there for.

In the Republic of Mexico there is a territory of 126,000 square miles capable of producing sugar.

Appleton's American Cyclopaedia has, up to this time, brought to its publishers fifteen millions of dollars.

Trains now cross the Missouri river at Sioux City on the ice. This winter bridge is used every year.

A vinegar-maker in Chicago has failed, with \$340,000 liabilities; assets \$29. His creditors feel sour.

It costs New York \$250,000 to put underground the wires of the police telegraph system.

The Mayor of New Orleans has suspended his chief of police on charges of incompetency and embezzlement.

Boston's gross city debt has increased nearly \$4,000,000 the past two years. The total liability is \$46,000,000, and it keeps growing steadily.

Ex-Alderman McQuade, of New York, was sentenced to seven years imprisonment, and to pay a fine of five thousand dollars, for accepting bribes.

General Ben Butler's new lecture is entitled, "The Part that Massachusetts took in the War of the Rebellion." What Ben took in that war is an old story.

The lady lawyers of the U. S. will hold a convention at Ann Arbor. They propose a campaign to secure access to the bench, believing that if a woman can practice she can sit in the seat of judgment.

Jay Gould has a superstition that he is to be killed in an elevator. He can beat destiny at that game by using the stairs and compelling the elevator to come out of its hole and attack him where he will stand some chance.

The old Court House of Plymouth, N. H., in which Daniel Webster made one of his earliest, if not his first, plea, has, after having been used as a wheelwright's shop, been restored to its original appearance at Senator Blair's expense, and is now used for a library.

It is believed grave difficulties will soon arise between the United States and Mexico, growing out of the position taken by President Cleveland against the right of Mexico to try Americans committing offences against Mexican law while on American soil.

Archbishop Ryan announces that under decrees of the Baltimore Plenary Council, balls for charitable purposes are prohibited. The managers of the annual Catholic charity ball for which arrangements had been nearly completed are greatly surprised and worried by the announcement. They had already received subscriptions amounting to over \$3,000, though the affair was not to come off until February 21st.

The "big trees" of California will soon be extinct. Seventeen lumber companies, owning from 3,000 to 25,000 acres of redwood forest each, are waging the war of extermination with all the weapons known to the modern logging camp. The demand for the wood is unlimited, and all the mills are kept at work to the limit of their capacity. The forests are large, but the forces employed against them are swift and irresistible.

The tariff reform resolutions have been voted down by a majority of thirty-three in the House of representatives in the United States Congress. Uncle Sam evidently believes in protection; but why the people should be called upon to swell the revenue by millions more than are required, must puzzle even an astute Yankee. Perhaps our neighbors contemplate the building of a navy, and are storing up the surplus millions for this purpose.

The amount of money in the United States, exclusive of copper and nickel, was recently estimated at \$548,320,031 in gold, \$308,784,223 in silver, and \$630,000,000 in paper; total, \$1,487,104,254. This includes money in the Sub-Treasuries, in the Mint, in the National banks, in the State banks, and in the hands of the people. Assuming the population of the United States to be 60,000,000, it would show that the American people have in use \$24.80 of currency per head. Comparing this proportion with that of other countries, it is found that France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Cuba have larger sums, and the rest of the world, smaller. The highest on the list is France, \$44.20; and the lowest is Russia, \$5.10 per capita. Great Britain stands at \$21 per head.

The insane speculation in silver-mine stocks now going on in San Francisco shows how gullible is the average human being. These stocks have advanced so rapidly that the person who bought one day could always sell out the next at a large profit. Consolidated Virginia, for example, which was selling at \$2.05 a share on October 13, was quoted at \$64 a share on December 7. Some persons will doubtless make large fortunes out of this gigantic boom, and be looked upon with envy for the rest of their lives, if they are smart enough to hold on to what they have got. But, for one who makes a fortune, hundreds probably will be ruined, and it is said that the sufferers will be largely among the working classes, who have been tempted to risk their savings in a foolish attempt to get money without earning it. Even washerwomen are said to be among the victims.

The Czar of Russia adds an abnormal fear of hydrophobia to all the dangers, real and imaginary, which surround his royal path.

The Council of State has ratified the acceptance of the Chantilly estates presented to France by the Duc d'Aumale.

Cairo, Dec. 18.—The Suez Canal Company and the Egyptian Government have agreed to the widening of the Suez Canal from Port Said to the Bitter Lakes.

Mr. Parnell has been suffering for the past week from a severe gastric attack, which has confined him to his room, and prevented his taking any active part in political matters.

December 20 —Lloyd's have ordered a steamer to be built, which, it is intended shall surpass in speed and size any vessel now afloat. She will be constructed by the Fairfield company, of Glasgow.

The police surprised a gang of forgers in Madrid. A desperate conflict with revolvers took place, some of the forgers being wounded. The police succeeded in securing the counterfeiting machinery and materials, and notes to the amount of \$1,750.

M. Pasteur read before the Academy of Medicine at Paris, recently, the results of the first twelve months of his hydrophobia inoculations. In that time 2,490 patients had been treated by this method. Out of the entire number only ten succumbed to the disease.

Cairo, Dec. 14.—Advices from Khartoum say that at a recent meeting of Sheikhs there, it was decided that a regular government be organized under the Mahdi Adulla, and that taxes be levied, and an army organized to resist the Kaffers. The idea of an invasion of Egypt was repudiated.

The Legislative Council of the Colony of Natal, South Africa, have by a large majority adopted a motion, declaring that Sir Arthur Havelock, Governor of Natal, has forfeited the confidence of the colony, and praying the Queen to appoint another Governor in his place.

The International Cable Company is announced, with a capital of £1,000,000. The object is to lay a cable connecting England, the Azores, the West Indies, New York, and Canada. A landing concession has been obtained in the Azores.

Advices report improved harvest prospects throughout Australia, incident to a generous and well distributed supply of rain. Stocks of old wheat are of course light, but the new crop will be ready in a few weeks. General trade is fair, and money in good demand.

Cholera is making terrible havoc among the people of South America, and it is feared that the death-roll will include many thousands before the epidemic is stamped out. The weakness of most of the South American governments precludes the idea that any strong precautionary or preventive measures will be taken.

The Times announces that Lord Randolph Churchill has resigned his seat in the cabinet, owing to a disagreement with the admiralty and war offices with reference to increasing the expenses of the country in view of the existing financial difficulty, and also because he disapproved of the home legislative measures of the cabinet.

M. De Lesseps, at a meeting of the French Geographical Society, declared that the Panama Canal would be open for traffic in 1889, but there would not be time in the interval to construct the locks. These M. De Lesseps declared "can be made later, the essential point being that the shipping will pass through the canal in 1889."

The Vatican is conferring with the French Bishops, relative to the best policy to be pursued by the Catholic clergy in France in the event of the Chamber voting to abolish the relations between France as a State and the Vatican as a religious power. The negotiations with the French Government, however, inspire the belief that M. Defreycinet opposes annulling the Concordat.

A Berlin paper states that the Czar of Prussia is about to call a Parliament at St. Petersburg, to deal with the Nihilist problem. If the Czar once allows such an engine of public opinion to commence operations, he will find its power greater than he conjectures. With a Parliament Russian civilization would soon include religious toleration, and other reform would speedily follow.

The candidates for the Bulgaria throne keep popping up in such a variety of quarters that it is almost impossible to keep track of them. The latest is Prince Ferdinand, of Saxe Coburg-Gotha, a cousin of the late Prince Consort, whose claims are supported by the British Princess. Bulgaria has now been without a ruler for several months, and the principality may soon decide to dispense with the luxury of a prince as a ruler.

There is much discussion in England over the new money that is to be issued next year in honor of the Queen's Jubilee, and there are multitudes of suggestions. All the coins that have done service for many years, are doomed to be melted down, and furnish materials for a new face. In the new coinage, the Queen is no more to figure as a girl of eighteen, but is to be arrayed somewhat in the fashion of Queen Catherine Parr by Holbein.

Matthew Arnold, who has occupied a position in England as Inspector of schools for the past thirty-five years, believes the time has come for the appointment of a British Minister of Education. Considering the importance of public instruction and the immense sums devoted to it we are inclined to think that a Minister of education would be a desirable representative in the Cabinet, but unfortunately there is the element of politics which would in a great measure destroy the usefulness of such a Cabinet official.

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CAPE BRETON RAILWAY.

SECTION—GRAND NARROWS TO SYDNEY.

Tenders for the Work of Construction.

SEALED TENDERS, addressed to the undersigned and endorsed "Tenders for Cape Breton Railway," will be received at this office up to noon on Wednesday, the 12th day of January, 1887, for certain works of construction.

Plans and profiles will be open for inspection at the office of the Chief Engineer and General Manager of Government Railways at Ottawa, and also at the office of the Cape Breton Railway at Port Hawkesbury, C. B. on and after the 27th day of December, 1886, when the general specifications and form of tender may be obtained upon application.

No tender will be entertained unless on one of the printed forms and all conditions are complied with.

By order,
A. P. BRADLEY,
Secretary.

Department of Railways and Canals,
Ottawa, 15th December, 1886.

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RELIGIOUS.

CATHOLIC.

The Redemptorist Fathers of Portland recently held successful missions in Pictou and New Glasgow.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Walsh, the distinguished Bishop of London, recently celebrated the 19th anniversary of his elevation to the episcopate.

Macaulay's essay on "Ranke's History of the Popes," contains a truthful but deserving eulogy on the Catholic church; but what would he have said if he had lived to see Good Hope the most north-west Catholic mission in America! This place is within the Arctic Circle, and has been ministered to by Bishop Clut for 28 years, fish and dried caribou being his principal article of diet. This noble soldier of the cross is now taking a short rest for his shattered health in Montreal.

Archbishop Corrigan, of New York, has been recently discussing Mr. Henry George's views on labor. His position taken on the subject by His Grace has been questioned by a learned Catholic priest, Dr. McGlynn, of the same diocese. The matter has been referred to the Sacred College for adjudication, and the doctor has been summoned thither to defend his views. This will doubtless prove of great interest to the public.

Pope Leo XIII. is going to celebrate the 50th anniversary of his entering holy orders by an exhibition of religious art in the Vatican Gardens.

A Vienna authority states that nearly 263 Jews have been converted to Christianity in that place during the past year. Most of them embraced Catholicity.

The chancel of new St. Patrick's is adorned by eight statues, which were purchased in Rome by His Grace the Archbishop during his recent visit to that city. They add very much to the already imposing interior. Similar donations have been given to St. Joseph's by Hon. Mrs. Thompson and Miss Affleck.

BAPTIST.

The Baptists of Faringdon, England, have lately celebrated the 310th anniversary of their organization at that place.

Two of the most important fields of the Baptist Missionary Union—the Telugu in South India, and the Burman—are greatly weakened from the death and removal of missionaries.

The Baptists of New South Wales have lately celebrated their jubilee. The sum of £2,000 has been promised towards a jubilee fund of £5,000, which is to be raised in five years.

There are forty churches and eight mission stations connected with the Baptist church in New York.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The appeal of the Bishop of this Ecclesiastical Province for support to Foreign Missions has just been issued. It sums up very well the present state of things, and earnestly pleads for more adequate help in providing men for the mission field. The two great societies which commend themselves to churchmen are the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, which has been the nursing mother not only of heathen missions but also of the Colonial Church; and the Church Missionary Society, which has now 90,000 native Christians, and over 4,000 European and native teachers employed.

Three gentlemen were ordained to the Diaconate last Sunday at St. Paul's Church. Rev. T. C. Mellor will be stationed at Eastern Passage, where he has been working for some time as a lay-reader; Mr. Wolcott will labor at Harrietsfield and North-West Arm; and Mr. Lancaster will probably be appointed to the Bishop's Chapel.

Rev. R. C. Caswall, M. A., has resigned the parish of Lunenburg, and has left the town. Rev. T. R. Gwillim will, it is likely, go to Lunenburg to fill the charge until another rector is elected.

