

Technical and Bibliographic Notes / Notes techniques et bibliographiques

The Institute has attempted to obtain the best original copy available for filming. Features of this copy which may be bibliographically unique, which may alter any of the images in the reproduction, or which may significantly change the usual method of filming, are checked below.

L'Institut a microfilmé le meilleur exemplaire qu'il lui a été possible de se procurer. Les détails de cet exemplaire qui sont peut-être uniques du point de vue bibliographique, qui peuvent modifier une image reproduite, ou qui peuvent exiger une modification dans la méthode normale de filmage sont indiqués ci-dessous.

Coloured covers/
Couverture de couleur

Covers damaged/
Couverture endommagée

Covers restored and/or laminated/
Couverture restaurée et/ou pelliculée

Cover title missing/
Le titre de couverture manque

Coloured maps/
Cartes géographiques en couleur

Coloured ink (i.e. other than blue or black)/
Encre de couleur (i.e. autre que bleue ou noire)

Coloured plates and/or illustrations/
Planches et/ou illustrations en couleur

Bound with other material/
Relié avec d'autres documents

Tight binding may cause shadows or distortion along interior margin/
La reliure serrée peut causer de l'ombre ou de la distorsion le long de la marge intérieure

Blank leaves added during restoration may appear within the text. Whenever possible, these have been omitted from filming/
Il se peut que certaines pages blanches ajoutées lors d'une restauration apparaissent dans le texte, mais, lorsque cela était possible, ces pages n'ont pas été filmées.

Coloured pages/
Pages de couleur

Pages damaged/
Pages endommagées

Pages restored and/or laminated/
Pages restaurées et/ou pelliculées

Pages discoloured, stained or foxed/
Pages décolorées, tachetées ou piquées

Pages detached/
Pages détachées

Showthrough/
Transparence

Quality of print varies/
Qualité inégale de l'impression

Continuous pagination/
Pagination continue

Includes index(es)/
Comprend un (des) index

Title on header taken from: /
Le titre de l'en-tête provient:

Title page of issue/
Page de titre de la livraison

Caption of issue/
Titre de départ de la livraison

Masthead/
Générique (périodiques) de la livraison

Additional comments: /
Commentaires supplémentaires:

This item is filmed at the reduction ratio checked below /
Ce document est filmé au taux de réduction indiqué ci-dessous.

10X	12X	14X	16X	18X	20X	22X	24X	26X	28X	30X	32X
											✓

THE CRITIC:

A Maritime Provincial Journal.

DEVOTED TO

Commerce, Manufacturing, Mining and Agriculture.

1.50 PER ANNUM.
SINGLE COPY 3 CTS.

HALIFAX, N. S., DECEMBER 23, 1887.

{ VOL. 4
No. 51

CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

Editorial Notes	1
Christmas	1, 2
Christmas Weather	3
Chit-Chat and Chuckles	3
News of the Week	4
The Sorcerer	5
Commercial	5
Poetry—Christmas in the Olden Time	6
The Two Trombones	6, 7
Christmas-Eve	7, 9
Mrs. Duncan's Will	10-12
Mining	12, 13
The Maniac Skater	14, 15

THE CRITIC,

Published every Friday, at 121 Hollis Street, Halifax Nova Scotia,

BY

CRITIC PUBLISHING COMPANY.

Edited by C. F. FRASER.

Subscription \$1.50 per annum in advance. Single copies 3 cents.

SAMPLE COPIES SENT FREE.

Remittances should be made to A. M. FRASER, BUSINESS MANAGER.

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 this 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.

Preparatory to Christmas, the bells are rung at dead midnight throughout England and the continent, and after the solemn celebration of the mass, for which the churches in France, Italy, Belgium, Spain and Portugal are magnificently adorned, it is usual for the revellers to partake of a collation, that they may be better able to sustain the fatigues of the night.

During the last days preceding Christmas it is still the custom for Calabrian minstrels to descend from the mountains to Naples and Rome, saluting the shrines of the Virgin Mother with their wild music, under the poetical notion of cheering her until the birth-time of her infant at the approaching Christmas. In a picture of the Nativity by Raphael, he has introduced a shepherd at the door playing on a sort of bagpipe.

In the Protestant districts of Germany, and the north of Europe, Christmas is often called the "children's festival," and Christmas eve is devoted to giving presents, especially between parents and children, and brothers and sisters, by means of the so-called Christmas-tree, which has now been long familiar enough to us. There is a heartiness and simplicity about many Scandinavian and Teutonic customs we have borrowed which, when we do so, always appeals to our best instincts. Such customs seem to flourish with us like a plant reverting to a congenial soil.

It was an old English superstition that, on Christmas eve, the oxen and sheep were always to be found on their knees as in an attitude of devotion, at midnight; and that, after the change from old to new style, they continued to do this only on the eve of Old Christmas day. Superstition though it was, it always struck us to be a beautiful, devout and poetical idea. It was derived from a prevalent mediæval notion that an ox and an ass which were present at the Nativity fell upon their knees in a suppliant posture, as appears from numerous old prints, and from a Latin poem of Saunazaro of the 16th century.

The custom of singing canticles, called Carols, at Christmas, which recalled the songs of the shepherds at the birth of Christ, dates from the time when the common people ceased to understand Latin. The bishops and lower clergy often joined with the populace in carolling, and the songs were enlivened by dancing, and the music of tambours, guitars, violins and organs. Fathers, sons, mothers and daughters mingled together in the dance; if in the night, each bore in his hand a lighted wax taper. Many collections have been made of these naive and æreal carols, which filled the hours between the nocturnal masses, and sometimes took the place of psalms in the churches.

Who rescued Jerry Toomey, who fell off a staging into the water on Tuesday? The *Mail* of that evening says:—"He would probably have been drowned but for *Harry O'Toole*, who jumped overboard and rescued him." The *Chronicle* reports:—"His cries were heard by the men on the 'Charger,' and *Captain Burrows* jumped over and rescued the man." While the *Recorder* has it:—"Wm. *Banbrich* jumped overboard and rescued him just in time." And again on Wednesday evening the *Recorder* says:—"Raymond *Byers* was the person who rescued Jeremiah Toomey." "Which is Napoleon and which is Wellington, Mr Showman?" "Whichever you likes, my little dears, you pays your money, and you takes your choice?"

The common custom of decking houses and churches at Christmas with evergreens is derived from ancient Druidic practices. It was an old belief that sylvan spirits might flock to the evergreens, and remain untripped by frost till a milder season. The holly, ivy, rosemary, bay, laurel and mistletoe furnished the favorite trimmings, which were not removed till Candlemas (2nd Feby.) In old church calendars Christmas eve is marked *Templa exornantur* (the temples are adorned.) Holly and ivy still remain in England the most esteemed Christmas evergreens, tho' at the two universities the windows of the college chapels are decked with laurel. With us the ubiquitous and almost equally beautiful spruces and firs take the place of the more numerous varieties of evergreens available in Europe, and we think most of us are well satisfied with the substitute.

There seems to be bad weather in the *Chronicle* office on Monday mornings. We were again honored last Monday by the notice of that journal, this time to the extent of about three-quarters of a column of good, sound, hearty abuse. Our offence is that we think differently to the *Chronicle* on some national questions, and that we do not devote our columns to abuse of the Dominion Government and Conservatives generally. Not to agree with the *Chronicle* is to be "anathema maranatha." Moreover, our modes of expression seem to be extremely distasteful to our contemporary. This we regret, because, as we have no idea of enacting the roles of the old man, the boy and the ass, in the endeavor to please everybody, there is not much probability of an amendment in the eyes of our censor. We shall expect next Monday to be solemnly cursed with bell, book and candle, as a new variety of Christmas function.

Christmas celebrations in England have long lost their primitive boisterous character, the gambols and carols are nearly gone by, and family reunions and evergreen trimmings are nearly all that remain of the various rough merriments which used to mark the festival. The last memorable appointment of a "Lord of Misrule" was in 1627, when he had come to be denominated a "grand captain of mischief." In the United States, as the Puritans were at first stern opponents of Christmas pastimes, the day was for a long time less generally celebrated in New England than in the middle and southern States. But it was made a legal holiday in several of the States, and is usually observed, as with us, by a religious service, by making presents, by trimming houses and churches with evergreens, and by imitating the German custom of Christmas trees. When Christmas weather is what we are in the habit of thinking it should be, bright and clear, with plenty of snow and sound ice, Canadians can revel in the pleasures of sleighing and skating, among the purest and most exhilarating of enjoyments. These, however, have often of late years been wanting, owing to the apparently growing uncertainty of climatic influences. But whatever fails, the brilliancy of the shops at Christmas-time is perennial, and imparts a general sense of comfort and joyousness to young and old. May all, tho' in widely different degrees, be able at this season to profit by some of their alluring wares! The Christmas cards, which have for some years past become so prominent and graceful a feature of the general kindness and goodwill of the season, are this year perhaps more costly and gorgeous than ever before, tho' not in the least behind those of former years in taste and elegance. Moreover, they are of all grades of value, and there are many, as beautiful in artistic simplicity as the more costly, which are within the compass of the most modest purse. Altogether, we have little regret in exchanging for the rude merriment and clumsy pageantry of our forefathers, the milder and more polished methods now at our command, wherewith to give expression to the feelings natural to the season.

CHRISTMAS.

The institution of Christmas is attributed to Pope Telesphorus, who died A. D. 138, and throughout the subsequent history of the Church it has been the most noted of Christian solemnities.

It was at first a "movable feast," often confounded with the Epiphany,

and celebrated by the Eastern churches in the months of April and May. But in the fourth century St. Cyril of Jerusalem obtained from Pope Julius 1st an order for an investigation to be made concerning the day of our Saviour's nativity. The result of inquiry by the theologians was an agreement upon the 25th December.

The chief grounds for the decision were the tables of the Censors in the Archives of Rome. There is in reality no sufficient connection between these tables and the tradition of the Church to furnish a sound historical basis for the fixture, and some of the early, and most prominent and erudite, of the Fathers, deemed it not inexpedient to meet in some degree a prevalent classic belief in a possible re-incarnation of the Sun god of their mythology, of which Hercules was to them the most familiar example, and in which light many worshippers of the old gods were not indisposed to regard the pretensions of the new avatar. A very elaborate myth of the course of the Sun, personified, had a strong hold on the pagan imagination. In it the life of the Solar Deity, which typified to the devout heathen all the benevolence to mankind and his habitation, the earth, which we ascribe to the Creator, was annually repeated and exemplified, in stages which corresponded to the Birth, the perils of immaturity, the assured maturity, the sacrifice to nullify the powers of Evil, and the ultimate triumph. The shortest day being the 21st December, the birth of the Sun-god was put on the 25th, the first day that shows any elongation. That the investigators were influenced by such considerations, there is plenty of evidence, amongst much other, St. Augustine, in a sermon on the nativity of St. John points out that the saying of the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease," procured for him his place in the calendar as lord of the waning year. For his festival is held on the 24th June, the last day of the summer solstice, and that from which the days begin to decrease, while from that of The Christ, at the opposite pole of the year, the days grow in length, even as the Saviour was said to grow "in stature and in favor with God and man."

It was, indeed, impossible to fix the true date with absolute certainty, and in fact it little mattered, so long as Christendom agreed on a day on which it should celebrate with joy and thanksgiving, mingled with humility and reverence, the most momentous event the world ever saw.

Tradition favored the winter time, and added the circumstance that He was born about the middle of the night. The decision as to the date was uniformly accepted, and on it, from that time, the Nativity has been celebrated throughout the Church.

The day was considered in the double light of a holy commemoration and a cheerful festival, and was accordingly distinguished by devotion, by vacation from business, and by merriment.

In such manner we still honor it, and shall doubtless do so to the end of time. In all its aspects—religious, joyous, social—as a time of family union and of universal charity and kindness—in every sense, and with every sincerity—we wish our Readers and the world at large a happy and a merry Christmas.

CHRISTMAS WEATHER.

Among other ideas suggested by the approaching Yule-tide, is that of the sort of weather we have of late years experienced at this season. When old men remark on a certain amount of change which they think they perceive in the seasons since "the days when they were young," their juniors are not inapt to set it down to the glamor which surrounds the long bye-gone, as in the notion of the "good old times" which really possessed many far from ignorant people not so very many years ago. We know well enough now what those "good old times" were. Times in which men and women of high estate lived in castles and manions, the chill of the stone walls of which was only barely modified by tapestry which moved and fluttered in perpetual drafts and currents of air—times in which the rushes which covered the halls grew foul from the debris which constantly accumulated amongst them, a foulness which, however, produced no impression on the tough olfactory senses of their denizens; a time when a great Queen swore like a trooper, habitually used the language of a char-woman, and breakfasted on strong beer and stroug meats. What was the state of the peasant requires a strong realization of minute history to comprehend. There does, no doubt, exist in the minds of elderly people a glamor of this kind, which invests the past with the deceitful beauty of a mirage. But a good memory, carefully excluding, so far as it can, the embellishment of facts, may feel some reasonable conviction that it has observed a gradual but distinct change in seasons. It is doubtful (to say the least) to many, whether some modification in the winters throughout a great part of Canada has not taken place within the last thirty years; or, at all events, whether, if the average cold be about the same, moderate weather has not come to prevail up to a much later time of year. It certainly seems that "green Christmasses" have been very frequent of late years, and generally that both summer and winter have been less distinctly hot and cold than formerly.

The general remark is the same in the old country. Winter there seems to have become a nondescript season of rain, fog, slush and mild weather generally; and summer a vanishing quantity of utter indefiniteness—not even the Frenchman's old idea of "three hot days and a thunderstorm." Fifty years ago, the winter after the Queen's accession, the Thames was frozen over down to below Blackwall, where it is half a mile wide. It was not smoothly frozen, but in hummocks, which, however became quite compact; and the summer which preceded it was abnormally hot. The year before half the mail-coach routes in England were impenetrably blocked by deep snow. Of course no stress can be laid on phenomenal seasons occurring now and then, but there is a general impression among people of sufficient age to give experience that there has been a gradual fusion of the lines which formerly separated one season from another with a more marked distinctness than is now apparent.

MANUFACTURERS OF MINING, MILLING, DESULPHURATING AND SMELTING APPLIANCES.

ALSO— ENGINES, BOILERS, PUMPS, DIAMOND ROCK DRILLS, PORTABLE TRAMWAYS, ELECTRIC MILLS,

Electric Tables & Plates, &c.

Estimates for erection of complete reduction works furnished. Ores assayed and treated by sample or car-load lots. Address

HARTSFELD P. S. F. & M. CO. Lock Box 459, CINCINNATI, OHIO

Mine, Mill & Factory Managers

Whether in Halifax or in the Country, Your attention is respectfully called to the fact that

AARON SINFIELD, Mason and Builder,

has had over thirty years experience in and has made a special study of, all kinds of Furnace Work, so as to reduce to a minimum the expenditure of coal and time, and to make the process of "firing up" as expeditious as possible. Expert advice given, and all kinds of Jobbing promptly executed in a thorough, mechanical style at lowest possible rates.

Address—7 GOTTINGEN ST., CITY

ARMY & NAVY DEPOT.

- 325 cases Old Brandy, x, xx, xxx, v.o.
- 110 cases Holland Gin
- 125 " Plymouth and Old Tom Gin
- 200 doz. Bass' Pale Ale
- 300 " Burke's Stout
- 200 " Claret and Sauterne, very choice
- 50 bbls. Loaf & Granulated Sugars
- 100 bags Jamaica Sugar, crystallized
- 50 chests choice Tea, 25c. to 70c. per lb.

JAMES SCOTT & CO.

Gold Miners—Attention!

THE OLDHAM GOLD DISTRICT

Is known as one of the most reliable Gold-producing Districts in the Province, and

The STIRLING MINE

As one of the best in the district.

The whole of this valuable property, consisting of ninety five and a-half acres, is now offered for sale, together with all the shaft houses and mining buildings erected thereon. There are several noted leads now opened up on the property, all gold bearing, and investors now have an unequalled opportunity of purchasing a thoroughly reliable gold mine. For Terms and Particulars enquire at

THE CRITIC OFFICE, 161 HOLLIS STREET.

Are Second to NONE in the Maritime Provinces. Our Type Our Prices Our Facilities

HALIFAX PRINTING COY., Opposite Western Union Telegraph Office, Halifax, 161 HOLLIS ST.

We print by hand
Print by steam,
Print from type,
Or from blocks—by the ream
Print in black,
Print in white,
Print in colors
Of aombre or bright.
We print for merchants,
And land agents, too;
We print for any
Who have printing to do
We print for bankers,
Clerks, Auctioneers
Print for druggists,
For dealers in wares.
We print for drapers,
For grocers, for all,
Who want printing done,
And will come or may call
We print pamphlets,
And bigger books, too;
In fact there are few things
But what we can do.
We print labels,
Of all colors in use, size,
Especially fit for
The many producers.
We print forms of all sorts,
With type ever set,
Legal, commercial,
Or houses to let.
Printing done quickly,
Bold, stylish and neat,
At HALIFAX PRINTING COY.
161 Hollis Street.

LEITH HOUSE, (ESTABLISHED 1818)

KELLEY & GLASSEY

(Successors to Alex. McLeod & Co.)

196, 200 and 204 Follis Street,

Have the largest and best assortment of

WINES, LIQUORS, ETC.

INCLUDING:

- Piper Heidsieck, Cabinet, Imperial Sillery, CHAMPAGNE.
- Royal Perrier's Duff, Gordon & Co's Old Brown Sherry, Duff, Gordon & Co's Old Pale sherry, Old Newfoundland Port.
- Sandeman's No. 1 Various Brands CLARET, LIQUEURS, Assorted SYRUPS, Fine Scotch Ginger Wine, John Bull and Angostura Bitters, *** and *** Hennessy's and Martell's Brandy, Royal, William's, SCOTCH WHISKEY.
- Celtic, Mackie's, Geo. Roe's * and ***, Kinnaird's L. L., Dunville's, Mitchell's, Plymouth, Old Tom, GIN.
- Holland, Walker's Old Rye, Gooderham & Worn's 5 and 7 years Old Rye, Corby's I X L Old Rye Whiskey 7 summers wood, Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey.
- IRISH WHISKEY.

Wholesale and Retail.

City Foundry & Machine Works

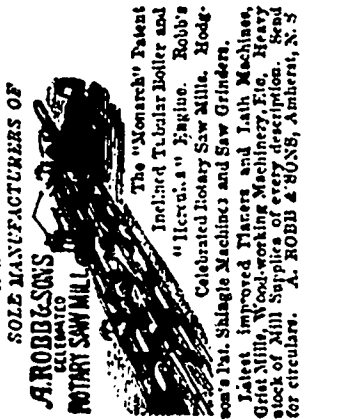
W. & A. NOIR,

MECHANICAL ENGINEERS & MACHINISTS

Corner Hurd's Lane and Barrington St.

Manufacturers of Mill and Mining Machinery, Marine and Stationery Engines, Shafting, Pulleys and Hangers. Repair work promptly attended to. ON HAND—Several New and Second-hand Engines.

Amherst Stove and Machine Works. Established 1846. SOLE MANUFACTURERS OF



CHIT-CHAT AND CHUCKLES.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good," said the Christmas turkey, as a cyclone whirled him from under the farmer's uplifted hatchet into the next county.—*Tid-Bits.*

Friend—Your dog looks completely worn out. Has he been on a hunting expedition? Host—Oh, no; he followed my wife on a Christmas shopping tour to-day. He is a young dog and cannot stand more than forty or fifty miles a day.

This may possibly have occurred about Christmas-time:—"The weather is very cold," said the unfortunate man on his way to the scaffold.

"Yes," responded the sheriff with kindly encouragement, "but you will soon be where it's warm enough."

The *Burk's Falls Arrow* makes the following announcement.—Fifty cords of hardwood, cut in two foot lengths, dry or green, for subscriptions to the *Arrow*. Butter, eggs vegetables, etc., also wanted on the same plan. Money or whiskey preferred, but everything comes in handy at Christmas-time.

No CONFIDENCE IN THAT DOCTOR.—Wife (to third husband)—"If you feel so unwell, John, I think we had better send for my old family physician."

Third husband (somewhat hastily)—"No, my dear, I would prefer to send for some one else."

Pie, often foolishly abused, is a good creature at the right time, and in angles of 30 or 40 degrees. In semi circles and quadrants it may sometimes prove too much for delicate stomachs. But how about Christmas plum-pudding? That can be taken at any angle, and in any thickness. At least the young fry think so!

Countryman: "Fi' pounds too much for him? He's a won'erful good sportin' daug, sir! Why he came to a dead p'int in the street, sir, close ag'n a ol' gen'lman, the other day—fust of September it was, sir—and the gen'lman told me afterwards as his name were 'Partridge.'" Customer: "You don't say so!" Bargain struck!

There are two very angry country ladies in New York to night. They had come to visit a rather penurious relative, and cherished a faint hope that they might be asked to stay over Christmas. But the astute relation presented them this morning with a little red-covered guide-book, with the legend "The way to see New York in half your intended time" inscribed in gold letters across the front.

It was a night or two before Christmas, and Brown was steering Robison homeward.

"What will you say to your wife?" Brown asked.

"Not a (hic) word, Robinson."

"Why not?"

"I won't have a (hic) chance."—*N. Y. Sun.*

"My young friend," said the solemn passenger, as the young man wiped his lips and returned the bottle to his valise, "it is beyond my comprehension how anyone can find pleasure or gratification in a drink of whiskey, such as you have just imbibed."

"Yes, sir," responded the young man, "and there are thousands like you. A single drink is no good; they want a load. But I believe in moderation, even at Christmas-time."

First New Yorker.—Who is that shabby looking man you just bowed to?

Second New Yorker.—Oh, that's an author who stuck to literature—said he would starve before he would write down to the masses.

"Ah, too bad! And who is that gorgeous looking swell crossing the street?"

"That is the soap and arsenic poet—writes most of the rhyming advertisements that you see in the papers."

"What curious substance have you in that vessel?" asked Society, meeting a stranger coming out of the dissecting room. "Brains" replied Truth; "which I have taken from a poor dead scholar." "Let me look at them," said Society, eagerly. "I never saw any before. Let me look at them; how are they worn?" "In the head," replied Truth. "Out of sight!" asked Society. "Entirely." "Take them away; I have no use for such ornaments." And so Truth went on into the college with her Brains, for she wanted some besides her own to help her to write something new about Christmas, and Society went on her way without any. P. S.—She doesn't need any. They would be to her a fatal gift, more dreadful than the shirt of Nessus.

THE NEWSPAPER AT HOME.—In many families the newspaper has become a forbidden object to the hands and eyes of the younger members. Their parents have become unwilling that they should familiarize themselves with the records of crimes to be found there, with the frequently light and flippant ways of mentioning them, while in many cases the advertisements have become sources of apprehension. It is a pity, however, to deprive the growing children of all knowledge of what is going on in the world in different regions from those of crime, and households have always their safeguard in the provision of a weekly paper which, while keeping its readers abreast with the current of the world, is not bound as a matter of news to the daily consideration of the last theft or murder.—*Harper's Bazaar.*

FOR RICKETS, MARASMUS, AND ALL WASTING DISORDERS OF CHILDREN, *Scott's Emulsion of Pure Cod Liver Oil, with Hypophosphites*, is unequalled. The rapidity with which children gain flesh and strength upon it is very wonderful. "I have used *Scott's Emulsion* in cases of Rickets and Marasmus of long standing. In every case the improvement was marked."—*J. M. Main M. D., New York.* Put up in 30c. and \$1 size.

A GREAT SUCCESS!

OUR OVERCOATS MADE TO ORDER,

\$15. \$15. \$15.

A Good SUIT to Order, \$6.00, good Material, good Trimmings, Well Made,

STYLE AND FIT UNEXCELLED.**BOYS' & MENS' READY-MADE CLOTHING,
ALL PRICES.****UNDERCLOTHING, &c.****CLAYTON & SONS,
11 JACOB STREET, HALIFAX.****MacGREGOR & KNIGHT'S**

Special Display this Christmas will be

**Photograph Albums,
(PLUSH AND LEATHER.)**

— AND —

**CHILDREN'S BOOKS
IN ENDLESS VARIETY.****ENGLISH, GERMAN
AND AMERICAN CHRISTMAS CARDS,
JUST OPENED.**

MacGREGOR & KNIGHT.

HENDERSON & POTTS

HAVING NOW COMPLETED THEIR

New Paint Factory,**On the Railway Siding, Kempt Road, Halifax,**

Beg to announce to their customers and the trade generally that they are now manufacturing and ready to supply their well-known

Anchor Brand of White Leads and Colored Paints,

IN ALL THE USUAL PACKAGES.

Handy Color Liquid Paints, in tins, 1 to 5 lbs.

Pure Liquid House Paints, in $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1 gallon tins, and 5, 10, 20 and 40 gallon packages.

Pure Linseed Oil Putty. Best English Linseed Oil. Varnishes, Dry Colors, Gold Leaf, Whiting, Paris White, &c.

IMPERIAL SHOE BLACKING.

HENDERSON & POTTS solicit a continuance of past favors, and hope with their much increased facilities to give, if possible, more prompt attention than formerly to all orders with which they may be intrusted.

NOVA SCOTIA PAINT WORKS, - KEMPT ROAD.**MACDONALD & CO.****BRASS FOUNDERS,****STEAM & HOT WATER ENGINEERS,**

—MANUFACTURERS OF—

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS.

PUMPING AND HOISTING MACHINERY, &c., &c.

NEWS OF THE WEEK.

We are indebted to the Queen Insurance Co (S Tobin, Agent) for a very neat and serviceable blotter and calendar.

The St. John River was reported on Tuesday to be free of ice from its source to its mouth. This is almost unprecedented.

The Christmas article enclosed to us by C. M. S. reached us too late for our Christmas issue. We will see if it can be made available.

Mr. Sponsor, M. P., (Cons.) for Missisquoi; Dr. Platt, M. P., (Liberal) for Prince Edward; and Dr. Chamberlain, M. P., (Liberal) for Dundas; have been unseated for bribery.

Several more or less serious accidents have recently occurred on the Intercolonial Railway. In some quarters the management is blamed, but it does not appear that the best management could have averted them.

Major-General Laurin (Conservative) has been returned to the Dominion Parliament for Shelburne by a majority of 7, and Mr. Lovitt (Liberal) has been returned to the Dominion Parliament for Yarmouth by a majority of 563.

B. G. Gray, Esq., Solicitor, has succeeded in his action against the city, Judge Weatherby sustaining his contention that the law for taxes did not take precedence of mortgages in existence prior to the passing of the new assessment Act.

A proposition to increase the pay of the city police receives general favor, and will doubtless carry. The men of the police force are hard worked, exposed to the full vicissitudes of a variable climate, and should receive at least the pay of ordinary street laborers.

The whereabouts of the Big Raft, or its fragments, seems to be matter of speculation. Whoever it or they may be, there will probably be danger to shipping. The commander in charge of the New York Navy Yard was directed to send a vessel in search, and despatched the *Enterprise* accordingly. A revenue cutter has also been sent on the same mission.

The City of Halifax can boast of many fine hotels, not the least of which is the "Globe." It is centrally situated on Buckingham St., and its moderate terms, easy access, and painstaking and obliging proprietor, Mr. Wallace, make it one of the most popular. Besides catering for the travelling public, Mr. Wallace has special rates for Commercial Travellers, who will here find every attention paid to their wants.

Mr. Diggles, a New York capitalist, who is at Ottawa in connection with the Calgary and Peace River railway charter, has originated one of the most extensive schemes ever contemplated for reducing the passage between America and Europe to a minimum. His plan is a railway from Quebec to the most easterly point of Labrador, where safe harbors abound. He says the voyage could then be made to Ireland in three and one-half days.