METHODIST.

The Rev. J. A. Smith, late of Ontario, has entered upon his duties as assistant on the Horton circuit.

Great changes will be made shortly in the administration of the Wesleyan Home Missionary Society in England, which, it is expected, will result in greater success than has attended the work in the past.

Five missionaries were sent this month from New York by the Methodist Episcopal mission of that city. They are to join the medical mission established lately in the north-west province of India by the Countess of Duffrin.

PRESBYTERIAN.

Rev. Mr. Genier, the evangelist, has been holding evangelistic meetings in connection with the Presbyterian church at Mount Stewart, P. E. Island.

Evangelistic services will be held throughout the congregations of the Presbytery of Halifax this winter.

The Rev. W. S. Whittier, late pastor of Chalmers' church, of this city, is at present pastor of a church in Australia.

The synods of the Southern Presbyterian Church, without exception, have sustained the action of the General Assembly in condemning the teachings of the Rev. Dr. Woodrow, of Columbia Seminary, on the question of evolution. The board of trustees of the Seminary demanded Dr. Woodrow's resignation, and elected the Rev. Dr. J. L. Girardeau to succeed him.

The Presbyterian Church is the largest denomination in Philadelphia. Including all branches it has over one hundred churches.

The Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States report a debt of \$200,000.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

THE BATTLE OF GRAND PRÉ.

FEBRUARY 9TH, 1746.

Room for the dead, the honored dead, in this fair year of grace;
In the Vallhalla of the brave, give them a glorious place;
The loyal men who crossed the sea, and came with battle ring,
To hold this free, fair land of ours a Province for their king.
When winter's iron fetters bound river and lake and bay,
And snow-drifts piled in fleecy white on plain and mountain lay
Where Blomidon's blue crest looks down upon the valley land,
And the great waves of Fundy lap the gray stones on the strand;
Here, where the scattered homesteads stood, from time and labor won,
The brave commander of the force quartered his garrison;
Retaining for his citadel the old French stone house set
Where the ripple of the Gaspereaux sighs round its ruins yet.

Down from the heights of Cobequid, on noiseless snow-shoes borne,
Slowly the crafty foemen came by march and travel worn,
Lightly the low toboggans swept, hearing their motley freight,
Food for the rebels on the march, shot for the brave who wait;
Broad rivers all unknown to fame their stealthy footsteps crossed,
The Shubenacadie, St. Croix, and Avon bridged by frost;
For sixteen weary days they crept over these leagues of snow,
As the grim panther tracks his prey so stole they on the foe;
In the deep stillness of the night—out from the cold, black cloud,
The snow-flakes falling one by one, the hemlock branches bowed;
Forest, and plain, and hamlet, all hushed in slumber deep,
And still before the driving blast the freezing Frenchmen creep;
With panting breath and weary tread through midnight's icy blast
With murder in their hearts they reach the Grand Pré camp at last.
The sentinels were at their post, within the watches slept,
Hushed in the tumult which the storm and cruel snow-drift kept;
Oh, God! that brave men thus should die, no time to rouse or stir,
One hundred English soldiers fell in that dread massacre;
Guarding the colours of their king in this new province land,
Scalped by the Indians' tomahawk, hewn down by alien hand

Roused by the din at dead of night, piercing the stone house then,
Brave Noble faced with sword in hand those fierce and blood-stained men;
The bitter wind in fury swept around his half-clad form,
The flash of steel and sweep of shot, more cruel than the storm;
The Red Cross flag of England waved above his fortress rude,
And brave as all her loyal sons he well her foes withstood;
All worn and faint, from battle sore, wounded in heart and frame,
From dying lips the valiant shout of "No surrender" came;
Nor nobler names can Britain write upon her glorious scroll
Than those who held the fort that night where Minas' waters roll,
Surprised, and overpowered and slain, yet heroes every one,
Those cold, set faces, white and still, turned to the rising sun.
Though many a score of years has marked, this earth with loss and gain,
Since Noble fought his last long fight on Grand Pré's snowy plain,
No stone is raised to mark the place where his brave comrades fell,
No monument above his grave of valiant deeds to tell.
Room for the honored dead to-day, in memory's tender grace,
To chronicle their glorious deeds above their burial place
Crimean heroes, all our own, Lucknow and Kara still tell
That Nova Scotia's sons can serve their Queen and country well;
But with their fame let us recall the battle long ago,
When English soldiers met the French at daybreak in the snow;
And held the fort, and kept the flag as only heroes could,
Where in this orchard land of ours the old gray stone house stood.
Now in this year of jubilee, when living deeds are read,
Glance backward through the centuries which hold our honored dead,
Where Lechmere sank, and Pickering died, where the brave Nobles fell,
Under our own old English flag, the flag they loved so well;
Where sunny Gaspereaux sweeps on amid the apple trees,
And the blue waves of Minas chant a requiem to the breeze,
Raise shaft or column to the dead, let some memorial fair,
Tell to our children's children still that Heroes slumber there.

December, 1886.

M. J. K. L.

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

AN INCONSEQUENT CHRISTMAS GHOST STORY.

We were sitting round the drawing-room fire late one evening last fall. We had a friend staying with us for a day or two before leaving for England, and he was to go into town the next morning to go on board the steamer, which left at noon. We had had a little music, and some "thought-reading," in which Mr. Galway had manifested a curious and apparently unerring power—a power tested, indeed, under conditions which precluded a possibility of illusion. It was natural that, when we drew round the fire before going to bed, conversation should glide into the occult and the so-called supernatural. From relations of experience in séances of various sorts we slid into more or less authenticated accounts of apparitions, with regard to which phenomena, real or imaginary, no one likes to confess belief, while the candid weigher of the value of evidence is, in many cases, impelled to an inward acknowledgment of its weight.

"Have you any sort of belief in ghosts, Colonel?" said Galway, partly in jest, but yet more in earnest.

"I could not answer you yes or no," said the colonel, "I fancy the more a man thinks and reads, the more he is inclined to say, 'I don't know.' Orthodoxy puts its own construction on the word; I put mine. To me it means that the cultivated love of truth does not dare to say it knows what it does not and cannot know. The word *know* is absolute. The practical evidence of our senses and of the few things we do know, leads to materialism. But we know so little that we are perforce driven back on the 'more things betwixt heaven and earth than our dreamed of in our philosophy.' I have tried to cultivate ghosts, but can't find them; but so many good people are so desperately afraid of shadows that they would think their poor little souls imperilled if they ventured to dip into a really curious literature, and consequently miss some singular evidence, not unworthy of sifting, on the other side. Take one instance. 'Captain Maryatt's serious account of the malignant female apparition,' which frightened himself and a brother officer who were staying in an old country house with the usual reputation of being haunted."

"What is the story, papa?" cried both the girls, to whom that sort of thing is mere w'olesome fun, in chorus.

"My memory is bad for details," replied the Colonel, "but it occurs in Robt. Dale Owen's 'Footfalls in the boundaries of another world.' It is, of course, at second hand there, and a story cannot go through two mouths without alteration, exaggeration, or corruption, as you will find out if you are ever led to investigate the laws of evidence seriously. Even at first hand you must know the narrator to possess that peculiar sobriety and restraint in statement which is so very rare, to command even a guarded credence. But if you, or rather Mr. Galway, for you girls have heard it before, want a ghost story at first hand, ask your mother for her Christmas eve experience at Harpenden."

"Oh, yes, mamma!" shouted Gertude.

"Yes, do, mother!" cried Emily.

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Mannering, "I have told it for your amusement as children, but it is not the sort of thing one cares to tell grown up people seriously, whatever one's own knowledge may be."

"But you know, mother, you have told it to us as fact," said Gertude, "and who ever knew you to tamper with the strictest truth?"

"Do let us have it, Mrs. Mannering, if you have no serious objection," said Galway, "I will promise not to be incredulous."

"You mean you will promise not to express incredulity, whatever you may think," said the lady laughing.

"Of course I could not be rude," said Galway, "but, joking apart, I should really like to hear it. I never heard a ghost story at first hand yet. I am prepared to shudder."

"There is nothing at all terrible or ghastly in it," said Mrs. Mannering, "but the most singular and really beautiful part of it does not rest on my testimony alone. Years ago, six or seven people could have told what they, as well as I, saw and heard. It is not three years since Ford, then our lady's maid, many years married to a respectable and prosperous tradesman, died; and it is not four years since she came to see me, when we were last in England, and referred to the occurrence with the sort of awe characteristic of her class—an awe which gives you the impression that they feel in some sort guilty in having even witnessed anything out of the common. Dear little Ford! she was as good as she was pretty and well-behaved, and was much valued and esteemed by us all—my sisters and myself. My next sister who saw nearly all that I did, is yet living, the widow of a clergyman. She is still, as she was then, a person of quick and clear perceptions, strong nerve and high courage. But we all shared those traits. I suppose it was in our blood, which was high Huguenot on one side, and old, old English on the other.

My father's side had given to England one of the two or three best known champions of liberty against Charles I., and the effigy of a giant crusader of olden times still lies in the old Church of King's-Langley. The other side had furnished the British Navy with at least half a dozen admirals, (one of whom had been ennobled for service in the war time), one or two distinguished soldiers, an Indian Judge, two or three clergymen; and the daughters of the house had all made high marriages. Of us, there were fourteen. Our father was rector of King's-Langley, a living in the gift of his brother, who lived in sober state and country utility at 'The Beeches.' We had, about a year before the time I am telling you of, sustained the irreparable loss of our sweet mother, an event fraught with infinite mischief to us in after life. The Rectory of King's-Langley was a smaller edition of 'the Beeches,' and my father had refused the Bishopric of Sodor and Man, and would just as likely have declined a bishopric which carried with it a seat in the Lords, if it had interfered with the privacy and comfort of his home-life. I was the eldest, my next sister had died, and the two succeeding ones were grown up. We had had scarlet fever at the rectory, and had been ordered away for change. My Uncle Frank had placed at my father's disposal a house at Harpenden, which was old fashioned, irregular, and quaint to a degree, but had good gardens, and stood in a healthy part of the country. Hitherto we repaired—myself, my sister Lou, and several of the younger ones, with a sufficient staff of servants. My father only came over occasionally to look after us, so I was in command. On the whole we enjoyed our stay in the rambling old house, and our independence exceedingly. We had been brought up with much strictness and particularity, and among other points, even a question about apparitions would have drawn upon any of us papa's contemptuous displeasure. Partly by reason of this kind of religious training, and partly constitutionally, we had a thorough, and somewhat scornful disbelief in anything of the kind.

Our contentment was therefore not in the slightest degree perturbed when we began to gather from hesitating hints from Ford, that the house had the reputation of being haunted, and that the servants were not quite easy in their minds. There were, it seems, the usual kind of stories—a lady had been murdered—a woman had murdered her child, and such like. Clergymen years ago had assembled to read the service of exorcism, then I believe extant in the prayer-book, and a garret up a stair which led up into a gable higher than any other part of the house had been secured with a marvellous strength and complication of iron bolts and bars. Here there was something tangible if it really were the case at all, and I resolved in my own mind to make an early investigation of this mysterious chamber, and told Ford to enquire about a blacksmith or carpenter to undo the fastenings. Ford was very reluctant, but I simply said I meant to put a stop to nonsense of that kind. Before Ford had executed her mission, however, something happened.