The Halifax Hotel continues to enjoy the reputation it has always maintained of being the leading house in the Maritime Provinces. The management is under the immediate supervision of Mr. Hesslein himself, ably seconded by Mr. Smith, Chief Clerk, his obliging and capable lieutenant. The employees are polite and attentive, the attendance ample, the decorations rich, and *cuisine* unexceptionable. Visitors from a distance will find all the latest improvements and appointments, and can reckon on every attention being paid to them at this excellent hostelry.

Another terrible railway disaster occurred at Caraquet Bridge, N. B., on Saturday last. The engine and snow plough were detached from a mixed train to pierce a snowbank. The engine had to cross the bridge to reach it, and in the middle left the track and plunged into the river, 15 feet below. Eight men, including the conductor and a passenger, were killed. The coroner's jury at the inquest on the victims found that the bridge was defective in its plan, and that several persons living near by were aware of its dangerous condition. As reported, however, the verdict is vague.

One of the most difficult matters in the world is to decide on the purchase of suitable Christmas presents. Books are always appropriate for both young and old, but in this kind of purchasing there must be a large and well-assorted stock to select from, and a visit to Messrs. McGregor & Knight, the well-known Stationers and Booksellers on Granville Street, should certainly be made by all who desire to secure bargains in the book line. There will be found books to suit every age and taste. Besides an endless variety of German and English Christmas cards, and a magnificent lot of photograph albums in plush and leather.

The International Commission at Washington has adjourned till the 4th of January. No one really knows whether anything definite has been reached, though there are indications that the negotiations may take a larger range into the realms of reciprocal free trade than was even hinted at when the Commission was formed. After all, everything depends upon the temper of the United States Congress, which, as it is practically a new body, may incline either way. Still, as the large majority of the members of both houses are intensely protectionist, irrespective of party proclivities, it is not at all probable that the free trade declarations of the President, or the weight of his administration will have any effect, other than to set the majority more firmly in their determination to grant "no concessions to foreigners." It is not likely that any terms short of absolute submission to the idea of "one unbounded continent," will find favor with our neighbors when it comes to practical legislation.

Mr. O'Brien, the new Mayor of Boston, is a prominent Democrat, and a warm supporter of President Cleveland.

General Thos. Kilby Smith, Chief of the Staff to General Grant at the close of the war, died last week in New York.

Two ladies in San Francisco were found dead in their bedroom, owing to one of them having blown out the gas instead of turning it off.

Two more cyclones are reported from the States, one at Crescent, Cal., the other in Arkansas. In the former a hotel was blown down, and a mother and daughter killed. In the latter half the houses of Fort Wachita are in ruins, and much cattle and stock were killed, though it lasted but six minutes.

A warning comes from Brookline (near Boston), to young women going to the States from the Provinces, and some very active steps have been taken to afford protection in travelling to unwary girls. "The Girl's Friendly Society," and others, now employ a travelling agent in aid of their philanthropic endeavors.

Sullivan has challenged Smith and Kilrain for \$5,000 a side.

The Rev. Father Maconochie, the celebrated Ritualist, is dead.

H. M. the Queen is reported indisposed from having caught cold.

The Home Rule agitation is evidently embarrassing to the Papacy.

Some anxiety is again prevailing about Stanley, the African explorer.

The Marquis of Lorne is reported to be seriously ill with a throat affection.

The redoubtable Earl Cairns was married on Monday in London to Miss Olive Berens.

The *Sportsman* says the contest between Kilrain and Smith was more of a wrestling match than a prize fight.

The reports of the state of the Crown Prince of Germany have been conflicting throughout the week, and nothing definite is at hand up to the time of our going to press.

Mr. Dillon says that he has every respect for the Pope as a spiritual head, but would as soon acknowledge the authority of the Grand Turk in the temporal affairs of Ireland.

The Marquis of Ely, who some time ago refused to grant a reduction of 25 per cent. on his Irish rents, has now visited his estates and granted a reduction of 50 per cent., on easy terms of payment, and reinstates evicted tenants.

An awful inundation has occurred in China. The Deungo-Ho River overflowed its banks, and swept away eleven populous towns, the whole area being now several feet under water. The loss of life was fearful, the authorities simply reporting to the Emperor, "Nearly all the people drowned."

Montreal Show Case Co.

MANUFACTURERS OF

Nickel, Silver, Walnut, Cherry, Ebony and Mahogany Show Cases, Jewellers', Druggists', Bar, Store and Office Fittings.

MANTELS AND OVER MANTELS.

No. 30 College Street, Montreal.

JAMES A. DOUGLAS, Gen. Agent,

P. O. Box 96, HALIFAX, N. S.

Christmas Presents
for Gentlemen.

FREEMAN ELLIOT,
163 HOLLIS STREET.

Gentlemen's Dressing Gowns
all New Patterns.

Smoking Jackets.

Silk and Cashmere Mufflers.

Silk Pocket Handkerchiefs.

Linen Handkerchiefs.

Gloves, Ties, Braces, Collars,
Shirts, Umbrellas.

Large Stock to select from.

FELIX GOURDEAU,
QUEBEC,

TANNER & CURRIER,

Hides, Leather & Findings.

Always open to Buy any quantity of Hides
and Slaughter-Sole Leather. Correspondence
solicited.

WM. J. HAMES,

Corner Argyle and Sackville Sts.

HALIFAX.

DEALER IN

Pork, Butter, &c.

N. B.—Hams, Bacon and
Sausages a Specialty.

Orders from the Country promptly filled:

JOHN S. JONES,

Manufacturers' Agent, Importer & Dealer in Eng-
lish and American

Square and Upright Pianofortes,
Church & Parlor Organs, Piano Stools, Sheet
Music, Music Books, Band Instruments,
Fittings, &c., General Musical Merchandise
57 GRANVILLE ST., CORNER SACKVILLE ST.,
HALIFAX NOVA SCOTIA.

F. W. CHRISTIE,

Member of the American Institute of Mining
Engineers.

Gold Mining Properties Examined,
Reported on, and Titles Searched.

Information for Investors in Nova Scotia Gold
Mines. Estimates obtained for Air Drills and Air
Compressors for Mines and Quarries, and Steam
Drills for Railroad Contracts.
Reference—Commissioner of Mines for Nova Scotia
Address—Letter or Telegram, BEDFORD STA-
TION, HALIFAX CO., NOVA SCOTIA.

"THE SORCERER."

To say that those who attended the Academy of Music on Thursday and Friday evenings of last week were pleased with the manner in which Gilbert & Sullivan's taking comic opera, "The Sorcerer," was performed, is to express but mildly the feelings of the vast majority in two packed audiences. The music of this opera is exceedingly pretty, particularly that of the opening chorus, "Ring forth ye bells," the quintette, "She will nurse him," etc.; and several of the solos, the melodies of which are bright and attractive. To boil down the libretto we might say:—A marriage had been arranged between Alexis and Aline—the two leading characters. Alexis, from purely philanthropic motives, determines to distribute among the peasantry of the village a liquid which insures love at first sight, secretly intending that his Aline shall drink it in his presence, and thus assure him of her life-long devotion. The liquid works like magic upon those who take it, and a hopeless muddle ensues from the wrong people happening to be neighbors at the time the fluid was administered. Aline refuses to drink it, but subsequently in her lover's absence pours out and drinks a small quantity, and at once falls madly in love with the rector of the parish. Alexis appearing on the scene, accuses her of inconstancy, but, upon being reminded that it was at his request Aline had taken the fluid, he called upon the Sorcerer who provided it to break the spell. This the Jester in myetic said would require the sacrifice of a human life, and, after much debate it was agreed that the Sorcerer himself should be offered up to Ahrimance, whereupon every one was ecstatically happy, and the course of true love runs smooth as before. Much speculation had been indulged in as to the possibility of a local company rendering this opera in a creditable manner, and the result proves that not only have we talent in Halifax to undertake and carry out such a work, but that even greater things may yet be accomplished. The choruses—which were rendered by Mr. Ross' choir—showed excellent training. In the opening chorus, "Ring forth ye bells," the voices were nearly drowned out by the orchestra, which appeared for a time to be running wild, but after fairly settling down to work the instrumentalists did good service, giving a support to the singers which could not fail to be appreciated. By the way, this utilizing of the Hadyn Quintette Club for orchestral purposes was a bright idea, and should be followed by other musical organizations. As this is the first appearance of the club under like conditions, it does not become us to criticize the performers too sharply, but it may be hoped that in future the singers, as well as the audience, may be spared from the excruciating pleasure of having two instruments playing in different keys. The quintette, "She will nurse him," etc., sung by Miss Shoff, Mrs. Creighton, and Messrs. Gillis, King Pooley, and Boak, was the gem of the concerted singing, and well merited the rapturous encore which it received. Miss Shoff as "Aline" won golden opinions from many in the audience. Her voice has in a decided measure developed since her last appearance in public and gives promise of even greater development in the future. The lady sang sweetly and naturally, and overcame some pretty difficult work with a surprising degree of ease. In her songs, "O happy young heart," and "Let us fly to a far-off land," Miss Shoff impressed us as having given the same a most careful study, but in many of the recitatives in which she took part, there was a lack of that interesting animation and total forgetfulness of self which makes the professional artiste seek to envelop her industry in the mantle of the character which she represents. These are imperfections which may readily be overcome, and should Miss Shoff aspire to become a leader in opera, she should not fail to take this hint of a friendly critic. Mrs. Creighton as "Mrs. Partlett," and Miss O'Dell as "Constance," sang most acceptably. The former, being a charming actress, won a hearty encore from her rendering of "I'm no saucy missy," which was well done. In the aria, "When he is here," Miss O'Dell was heard to advantage, and as she threw into the song all the energy and vivacity which it required, she received an enthusiastic recall, to which she gracefully responded.

Mrs. Taylor, as "Lady Sangazure," took her part well throughout, singing in such a manner as we have seldom heard her sing before. Mr. Gillis, who took the part of "Alexis," is to be congratulated upon the success with which he carried out his very difficult part, and we may say that never in any concert have we known his solos to be so uniformly good, or his voice to be so telling in the concerted parts. In the Opera, Mr. Gillis will find the best study for a voice, which, while ruggedly strong, is remarkably true, and while capable of much greater culture, is yet under excellent control. Mr. Boak, as "Dr. Daly," won high encomiums from many among the audience, and there were, all things considered, fairly well deserved. Mr. Boak's acting was remarkably good, and in the dialogue he was the peer among those who surrounded him. It was probably from the thorough interest which he took in his part that we noted the absence of that mechanical style of singing in which he sometimes indulges in public. Of the remaining three soloists, Mr. King-Pooley was the only one who can be said to have sung well; but while Mr. Johnstone might be said not to be in quite perfect voice, his rendition of the song "My Name is John Wellington Wells," was simply superb. "Now to the Tea," the closing chorus, wound an evening's entertainment that will long be remembered in Halifax with genuine pleasure.

We extend our hearty congratulations to Mr. Ross for the unqualified success, musically and financially, which has attended his efforts, and strongly recommend him to map out his winter's work upon the same lines as that of the past few months, as by so doing he will open up what is to Halifaxians a new and unexplored field of musical culture.

"Took long steps, my child," said Solomon Isaacs, "you won't wear out your shoes nearly so quick."

COMMERCIAL.

General trade maintains a state of fair activity, and a good business in most staple lines is doing.

The following are the assignments and business changes in this Province during the past week: Abraham Rodehiser, hotel, Bridgewater, assigned to Wm. M. Duff; Wm. B. G. McLeod, grocery and feed, Halifax, assigned to John Cody, livery, Amherst, sold out to Harvey Brownell; Jas. Dover & Co., agricultural implements, Truro, dissolved, James Dover retires; Chas. Moody, dry goods and clothing, Yarmouth, assigned to Chas. R. Kelly; Howard & Carter, general store, Parrashore, dissolved; Taylor, Christie & Co., grocers, Halifax, assigned to Jacob L. Barnhill.

DRY GOODS.—The prevalent tone of the local dry goods trade has been healthy. During the past week no special feature has developed, and the market has been very quiet. Travellers are coming home to spend their Christmas holidays, and, as a rule, report their late tour as having been fairly successful. Payments generally have been satisfactory, and when agents again take the road they anticipate meeting customers ready to purchase fall goods at satisfactory prices. We regret to note that in the West the dry goods trade has an unhealthy look. Several failures have occurred, and more are expected. This is stated to be due to the wholesale houses in Toronto and other centres cutting prices freely and forcing trade by every means possible.

IRON, HARDWARE AND METALS.—A considerable strength has been developed abroad, but, although prices are firm, no quotable change has been made. Trade has been fairly active and steady as to prices, and a good business has been done in most items on the list.

BREADSTUFFS.—Flour has been quiet and nominally steady, but the movement has been confined to small lots, and the trade has been of no importance.

PROVISIONS.—In the local markets a fair business has been done in pork, and small lots have changed hands rather freely. Lard has met with fair enquiry at steady prices. Green hams and slunks have found ready purchasers. The comparatively small supply has undoubtedly assisted in facilitating sales, though the mild weather has had a tendency to depress figures.

BUTTER AND CHEESE.—The butter situation remains unchanged—that is quiet and featureless. Apart from regular jobbing requirements trade has been light, but, despite the absence of important demand there seems to be no serious anxiety to sell on the part of holders, especially when the stock shows fine quality. The cheese market has continued to be very quiet, and actual business has been quiet. Though there is hardly any enquiry holders seem to carry their stock with a great show of confidence. The cable stands unchanged at 58s.

APPLES.—Liverpool cables report a strong market, and a good demand for good to choice fruit. In the local market the feeling is firm, and choice long keeping varieties are considered good property to hold. A Liverpool report on the market for Canadian and American apples, for the week ending December 3rd, 1887, says: "With arrivals double the weight of last week, our market must be reported somewhat weaker, although good fruit, in good condition, will still bring the high prices mentioned in our last. The 'Germanic' was partly sold last week, and the portion held over did not benefit by the delay. The 'Toronto,' with 731 barrels was also partly sold last week. New York prices show the most palpable signs of weakness, and all round the decline may be estimated at 1s. 6d. to 2s. Boston fruit was not so good this week, and here, again, the decline may be noticed. Canadian apples keep up in price best of any, and only a slight decline may be noted here, caused more by the condition of the fruit than by a slackening-off in the demand, which continues excellent."