I was in the habit of visiting the nursery nearly the last thing at night, sometimes after Ford had done our hair. My way from our bedroom—my sister Lou slept in the same room—led thro' more than one passage, and up some length of a curious well-staircase, which terminated abruptly below in a sort of backhall which led, so to speak, nowhere. Traversing these stairs and passages I had more than once experienced a sensation of some thing or

person being near me, but I had soon nothing and paid no attention to the passing fancy. On my return this night, however, I became aware of a faint rustling or swishing sound such as might be made by extremely soft and delicate garments, which seemed to move steadily behind me. At the same time the sensation of an accompanying presence came over me far more distinctly than previously. I was not alarmed, however, and resisted a slight inclination to look back over my shoulder, until I had my hand on the handle of our bedroom door. Then, as I slightly turned, the faint rustling seemed to pass me, and I saw a sort of faintly luminous cloud about the size and outline of a human figure which wound on down the stairs till it disappeared at the bottom. I had the curiosity to look over the banisters and watch it winding swiftly and steadily down. My impression was quite distinct, yet I instinctively so far distrusted it that I said nothing to my sister, and dismissed it from my mind as something perhaps a little odd, but inexplicable, or perhaps, after all, an illusion.

Two or three times in the next week the same thing recurred, but with so marked an increase of distinctness that, unless I had suspected myself of a growing tendency to monomania, or a softening of the brain, I could no longer resist the conviction that I was frequently attended by a supernatural appearance. Still, tho' somewhat startled by the growth of certainty, I was not frightened, and continued my nightly visitations without carrying a candle, as had been my custom from the first. One night something provoked me from going, and Lou went in my place. She came back somewhat silent and perturbed, and then I broke my peace. Poor Lou was much exercised, but it seemed to me that if such things were permitted, or possible, there was nothing in them to affright us overmuch. My pluck and spirits were very high in those days.

Meantime Ford had reported that the man in the village best suited to the carrying out of my resolution was away for a few days. Lou and I went up the narrow stairway, leaving our footprints deep in accumulated dust and found the door at the head of it really bolted and barred as had been described, with absurdly superfluous strength.

I must tell you that our sojourn at Harpenden happened so late in the year that Christmas was close at hand. The last appearance of my apparently supernatural attendant (it was not every night that I saw her) was unmistakably that of a veiled female figure, diaphanous and more luminous than at first, but no face was distinguishable. I had begun to take a strong interest in the apparition, and to be almost disappointed if it failed to appear. Later I have fancied that, if I had observed them, atmospheric conditions may have had something to do with its appearance or non-appearance.

At last came Christmas Eve. Our Christmas celebrations were necessarily, in our absence from home at that season, of a very quiet nature, and we went to bed perhaps even earlier than usual. We had played, mostly sacred music, up to the last moment, and I had closed the piano, blown out the lights, (our lights were wax candles in those days) and shut the drawing-room door as we left the room.

We sat talking a little by our bedroom fire after Ford had left us, when she knocked at the door, and, on being desired to come in, entered with a very white and scared face.

"Dear Miss Hampden," she stammered, "will you and Miss Louisa please to come down to the hall! There is music playing in the drawing-room, and, oh, miss, it doesn't sound earthly, and we are all frightened out of our senses."

I looked at Lou and said, "We had better come." Lou said nothing, but rose and took a candle and we went down, Ford following us.

When we reached the hall I think all the servants were assembled outside, but at a respectful distance from the drawing-room door, pale and shaking with fear. A little dog which belonged to the house had accompanied them and stood cowering against the opposite wall. There were candlesticks on the hall table. We paused a moment and listened. Strains of the most exquisite sweetness, of a half wild, half sacred, infinitely pathetic, nature, were issuing from the piano (not a particularly good one). Whoever the player might be, neither of us, and we both played well, could have drawn such music from it.

"Charles," I said to the footman, "light two of those candles." Some of the servants had tallow candles in their bed candlesticks, but their lights were dim.

Charles, with a very shaking hand, obeyed in silence.

"Now," said I, "come close behind me and hold those two candles over my head as I open the door."

"Oh, pray, Miss, don't do it," came in a whispered chorus in various forms of speech, from the trembling crowd, and the dog gave a low moaning sort of a growl.

"Be quiet, all of you," I said, "and do as I order you, Charles. If any of you are afraid, go, except Charles and Ford, and Miss Louise and I will see what this is."

There was silence, but curiosity overpowered fear, and they all stayed.

"Lou, dear, come close to me," I said, "and Charles if you are a man, keep the candles steady as I have told you."

"Yes, Miss," said Charles, "I will stand by you." But the candles were very unsteady, for all the courage the poor fellow tried to screw up.

I walked to the door and with a rapid but very quiet motion threw it back. The piano was diagonally opposite, and the room was not a very large one. Lou was at my elbow and Charles managed to keep the trembling lights in position. The rest of them huddled close behind him, I stepped at once within the doorway, and the light would have enabled us to see clearly enough for certitude. But, indeed, it was scarcely necessary. The luminousness with which I had become so familiar on the well-staircase was brighter than ever before in front of the piano, and it seemed to emanate from the now quite well-defined figure which, with a perfectly

graceful deliberation, rose from the instrument, turned for an instant towards the door I had thrown open, (I was still unable to distinguish the face), glided with a spiritual smoothness towards a door—shut and locked—which opened from the corner beyond the piano into a disused room, and—simply vanished there.

Lou and I looked at each other blankly for an instant. Charles and several of the others had seen it all nearly as plainly as we. Ford was close to my sister, who is very tall, but she told us afterwards she just saw between her and me and with perfect distinctness I walked across the room and shut the piano again. "You had better all get to bed now," said Lou, in her commanding, incisive way, which generally ensured obedience, and they vanished accordingly.

We went upstairs. "Well?" said Lou quite calmly, but in an interrogative way. "Well," said I, "there is no ignoring that, even if I had been out of my wits before."

"Let us say our prayers," said dear Lou.

"Yes," I replied, "but what can be the state of such a wanderer between earth and heaven, who cannot be wicked or even malignant?"

"It is too much for me," said Lou, and she knelt down as she had done every night and every morning (and how many other times a day?) of her noble, unselfish and righteous life.

Long years after a sudden flush of thought came to me when I was myself in great tribulation in a far land. I think it was an inspiration. It connected itself with my sainted mother. Was she permitted to endeavor to cheer us in our unforgotten bereavement on that lonely Christmas eve, the first after her departure?

After Christmas the village artificer general returned and was brought to me. He was an old man, tho' hale, and it turned out that he was the very person who had, under orders, assisted in securing the mysterious garret-door 40 years before, after a regular service of exorcism performed by three clergymen together, one of whom was a Dean. He endeavored to dissuade me from having the door broken thro', but we were determined to probe everything to the bottom, and if possible to break the spell, if spell there were. The upper servants tried to remonstrate too, but Lou and I were resolute. The old man came with a stalwart assistant. The work was one of no small difficulty, so ponderous were the fastenings, and when they at last gave way, you may be sure none but Lou and I were on the staircase, which I had had swept.

A cloud of the finest dust almost suffocated us as the door was broken in, and we beat a precipitate retreat till it to some extent subsided. As soon as we could breathe we ascended and entered. A commonplace garret, thick with the finest dust, a dull light with difficulty penetrating the lozenge panes of a small double window on hinges—nothing but dust—not even cobwebs—and an old worm-eaten bedstead, washing-stand, and chair. I stepped first into the room. I supposed I had at last become a little excited. The idea of the solemn exorcism possessed me in spite of myself, and I was unable to restrain myself from asking, "Is any one here?" Both Lou and I felt convinced we heard an affirmative response which was more a sigh than an articulation. I confess we both shrank back. The old blacksmith and his assistant told those below afterwards that they had heard it too. To us there certainly seemed something weird and awful in the sound we thought we had distinguished. We quickly recovered ourselves, however, I called up the men again and made them open the window, then, not without difficulty, we got the place swept and dusted, and a terrible dusting it was. When it was clear we certainly distinguished on the floor near the bedstead one of those ugly dark stains which are common, and I believe pretty unmistakably, ascribed to blood. The old man said there was no doubt about it. It was not the first he had seen and it was now just as he had first seen it, when he had helped to barricade the ill-omened door.

We did not remain in the old house at Harpenden above another fortnight, but during the time we did stay, there seemed to be no further ghostly disturbance. Neither Lou or I ever ventured to tell our father of our adventure, and you may be sure that what we did not dare the younger ones did not.

"Thank you, Mrs. Maunering," said Galway, "I hope I shall sleep to-night."

"Come and have a pipe and a glass of whiskey and water," said the Colonel, "and you will sleep well enough; for me, I am case-hardened, I have been there before."

ADAM PHOOL.

OUR REPORTER'S XMAS RAMBLINGS.

On Saturday morning the reporter continued his rambles, but found that he had so many friends of THE CRITIC to see that he would have to take a somewhat zig-zag course, and pass by without mention a great number of shops that had large stocks of Christmas goods. The weather gave every sign of breaking up. A mild and enervating breeze from the south took the elasticity out of his step. The sun would occasionally dart out with dazzling brilliancy from behind the drifting clouds only to be again eclipsed, plunging the streets in gloom. The sleighing was still fair, but the snow was beginning to melt and formed occasional uncomfortable pools on the sidewalks. On his way to Bannister's Jewellery shop, his starting point, the reporter strolled through Bedford Row, which was crowded with market women and their customers. It was a busy scene. Pretty girls were making their purchases from robust comely market women, and filling their coquettish-looking market baskets with fresh eggs, pats of butter, and crisp celery. Vinegary old maids were driving the hardest kind of bargains and glaring "how dare your sis!" at the young men who jostled them in passing. Fat, good-natured matrons, accompanied by the inevitable boy, munching nuts and candies, and groaning under the weight of the well-

filled basket on his arm, cut a furrow through the crowd. The astute Hon. A. G. Jones was also there, and doing a quiet, but most effective canvas—asking this old farmer about his crops, or saying a pleasant word to that old woman as he passed along. No wonder he is popular with the people whom he shows such an interest in their welfare. Happiest of all the crowd were the Prestonians offering for sale their overgrown wreaths and Christmas trees. What a disgrace that no suitable market is provided to shelter these vendors of vegetables and country produce! Shall another Christmas arrive and find them still without a suitable market building?

The reporter threaded his way through the throng, passing into Granville street, and in a few minutes was in Wm. Bannister's snug shop, and glanced admiringly around at the handsome display of watches, clocks, jewellery and platedware, which line the shelves and fill the show cases. A bashful young man came in, and after much stammering, managed to say that a friend had requested him to purchase an engagement ring, but the toll-tale blood that rushed to his cheeks proclaimed who the victim really was. Leaving him to make his selection from a large assortment of rings, the reporter dropped into Mackinlay's, and found that the store in connection with this well known publishing and stationery house, presented its usual attractive appearance. Its shelves were lined with standard ledgers, cash books, reams of legal cap, and packages of the finest note and commercial paper, while the handsome show cases were filled with an assortment of rich fancy stationery and book-keeper's requisites. Large as is the stock in the store, it represents—but in an infinitesimal way—the great extent of the trade this house, which is the largest in the line east of Montreal. The genial Colonel and his two pushing sons and partners were busy in the comfortable counting room in the rear of the store, so merely bidding them good morning, the reporter went on his way to Brown Brothers & Co. The indefatigable Mr. Simson could not be seen, as he was at work in his laboratory, so the reporter rapidly inspected the retail department of this well known drug house. Some of the clerks were busy in dispensing medicines, others were supplying customers with delicate perfumes, fine toilet articles, pure spices and flavoring essences, and the other specialties for which Brown Bros. & Co. are famed. On a table was a varied assortment of Christmas cards, while some life-like statuettes were scattered about the show cases. One of these represented a jovial old gentleman with a Turkish smoking cap on his head, seated in a comfortable chair, his hand grasping a foaming mug of beer that rested on his knee. It took the fancy of an old farmer, who laughed immoderately over it. "That's just solid comfort," said he, "must be meant for a judge," then noticing the smoking cap, "no, he's a Turk; didn't know them Turks had so much sense," and he indulged in another roar.

The Ordnance Square is in the centre of the busiest part of Halifax, and as the reporter stepped on the sidewalk his eye met a constant succession of sleighs dashing along in both directions. There was the light cutter with its fast horse, immediately following come the truck sled loaded with barrels and boxes, and then a handsome family sleigh with a stiff coachman on the first seat, and a demure miss and her haughty mamma on the back. So in endless procession they passed on, wealth and poverty following one another in rapid succession.