DRIED FRUIT.—A fair volume of business has been done in dried fruit since our last report. Outside markets have ruled weaker for Valencia raisins, which has caused a somewhat depressed feeling here. Currants, on the other hand, have been stronger, and a further advance is reported. Almonds and other nuts are unchanged but in good demand, as is usual at this season.

SUGAR AND MOLASSES.—Values in the sugar market have continued firm and are well maintained, though there has been no actual change in quotations. The Nova Scotia Refinery has shut down for a few weeks to make repairs to engines, boilers, and other machinery, but will very soon resume operations. In Montreal there has been more activity in molasses, which has been in better request there at a slight advance, sales being reported of Barbados at 38c. Stocks there are now in few hands, and are well held.

TEA AND COFFEE.—The tea market has been fairly active, and jobbers have done a very good business for December, under a brisk country demand. Coffee is quiet at steady prices.

FISH.—The local market has been extremely quiet and without change. No activity is to be expected till after the holidays. Our reports from outside markets are as follows. Montreal, Dec. 20th.—"The fish market has been fairly active, there being a good jobbing demand, and a number of small sales have been made. Labrador herring in small lots have been sold at \$4.50 to \$4.75. No. 1 green cod have been weaker, and some small sales have been effected at \$4.50, while No. 1 large have ruled steady, with sales reported at \$4.75 to \$5. No. 1 Labrador salmon in tierces at \$19.50 to \$20. Fresh herrings are in good supply, and selling at \$1.75 per 100. For fresh haddock there is good enquiry at 4c., and fresh cod at 4c. per lb. Finnan haddies are in good demand at 6c. and 7c." Another report of the same date says: "Until after the holidays no movement of any consequence is expected, and prices in the meantime will, of course, remain nominally unchanged. Labrador herrings have been sold at \$4.15 to \$4.25, but not in large lots. Green cod is quiet at \$1.25 to \$1.50 for No. 1, and at \$1.50 to \$1.75 for large. Dry cod \$1 to \$1.25. Salmon \$11 to \$12 per bbl."

CHRISTMAS IN THE OLDEN TIME.

On Christmas eve the bells were ring:
 On Christmas eve the mass was sung:
 That only night in all the year
 Saw the stole'd priest the chalice rear.
 Then opened wide the Baron's hall,
 To vocal, tenor, serf and all;
 Power laid his rod of rule aside,
 And ceremony doffed his pride.
 The heir, with roses in his shoes,
 That night sought village partner-hoos.
 All halled, with uncontrolled delight
 And general voice, the happy night
 That to the cottage, as the crown
 Brought tidings of salvation down.
 England was merry England when
 Old Christmas brought his sports again
 'Twas Christmas brought the mightiest ale
 'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale.
 A Christmas, and that was all he
 A poor man's heart: that's all the year

THE TWO TROMBONES.

Mr. Whiffles—the respected parent of our hero, Mr. Adolphus Whiffles was an opulent Berkshire farmer, who, before retiring from his business and leaving it to his son, fancied that a visit to the great metropolis would have the effect of sharpening the wits of that amiable youth, an operation of which that young gentleman stood greatly in need. The son jumped at the idea, especially when he learned he was to set forth on his travels alone. With the parental blessing and his purse well filled, Mr. Whiffles, junior, duly arrived in London and installed himself in economical quarters in Savoy Street, Strand.

The theatres, of course, occupied a large share of Mr. Whiffles' attention during his stay in London, and the neighborhood of stage-doors afforded him a vast amount of satisfaction. The sight of "professionals" in their everyday costume was to him a source of great gratification, and his delight when he made the acquaintance of a prominent member of the orchestra of the Royal Dash Theatre exceeded all bounds. He vowed eternal friendship for him on the spot, and there and then ratified the agreement by entertaining his new acquaintance at a *recherche* supper at the Albion. Our story opens when Mr. Whiffles and his companion—Mr. O'Leary by name—had been almost inseparables for the space of six weeks. With pain Mr. Whiffles had lately observed an expression of settled melancholy upon Mr. O'Leary's expressive countenance, and had resolutely determined to divine the cause.

"You are ill?" said our hero one evening, after they had supped at the hostelry above mentioned, and were quaffing various "whiskys hot" to promote digestion.

Mr. O'Leary sighed, shook his head sadly, and emptied his glass by way of a reply.

"Your supper has disagreed with you—you have eaten too much," continued Mr. Whiffles, tenderly.

"It isn't the supper that worries me," observed his companion. "it's the substitute."

This mysterious answer puzzled Mr. Whiffles. He thought it over seriously, then gave it up in despair, and demanded an explanation. Mr. O'Leary vigorously pulled at his cigar and proceeded to enlighten Mr. Whiffles.

It appeared from Mr. O'Leary's account that it was customary in the Royal Dash Theatre for the management to allow various members of the orchestra to absent themselves from time to time from their posts in order to attend concerts or other entertainments, on the condition that they provided efficient substitutes to fulfil their ordinary duties. As a rule, these substitutes were not hard to find, but Mr. O'Leary confessed, with tears in his eyes, that although he had searched high and low, for some unaccountable reason he could find no one able or willing to supply his place at the theatre while he was absent to fulfill a most profitable engagement he had accepted to play at a fashionable West End concert the ensuing evening. Without a moment's hesitation Mr. Whiffles threw himself into the breach and proffered his services.

"Stuff!" replied Mr. O'Leary, rudely, "what do you know about music?"

Mr. Whiffles couldn't tell. He was quite certain about what he *didn't* know, but that he refrained from mentioning. There was a painful pause. Mr. O'Leary smoked silently on for some time, now and then darting a searching glance upon the anxious face of Mr. Whiffles, as if he were revolving some great scheme in the innermost recesses of his own mind, but as yet scarcely saw the manner in which it could be carried out. Suddenly, "I have it. Thanks Whiffles, my boy. I accept your generous offer. You shall be my substitute," said Mr. O'Leary.

To say that Mr. Whiffles was delighted would but feebly express the state of his mind. He grasped Mr. O'Leary's hand and shook it fervently. He trembled already with excitement. His proudest hopes were about to be realized. He would be admitted behind the scenes of a theatre. Words failed to convey any idea of his feelings, as he lent a willing ear to Mr. O'Leary, who proceeded to give him the necessary instructions.

In the first place, Mr. O'Leary pointed out there were two trombone-players in the orchestra of the Royal Dash Theatre, he himself being one, and that for the especial guidance of Mr. Whiffles he would summarily state the case as follows, promising that after the rising of the curtain on the first piece, a performance upon the two trombones heralded the approach of the villain of the piece.

Further, his (Mr. O'Leary's) experience induced him to believe that in a crowded assembly one trombone would probably make as much noise as two;

and that all Mr. Whiffles had to do, after announcing himself as Mr. O'Leary's substitute, would be to take his seat leisurely in the orchestra, and, when the curtain rose, carefully watch the proceedings of the other trombone-player, and imitate his every movement: so that, in reality, one trombone would make all the noise, although apparently two were being played. Lastly, he advised Mr. Whiffles to be careful and to mind what he was about, as the Leader was a —

Soon afterwards the friends left the Albion and proceeded on their several ways—his friend and companion already more than half repenting his rashness in embarking in the undertaking.

It was close upon Christmas. The sombre shades of twilight were enveloping, as with a shroud, the streets of London, when, carrying Mr. O'Leary's trombone in his hand, Mr. Whiffles might have been observed woefully picking his way through the parlous of Drury Lane, endeavoring to find the stage-entrance of the Royal Dash Theatre. Two or three sallow-faced gentlemen were smoking short-pipes in front of the entrance, and occasionally a lady or gentleman passed hurriedly in, evidently under the impression that they were behind their time, but a glance at the clock in the hall appeared to reassure them as they made their way more leisurely towards their respective dressing-rooms. Upon reference to his watch, Mr. Whiffles found that the doors had only just been opened, and he therefore had some leisure to look about him. He loitered at the door for some time, wondering, as the various members of the company made their appearance, who *this* was, and who *that* could possibly be, until a small, but uncommonly sharp, boy plucked him by the sleeve and said,

"You'd better make haste—they're a goin' to ring in."

Mr. Whiffles then became aware that he was almost alone. Without having the faintest idea of the meaning of "ringing in," he mechanically followed the small boy down a gloomy passage, tumbled down a few steps, picked himself up and found himself upon the stage. He had hardly time to cast a hurried glance upon the novel, not to say dreary, objects by which he was surrounded, when an elderly individual, in a white beard, and whose shirtfront appeared to be plentifully besprinkled with snuff, beckoned the boy.

"Tom," said he, "go into the music-room and ask Mr. Lovejoy for my copy of 'Old King Cole.'"

The boy at once complied. Rightly conjecturing that the music-room was the place wherein the musicians assembled previous to making their appearance in the orchestra, Mr. Whiffles followed the boy down a score or so of rickety stairs, to the great detriment of his shins, into a scantily-furnished apartment, situated immediately beneath the stage, wherein he found several gentlemen composedly tuning their instruments. Upon hearing Mr. Lovejoy, the Leader, addressed by name, Mr. Whiffles nervously introduced himself as Mr. O'Leary's substitute.

"Very good," said Mr. Lovejoy; "he's told you everything, I suppose!"

Mr. Whiffles bowed assentingly, and darted a piercing glance into every corner of the apartment in search of the other trombone. Horror! *He wasn't there!* The man upon whom he solely depended, absent! What was to be done? Retreat was out of the question; as, while he was contemplating flight, a small bell sounded, and the musicians proceeded to take their places in the orchestra. Mr. Whiffles, still bearing the fatal trombone, despairingly followed, and, ere long, found himself in the presence of the British public. The novelty of his situation so confused him that he, for a moment, seated himself in the chair belonging to Mr. Lovejoy, and was received with a prodigious outburst of enthusiasm, the audience supposing him to be the talented Leader himself. This mistake was soon rectified by the appearance of the veritable leader, who muttered something under his breath by no means complimentary to our hero, and motioned him angrily to the seat usually occupied by Mr. O'Leary. The audience, perceiving the mistake, expressed their opinion of Mr. Whiffles in candid and unmistakable terms as he ruefully made his way to the spot indicated by the irate conductor. After trying to reduce to something like order the sheets of music upon the stand before him, Mr. Whiffles regained sufficient courage to look around him. The house was packed from floor to ceiling—everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation, and sundry anxious voices appertaining to impatient "gods" implored the musicians to strike up at once and appease their anxiety.

Again the small bell tinkled. Mr. Lovejoy tapped his desk—raised his baton—looked on each side of him, and—stopped. He whispered the First Fiddle, then left his seat and the orchestra. Mr. Whiffles asked his next neighbor what *this* might portend; and was informed, in reply, that Puffer, the other Trombone, hadn't as yet put in an appearance.

"Couldn't they do without him?" asked Mr. Whiffles—devoutly hoping in his heart of hearts they couldn't.

"Certainly not," was the reply.

"Wouldn't the big drum do as well?" inquired Mr. Whiffles.

His neighbor regarded him with some surprise, smiled, and continued. "Do without him! how can they? Don't you know that you and he begin the moment the curtain rises, to bring on old Russett, the heavy man? He *couldn't* come on without his music, you know; as he appears at the back at first—then crosses the mountains from left to right—then from right to left, and finally comes down left upon the stage, where he expresses a variety of emotions in pantomime, and all to your music."

At these words Mr. Whiffles resigned all hope, and was mentally calculating the dangers to which he would be exposed if he leaped into the stalls, from thence into the pit, and fought his way out of the Theatre; when the Leader returned, an ominous frown upon his brow, followed by a short, fat, pale faced gentleman, apparently of foreign extraction, who carried a trombone under his left arm. Joy! Mr. Whiffles felt a man again. This, then, was Puffer! Mr. Whiffles remembered his instructions and watched the new comer attentively, who, upon his part, appeared to regard him with

the uttermost concern. Mr. Whiffles had occasion to shift his trombone—Puffler did likewise. Mr. Whiffles felt for his handkerchief—Mr. Puffler followed his example. All this seemed very mysterious, and Mr. Whiffles was lost in wonderment when the overture commenced. Luckily, the trombones were not wanted until the commencement of the drama. The overture ceased.

"Now, look out," observed Mr. Whiffles' neighbor—"it's you now."

Mr. Whiffles mechanically raised the instrument to his lips, keeping a steadfast gaze the while upon the proceedings of Mr. Puffler, who did his best to stare Mr. Whiffles out of countenance. Mr. Lovejoy looked round, and seeing the Trombones perfectly ready, awaited the rising of the curtain. It was an agonising moment. The silence was positively painful. One might have heard a pin drop. The small bell was heard again. Mr. Lovejoy tapped his desk, and the curtain slowly rose—in *sublime silence*. Mr. Lovejoy began beating the time slowly, and had even accomplished a few strokes before he realised the fact. Turning round to ascertain the meaning of this extraordinary circumstance, his surprise and bewilderment may well be imagined at perceiving the two trombone players hard at work, distending their cheeks to their utmost capacity, nervously manipulating their instruments, and producing not a sound! And the most unaccountable thing was they never took their eyes off one another. Mr. Lovejoy was transfixed with amazement.

"This is very strange," thought Mr. Whiffles. "I wonder when that fellow is going to begin!"

The little bell tinkled again and again. Mr. Rusted stopped upon the stage with some amount of dignity and left it without any, under the impression that he was a trifle too soon. The stage-manager, a gentleman of excitable temperament, and much addicted to the use of passionate language, who played one of the principal parts in the piece, rushed from his room, discharged on the spot an inoffensive "super" who, unfortunately, happened to cross his path,—went, half-a-dozen or a time down the tickety stairs, at the imminent hazard of breaking his neck, and, appearing at the little door, under the stage, that led into the orchestra, demanded in unmeasured terms what the—very bad word—Mr. Lovejoy meant by such conduct, and why this—excessively rude observation—he didn't go on? Mr. Lovejoy was too astounded to reply. He could only point, in silent wonder, to the two Trombones. There they sat, pulling and blowing vigorously, but with no result. The stage-manager gesticulated violently and nearly had a fit. The audience, unable to comprehend what was going on before their eyes, hissed loudly; and, finally, the curtain fell. Then Mr. Lovejoy gave vent to his feelings. He leaped from his seat and rushed towards Mr. Whiffles, who, panting with exhaustion after his unaccustomed exertions, was wiping the perspiration from his face, wondering what on earth was going to happen next. No sooner, however, did he perceive the angry Conductor advancing towards him than, with an intuitive perception that something unpleasant was about to occur, he made a precipitate rush through the little door, and sought safety under the stage, hotly pursued by Mr. Lovejoy, who opportunely came across the foreign gentleman quietly sneaking away, and fell upon him tooth and nail. The foreign gentleman, being choleric, knocked Mr. Lovejoy down. Mr. Lovejoy, being by no means deficient in pluck, regained the perpendicular, and—in the language of the King—let the foreign gentleman "have it." That individual next seized the astonished Whiffles and endeavored to drag him before Mr. Lovejoy, in order that he might undergo condign punishment, when the foreign gentleman slipped; they both fell, and the two trombone-players mysteriously disappeared.

They had fallen down an unused well under the stage, Mr. Whiffles undermost. There being but little water, they were soon extricated, and, fortunately, no bones were broken.

The two gentlemen—after a rather exciting interview with the stage-manager—were, shortly afterwards, permitted to take their departure.

Mr. O'Leary, next day, was duly informed of the disaster, and lost his situation. The same fate befel the unfortunate Puffler, who, it appeared upon inquiry, was really laboring under some severe indisposition that threatened to confine him to his bed; and, being naturally unwilling to lose his salary, he provided a substitute, like Mr. Whiffles, utterly unable to play, and to whom he gave, in effect, instructions almost identical with those given to our hero by Mr. O'Leary.

Mr. Whiffles returned to the home of his ancestors a sadder and a wiser man. He has never been to a theatre since, and never thinks without a shudder of his terrible adventure connected with the Two Trombones.

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

"Off to-night! Mail train, eh? Why, Talbot, old fellow, you will lose the very cream of the hunting. Nice open weather, with the scent breast-high, and the horses in their best form. We draw Appley Gorso on Wednesday—a sure find and a splendid country. I want you to show these Melton dandies at Lord Whiplam's the way over Bullingsley Brook. It is a pity to leave us just now." Thus spoke our veteran M.F.H., a thorough sportsman, and a genial, warm-hearted gentleman of the old school, with whom I had been a favorite ever since he first rated me, at the ripe age of ten, for riding my shaggy pony too close to the leading hounds.

I, Talbot Carew, whose name figured in the *Landed Gentry* as second son of Francis Carew, Esq., of Harbledown Court, and in the *Army List* as lieutenant in a light cavalry regiment, looked rueful enough, I daresay, as I assured the good old master of hounds that there was no help for it, and that with all my desire to stay until the frost should put a stop to our sylvan enjoyments, go I must. The fact was that my regiment was under orders for India, and that before we sailed my father had urged me to accept an

invitation to spend the Christmas with an uncle and aunt of mine, a certain Sir Charles and Lady Treherne, who lived a long way off, in the West of England, and whom it so happened that I had not seen since my school-boy days. I had no particular desire to devote my last days in England to a visit at Bramshaw Hall, where I had never before been a guest, and it was especially displeasing to me to leave home just then. We lived in one of the most famous of those "grass-shires" which form the paradise of fox-hunters, and the emporium of weight-carrying hunters and hounds of high degree, while Bramshaw was situated in Blankshire, which, as everyone knows, is a rocky, healthy, and eminently picturesque county, where fox-hunting can only be pursued under difficulties.

My parents were, however, so anxious that I should not refuse my uncle's well-meant invitation, that I reluctantly made up my mind to accept it, and as there were sundry matters to transact in town, with reference to equipments, outfit, &c., and as we expected to embark for India early in the new year, I was obliged to hurry up to London at once, to attend to the needful preparations, and to be in time to reach Bramshaw before the Christmas festivities should fairly begin. When it began to snow heavily on the day of my leaving London I reflected that the fine scinting weather in our own county was over for the present, and that I had not lost many runs by my unwilling absence.

With all that, I could not help looking upon my visit to Bramshaw as an unmitigated annoyance. I had seen, as I have already remarked, very little of the relatives under whose roof I was to be domiciled, and to all their friends, as well as to the part of the country in which they resided, I was a total stranger. The Trehernes were people who had for several years led a quiet life on their own estate, and the district in which they lived was one that had a reputation for tenaciously keeping up ancient usages and customs exploded in parts of England more infused with the metropolitan spirit of change. "I suppose I am in," said I to myself, as I gloomily gazed out of the window of the railway carriage and watched the whirling snowflakes swept past with blinding rapidity, "for what they call a good old-fashioned Christmas. I know. Round games snapdragon, blindman's bluff, forfeits, and the rest; and I shall be lucky if I escape hunt the slipper."

Bramshaw Hall turned out to be a fine old place, built of stone which age had covered with mosses and lichens of dainty green and golden russet tints, and very much superior, in an artistic point of view, to the red bricks and white copings of our own ancestral mansion in central England. The Hall stood also in a commanding position, perched as it was on a stone terrace, overlooking all the surrounding country with all its horrent woods, and bare peaks of gray rock, and the purple moorland clothing the neighboring heights as with a royal robe. One part of the old house—the western end—looked upon a really lovely glen, something like a bit of scenery transplanted to the south; and there was a steep fall here from where the terrace ended down to the rough rocks beneath, and to the stream that battled and frothed among the boulders and deep overhanging banks of its narrow bed.

I was very kindly received by the baronet and by my aunt—it was Lady Treherne, by the bye, to whom I was related—and found myself welcomed by a number of guests of different ages, ranging, so far as I could guess, from seven to seventy years, most of whom were Blankshire people, or from the adjacent counties, I was the only late arrival, for all the others had been for several days at Bramshaw, so that, as I did not possess the slightest local knowledge, I was glad to get what Frenchmen call the *carte du pays* from those who were better informed than I was. There was a young fellow there whom I did not know, one Tollemache—Lionel Tollemache—a full cornet in the Lancer regiment quartered at Stochester, and whose relations had got him an introduction to Sir Charles as to one of the magnates of the country-side.

"Awfully jolly old place, you know, and all that," said Cornet Tollemache to me aside, and with an air of mysterious importance. "And as regards your uncle and aunt, I only wish that there were more of the same sort, for kinder people I never knew. Capital house, good cook, decent cover-shooting, and pretty girls staying here, but—You don't believe in ghosts, Carew, of course?"

"Of course not," said I, wondering.

"Nor do I. Awful stuff!" said my friend, and went off to flirt with a Miss Porter, who came from Stochester too.

A lady whose acquaintance I presently made, and who liked, apparently, to hear the sound of her own voice, was more explicit than the enigmatical subaltern had been. It was thus that Mrs. Methven explained matters: "Why, you see, Mr. Carew, we are rather celebrated for haunted houses in this part of the country, and the wonder was rather that Bramshaw, old as it is, and with all the dreadful things done here that must have been done of course—you men are sad, wicked creatures, Mr. Carew, though of course you won't agree with me about that—should not have had a ghost of its own before. But really, what with the rustlings, and what with the light tread that passes by our bedroom doors at the strangest hours of the night, and what with vague movements, and creaking of the old oak stairs, and things being disturbed or thrown down in a way no servant can account for—why, one does not know what to think; and excepting your good aunt and uncle, to whom no one likes to speak on the subject, I assure you we are all exceedingly uneasy and uncomfortable."

And indeed, on farther inquiry, so I found it. A vague feeling of discomfort, almost of alarm, was abroad among the guests. Dinner, however, so far as I could see, dispelled all these dismal day-dreams as to haunted houses and creaking stairs; and indeed I have not often known people who enjoyed their elves so heartily as these Blankshire gentry around my uncle's hospitable board. They all knew each other, and had at their fingers' ends, so to speak, the names and circumstances of every married daughter, and of every son at Sandhurst or the University. A few outsiders

there were: Tollemache, the Porter girls, and Major Porter—an apoplectic old soldier, who rarely spoke, except with reference to "the Duke," or "the Peninsula"—and myself; esoteric persons, who did not know who Mary and Jane had married, and who had never admired Frank's score at cricket, or the matchless horsemanship of Aulophus. But they were all very kind, and did their best to lighten our natural sense of inferiority to those who were better informed. The dinner was an excellent one, and it passed merrily, and the children came in at dessert in gay frocks and sashes and velvet tunics, and shining curls, according to sex and complexion, and there was a great silver-gilt caldron full of something hot and strong, which was called the wassail bowl, and we all sipped and laughed, and became seasonably merry and blithely sportive.

Then in the drawing-room there were games of all sorts—one of forfeits among them—and, to my own amazement, I found myself voted by the children into the high dignity and office of Lord of Misrule, or Grand Mutti, or something of the sort; which post I accepted because they clapped their little hands and seemed so eager and bright-eyed, and because even then, at one-and-twenty, I could not bear to say to children, Nay. And we had a great deal of romping, laughter, and intense nonsense, to the disgust of young Tollemache, who wondered how an officer of my standing could thus demean himself; until the tired darlings were taken off to bed, and it was almost time for us grown people to go to bed too. I think the liveliest of the young girls there, the quickest guesser of charade or conundrum, the dearest at "post" or "pass in the corner," the smartest competitor at forfeits, was my young cousin Blanche, the only child of Sir Charles and Lady Treherne; a delicate pale slip of a girl, with fine eyes and long fair hair, but by no means so pretty as several of the little rich-complexioned West-of-England pixies who frolicked around her. Blanche's health, as I conjectured when first she put her thin hand into that of "Cousin Talbot Carew," was none of the best; and I could see by Lady Treherne's half-anxious, half-gratified look, that she was surprised by the unusual animation which her daughter, usually languid and reserved, displayed on the occasion of these Christmas sports.

Well, we went to bed. My room was at the east end of the house, and was known as the Tapestry Room. Its walls were, indeed, covered with tapestry of great antiquity and ugliness, and the bed was an imposing structure, calculated to impart to the intelligent foreigner, should he ever gain admittance, a proper appreciation of the majesty of sleep. A wood fire, clear, ruddy, and bright, burned on the ample hearth, where the massive "dogs" or andirons of parcel gilt steel were formed to represent the heraldic cognisance of the Trehernes. I was tired, but not disposed for sleep; so instead of retiring to rest, I sat down before the fire, from time to time tossing a fresh log into the blaze, and meditating on many things, on my life, past, present, and future, as I gazed on the glowing embers, which seemed to have that strange fascination for me that they have had for thousands.

At last, the sullen sound of the great clock on the turret above the stables reminded me that it was very late, conventionally as well as actually, and that I had better get some sleep while I could; and then it was that feeling for my watch and missing that accustomed pocket-companion, I recollected that when we were at play downstairs, my watch had been one of the forfeited pledges, late redeemed, and that it had been left lying on the marble mantelpiece in the great drawing-room, since I had forgotten to take it up when my little playmates left us. "It serves me right," said I cynically, with the remembrance of Tollemache's face floating before my mental vision, "for making such a fool of myself. Never mind! I'll fetch it." So I took up my candle and sallied forth. The passage which gave access to my room was called the Gothic Gallery, probably because it was narrow and dark, with hideous mediæval carvings in niches, and stained-glass casements, through the tinted panes of which the pure white snow outside looked crimson, ochre-yellow, or of a dusky green. This passage leads into the wider and loftier one styled the Oaken Gallery, where the family portraits hang against the panelled walls; and from this, the broad and elaborately-curved stair-case of dark and polished wood conducts to the entrance-hall below. I made my way to the drawing-room, found my watch without difficulty, the centre of a heap of torn gloves, crushed flowers, and the pink or blue papers that had been wrapped around French bonbons, relics of the juvenile revelry. I had nearly reacked my room again when a gust of wind, caused by the sudden opening of a door, extinguished my candle. Immediately afterwards, I saw the faint glimmer of a light slowly and steadily approaching. Nearer and nearer it came; and presently I could distinguish a figure clothed in white, or some light colour that looked white in the uncertain light, gliding with a noiseless tread and a smooth evenness of motion which was of itself remarkable. I am, I hope, as brave as my neighbors; and I may say, without boasting, that I have not been found lacking when face to face with danger in a tangible shape; but I confess that a cold shuddering chill ran through my limbs, and that my heart bounded like a startled horse, and then seemed to cease beating, as I caught sight of this mysterious form silently and surely approaching me. The Blankshire lady's story of vague alarms among the visitors on account of strange occurrences by night in that old house, the very scene, with its solemn state and antique magnificence, for the manifestation of supernatural phenomena, recurred to me with disagreeable emphasis. Idle words had I thought them at the time when they were uttered; but now I felt anything rather than inclined to ridicule them. The apparition drew nearer, and by an involuntary impulse I shrank back into a doorway, as if to allow it to pass. It did pass; and in a moment more I breathed more freely, and began to be heartily ashamed of my superstitious fancies.