Jennett's was close at hand, and the reporter slipped in and feasted his eyes on the rare china, the delicate, fragile vases, the large assortment of lamps and the bright platedware that is here offered for sale at such reasonable prices.

Then he cut across the street to the Army & Navy Depot. The name is synonymous with all that is best and purest in the way of fine champagnes, wines, liquors, beer and staple and fancy groceries. To say that an article is from Scott's at once stamps it as the very best. Leaving Scott's, the reporter now turned his steps towards the upper part of Barrington street, the domain of the wholesale dealer in produce and the commission merchant. He had been visiting the locality of handsomely fitted up shops and well paved sidewalks. He now entered that part of the city where the beautiful has to give way to the useful; where bags of potatoes, barrels of flour, tubs of butter, and chests of tea, were piled on the slushy, unpaved sidewalks; where fat, but heartless porkers, unconscious of the "true inwardness, or want of inwardness, of things," and without a hair to cover their nakedness, were being loaded on sleds by busy men. Threading his way through all obstructions, the reporter finally reached the wholesale produce house of W. Eaton & Son. Jovial Mr. Eaton, pipe in mouth, was up to his eyes in business, receiving and shipping goods. As everything proved that the firm was doing a rushing Christmas trade, the reporter asked no questions, but continued on his way to Messrs. Clayton & Sons, on Jacob street.

This progressive firm so well know the merits of advertizing that it is almost unnecessary to mention them, as every one in need of mens', youths' or boys' clothing or underwear, is sure to visit them, and get full value for their money. This establishment has attained to great proportions, and their salesroom is the largest in the country.

From Clayton's to Moir's is but a short walk, and here the reporter found the usual stream of customers who always patronize this favorite establishment. For a firm that is under the ban of the boycott they are doing a remarkably heavy business. In fact, the boycott has affected them so badly that they have been obliged to open a branch at the "Whitehall" to accommodate their Christmas trade. There, a large stock of confectionery will be displayed, candies will be made before the eyes of their customers, and nightmare-producing plum puddings will be kept on hand or made to order.

Ira Etter's, the Jeweller, at 199 Barrington street, was the reporter's next stopping place, and here he just glanced in to find a fine display of watches and jewellery. No one in search of bargains in this line should fail to pay Mr. Etter a visit.

Those of THE CRITIC's subscribers who like to celebrate Christmas in the

good old-fashioned way, with a glass of wine or a drop of the "crathur" to "warm the cockles of their hearts," will find the best and purest articles that money can buy at Kelley & Glassey's. Sparkling champagne, old port, Plymouth gin, the best brands of brandy, Bass' ale and Isley Blend whiskeys, can there be had by the barrel, gallon, or bottle; while John, that prince of concoctors, will tickle their palates with his famous mixtures, and make them smile and smile again at his very dry witticisms. The reporter dropped into Kelley & Glassey's, and there referring to his note-book found that he had neglected to call on friend Montgomerie of the Scotch Bakery. Returning to Barrington street, he paid a visit to the bakery, and was convinced that every preparation had been made to do a large Christmas trade. Orders were pouring in, and those in want of cakes, buns, and short bread, would do well to apply at once, or they will be too late.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness," as the reporter was convinced on calling at the Nova Scotia Steam Laundry, at 9 Blowers street. Piles of snowy linen were ready for delivery, and Mr. Pond and his assistants were busy as bees. But as it was long after his dinner hour, the reporter felt completely washed out and as limp as a rag, so he did not tarry, but made straight for the London Fruit Store, and there solaced by an excellent dinner, finished his rambles.

But a few words to the readers of THE CRITIC at parting, and let them be of solemn warning—Beware of Millican & Co., the custom shirt makers, of 156 Hollis street, as all going there are sure to get a "fit."

COMMERCIAL.

The usual precedent has been a dull state of trade during the month now rapidly drawing to a close. This precedent has, however, been perceptibly moved aside so as to permit of a very fair volume of trade being transacted, considering the time of the year. This state of matters is the more satisfactory as merchants are now intent upon squaring out all accounts rather than on soliciting new business. The fact that the last has been a prosperous season for the rural portion of our community is emphasized by the large and unexpected calls for groceries and dry goods throughout the Maritime Provinces. The general feeling in business circles is healthy and confident and few complaints regarding payments are heard. As compared with the two previous seasons the volume of the wholesale trade of 1886 has been larger and the profits more satisfactory.

The local event of the week was the sale at auction by the City Collector of sundry properties for non-payment of civic taxes. The prices obtained were merely nominal, but this was doubtless due to the fact that previous owners were given the right of redemption for one year, on condition of within that period paying the taxes together with 10 per cent, which will be added for legal and other expenses. In one or two instances protests against the proceedings were entered by mortgagees or their agents. We fail to see the wisdom of this course. The law as it now stands makes the civic taxes a first lien on all real property within the city limits and mortgagees have to take a second-place. If their advances on a given property are sufficiently large to be worth their protecting them, they should see to it that the taxes are duly paid. Undoubtedly it will be harder in future to borrow money on real estate than it has been in the past, but this is a matter that will regulate itself in a short time.

The open season continues and tends to retard communication to a considerable extent. The country roads generally are reported to be in a frightful condition. It is the custom of those, who have the care of the public highways in this part of the world entrusted to them, to cease operations in October or early November and then rely upon Nature to produce frost and snow to make the roads passable. When, as is the case this season, she fails to do so, the road (and the travelling public) must look out for themselves. Is not this rather a slipshod way of managing things? The initial cost of constructing really good roads that would last for many years with but little attention or expenditure, would be only slightly more than that of making them under the present unsatisfactory want of system; and, in the long run, would be far more economical. We would commend this matter to the consideration of Municipal Councils.

BREADSTUFFS.—The markets continue firm without notable change. The bull movement of the last two weeks proved a complete failure so far as forcing an advance went. The grain product of the world is admitted to have been largely in excess of all probable demand and the slightest effort to enlarge figures causes such immense quantities to come forward from first hands as to peremptorily stop all such movements. Locally there is a good consumptive demand, but the supply in hands is ample for the public needs. The discriminating tariff on grain and flour freights against Halifax, made by the western railways, has been removed and we can now compete on more even terms with Boston, New York and Portland for the handling of western grain and flour seeking its way to Europe.

PROVISIONS.—Trade in this line has been very quiet, and little beyond supplying the current consumptive requirements has been done. Newly cured hams are in good call, but prices rule fully 1c. lower than they did last year at this time. Hogs are in large supply, but figures do not come up to the expectations of raisers, as many say that rather than slaughter at ruling prices—5 to 5½c.—they will hold their hogs over till next spring. We cannot see that they will be wise to do so for the cost of keeping the beasts through the winter will be more than the cent or two more that they may possibly realize for them in the spring.

LIVE STOCK.—Large numbers of small Cape Breton and Antigonish neat cattle continue to come forward. They realize very small figures at present, which fact is not calculated to encourage those who raise and ship them to this market. The writer saw a pair of fine, healthy yearling bulls of this breed sold this week for \$17.50 together. Possibly it was cheaper

to the owner to give them away at that price than to care for them through the winter, but such transactions are likely to discourage breeders who hope to make any profit out of the business.

POULTRY are in large supply and prices are firm, especially for choice birds which find an active demand.

BUTTER AND CHEESE.—The best qualities are now sought for and meet ready sale. For reasons which it is unnecessary to repeat, having already been detailed at length, cheese holds its price very firmly and the tone of this market is decidedly buoyant.

FRUIT.—There has been no noteworthy change in the market. Though apple shipments continue to be large, they are chiefly of fruit that was sold some time since and has been held subject to buyers' orders. Dried fruits are of course in active call as is usual at this season, but figures remain the same.

FISH.—There has been a very little doing in our fish markets since our last issue. Any transactions that have taken place have been very limited indeed. There is yet on the coast some of the late catch of mackerel, shore and bank codfish and fall split and round herring, to come to market, but the quantities of pickled fish are very small. It is now very doubtful if any will come in until the first of the new year. Holders both in the city and along the coast are looking for an improvement, particularly in fat mackerel.

Bay of Island herring have been coming to market since our last issue, and most of the arrivals have been sold at about \$3.75 to \$4 per bbl.

MINING.

THE CRITIC takes this occasion to wish its many mining friends A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS. May it find them prosperous and in the enjoyment of perfect health and the best of spirits. Our many contributors who have kept us so well supplied with mining news have earned our heartiest thanks and good wishes. May they "live long and prosper," as Rip Vanwinkle so comically puts it, and continue in their praiseworthy efforts to aid us in advancing the mining cause. Some in the city, surrounded with every luxury that money can purchase, may be disposed to waste a little sympathy on the hundreds of isolated mining camps which at this merry Christmas time may be debarred from enjoying the many good things that are at our disposal, but we cannot be counted amongst the number. We conjure up visions of several picturesquely situated mining camps, mere clearings in the "forest primeval," where the Sabbath-like stillness is only broken by the foaming mountain torrent, and the crunching of heavy stamps forcing the adamant quartz to yield up its golden treasure. The fragrant spruce and hemlock forest is bowed under the weight of the freshly fallen snow, the bright sun pours a flood of exhilarating light into the clearing, but cannot penetrate into the depths of the woods where the wind sighs and moans through the trees, not with a mournful, but with a most soothing effect on the spirits. Gun in hand, and pipe in mouth, we enter the forest in search of partridge or rabbit. Our companion, a sturdy miner, full of wit and anecdote, guides the way and follows the footprints of the partridges on the freshly fallen snow. The snow dislodged from the branches by our passage falls on our heads and down the backs of our necks, and we sink deep into it at every step, but we go laughingly on. Suddenly, with a loud whirr, which causes us to nearly drop our guns, and to forget all about taking a shot, a partridge rises in flight, but soon takes refuge under the branches of a tree. His doom is soon sealed, so we go on and on, filling our bags with game, and do not return to the camp until the lumps have been lighted, and the long table in the boarding house has been laid for tea. Seasoned with the best of all sauces, hunger, the potatoes bursting from their jackets, the cold meat, the bread and butter, and the molasses cake, are devoured with a relish. Boiled tea takes a flavor, that my lady's most carefully prepared Oolong, served in the most delicate china at her popular five o'clock teas, never could equal. Then we gather around the roaring log fire, and listen to quaint stories of mining life. Of rich finds that prove the inventive genius of the narrators, and throw into the shade the adventures of Aladdin with his wonderful lamp. One of the men, with delicate hands and fine intellectual face, an unusual type of miner, with his sweet tenor voice, starts a catching ballad, and the men joining in the chorus, make the long room ring again with melody. Cards are now produced, and forty-fives are indulged in until bed time, when we turn in under the warm buffalo robe and are soon enjoying a refreshing sleep, undisturbed by dreams or nightmare. Compare this scene with the stately dinner party of high social life. The numerous courses that fail to tempt the appetite of the satiated guests; the skillful and gloomy butler, treading cat-like around, with a stereotyped smile on his face, while his heart is raging at not being able to be off with his "own Mary Ann;" the stilted conversation of the guests, the anger raised by the precedence given some young snob because he owns a title; the false flattery, the fawning subserviency, the cutting sarcasm, the fear of seeming to be natural that animates most of those present, which turns what should be a pleasant social gathering, into a few hours of misery. And then the horrors of the adjournment to the drawing room, where amateur singers and players, the most conceited of beings, repeat it maybe for the thousandth time, their favorite selections, and whilst inwardly sneering, lavish the most rapturous compliments on each other. Cads may say that we are vulgar and that we display very low tastes, but give us the enjoyment of the mining camps in preference to the tortures of the fashionable dinner party. Mining is decidedly a manly employment. Its followers have to encounter dangers, and to endure hardships that would appal any but the stoutest hearts. Gold is where you find it, and the best miners may toil in vain for years and only make a living, while the beginner may strike a fortune at his first venture. To the fortunate ones who have succeeded, we offer our congratulations. To their less successful co-laborers we say, toil on, hope on, and may another Christmas bring you rich reward.