Blanche! Yes, it was my young cousin, Blanche Treherne. I recognized her as she passed close by me, carrying her candle in a hand that was as if it had been that of a statue; and, in truth, marble itself could scarcely

have been paler than her fair innocent face, as she went by, to all appearance, without perceiving me. She still wore the dress that she had worn during the evening's merry-making downstairs, her pretty white frock relieved by some admixture of light blue. Her long hair, of a pale golden colour, hung loose over her shoulders, and I noticed with wonder that her small feet were bare, so that her step caused no more sound than if she had indeed been a phantom. On she went, walking slowly but with no sign of hesitation, her eyes fixed on something—what, I knew not—as if a spirit's shadowy hand had beckoned her onwards. By some instinct, I had refrained from addressing her, even in my surprise at the recognition; but now, moved by an impulse for which I could not account, I left my place of capital, and followed her some distance, being careful to tread as lightly as I could. She passed on, along the Oaken Gallery, and I wondered more and more at the strangeness of her conduct. Her own chamber was, I conjectured, on the floor above, as were those of several of the visitors, while others, as well as the master and mistress of the house, slept in that part of the mansion from which every step removed her farther and farther. Why, in the name of common sense, had she chosen to range the house thus, on this bitter winter's night? and what could be the steady purpose that drew her forward, as steel is drawn to a magnet?

Ah! now she can go no farther, unless her intention be, as doubtless it is, to descend to the reception-rooms below by the grand staircase, for she has reached the end of the Oaken Gallery. Such was my soliloquy, as I cudgelled my brains in the effort to devise a reason for these extraordinary proceedings on the part of a girl of my cousin's age. It was just possible that she, like myself, might have left downstairs some object of which she was now in search; but if so, why this ghostlike gliding with bare feet about the mansion of which she was the heiress, indulged and loved by all? These thoughts came into my head as for an instant she stood still, near the angle of the broad landing place, while in front of her was the great French window, filling up nearly two-thirds of the width of the wide passage, by which the Oaken Gallery was lighted. This window was an innovation, no doubt, but an improvement on the small paned casement of stained glass, through which the sun had scarcely had power to illumine the old pictures that lined the walls, which it had superseded.

"By heaven, she is lost!" was my hasty exclamation, as, to my infinite horror, I saw Blanche turn from the staircase, and deliberately yet quickly throw open the tall French window. That very day, just after sunset, Sir Charles had insisted on my admiring the view from that west window, which commanded a bold sweep of country, swelling moorland and black pine-woods, rocky fort and the distant sea. The window was a great height above the ground, since from it one could look down, sheer over the edge of the stone terrace on which the mansion stood, to a rocky dell, where far below a brawling stream made music among the boulders that fretted its waters into foam. All this I remembered, at the same instant that the dreadful truth flashed upon me. Blanche was a sleepwalker—her actions were prompted by the strange mechanical semi-consciousness of the somnambulist—and from this terrible slumber that was not rest, her awakening would be in another world. Nearer, and nearer yet, she drew to the giddy verge, her eyes steadily fixed on vacancy. She stood poised on the very sill of the open window, through which the bleak night-air rushed in, causing the candle in her unconscious hand to flare and flicker. I dared not call, dared not raise my voice, lest I should startle her, and precipitate the catastrophe that seemed imminent. There was a chance, though a poor one, that she would close the window and return to her room, as I had heard that sleepwalkers sometimes do, ignorant of the mortal peril so nearly encountered.

Now she seems to bend slightly forward, her slender figure actually overhanging the abyss. A fall from such a height must be fatal. Bitterly blaming myself for my own lack of prudence, in allowing things to proceed to this pitch before I interfered, I mustered all my strength for one desperate bound, sprang to her side, and caught the girl's falling weight in my arms, at the very moment when she stepped from the window-ledge. A second or two would have made my hasty movement too late; and, as it was, it was well that Blanche was a light burden, and that I was active and strong, or both might have fallen from that dizzy perch. Blanche, abruptly awakened, broke the silence of the house by an agonised scream, as of mingled pain and terror, and for an instant she struggled, while the candlestick dropped from her hand. The candle was extinguished in its fall; but I looked down and saw the tiny luminous spark of the burning wick falling, falling through the midnight darkness, and then heard the dull clang as the silver candlestick reached the rocks below.

Blanche's shrieks had effectually aroused the household, and before I could soothe her natural alarm, she was clasped in her mother's arms; while a babel of voices rose clamorously around us, and conjectures, exclamations of horror or of thankfulness, were uttered on all hands, as visitors and servants came successively hurrying to the spot whence the cries had been heard. That the young heiress of the Trehernes was a somnambulist was what no one, not even her own parents, knew, nor had the poor frightened child herself the least suspicion that this was the case; but at any rate the incipient ghost-stories with reference to Bramshaw Hall were now nipped in the bud, and the most superstitiously disposed could not doubt the connection between the mysterious occurrences of which they had whispered, and Blanche's unlucky peculiarity. The candlestick, dented and battered, was found next morning among the rocks below the terrace.

I prefer to pass lightly over the deep and fervent expressions of gratitude and strong feeling with which Sir Charles and Lady Treherne acknowledged the preservation of their only child; but I remember to have reddened and winced excessively under the weight of praises undeserved, since any one else in my place would surely have done as much, and it rather annoyed me than otherwise, that the company persisted in treating

me as a sort of hero during the rest of my stay, and in humoring and deferring to me as if I had been some great public benefactor. The only exception to this general conspiracy to make much of an unworthy individual was Blanche herself. My young cousin seemed to avoid me since that eventful night, and of all the farewells that were said when I returned home, the coldest "good bye" was Blanche's own.

We sailed for India, and for four years I went through the usual round of Indian duties and amusements, with no opportunities of active service, but a fair average of sport with gun, rifle, and boar-spear, with plenty of drill as well as dancing, and an occasional change of station as the chief military event of the year. During this time I sometimes received, though rarely, a letter from my aunt, but from home I often heard tidings of the Trehernes, who no longer resided constantly at Bramshaw, but were often in London, on the Continent, or at English seaside watering places. At the end of four years, my elder brother, poor Tom, died, and my parents pressed me to leave the army and come home, the necessity for a profession in my case no longer existing. With some regret I bade adieu to my former life and its associations, but, after all, there is no great hardship in being the future proprietor of an entailed estate like ours, and with tolerable resignation I sent in my papers and renounced the career of arms.

I had not been long in England before an invitation to repeat my former Christmas visit to Bramshaw Hall reached me, couched in such affectionate terms, and so urgent, that I could not find it in my heart to decline. "Mind," said my father jestingly, "that you don't leave your heart behind you there, unless indeed you have left it in India. Miss Blanche, I am told by those who are judges of such matters, has turned out amazingly good-looking."

I laughed, and answered with a tone of perfect conviction that there was little prospect of any love-passages between my cousin, now sixteen years of age, and myself. I found that my father's accounts of Blanche's appearance hardly did justice to the reality. She had developed into a very pretty girl, who at moments, as when she sang, which she did in a sweet sad voice, and with much musical taste and skill, looked absolutely lovely. I took an opportunity to ask Lady Treherne, half jocularly, whether "the ghost" was effectually exorcised, and sleep walking a thing of the past. With perfect confidence my aunt replied in the affirmative. Care, and change of air and of scene, amusement and study, had, she said, done wonders for Blanche's health, and whereas the extreme delicacy of her constitution had formerly caused much anxiety to her parents, they now considered her to be quite well and quite strong. "It was on her account, dear girl," said Lady Treherne, "that we quiet old folks have run about the world as we have done, travelling and pleasure hunting, for you must know, Talbot, this is the first Christmas we have spent at the Hall since—since you were with us."

A curious coincidence. It was wild snowy weather again, and with few exceptions the same company that I had formerly met had reassembled under Sir Charles's hospitable roof. As before, I had arrived on Christmas eve, and as the dinner in its old style, and the dance, and the songs and music, and the games for the children, succeeded in precisely the same fashion. I could have imagined that the four last years were the baseless vision of a dream, and that this was my first and only Christmas at Bramshaw Hall. One change there certainly was. Blanche, no longer a child, was taken in to dinner by me, and she did not avoid me in the pointed, almost petulant, manner in which she had turned from me when she was but twelve years old, but I could make no way with her in conversation, nor did she meet my eyes frankly, but allowed hers to rest anywhere but on my face when I addressed her, answered my best things with monosyllables, blushed when I spoke carelessly of our former meeting, and altogether disconcerted me, who was perhaps a little vain of my powers of pleasing. I soon gave her up as hopeless, and directed my attentions elsewhere.

Never in my life had I felt myself less disposed to sleep than when, late on the night of Christmas-eve, I sat before the crackling wood fire in my bedroom—they had given me the Tapestry Room, as before—and meditated on all that had occurred, for good or ill, since last I was the tenant of that ancient chamber. Four years ago poor Tom, my elder brother, was hale and strong, and I a younger son, with no prospects but such as my profession might, in these, from a military point of view, hard times, open out before me. Four years ago I was setting out for India, with scanty chances of revisiting familiar scenes and associating with old friends, until absence should have weakened the memories of the first, and thinned the numbers of the latter. Yes, four years ago; how strange was the adventure of that other Christmas-eve, to which my thoughts flew back, no matter on what subject I might be pondering.

Blanche Treherne was a pretty girl—very pretty. Yes, my father had been accurately informed on that point. Accomplished too, but not, perhaps, a person of very deep feelings; or surely she might have been a little more cordial with a kinsman just returned from a four years' exile, and who had been once lucky enough to render her a service which—Well, well! that was an old story now, and young ladies have plenty to occupy their heads without treasuring up romantic gratitude for something that happened in their childhood.

I drew aside the heavy window-curtains and looked out. Snow, snow everywhere, as on that memorable night long ago. It was but a thin sprinkling as yet, however, for it had but begun on fall on the previous day. The sky was streaked with clouds, through the rifts of which a wan new moon peeped coldly. There had been no moon to light the inky blackness of the night four years since, and so far there was a difference.

I could not go to bed. Somehow, do what I would, I remained wakeful and watchful, with an undefinable impression upon me that I was wanted, that I had a duty to perform, and that I must not sleep. I

listened intently for the slightest sound, and even the moan of the wind without seemed to me like a human voice complaining. Again and again did I throw wood upon the fire, until my supply of fuel waned to such an extent that it was plain that I must soon retire to rest, or sit up fireless. "This will never do," said I, "fancy is making a fool of me; and because something queer happened when I was last here, I cannot accept the prosaic view of life which is of course the true one. I'll just slip out and take a glance at the scene of my former adventure, and then come back and go to sleep for the rest of the dark hours."

So saying, I took my candle, and emerged into the Gothic Gallery. Instinctively I turned to the point where, four years since, I had espied the gleam of the light in Blanche's hand. All was darkness now. Here, too, was the doorway into which I had retired to allow the apparition, as I had deemed it, to pass. Smiling at the recollection of my own irrational alarm, I went on, walking softly, to the corner of the Oaken Gallery. "So vivid is the imagination," said I, "that I almost expect to see the glimmer of the light, and the childish figure gliding on before me, as when—"

The words died away on my lips, for what I beheld was a sight that curdled my very life blood with horror.

At the other end of the Oaken Gallery, receding from me, and within a few feet of the great west window, was a female figure draped in white, distinctly visible, and carrying a lighted candle with the same impassive mechanical steadiness, that I had noticed four years since; advancing slowly, and noiselessly, with the same air of being beckoned forwards by a viewless hand that had shocked me in a child so narrowly rescued from a cruel death. It was no dream—no creation of a distempered brain. No. It was Blanche herself; her bright hair floating like pale gold over her shoulders, and wearing a loose *peignoir* of white cashmere. While I stood speechless, she advanced, and with a slow but certain movement of the hand which was free, she began to unclasp the fastenings of the great French window.

For a moment I stood, as if rooted to the ground with horror. I tried to rush forward, but my feet seemed nailed to the floor, and my voice, when I essayed to call aloud, refused to obey my volition. The low creaking sound, as the window slowly opened, and the inward rush of the shrieking night-wind, dissolved the spell of my helplessness, and I darted along the gallery, shouting, or attempting to shout, though my voice reached my own ear but as a harsh and hollow murmur. The white figure, bending forward, seemed about to vanish in the blackness beyond. Suddenly the candle was extinguished by a stronger gust of wind, and I uttered a cry of horror, for I thought that Blanche had actually fallen; but by Heaven's mercy it was in time, just in time. My arm was round her waist, my hand was on her arm as she was tottering on the very verge of the dread precipice; and by a quick and powerful exertion I drew her back. She awoke, with a low moaning cry, such as may often be heard on the lips of a child suddenly aroused from sleep. "What is this?" she said wildly—"Where am I?—Cousin—what—where?" Then, as she looked around, and saw the reality of the position, she shuddered, and sank fainting and unconscious into my arms. Bearing her as swiftly and tenderly as I could along the Oaken Gallery, I laid her on a sofa that stood in the adjacent corridor; and hurrying to Lady Treherne's door, aroused my aunt from her sleep, and related in few words what had befallen her daughter; and how, a second time, she had been providentially snatched from the jaws of death.

"It was the association of ideas that did the mischief—not a doubt of it," said the old family physician, who had known Blanche from her infancy; "the cure seemed complete, and in effect was so; but no doubt the Christmas spent for the first time at the old house and in the old way; the similarity of the weather and of the evening's amusement; and, above all, Mr. Carew's presence, with the memory of the former adventure, influenced our young friend's fancy in a manner that might have been—But we won't talk of that now."

The Trehernes left Bramshaw at once; and at their earnest wish I accompanied them, and paid the remainder of my visit at their house in London. Here it was that I learned to find Blanche very, very dear to me; and that after some weeks I ventured to ask her to be my wife. "I thought," said I, as I took her little hand, unresisting, in mine, "that you rather disliked me than otherwise formerly; but perhaps now—"

"Do you remember four years ago?" she asked, interrupting me, and with a burning cheek and a glance, half arch, half shy, that puzzled me greatly.

"Yes, of course I do," answered I, perplexed.

"Because I have loved you ever since—ever since you—first—" and she shuddered, and hid her beautiful blushing face on my shoulder.

Sir Charles and Lady Treherne gave their willing sanction to the engagement between Blanche and myself, which was equally welcome to my own parents; but on account of the youth of the bride-elect, it was thought better to postpone the wedding for another year, till Miss Treherne should have passed her seventeenth birthday.