[WRITTEN FOR THE CRITIC.]

A CRITICAL AND PUZZLING CASE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

On the 24th day of December in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and seventy-two, a gentleman entered a well-known and long-established toy and fancy store on Hollis St., in the city of Halifax. Notwithstanding the snow storm that raged without and the drifts that almost blocked the streets, the store was well filled with customers, and the proprietor and his assistants were busy enough, so that the gentleman examined such articles as attracted his attention unquestioned and apparently unnoticed.

While he was thus occupied, customers buttoned up overcoats, put on mufflers, drew hats and caps over eyes and ears, and with cherry "good-night," and occasionally a "Merry Christmas," went out into the storm with mysterious brown paper parcels under their arms, and customers came in stamping the snow from their feet and shaking it off of coats and hats. A pause in the hitherto incessant demands of customers gave the proprietor opportunity to glance at this gentleman, and then to come around the counter and say, "Can I do anything for you?"

A look of surprise and perhaps annoyance that he should be thus accosted by a person to whom he supposed that he must be unknown, passed over the gentleman's face, but he replied pleasantly enough.

"I really don't know that I wish to buy anything in your line, indeed I don't know why I came in here, unless to pass away the time. I had intended to get a few presents for nephews and neices in the country, but this storm has so blocked up the roads that even if the cars should push through I would have to remain at the station."

Just then the stamping of snowy feet at the door caused the Dr. for the first time to turn around, and as the new arrival entered, to advance with outstretched hand and cherry "Hallo, Rick!" which greeting was as heartily reciprocated with "Why Ned where'd you come from?"

"That's not what's troubling me just now, but where I'm going to."

"Don't let that trouble you, Ned, for a moment, I'll soon settle that trouble for you. You're going to spend Christmas with us."

"That is very kind of you Rick old fellow. Let me see, I was booked for the old homestead, should have been at the station this evening, but the storm has thwarted my plans. Sorry about it too. You see it has got to be a regular institution to be at the old place at Christmas, and I dare say they'll miss me. It's a kind of pleasant too to feel that you're missed when away. Then there's Mother. You know Mother, don't you, Rick? she's just splendid."

Dr. Ned saw a smile upon the toy shop man's face, and drew himself up and within his customary shell of reserve and said:

"We are keeping our good friend here waiting. Got some bairns at home Rick? How many? What! four? What kind are they, boys or girls, or both?"

"Two girls and two boys. My eldest is a girl of fifteen, then comes Rick thirteen, Maud eight and Ned six."

"Is that my boy, Rick? That's kind of you. But what puzzles me is how old I am."

The ludicrously puzzled expression and gesture which accompanied this explanation occasioned a hearty laugh, which was interrupted by Dr. Ned, who had seized upon a beautiful wax doll that could say "Pa" and "Ma," and turning to his friend, inquired, "What's the number?"

"No—Pleasant St."

"Do you think your boy could get a parcel to No.—Pleasant St. this evening for me, Mr. Cook?"

"If he can get himself home he can, for he has to pass there."

"All right," and laying the big doll aside, Dr. Ned proceeded to search the counters and scan the shelves, repeating to himself fifteen, thirteen, six, fifteen, thirteen, six. Presently he seized upon a railway train, locomotive, tender, baggage, first and second class and freight complete.

"You wind up here," said the shop man, suiting the action to the word, and placing the train on the floor, off it went colliding with the shop door.

"That's good!" exclaimed Dr. Ned, and gathering up the wrecked train and placing it with the doll, he continued his search among the toys and the refrain, "fifteen, thirteen, six," "fifteen, thirteen, six. No, I'm wrong, it's fifteen, thirteen, fifteen, thirteen, thirteen, thirteen. Now this is a tough case." Presently his perplexed look left his face and turning away he joined his friend, who had also been searching among the Christmas things and had made several selections.

"Ah! these are just what I was looking for," said Dr. Ned, quietly taking a pair of skate, selected by his friend, and placing them with the doll and train, apparently without being observed by his friend.

"Fifteen, fifteen, album, work-box, fifteen, skates. I say, Rick, it must be a fine thing to have children. Now your daughter must be quite a comfort to you—make slippers—some one to go skating with. I would like to have a daughter to read to me occasionally."

"I don't think you'd get either slippers or reading out of Mabel, but she's all the time bothering for skates. She ought to have been a boy, Ned. I'm very sorry about it too."

Another pair of Acme skates were added to Dr. Ned's pile, the search and the refrain ceased, and approaching the proprietor he said, pointing to his selections, "How much?" The bill was paid.

"Now please do them up. Thank you."

"You have address labels" Receiving one, Dr. Ned wrote on it.

"EDWARD HANNAFORD, Care Dr. RICH'D C. CAIRNS, No.—Pleasant St.," and stuck the label on his parcel.

"Your boy will be sure to leave this?" "Yes, of course, quite sure."

Then Dr. Cairns had his purchases put up and paid for them. "This parcel will be called for," he said, and the two friends bidding Mr. Cook "Good-night and a Merry Christmas," went out into the storm together.

"Anything on hand Ned, for the balance of the day?"

"No, except to write and mail a note to the folks at home."

"All right, come in here and write. You can mail your letter as we pass the office. Then we will call on a few patients that I must see on the way home."

The letter was written and dropped in the office and the men trudged through the snow, up George St. and along Granville.

"This way, Ned," said Dr. Cairns, as he entered the Acadian Hotel. The two friends shook and stamped off the snow in the hall and went up stairs to room No.—, at the door of which Dr. Cairns knocked.

"Come in Dr.," cried a cherry voice.

"This is my friend, Dr. Hannaford, Mr. Burton."

The glow of the bright coal-fire revealed a short, slight, wiry looking man lying on a lounge, who arose and held out his hand to his visitor. The proffered hand was grasped cordially, and Dr. Hannaford said,

"I think, Mr. Burton, we scarcely needed an introduction. I am glad to meet you again. Sit down pray, perhaps I should not have allowed you to get up."

"Well, I did rather forget myself, but I was kind of electrified at the sight of you. I'm right pleased to see you too. You'll excuse me if I stretch myself out again, I find I ain't strong yet," and a look of pain passed over the speaker's face.

Mr. Burton caught his foot as he was getting out of a sleigh, his head came into contact with the valise which he had in his hand, inflicting an ugly wound, and his wrist was badly sprained. He is getting on nicely, however, and will be able to return home in a few days. A look of pain again passed over Mr. Burton's face, but Dr. Hannaford imagined that the pain proceeded from a heart wound.

Dr. Cairns and his friend examined the patient's wrist and wound. Strict injunctions were given Mr. Burton not to venture out until his physician's approval had been obtained, care in diet rendered necessary by unaccustomed inaction was enjoined, and the visitors arose. As Dr. Hannaford bid Mr. Burton good night, he said,

"It is hardly worth while to wish you a 'Merry Christmas,' I shall wish you a 'happy New Year' though. Keep up a good heart, all will come right in due time. I will try to get to see you to-morrow if you would like me to see you?"

"Do, Dr. Hannaford; only one other visitor could give me greater pleasure. I shall look for you."

As the sound of the front door closing behind his visitors reached Burton's ears, he turned the key in the door of his room and paced the floor, his hand pressed to the wounded and throbbing forehead, and anguish depicted on his countenance. "Good God, have I merited this? Oh, Mary! dear wife! if you could only know how I long for you. If you could know how bitterly I repent, how gladly I would be forgiven and forgive. Merry Christmas! If I could only get away from the sight and sound of other people's happiness, if only to be in my desolate home. The sound of the Christmas bells will mock my misery."

Forgetful of his injury, Burton threw himself upon the lounge and falling upon the sprained wrist which rested in a sling, gave one cry of terrible pain and fainted away.

The two friends, after leaving Burton's hotel, trudged along to the end of Granville St., making a professional call on the way, then up to Pleasant Street.

"I have two more calls to make on this street," said Dr. Cairns, "and then I hope will be at home for the rest of the night. We will go in here. This is a very critical and puzzling case. I have consulted with Dr. Black and with Dr. White, our best men you know, and have made a special study of it, but it baffles us. I shan't prejudice your opinion though, but will leave you to form your own diagnosis." Saying which Dr. Cairns knocked at the door of a small but cozy looking house, and was ushered in by a young girl. What was there in her face and voice that was strangely familiar? Was it the recollection of a dream?

"This is my friend Dr. Hannaford, Millicent, Dr. Hannaford, Miss Millicent"—The rest of the name was drowned in the yelping of a little dog, that while sniffing around the stranger's feet, had been stepped upon by him as he advanced to greet Miss Millicent.

"Hang your coats and hats here, please, and come in!"

The apartment into which they were ushered was evidently the sitting-room, in which for convenience, the invalid's bed had been placed. A well filled mahogany book case occupied one corner of the apartment, an old fashioned mahogany eight day clock ticked its solemn "forever, never, never, forever" in the opposite corner. A mahogany table covered with books, papers, and writing materials, an easy chair, a rocking chair, a sofa, a chiffonier and an ottoman, all heavy, old-fashioned solid mahogany and handsomely upholstered, occupied all the floor and wall space that was not taken up by two doors, a richly curtained window, a Gothic grate, and a small iron bedstead that contrasted strangely with the rest of the furniture, and upon which appeared a tiny slippered foot, a shawl and head of rich brown hair.

Millicent held up her finger with a warning "sh," and whispered, "She's sleeping now. Please don't wake her up, she hasn't had any sleep since I don't know when."

"It's a very critical and puzzling case, I can't make out a diagnosis. As to prognosis, there can be but one termination, increasingly rapid decline. At the ratio of decline exhibited, with the bursting buds and new life of spring, this beautiful, this lovely blossom, will fade and fall."

Dr. Cairn uttered these ominous words in a professional undertone to his friend as they stood by the table in the centre of the room where their progress toward the bedstead had been arrested by Millicent's warning "Sh."

Dr. Hannaford made no comment, but stepped softly to the bedside. The patient lay across the bed. Her head touched the wall, against which the bed stood. What of the face was not hidden by the pillow was concealed by brown tresses.

Edward Hannaford was a born physician. Genius is never, can never be acquired. What genius is, who can define? Can more be said than that it is a peculiar aptitude and enthusiastic love for that wherein it is exhibited? This peculiar aptitude and enthusiasm our Dr. Ned had and evinced. No symptom, nothing worthy of notice in connection with a case, escaped his keen, penetrating and well educated perceptions. He had the knack of winning the sympathy and confidence of his patients and readily learned what was withheld from others. Errors in diet or habits that would pass unknown and unnoticed by the large majority of his professional brethren, were revealed to him and accepted as the cause of morbid symptoms exhibited, and which being corrected, wonderful cures were credited to him. In other cases disease was (as it always should be) recognized as remedial effort, which, if wisely directed, would result in victory—if victory were possible.

Dr. Hannaford had watched this patient but a few moments ere he concluded that she was *not asleep*, but was for some reason or other *pretending to be*. Why? Ah! that's the puzzle, that is the puzzle.

"I'd be willing to bet my Christmas dinner against a crust of bread that this is a case of wasted affection."

Having arrived at this diagnosis, Dr. Hannaford turned to his friend and said—"We should not disturb her?"

"No, certainly. We had better call again."

They went out together quietly, Millicent following them to the door and exchanging Merry Christmas wishes.

The other call, although one of more than ordinary professional interest, does not concern this narrative, so we will accompany Dr. Cairns and his friend home.

Dr. Cairns had a good practice, indeed he had stepped into a good practice to which he had been recommended by his preceptor and friend, who had retired from active professional work, so, as might be expected, the residence into which Dr. Hannaford was ushered, bore evidence of the prosperity of its occupant. "I never thought of asking you, Ned, about your luggage. Where is it? You will stay with us while you remain in town."

"Thank you. You're quite sure that Mrs. Cairns will be as pleased with this arrangement as I know you are?"

"Come in and see. My man will get your luggage from the International." The two gentlemen entered a room in which could be discerned, by the somewhat uncertain firelight, several figures, two of which ran to the door with the glad cry, "Here's papa!"

"Yes, and here's somebody else too, an old friend of papa's. Ned, this is my Mabel, and here is your namesake."

"Mabel, come here and welcome Dr. Hannaford, you have often heard me speak of him."

"Yes, pa, I'm very glad to see you, sir. Mother will be too," and the young lady placed her shapely hand in that of the guest, and gave him a smiling welcome.

"Where is mamma. Hasn't Rick come home? Where is he?"

"Rick is in the surgery, and Ma is there on the lounge, why, don't you see her Pa?" said Mabel. "She's asleep, I guess."

"Don't disturb her, pray," said Dr. Hannaford.

"Well, shall we go into the surgery, or sit down here?"

"Right here among the children, that is, if Mrs. Cairns will not mind when she wakes? This is the 'childrens' hour, you know."

"Are you as fond of poetry as of old, Ned? I sometimes wish that I had a better appreciation of poetry for my wife's sake. Marian is very fond of poetry, I think she must know a large part of Longfellow's poems by heart. Longfellow is her favorite, I believe."

"The love of true poetry should always increase with experience, as truth is essential to true poetry, and age should bring riper appreciation of what experience has proved to be faithful delimitation. I like less or not at all what I once considered poetry. I more thoroughly appreciate other word pictures of nature and life. If you will have patience with an illustration."

"Go on, Ned, I like to hear you, perhaps you may open my eyes or tune up the heart-strings, is that a good illustration? So that the poet may make the harmony in my heart, that he feels in his own, and that together with skill, makes him poet. Go on, now, let's have your illustration."

"Do you remember Longfellow's 'A Gl^{am} of Sunshine'?"

"Well, I don't know that I do. Can you repeat it?"

"I am sorry that I cannot."

"Well, I do declare, Marian has been listening to us. How long have you been awake? I have brought my old friend, Ned Hannaford, to spend Christmas with us. Ned let me introduce you to my wife."

Mrs. Cairns arose and extended her hand to her guest with more cordiality than he could have expected even as an old friend of her husband.

"Dr. Hannaford is heartily welcomed. By the way," she said, with almost a touch of coquetry, "you remind me of an old friend of my girlhood, and by a remarkable coincidence the name is the same. I went to school with a Ned Hannaford, whose home was in sight of my own."

"Marian—Marian Ellesley. Yes, of course I remember, how could I forget! Your father and mother still occupy the old homestead with Charlie and his wife and family."

(To be continued.)

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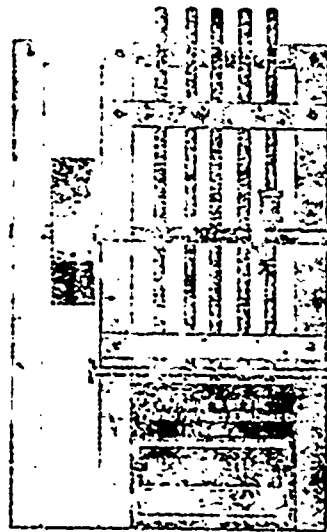
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[FOR THE CRITIC.]

A COWARD CONSCIENCE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY FOR BOYS.

They all blamed me, and I guess I deserved it. Aunt Matilda said there were no extenuating circumstances, (she got that out of the dictionary I know). When I began to write this I got a dictionary and a grammar and wrote a page, my! it was so full of big words I couldn't understand it myself, so I tore it up. The reason I am writing is that I can do nothing else. Aunt Matilda has me cooped up in the house with yards of red flannel round my throat, and she won't let me have a book or anything for fear I might be taking diphtheria.

Aunt Matilda is a model woman, so Marian says. When father and mother died with typhus fever, which he caught visiting in his large city parish, they left five children and very little money. Then Aunt Matilda came and brought us to Oldtown, father's old home. It was a very large old-fashioned house with deep window-seats and queer brass handles on the doors, so high that I could hardly reach them: for I was a little fellow then and Janie was only a baby.

Grandfather had been a minister, too, and the first gentleman in Oldtown when the house was built; but times had changed.

Now Oldtown had immense cotton factories and machine shops, and new rich people who made picnics and parties and invited aunt and the girls out of pure kindness and pity, you know.

We had all we could do to make both ends meet, and Aunt Matilda's fine old parlors were given up to summer boarders, and the three oldest girls taught school and music. There were four girls, Marian, Kate, Anna and Janie, and I was the only boy; my name's John and I'm fourteen years old and Janie's ten.

Of course I was awfully imposed on; don't I pity the poor boy who lives with a houseful of women? They are either bossing or coddling him. I know all about it, with five of our own and the summer boarders, how I hated them! It would be, "Johnnie, dear, get me some fresh water for these flowers?" "Johnnie, go down to the post office and get my papers?" "Johnnie, I want you to get me some ferns," or "to go an errand," and they just kept me on the trot, for you know a fellow hates to be disobliging, and every bit of spare time I had Aunt Matilda kept me picking berries to make pies and short cakes, and I hardly got a bit of them.

It was an awful hot day, the sun fairly blazed and the air seemed all moving and dancing with the heat. I was going through the porch, when Aunt called me to go with Janie to the back pasture for some more raspberries, as she had promised Mrs. Gray a short-cake for dinner. I did not want to go, but it was no use, I had to.

The berries were thick and the kettle nearly full when Janie said that Aunt was going to heat the brick oven that morning and bake it full of pies. "Duce take it," says I, "blast the boarders," and I dropped the kettle, the berries spilled out into the sand, and Janie began to cry and said she would tell Aunt Matilda. I told her to shut up and hold her tongue, for I was mad, and who wouldn't have been when he thought of Aunt Matilda, with her lips drawn in, lighting the fire with "Wild Bill of the plains," and that new "Harkaway book" that I had hid in the brick oven that very morning. So I just left Janie and the berries and went down to the river. I thought I might as well have some fun, for there was punishment in store for me any way.

Billy Brown was there, and we were standing on the bridge when a cab came driving up at a great speed. That Mr. Adams who had been escorting Marian to picnics and places was the only person in it: when he saw me he reined up and he jumped out and gave me a letter. "John," says he, "here is a letter I want you to give to your sister Marian, I was going to leave it at the post office, but you will do better, as I have only five minutes to catch the train. Be sure you give it to her, remember," and with that he jumped in again and was out of sight in a jiffy. I had no notion of going home just then to face Aunt Matilda in the first heat of her wrath, so I tucked the letter into my pocket and Billy and I went down to the mill-dam to sail his boat. The jib got loose, and I put my hand into my pocket for a piece of string, I jerked it out quick and the letter flew out with it right into the water and in an instant was under the great mill. I felt awfully, but Billy said never to mind, that quite likely it was only to say he was going home, nothing much anyway, and for me never to let on about it.

I stayed away until tea time, and when I came they were all sitting on the verandah and Mrs. Gray says, (sweet as sugar, looking straight at Marian), "Mr. Adams went back to Hartford to-day. I think it rather strange that he did not call to say good-bye to any of his friends here." Everyone was surprised and made remarks excepting Marian, and in a little while she followed me into the house and whispered to me to go down to the post office by the back lane and ask if there were any letters for her. When I came back and said there wasn't she got as white as chalk and gave a gasp, my! wasn't I frightened! Far more frightened than when I thought of what Aunt had in store for me, and I couldn't help thinking of that letter ground up under the cotton mill.

After a while the summer boarders went back to town and school began again. Marian used to walk back and forth with me, seeming so quiet and tired like, different altogether from what she used to be—full of fun and talking all the way—and whenever I thought of Adam's letter I could have choked myself, but of course that had nothing to do with making her so changed. Sometimes when I would be eating my meals, that letter would make such a lump in my throat that I could hardly swallow. I often talked to Billy about it, so often that he said he was tired and sick of the sound of letter. "Why didn't I tell Marian about it?" But I didn't, for what good would it do now she could never get it?

Just before Christmas Billy told me he had a great story to lend me, a

now kind, a love story, about two girls and a man. He proposed to one girl and the other got the letter and burnt it, and the one that waited for the letter and never got it, pined away and died with a broken heart. The word letter startled me and I says to Billy, "What if that letter I lost was a proposal?" and Billy said, "You can bet your boots it was, oh my, Johnnie, didn't you miss it, why he's as rich as a Jew, and he'd have given you a pony and a revolver and any amount of money, and we could have bought the whole Harkaway set. But it's no use now, for they say he is going to marry Miss Maude Findlay. I heard Miss Budd telling mother she was after him hot-foot; what that is I don't know. I hate Miss Budd; she said the reason we were so bad was because our fathers were ministers, and that we were ripening for the penitentiary."

When I went home I kept thinking all the time about that letter and the pony. And the muffins at tea just tasted like rolled up paper. Next afternoon I heard Kate reading a letter to Anna from Mrs. Gray, she wrote about meeting Mr. Adams, and that he seemed so changed and dull, but perhaps it could be accounted for in the death of his only sister, when he left Oldtown so suddenly it was to see her, and she died a few days after in Baltimore. He paid Maude Findlay some attention but nothing more than politeness required, as he had been their guest in summer: but Maude was a fool. He had made no inquiries about his Oldtown friends, but she had told him without being asked, that Mr. Curtis, the High school teacher was paying Marian a great deal of attention.

Kate laughed and said, "Is that so, Anna?" and Anna's face got as red as fire. I saw them.

Well the days went by and it came near Christmas. Mrs. Saltonstall was making a big party on Christmas eve. Mrs. Saltonstall is a swell, not the kind of a swell the Findlays are, though the Findlays are well enough.

Of course our girls got invitations, and then came the row about what they were to wear, for of course, as Kate said, they could not go shabby there, and Charlie Saltonstall coming home with a large party of friends from New York.

How their tongues did wag! For two or three days it was nothing but gowns and gloves and flowers and shoes, until I wondered their tongues were not paralyzed.

The very afternoon of the party Marian said she wouldn't go; said her head ached. I s'pose it did, but I think Mr. Adam's coming with Charlie had more to do with it, and then she had to sing next evening at the school children's concert.

It was just a glorious night. I went and looked out after Kate and Anna went off. There were millions of stars snapping and twinkling and where the moon was shining on the snow crust it looked like sheets of gold; everything was creaking with the frost.

Mr. and Mrs. Golden called for Kate and Anna. My, what a time they had getting rigged: Anna wore a pink frock and looked pretty enough, but Kate was a stunner. Aunt Matilda had given her a lace shawl and she fixed it over the front of her dress and bunched it up behind, what she called draping it, and her neck and arms were that white, and she wore big bunches of scarlet geraniums and black velvet ribbon and a locket and bracelets. She was a regular "Queen of Hearts." After they got off I went out to the pantry and found a mince pie. I ate more than half of it. Aunt Matilda don't allow me to eat cold mince pie; says it will make me dyspeptic and that I am predisposed to dyspepsia because my father and grandfather were ministers. Miss Budd says that is the reason I'm so bad. She's a cantankerous old maid, and I paid her up for talking about Billy and me. Aunt Matilda found the stilts and sheet in the back porch, but she never suspected. After I ate the pie I went up to Janie's room. She was going to bed early so that Santa Claus would be sure and come; I offered her a piece of pie but she was so awful good that she wouldn't look at it and said "She know I stole it."

I told her she was a "silly" to go to bed so early for there was no such person as Santa Claus, that Marian and Aunt Matilda filled the stockings. Then, of course, she began to cry and made such a hubbub that Marian came and took her on her knee. I sat down beside them, and she told us Christmas stories and talked about father and mother until Janie went to sleep, and then she went downstairs, and I felt so sorry about being bad that I could not help crying. I made up my mind to go right down and tell her about the letter.