When I asked her, as in duty bound, to name the day for that all-important ceremony, the dear girl hesitated for a moment, and then, with tears, but not of sorrow, sparkling in her loving eyes, she softly made answer, "Christmas-eve."

COWEN'S "RUTH."—The criticism on this new oratorio has been so favorable that arrangements have already been made for its production at Novello's concerts at St. James' Hall on December 1st and at the Crystal Palace on December 19th. At both places the composer himself will conduct. Several musical societies in the Provinces are also about to take the work at once into practice, and it is to Mr. Cowen's great credit that his first oratorio should prove such a popular and artistic success.—*Exchange*.

MRS. DUNCAN'S WILL.

I.

The little church stands high upon the hill at Crossmyroof. It is not a handsome church at all, nor curious, nor famous; but I love it dearly, as I ought to love it, having lived all my life in its very shadow, and listened within its old grey walls while my father's lips taught me the one great lesson which has sanctified it.

We decorated it three times in every year; at Christmas, at Easter, and for the Harvest Thanksgiving service. But the Christmas decorations were what I took most pride in—and, being the vicar's eldest daughter, of course the chief of the work, and of the pleasure, fell upon me. The children, (I mean my brothers and sisters) helped me always, and we had one of our own servants when she could be spared, besides countless village volunteers; but I always felt we should have been very much more incapable and unsuccessful if it had not been that old Mr. Gotto made a point of having her grandson down at Crossmyroof for Christmas. He was so ready with his help; so quick to see what would look well; so tall and strong, that nothing we wished to attempt was impossible when he was there, and nothing in the work was a trouble to me.

Perhaps that was why I took most pride in the Christmas decorating,—for it is pleasant to meet with hearty sympathy and help in anything one undertakes; but perhaps it was only because Christmas was always such a happy time with me.

Sometimes Eleanor M'Laird came up from the hall to help us, and when she did she generally laughed, a little low aristocratic laugh, over my garlands and texts, and pretended to think the children had done them all. I was often glad that we were in the church when she said so, because hot words rose from my heart, and would have left my lips perhaps if we had not been there. She was an only child and very rich; and I was the eldest of eight, and had never known what it was to have a sixpence, the spending of which had not been anticipated. Her father was lord of the manor, with £3000 a year. My father was vicar of the parish, with £300. But I think if she had felt the difference between us less, I should have felt it more—certainly I should have felt it in a better way.

Christmas day fell on a Saturday that year, and it was getting quite dusk on the Friday afternoon before we finished. Eleanor had brought a magnificent bouquet of hothouse flowers for the chancel table, and I stood watching her while she arranged them.

"They will not be moved, I hope," she said, stopping down into the aisle again and addressing me, "nor the cross I have placed above James, just see that the cross is safe."

James was the footman who had been sent to walk home with her; and while he did as she had bidden him, she repeated her question to me.

"No; no one will move them, Miss M'Laird," I answered.

"Low Church people have such cramped ideas sometimes," she said, passing on; and I set down again to the wreath that I was making. How different the vicarage flowers were from those which she had brought from the conservatories at the hall. I thought this, working on with my shy-looking little roses, while the whispering shadows glided in under the heavy porch, and crept along the narrow windows. I had heard voices in the churchyard after Eleanor had left the church, and I knew that Marq Gotto (his name was really Marquis, but we always called him Marq) had met her just outside the porch, and had stopped to chat. She was generally very gracious to him; perhaps because he did not live in Crossmyroof, perhaps because he had that charm about him which compelled people to like him, perhaps because he was so grand and handsome that she could forget, while she was talking to him, that he was only a poor young lawyer, struggling hard to win his own way in a world over whose wide extent, he used to say, there was no one else to win it for him.

"Is it finished?" asked Marq, standing beside me in the twilight, with that little smile upon his lips with which he so often spoken to me. "If so, let me hang it before we are shrouded in utter darkness."

I tried to hasten, but the string got entangled every second.

"Nina, your hands are cold and tired, dear. Give me the wreath."

I gave it to him at once, helping him to hold it while his strong fingers dexterously tied in the last ivy and laurel leaves.

"Now hand me the nails, and see how artistically I will put it up."

I stood at the foot of the little ladder, while the children, who had finished their task, gathered round. When the wreath was hung, he stepped down among us, and—quite unconsciously I think—laid his hand on mine as he looked up at it.

"The flowers look very common-place beside Miss M'Laird's, I said, with a little sigh.

He laughed—the laugh deepening in his eyes as he turned and looked into my face.

"I think Miss M'Laird's garlands are as like herself as Miss Callaway's garlands are like herself. My fingers could not weave a wreath of hers."

"That looks pretty now," I said, still looking up.

"It is our wreath, remember. How long will it live?"

"Only over Christmas," put in Tom practically.

"Indeed, sir!" laughed Marq. "and may I inquire what Christmas you allude to? Now, Nina, is there anything else for me to do in this way?"

"I think not."

But, though the children went home then, we two still lingered there, while the brilliant Nativity scene upon the eastern window grew more and more real, as the light faded without.

"I have one thing more to do, you know, Marq," I said, as the choir came in. "We have to sing the anthem over to papa."

"That's right. I will stand here and listen."

The singers lighted the candles on the organ, and bent over them to bring

their light upon the music; but I know the grand old anthem well, and stood back in the shadow, where I could see Marq leaning at the end of our seat. Often in the time that followed did I sadly remember how heedlessly I had sung the comforting words that night, while I watched his listening figure, and while the gorgeous picture of the Birth we sang of faded utterly.

Papa was detained in the village, so Marq and I walked slowly on together down the quiet lane, the darkness of the Christmas night deepening and deepening, and no star yet venturing out into the chilling air. Yet we lingered at every step, thinking nothing of the cold. Marq was telling me of that strange old Mrs. Duncan, who, ever since I can remember, has lived alone at the old Priory on the other side of the hill. Of course, long ago I had heard the story of her cruelty to her stepson, and of the quarrel between them when his father died and left all his wealth unconditionally to her, the will never even mentioning his only son; but Marq was telling me other things—how Mrs. Duncan always sought his advice now on the most trifling matters of business; how often she sent for him when she was in London; how she was now ill at Torquay, and he was going to her in a few days.

"When lawyers get one good client they think their fortunes made, Marq, don't they?" I asked.

"I cannot quite answer for lawyers in general being so weak, dear; but one lawyer in particular is. I feel my fortune made. My only want now is—some one to share it."

He was laughing, of course, and I laughed too.

"It is too great for you to spend alone, then?"

"It will be when I've earned it. I intend to have such a beautiful little home. A white house with roses and jasmine all over it, and a garden full of wonderful scents and unexpected corners,—just like your own home, Nina. And of course I shall want some one to share it with me."

"Your grandmother," I suggested.

"No, dear. My venerable ancestress is a strong conservative, declining to leave her angle; and can you expect her primitive residence to hold me when I am a great man?"

"You remember the inquisitive bells of Stepney?"

"You want to know when that will be, do you? With your usual far-sightedness, you would insinuate that I am counting my chickens too soon. Never mind! I feel that I shall win success at last. Faint heart, as you are aware, never won fair lady; and as I mean to win her, my heart is very strong. That is the one great hope leads me on, Nina. Stand here a moment, dear, out in the quiet night with me and tell me that hope shall have its fulfilment."

We were at the gate then, and I heard papa's step behind us on the frosty road. A new nervousness came upon me in my great happiness, and I hurriedly put my fingers on the latch. Marq laid his cool, firm hand upon them, whispering very tenderly,

"I will not keep you here, my dear one; I will not urge you for your answer now. Give it to me to-morrow night—on Christmas night. Ah, little Nina, let it be kind. I have loved you with all the strength of my heart. You have been the one bright hope of all my life. Let the pleasant home of which I dream be mine. Give me the little wife I seek, to make it bright and beautiful."

Quite quietly we walked together up the garden, but when we reached the lighted hall I ran away up-stairs. After tea we had a long happy evening of Christmas games and music, and Marq seemed to lead everything, and was the wildest and merriest of us all. Not till the bells had chimed the Christmas in, did we think of separating. Then the children were sent to bed, and Marq stood at the hall door, lingering over his good-night; the frosty breath of the new born day filling the hall, and we laughing and shivering as we stood there. He loitered so long that they all left us; then I gave him my hand that I might follow them.

"I wonder whether I shall reach home safely," he mused, holding it while he looked around into the darkness. "Nina, let me take what light I can. Let me have another look into the face I love."

Moving back into the light, my cheeks burning, I stood and smiled my last good-bye, and outside in the gloom Marq raised his hat and brightly answered me.

Our wreath, he had said—Marq's and mine. I thought it looked lovely even among Eleanor's rare and brilliant flowers. The children and I—reaching the church first of all the congregation—walked up the aisle, whispering how beautiful the glistening leaves and berries looked when the slanting sun-rays touched them. Then I took my place in the choir, and in little straggling groups the people passed under the porch, bringing in the Christmas suushio on their faces. Old Mrs. Gotto came at last, on Marq's arm, and she stood a moment just within the door, looking round upon the decorations. Marq looked up too, but his eyes were very grave, and I fancied that his thoughts were far away.

Then—in a hush which seemed to me a breathless hush of joy—we sat among the winter flowers in gloams of suushio, while my father read us the old sweet story, which has hallowed this day for every age to come. And the glad words of the anthem filled the church as if we too, in joy and thanksgiving, would join the angels' glorious hymn to-day.

We had been home only a few minutes, and were standing round the fire warming our feet, when Marq came in. I wondered to see him, because he never came to us on Christmas day until evening, and I especially wondered when—as he shook hands with us all—he wished us a merry Christmas; forgetting he had done so in the early morning.

"I am sorry to say my Christmas greeting heralds my good-bye," he said, speaking rather nervously. "Mr. Callaway, what do you think has happened?"

Of course, papa said he could not think at all.

"Old Mrs. Duncan has died at Torquay, and—and—left me her heir."

"Nonsense!" papa said promptly. "You joke too gravely, Marq."

"But it is not a joke, sir; it is a simple fact."

"But she has a son, Mr. Gotto," began Tom, staring into Mary's face.

"No; but her husband had one."

"And has she left her husband's wealth away from her husband's son?" I asked, breathing very quickly.

Mary simply answered, "Yes," without looking at me as he spoke. "Since that quarrel nearly twenty years ago," he added, as papa questioned him farther, "she has never heard of this son, and has never tried to hear of him. He is not mentioned in her will, they tell me."

"And the will is valid?"

"Perfectly so. The property was her own, to leave as she would."

"Then the father's will long ago was as unjust as the mother's is now," mamma interrupted.

"Old Mr. Duncan was entirely ruled by his wife, I believe," Mary answered, "and left her uncontrolled possession of the whole estate."

"But he never could have imagined that she would will it away from his only son," my father said. "Why, the name and estate have gone together for two hundred years!"

"Was Mrs. Duncan quite clear in her mind when the will was made, do you think?" I inquired.

"Quite so, as far as medical judgment goes."

"There is no difficulty in deciding what was wrong in her mind," said my father, gravely. "How inveterate must have been her hatred!"

"What a rich man you will be Marq!" said Tom delightedly, "and you'll live at the Priory, and be greater than the M'Lairds!"

"Are you really very rich and great, Marq?" asked Elsie, raising her small inquisitive face, and trying—as I think we were all trying—to read Marq's

He stooped upon the rug beside her, and I fancied that he did it to avoid our eyes, as he answered, "Yes; I am a very rich man, Elsie darling, but not great yet. That I must try to be, now that the riches are mine."

The words were spoken very slowly and very thoughtfully; and they fell upon my heart as a heavy shadow sometimes falls upon a sunny spot.

He had to start for Devonshire so early in the morning, he said, that he must bid us good-bye then. His grandmother would not hear of his leaving her again that day. We all shook hands with him as we stood round the fire; then he hurried away, saying we should be late for dinner, as he had to go round to the Priory.

"He speaks of the place in a tone of proprietorship already," papa said, laughing a little. "It will be good to have such a neighbor. I wish I had him for a patron. He will go into Parliament, of course, and be a great man, as he says."

"Poor Mr. Duncan!" mamma said, as she and I went upstairs. And whether it was because I thought of Marq, or because I thought of myself, I don't know; but the joy and sunshine of that Christmas day were gone. I had no fire in my bedroom, else I think I should have sat before it all that night, wondering and wondering. Yet I daresay that would not have made things any clearer to me than they seemed, as I stood for those few minutes at the staircase window. It was to-night that I was to have told him whether the home he said he dreamed of should be his. Another home had been given him now, which took him—in one way—far from me. He was free. Since I had not accepted his love, he could not think himself bound to me, and would go into a different world now, and see how much more wisely he could choose.

"I know he will be a great man," I whispered to myself, "and I will rejoice in it as I live on quietly here. Perhaps, sometimes, when he feels tired of his state and grandeur, he will like to rest a few minutes in the old garden with 'its wonderful scents and unexpected corners;' and I shall be his friend—only his friend, but always true to him in my heart, whether he knows it or not. O, I am so glad that I could not tell him last night how I loved him!"

Yet though I said that I was glad, though I pictured the quiet friendship I would feel for him, my heart would beat so quickly when the letters came, that I dared not trust myself to look at them; and while I waited for them to be claimed, each breath I drew hurt me with a quick sharp pain.

Week after week went by, and no tidings came of him—no tidings for us at least. Sometimes old Mrs. Gotto told us where he was, but not often, and never what he was doing. Spring came. The roses and jasmine on the white walls of my home bloomed in their first fresh beauty; looking in at my window, and reminding me of many a happy spring-time past, while the birds sang hopefully of many a happy spring to come. But still he never came.

Dreamily, in its full and perfect beauty, the summer followed. On all the land lay its flashing, radiant smile; but through these long bright days he did not come.

I listened to the roapers singing at their work; I listened to the lark echoing their song among the soft white clouds; but through all the joyous music of the autumn days there came for me a sad, sad strain, because he did not come. Slowly and steadily there crept to my feet the lengthening shadows of that long winter, whose coming I so sorely dreaded.

II.