When I went into the parlor she was playing softly. I went up to her and was just beginning to tell her when the front door knocker rattled and she never heard it, for Aunt Matilda came in loaded with parcels and looking mighty important. As soon as she caught sight of me she says, "Why, John, what are you doing up this time of night?"

"Here is your lamp, take it and go to bed at once." I said "Yes'm," and when I heard her talking with Marian in the dining-room, I blew out the light and crawled under the table, for I was bound to find out who filled the stockings. Aunt Matilda looking so mighty mysterious made one forget all about being good.

The room was warm and dark. The heat from the open fire came under the table which had a long cloth hanging down.

I was beginning to get sleepy, for I waited and waited for them to come in. At last I heard steps, but they were heavy and loud, not like Aunt's. The door opened and a tall man with a high pointed hat, long boots, a red cloak and a lot of pistols and knives in his belt, came in. He had a most awful face, a hooked nose, and long mustache and one of his eyes was out. He looked all around as if waiting for somebody. Presently the door opened again and a red Indian with feathers in his hair came dragging in a woman by the hair. He put her down on the rug and I saw her face, it was Marian, quite dead.

Oh, my! dear, oh dear! how awful I felt. I tried to scream, but I couldn't make a sound.

The brigand pulled the very letter Mr. Adams had given me out of his pocket and asked the Indian if Marian was the victim, and he said "Ugh." Then he began walking up and down with a sword in one hand and a pistol in the other, he whistled and stamped his foot and the awfullest thing came in. It looked like a gorilla covered with long white hair, and its teeth filed to a point and claws with long nails.

Then he says, "Bring hither the perpetrator of this vile deed of the letter. Revenge, blood, blood."

Then the awful thing came over to the table and lifted up the cloth and made a dive at me. I was perfectly paralyzed with fright. I couldn't move. At last I made a jump and hollered as loud as I could. I heard chains rattling and I kept on with my eyes shut: "Murder! thieves! help!"

I heard a terrible noise in the hall just like tons of coal rolling down stairs and lots of people talking, and Anna, Mr. and Mrs. Golden, and Mr. Curtis came running in.

They pulled me from under the table and told me to open my eyes and stop the noise, that I had only been dreaming; and when I saw Marian I threw my arms round her and hugged her I was so glad she wasn't dead.

And she said no person was to ask me questions until morning, and she tucked me in bed and kissed me.

Christmas morning the stockings were full, even if I didn't see who put the things there. And at breakfast Anna told how, just as Mr. Curtis was undoing the door chain for her, they heard piercing cries of murder: Mr. and Mrs. Golden came running too. When they got into the hall there was Aunt Matilda in her night gown and extra frilled night-cap, on the upper landing with toes sticking through the rails shaking that police rattle-loud enough to wake the dead, and murder! help! coming from within the parlor.

I was so glad that Kate was behind, for, if Mr. Saltonstall had heard the row, you could not have kept him from coming in and he would never have got over the frilled cap.

Aunt Matilda was so tickled about Mr. Saltonstall's attentions to Kate that she didn't say very much, only about the pie.

Then Kate said she could put two and two together—could mince pie and dime novels—but why Marian for a victim? Come J. Annie, explain? I hadn't the least notion of telling it to her, but that morning I made up my mind to tell Mr. Adams.

On the way to church I went up close and tried to speak to him, but he was with another man and never let on. Church seemed awful long and I sat and made faces at Kittie Findlay, until she laughed out. Aunt's eagle eye was on me then, for we were all at church but Marian.

Coming out the aisle I pressed close to Mr. Adams and gave him a nudge and when we came into the vestibule I whispered, "That letter you gave me last summer for Marian, I lost it in the mill-pond."

He turned red, then white. "Heavens! Do you mean to say she never got it?"

And I said "Yes," very low.

He came out and made a straight wake for our house. I ran down the back lane and got there first, and showed him into the parlor where Marian was. Then I shut the door and sat down in the hall, although I did want to see if he proposed like they do in stories.

When Aunt Matilda came she was for walking straight over me into the room. I told her to keep off; there was a mad dog in there and she ought to remember "cave canem."

At dinner I told the whole story. It was then that they all blamed me, and Aunt Matilda said there were no "extenuating circumstances," but I felt that good I didn't care a snap what they said.

They allowed me to go with them to the concert in the evening.

My! didn't Marian sing? Mr. Saltonstall said, "Quite as good as anyone he heard abroad." It was there that Billy Brown gave me a piece of tobacco. I chewed it and it made me horribly sick. Aunt Matilda looked at my tongue. It was queer looking, and she said it was a symptom of diphtheria. I never let on, but I had to pay for deceiving her. She is keeping me all alone in this bare room.

I see Mr. Adams coming in. He is going to marry Marian next month and take me to live with them; he says I need looking after.

I feel better and I'm done writing, so I will slip out and see if Billy is sick.

I don't know whether I'll try the tobacco again or not. I promised my Sunday-school teacher last Sunday when she gave me the motto, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." So I 'spose I'll have to try the tobacco, as she said I must act according to the motto. C. R. F.

THE MARITIME PATRON,

AND ORGAN OF THE

Maritime Provincial Grange—Patrons of Husbandry.

"In Essentials Unity—In Non-essentials Liberty—In All Things Charity."

[All communications intended for this column should be sent to the editor of the Maritime Patron, EDWIN S. CREEP, M. D.; Newport.]

The quaint old proverb: "If wishes were horses beggars might ride," comes to mind to-day and mingles with the hearty Christmas greetings—the "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year" wishes that beam from every face, that come so readily and heartily from every lip, and echo on the Christmas air and through the Christmas hearts of all whom we meet.

But wishes are not horses, luckily for the beggars and those who would have both beggars and steeds to support; nor are Merry Christmas and Happy New Year wishes potent for their own fulfillment or more than "the

compliments of the season." Were it otherwise, could these kindly wishes work their own fulfillment, what a merry Christmas would to-morrow be, and how happy would everyone be during the year of grace 1887. For surely in this wide world, wherever Santa Claus comes; from heggar to ruder, there is no one so poor, there is no one so isolated by rank or wealth as not to receive the good wishes of the season.

There will be very many glad hearts and merry homes to-morrow, and gift-belen Christmas trees and stockings, and there will be during the coming year much more of joy and gladness and happiness than of grief or unhappiness. But should we be scouted for spoiling Christmas mirth if we remind you, dear reader, that there are also homes from which grief will drive joy and gladness—will sit at the Christmas board, mingle with the circle around the Christmas fire and meet the guests at the door? There are other homes, if that dear sweet name may be applied to such abodes, where poverty and want cry, not for Christmas trees and presents, not for empty impatient wishes, but for food and clothing and warmth. Shall we sin against your Christmas, dear reader, if we remind you that, though grief may have its course, we may and should fulfill our good wishes by carrying food and clothing and comfort and mirth to homes where poverty would otherwise reign even on Christmas day.

In another sense besides that in which it was spoken is it true that "whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance," and in this other sense the saying will have many illustrations on the morrow. Let us find our happiness not in adding to abundance, but in relieving want, in brightening and making merry people and homes and Christmases.

May the "good tidings of great joy" brought midst glorious light and the burden of that first Christmas anthem sung by the angel choir eighteen hundred and eighty six years ago, soon be fulfilled in "great joy" and in "peace on earth and good will."

Good friends we wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

(Continued from last week.)

Constitutional control and direct effort. Laws may encourage zeal and promote efficiency instead of interfering with it, and may be so framed as to be selective of the best material for legislative and executive work but they cannot create zeal, wisdom or efficiency. Just as a machine may be devised and constructed so as to perform its work in the best manner and with the least possible loss of power, yet cannot create but only apply power.

In the future the Maritime Provincial Grange will alone be responsible for the efficiency or inefficiency of the order in its jurisdiction so far as efficiency or inefficiency are under the control of the legislative body and its executive officers.

Our order undertakes most important work—the work of educating its members and improving their condition intellectually, morally, socially and professionally—and of promoting the best interests of agriculturo generally. This work cannot be efficiently done, it will not be done at all, and had better not be attempted, except by the best possible machinery, wisely, patiently, perseveringly, and zealously directed.

The funds at the disposal of the Maritime Provincial Grange, if not amply sufficient for the efficient prosecution of the work of the order, will at least be greatly increased by retaining the tax hitherto paid to the Dominion Grange and by charter fees from new granges.

The Executive Committee of the Maritime Provincial Grange particularly request that the annual sessions of our Division Granges be held as early in January as possible, that all reports be made and dues and taxes paid promptly, and that Division Granges select as delegates the very best material to compose the Maritime Provincial Grange, to which will be intrusted the responsibility of designing the machinery of the order in its jurisdiction, and of making the laws that shall control and direct the working of that machinery.

The present time is a most important crisis in the history of the order. Let us each, as good and true patrons of husbandry, realize the responsibility resting upon us individually. Let nothing be hoped for or said or done at this crisis with selfish motives, but let the good of our noble order and the accomplishment of its object inspire all our minds and actions.

The regular annual session of the Maritime Provincial Grange will be held at Truro commencing at 10 o'clock a. m. on Wednesday, 26th day of January next. The session will probably occupy at least three days. The Executive Committee of the M. P. G. will hold sessions on Monday evening 24th, and Tuesday 25th prox. at the same place. The usual arrangements will be made for reduced fares on the Intercolonial and Windsor and Annapolis Railways.

Patrons attending sessions coming by railway will purchase first-class tickets at their nearest station and receive from the secretary a certificate entitling them to free or reduced fare tickets for returning.

Upper Newport Grange, No. 619, mourns the loss of a worthy and much esteemed charter member, Brother George McKay, who on Thursday afternoon, 16th inst., was "called to lay down his implements on earth." Bro. McKay leaves a wife and four children with whom, and a large circle of relatives and friends, we most sincerely sympathize.

Morinos are the best sheep on poor land where pasturage is scanty, but where there is good grazing the mutton breeds are preferable. If the breeds are adapted to the pastures, and the proper conditions necessary so, each breed considered, the profit will be greater. Not only the amount of food in the pasture but the climate and quality of the grasses composing the pastures affect the sheep.

GOLDEN THOUGHTS.

The secret of success is constancy to purpose.
 We are never so happy or unhappy as we suppose.
 It is better to be nobly remembered than nobly born.
 One man's word is no man's word; we should quietly hear both sides.
 Truth is as impossible to be soiled by any outward touch as the sun-beam.
 Moderation is the silken string running through the pearl chain of all virtues.
 Many people are busy in the world gathering together a handful of thorns to sit upon.
 Every man throws on his surroundings the sunshine or shadow that exists in his own soul.
 "Life is what we make it," and when you "make it" hearts, you want to have either a "lone hand" or a very good "pard."—*Pretzel's Weekly*.
 A Russian Proverb.—Before you go to war, pray once; before you go to sea, pray twice; before you take a wife, pray thrice.—*Plauderecke*.
 Teach self-denial and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer.
 Good health is catching, and all are benefited by contact with healthy people. Ill health is also catching, and the most healthy person is depressed by contact with the sick.
 Carlyle says: "We are firm believers in the maxim that, for all right judgment of any man or thing, it is useful, nay essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad."
 Men's lives should be like the day—more beautiful in the evening; or like the summer—aglow with promise; and like the autumn—rich with golden sheaves, where good deeds have ripened in the field.
 Everything which tends to discourage or agitate the mind, whether it be excessive sorrow, rage or fear, envy or revongo, love or despair—in short, whatever acts violently on our mental faculties, tends to injure the health.
 Every one, however humble, has a mission to do, or say, or think something which has never been done, or said, or thought; therefore, let each one, while gratefully accepting the help and profiting by the wisdom of others, cultivate his own individuality, live his own independent life, and fulfil his own possibilities.
 That was a rare philosophy in the 3-year-old boy who asked what night is for, and not content with the reply, "For rest and sleep," added, "No papa, night is for to-morrow." Many men and women grown, never apprehend so clearly the true relations existing between rest or recreation and the serious duties of life.—*Chicago Advance*.

Rest is not quitting The busy career; Rest is the fitting Of one's self to sphere, Tis the brook's motion, Clear, without strife,	Fleeing to ocean After this life 'Tis loving and serving The highest and best, 'Tis onward unswerving, And this is true rest.— <i>George</i> .
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Richter said no man can either live piously or die righteous without a wife. Milderbe said the two most beautiful things on earth are women and roses. Saville considered there was more strength in women's looks than in any laws. Victor Hugo didn't believe that women detested serpents so much from fear, but more through professional jealousy. Boucicault wished that Adam had died with all his ribs in his body. The only thing that consoled Lady Blessington for being a woman was that she could not be made to marry one.

Had you ever a cousin, Tom?
 Did your cousin happen to sing?
 Sisters we have by the dozen, Tom;
 But a cousin's a different thing.
 Did you find, whenever you've kissed her, Tom—
 Though the kiss be a secret between us—
 Your lips were all of a blister, Tom?
 For she's not of the sister genus.

We can recommend our readers to use Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup in all cases of coughs, colds, etc.

"Mother, the ladies are all out in Spring dresses, and I can't wear mine for fear of neuralgia." Pshaw, child, go, and buy a bottle of Salvation Oil.

ADVICE TO MOTHERS.—Are you disturbed at night and broken of your rest by a sick child suffering and crying with pain of cutting teeth? If so send at once and get a bottle of "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" for Children's Teething. Its value is incalculable. It will relieve the poor little sufferer immediately. Depend upon it, mothers; there is no mistake about it. It cures Dysentery and Diarrhoea, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, cures Wind Colic, softens the Gums, reduces Inflammation, and gives tone and energy to the whole system. "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" for children's teething is pleasant to the taste and is the prescription of one of the oldest and best female physicians and nurses in the United States, and is for sale by all druggists throughout the world. Price twenty-five cents a bottle. Be sure and ask for "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup," and take no other kind.

A CARD

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, etc., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the Rev. JOSEPH T. INMAN, *Nation D, New York City*.

IRA ETTER, To Gold Miners!

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 The sale of it (Putner's Emulsion) is steadily
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R. A. Nisbet, " " " "	J. H. Margeson, " " " "
Brown Broe. & Co., " " " "	R. McFatrige, M.D., " " " "
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SEALED TENDERS, addressed to the Post-
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Printed notice containing further information as
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 Post Offices at Roman Valley and St. Andrews,
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CHARLES J. MACDONALD,
 Post Office Inspector.
 Post Office Inspector's Office,
 Halifax, 16th Dec'r., 1886.

Letter from FRANZ LISZT,
"The King of Pianists."
 (TRANSLATION).

Messrs. Chickering.—
 It is very agreeable to me to add my name to the concert of praise of which your Pianos are the object.

To be just, I must declare them perfect (perfectissimus, superlatively perfect.)

There is no quality which is foreign to them. Your instrument, possess, in a supreme degree, nobility and power of tone, elasticity and security of the touch, harmony, brilliancy, solidity, charms and prestige, and thus offer a harmonious ensemble of perfections, to the exclusion of all defects.

Pianists of least pretensions will find means of drawing from them agreeable effects; and in face of such products—which truly do honor to the art of the construction of instruments—the role of the critic is as simple as that of the public; the one has but to applaud them conscientiously and with entire satisfaction, and the other but to procure them in the same manner.

In congratulating you sincerely upon the great and decisive success obtained at the Exposition at Paris, I am pleased to anticipate the happy continuation of the same in all places where your Pianos will be heard, and I beg that you accept, gentlemen, the expression of my most distinguished sentiments of esteem and consideration.

ROME. (Signed) F. LISZT.

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CLAYTON AND SONS.

VERY HEAVY ALL PURE LAMBS- WOOL SHIRTS AND DRAWERS, 60c., MARKED DOWN FROM 75c.

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ALL WOOL EXTRA HEAVY SHIRTS AND DRAWERS, 60c.

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CUSTOM TAILORING DEPARTMENT: GOOD TWEED SUITS, to Order, \$12.00.
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VERY FINE HEAVY TWEED PANTS, to Order, \$4.25.

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CLAYTON AND SONS.

We have recently made a Large Purchase of VERY FINE BLACK WORSTEDS.

Which we are enabled to offer at Prices never heard of before in this class of Goods.

SUITS \$16; PANTS \$4.25; OVERCOAT \$12.

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[ADVERTISEMENT.]

A COCKNEY MOOSE HUNT.

A cockney, who had hardly been out of the sound of Bow Bells, came into some money and the other day landed at Annapolis, bent on having a moose hunt in Nova Scotia. Although more familiar with the yard-stick and the tape than with firearms, he had provided himself with a small arsenal of rifles, revolvers and fowling pieces, and had also quite a cargo of luggage, including the inevitable bath tub and hat case. He finally got under way for the hunting grounds, accompanied by a large retinue of servants and Indian guides, and, after many strange and perilous adventures, which will doubtless be duly described in the English papers, reached his destination in the wilds of Queens County. After some days' search the Indians got on the track of a moose and placed our hunter in a good position for a shot. He waited for some hours with his rifle ready cocked, expecting every moment that a moose would rush by, and finally a noble buck in full flight came tearing down upon his hiding place. Filled with consternation he stood with his rifle at his shoulder as if transfixed, and, instead of pulling the trigger as the moose rushed by, he yelled out in great excitement, "Bang! bang!" Then, forgetting that he was standing on the edge of a gully, he in his fright jumped back and fell some ten or twelve feet to the bottom, covering himself with bruises and badly spraining his ankle. His cries soon brought up the guides, who removed his boot and then carried him to a lumber camp, which fortunately was within a few miles. He endured an agony of pain in the passage, and his ankle was greatly swollen. The cook of the camp was quite a doctor in his way, and after seeing our unfortunate sportsman comfortably placed in a bunk he produced a bottle of Simson's Liniment, and applied it with the most soothing effect to the sprain and bruises. In a few days the patient had quite recovered and turned his steps homeward, completely cured of all desire to distinguish himself as a moose hunter. The only thing in the "blasted" country he can praise is Simson's Liniment. The cook told him he would as soon go into the woods without food as without Simson's Liniment, and he was right.

Simson's Liniment is a combination of vegetable oils so blended together as to form the most reliable article of the kind ever manufactured. It has been a great success in the cure of rheumatism, sciatica, bruises, cuts, neuralgia and other innumerable pains and aches to which mankind is subject. Price 25 cents.

Simson's Jamaica Ginger possesses all the valuable properties of Jamaica ginger and is particularly recommended as a tonic. To the aged it will prove a great comfort, to the dyspeptic it will give relief. Price 25 cents.

Sony he forgot. - Scene—A comfortable bedroom, lamp dimly burning, thermometer down to zero, man and wife sound asleep, child moving restlessly about on a small bed in adjoining room. Time—One a.m. The stillness is suddenly broken by a loud wail from the child. "What's the matter?" calls the mother. "I'm sick." "Charlie! Charlie! don't you hear. Bobby is sick!" But Charlie won't wake up. Prolonged wailing from the child, which finally wakes Charlie up.

"What's the matter?"

"Why Bobby is sick, did you get those worm tablets I asked you to go into Brown Brothers for? No! Then you can look after him yourself. I told you he had worms and Abbott's Worm Tablets are a sure cure."

Charlie shiveringly crawls out into the cold air and tries to pacify Bobby. But he won't be appeased, and is so sick that a visit to the doctor is necessary.

"Hum, haw," says the doctor, "worm's, hey. Here take these tablets and give him a dose," and as Charlie hurries home half frozen, he mentally vows that he will never be without a package of Abbott's Worm Tablets in the house.

Symptoms of worms in children are often overlooked. Worms in the stomach and bowels cause irritation, which can be removed only by the use of a sure remedy. Abbott's Worm Tablets are simple and effective.

We have all experienced the discomforts of chapped hands and lips, and know what an annoyance they too often prove. Women in the discharge of their household duties find that in, despite of their utmost care their hands will become red and swollen. They know that nothing charms the masculine heart more than a pretty, soft, white hand placed confidently in his, and are often in despair. If they will send to Brown Bros. & Co.'s for Price's Glycerine Cream, they will obtain a sure remedy for chapped hands and lips. No family should be without it.

BROWN BROS. & CO. ARE AGENTS FOR
 McPHERSON'S DIPHTHERIA WASH—Highly recommended as a cure for Diphtheria.
 POLAND MINERAL SPRING WATER—For Bright's Disease and Urinary Complaints.
 BUTCHER'S ANTISEPTIC INHALER—For the permanent cure of Catarrh, etc.

Witty apology.—A Physician calling one day on a gentleman who had been severely afflicted with the gout, found to his surprise the disease gone, and the gentleman rejoicing in his recovery over a bottle of wine. "Come along doctor," he exclaimed, "you are just in time to taste this bottle of Madeira; it is the first of a pipe that has just been broached."

"Ah!" replied the doctor, "these pipes of Madeira will never do; they are the cause of all your suffering."

"Well then," rejoined the gay merrable, "fill up your glass, for now that we have found out the cause, the sooner we get rid of it the better."

Simson's Jamaica Ginger possesses all the valuable properties of Jamaica Ginger, and is particularly recommended as a tonic. To the aged it will prove a great comfort, to the dyspeptic it will give relief. Price 25 cents.

Neglected Coughs and Colds. Few are aware of the importance of checking a cough or common cold in its first stages. That which in the beginning would yield to a mild remedy, if neglected, soon preys upon the lungs. Simson's Tob and Aniseed will afford speedy relief.

For a good tonic and appetizer use Chemical Food manufactured by W. H. Simson.

The present seems to be the age of adulteration, and no articles of modern use are so easily palmed off on an unsuspecting public as impure and worthless spices and flavoring essences. Every house wife knows how discouraging it is to have her best dishes spoiled by the trash that is ground up and sold as cloves, pepper, &c., or her custards and puddings rendered unpalatable by impure flavoring extracts. It should be remembered that Brown Brothers & Co.'s Flavoring Essences are articles of true merit, and that their spices are the purest in the market.

Symptoms of worms in children are often overlooked. Worms in the stomach and bowels cause irritation, which can be removed only by the use of a sure remedy. Abbott's Worm Tablets are simple and effective.

Abbott's Diarrhoea Cordial is a superlative remedy for diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera morbus, &c.

Of all the tortures that human flesh is heir to, toothache is one of the worst. Why it should be endured is a mystery, as Brown's Toothache drops are an infallible cure.

How often do we meet persons for the first time and receive a pleasant impression, which is immediately changed to disgust when their mouths are opened, showing dirty, neglected teeth, while a whiff of bad breath that newly knocks us down is blown into our faces. Fisk's Lavodent is a delightful, fragrant and elegant tooth and mouth wash, and is an indispensable article for the toilet table. Manufactured by Brown Brothers & Co.

At this season of the year, when colds and sore throats are so prevalent and the dangers of diphtheria are so great, it is well to remember that Brown's Astingent Gargle is a reliable cure.

No more suitable and acceptable present could be given than a bottle of Mayflower Cologne. It is a refreshing and fine flavored perfume.

Simson's Golden Eye Water for weak eyes is invaluable.

Young man, if you wish to capture your girl every time, just give her a bottle of Mayflower Hair Glos.

Remember the place to get the best

DRUGS, CHEMICALS,

Pure Spices, Flavoring Essences,

DYE STUFFS, PATENT MEDICINES,

AND ALL KINDS OF

Druggists' Sundries,

IS AT

BROWN BROTHERS & CO.

Ordnance Square, Halifax.