It was Christmas-eve once more, and I had just brought into the church my last annual of glistening holly-boughs from the porch. Under the pulpit stairs sat Eleanor, sowing letters of box-leaves on white muslin.

"FEAR NOT—" The words grow under her fingers, and I read them over and over as I stood resting a moment near her. She was talking to papa quietly and rapidly as she worked, but I did not follow her. Now and then I heard "chasubles," "tunicles," "albs," "baretts," and many things which I suppose he understood, though he hardly spoke at all, but the

only words which went to my heart were those her fingers left upon the long white scroll.

I turned to my work, ashamed of the feeling which had been upon me all that morning. I would not think again of any one who had been used to make this task so light to me in the years gone by. I would think none but happy Christmas thoughts.

"Why have you left that space bare, Nina? Sha'n't you put a wreath up as you did last year?"

"No, Tom. I've finished now."

Eleanor had seen her text put up, and was leaving the church, wrapped in her rich soft furs. She hesitated a moment, looking curiously into my face, where the color had risen, sorely against my will.

"Who made the wreath that hung there last year?" she asked Tom.

"Nina and Mr. Gotto."

"Have you heard of Mr. Gotto lately?" she asked me.

"No."

"Have you seen him?" and she raised her eyebrows with languid surprise.

"He is in London now. He is coming down to stay with us, before he takes possession of the Priory. Papa helps him at present in the personal management of the estate, but we expect him soon."

"How soon?"

I asked it in a voice so still and passionless that it surprised me when I heard it.

"Perhaps to-night; I know he will come as soon as he can. He agrees with us that the Priory ought to be occupied. It is the only house in the neighborhood which I visit. Now I will bid you good evening, Miss Callaway."

I had been going to give her my earliest Christmas wishes; but now my hands were tight upon the rails, and my tongue felt hot and dry.

"Then you won't put a wreath up there, Nina?"

"No, no."

"How very decidedly you shake your head! Then we've finished, I suppose. I shall stop for the practice, and walk home with you." As Tom spoke, he gathered up a few stray leaves and bits of string which we had let fall after the woman swept the church, and I carried with me the flowers I had not used. They were only the old simple flowers from our own garden and little greenhouse, but I thought how bright and fresh they looked when I laid them down upon my own seat in the choir.

We tried over our new anthem in the fading daylight; but papa, who stood to listen just where Marq had stood last year, decided that he would rather hear the old one. So we sang it once over; then with swimming eyes I went away, and left the flowers lying there.

The snow lay ankle-deep upon the churchyard grass next morning, but a path was cleared up to the porch, where the pure white flakes clung delicately to the dark old wood-work. How cold the church was! I sat and shivered in my place before I even cared to look at the effect of our decorations. Eleanor's cross was more beautiful than ever this year. Did it make her very happy to live among such beautiful flowers? Would it make Marq happy?

Thinking of him, my eyes wandered to where, upon that happy day a year ago, our wreath had hung. And there, just in the old spot, woven of the old flowers, another wreath was hanging now. The color rushed to my face; a hot light burned in my eyes. Who but Marq himself could have done this? I recognised the flowers I had left in my seat last night; I recognised the taste which had arranged them; and thou I forgot all about the cold, and a great joy filled my heart as completely as the triumphant organ notes now filled the church.

He came in with old Mrs. Gotto on his arm, and behind him walked a sleeping sunburnt gentleman, with gray hair and a face lined thickly by something that had gone more deep than care. But I did not trust myself to look at Marq, and when we came out into the churchyard, they were gone.

As we lingered round the fire at home, I could not help fancying that Marq would come in to us just as he had come that day a year ago. Yet, when I really heard the footstep for which I had been waiting so long, I did not dare to turn. The children clustered round him, so I was the last whom he greeted.

"Nina, a merry Christmas?"

The words were so gay and yet so earnest, that I was ashamed of my own shyness, and tried to answer in the same frank tone.

"I am come, you see, Elsie," he said, taking her on his knee as he sat down among us. "and nobody says how nice it is to see me. I think I will go back again."

"Are you come to live at the Priory now?" asked Tom eagerly.

"No."

"Who was with you in church to-day, Marq?" asked my father.

"Mr. Duncan, sir. He is staying with us over to-day, then he takes possession of his own estate."

"What! old Mrs. Duncan's stepson?" we all exclaimed. "Is he come back?"

Papa said quietly, "So I thought."

"Yes, he is come back—from the very farthest corner of the earth, one may say."

"And did you bring him back, Marq?" I asked, feeling how proudly I was looking up into his face.

"Yes, Nina; I brought him back with the aid of many lawful and unlawful means," he said, with the old smile on his lips as he answered me.

"And—and—the wealth is his now?"

"The wealth has been always his, Nina; but there were some useless forms for me to go through; and these, with our long search and many

journeys, have taken up a whole long year. Did you remember Duncan, sir?" he added, turning to papa. "Did you recognise him?"

"Hardly, Marq. He was nothing more than a handsome careless lad in those days; now he looks a middle aged man—cue, too, who has passed through a hard and bitter battle with the world, and—I fancy—with him self too."

"I wonder what old Mrs. Duncan would have said, if she had known how her will would be slighted," put in Tom, laughing.

"Perhaps," I said, looking into the fire, while the cheek next Mary grew very hot indeed. "Perhaps she knew what Marq would do."

"If she knew him well, she may have guessed it," my mother added gently.

Yet I, thinking I knew Marq so well—never had guessed it! He laughed, giving Elsie a hasty kiss, and depositing her on my lap. "I must go now," he said, "or Mr. Duncan will have exhausted all my grandmother's reminiscences of his ancestry. May I come in for the evening?" Every one answered him eagerly except myself; but he smiled at me just as if I had done so.

What a happy day that was! And in the evening, when the fires burned brightest, and the shutters were shut, and the curtains drawn, Marq came.

The urn had just been carried into the dining-room, and I was in there alone, making the tea, when I heard him hang his hat and coat in the hall.

We were so many, I thought, that it would not do for me to put in a spoonful of tea for each of us and one for the pot, but I did put in three extra ones for Marq. I lingered, rearranging the flowers on the table, and wondering whether Marq had ever sat down to such a formidable children's tea since he had last been amongst us. Then it was time to ring the tea-bell.

As I turned to leave the room he met me, coming in with his old smile even more bright and tender than it used to be.

"Nina, this is Christmas-night."

"And tea-time," I added, laughing, as he took my hands in his.

"I said I should come for my answer on Christmas night."

"You said so, but never came."

"Dearest, do you not understand now why I never came? Could I come until I knew what life I asked you to share with me? Could I offer myself as a rich man, Nina, when I knew that very soon I should be poor again? You, I know, would have understood me, if I had told you what to do; but it would have been unfair to you in the eyes of others. If—if there had been no one to claim the wealth, after all, but myself, of course I could honorably have asked you to share it with me; but not—not while I felt I held it only in trust. I was to come for my answer on Christmas-night, Nina; and here I am."

"And, Marq, here I am too."

And then his brave happy face bent down to mine, and neither of us spoke at first in our full content.

"Nina, what have you thought of me this year of silence?" asked Marq, presently. "Has it tried your love, my darling?"

I did not answer that, but shyly took my place before the tea-tray.

"Ah, little Nina, it is impossible that you have trusted me just so firmly and entirely as I have trusted you."

I knew I had not. O, so well I know!—and I told him so.

"You saw our wraith, Nina! Did it tell you what I meant it should?"

"Yes; and more, Marq."

"It is very, very good to feel that that waiting time is over," he said, leaning over my chair, while I first looked unmeaningly into the tea pot, and then asked if he would please to ring the tea-bell.

"Presently. The tea will be all the better for standing a few minutes longer. Duncan is so anxious to see you, Nina. He says he must always look upon us as his two first and firmest friends; and that the Priory must be always home to us. But, dear, through this long lonely year, I have been working with other aims besides the—relieving of my conscience. I have been working for that home I used to dream of: and now I feel it within my grasp."

"And the roses and the jasmine?" I asked, looking up, and trying to speak easily, though my cheeks were crimson.

He answered me quite differently from what I had expected; and I began to put the sugar into the cups at random.

"Will you come with the roses and the jasmine, Nina? Surely, then I shall have waited long enough, my dear one?"

"O, Marq: do ring the tea-bell."

For I knew the tea would be undrinkably strong if we waited any longer, and every one would laugh at me for putting in so much extra—just for Marq.

MINING.

Before another issue of THE CRITIC shall have gone to press, Christmas, the season of mirth and festivity, will have been past, and attention will have been riveted on the approaching birth of the New Year. It is the blessed season of joyful reunions, and many of the American managers of our gold mines, who have labored so successfully in isolated mining camps, far removed from home and family, will take advantage of the holidays to visit their loved ones, be they wives or sweethearts. Others from morbidly distant England will doubtless try and be merry, but we fear their hearts will, at this season above all others, long for the delights of home, and it is the duty of their friends and neighbors to cheer them, if possible, into forgetfulness for the time at least, of the sacrifices they have made in leaving familiar scenes and customs, and coming to a strange land. Many of our mining camps will appear desolate and deserted by a general exodus of native miners to their homes in neighboring towns or farm houses, but the smoke will still curl up from numerous mining cabins, where sturdy miners, with buxom wives and rosy children, will join as joyfully in the Christmas festivities, and perhaps have a merrier time than the dwellers in city mansions. We had thought to illustrate the season by a mining story appropriate to the occasion, but on mature consideration we concluded to spare our friends the miners. What had they done that they should be so tortured? They had paid their subscriptions with a punctuality that was delightful, had encouraged us in our efforts to aid the mining cause by every appreciation, in fact we could not find a single argument that would justify us in putting them through an ordeal far worse than the ordeal by fire, i.e., the perusal of a mining story by us. Have we not already offended grievously, and been spared?

Have we not said that Mr. Pulveriser owned a most valuable mine, which he managed with great ability, while Mr. Dynamite, who owned an adjoining property, and loved Pulveriser as the devil does holy water, knew him to be a swindler, a liar, and a perfect brute, who was devoid of all knowledge of mining?

Have we not had then to extinguish Mr. Dynamite with a "puff" that fairly exhausted our stock of adjectives?

Have we not, in fact, trodden on innumerable corns, and still been forgiven?

Then why should we place the last straw on the camel's back and ruin ourselves irretrievably, by the unpardonable offense of an original tale, or more correctly, a tale by an original.

It was not for lack of material, as the supply far exceeded the demand. We had pictured a somewhat pathetic scene in mining life, a sort of drama in one act, but the details were too voluminous, and pages would have been required to do it justice. Briefly, the scene opened in a miner's cabin on a Christmas-Eve. Seated before a crackling wood fire was a miner's wife, surrounded by her large family of children, all anxiously awaiting the return of the husband and father, who had gone into the city. The younger children were crying for bread, while the older ones assisted the care-worn mother in soothing them. The eldest daughter drew them around her, and they soon forgot their hunger in listening to her story of Christmas and Santa Claus, and all the good things to eat he so liberally supplied to nice little children. The marks of extreme poverty were painfully apparent, but everything, even to the children's patched clothing, was scrupulously clean. The mother, taking advantage of the temporary diversion of the children's thoughts, stole away to grieve in silence. It was Christmas-Eve, and she could see no hope for the morrow, and, filled with anguish for her little ones, she threw herself on a bed, convulsed with tears and sobs.

The past, with all its delights, was mirrored in her mind. She saw herself again the happy bride first taking possession of her snug home by the sea. Jack, her handsome, manly husband, a well-to-do farmer and fisherman, was all devotion, and her days were past in perfect freedom from care. Years flew on in the same happy manner, and their union was blessed with numerous children. Her husband was always affectionate, and she lived only for him and the children. Two years before no had been struck with the gold fever. A sly neighbor, whom she had always hated, always mistrusted, talked him into joining in taking up and working some areas, and from that moment their course had been steadily down-hill. Everything was mortgaged to raise money to secure the wealth that always just eluded her husband's grasp. One never-to-be forgotten day the sheriff seized upon their goods, the mortgage was foreclosed, and with the little remnant of their fortune the family moved into the dreary mining camp and took possession of a deserted cabin. Like a true wife she hid her anguish from her husband, and the cabin was ever made bright to him by her pleasant smile and cordial greeting. He was buoyed up by his hopes of speedy success, but his wife with no such incentive, gradually aged before her time, and became a mere shadow of her former self. Still, she never repined, never grumbled. She cared nothing for the loss of friends; she was always ready to defend her husband when assailed, but the sight of her children growing up around her uneducated, poorly clad, miserably fed, grieved her beyond expression, and she shed many bitter tears in private. Affairs had gone from bad to worse, until now there was almost nothing in the house to eat, and Christmas, which was a time of rejoicing to others, only intensified the misery of the situation. Weeks before her husband had been offered a, to him, fortune for his property, by the owners of an adjoining mine, and he had agreed to sell. Delay after delay had caused her to lose all hope, but the day before he had gone into the city to try and close the bargain. Almost in despair at the thought of their condition, she slipped off the bed on to her knees, and prayed as she had never prayed before.

Suddenly, there was the merry jingling of sleigh bell without. At a sound so unusual, the wife quickly arose from her knees, and tried to efface all traces of tears by dashing her face in cold water.

Globe Hotel,

12 Buckingham Street,
HALIFAX, N. S.

SPECIAL rates for Commercial
Travellers. Parties arriving
by Train can take Horse Cars
to door.

HARRIS L. WALLACE, PROP.

Halifax Hotel,

HALIFAX, N. S.

THE LARGEST & MOST COMPLETE HOTEL
IN THE LOWER PROVINCES.

Has been lately fitted with all modern
improvements, making it one of the
Leading Hotels in Canada.

H. HESSLEIN & SONS, PROPS.

The children rushed to the door, the sleigh stopped, and the next moment she heard wild exclamations of delight, while her husband called out in his jolliest tones—"Good news, Molly, the mine is sold at last, and I have got the money."

The next moment she was clasped in his arms, and much to his surprise, sobbed as if her heart would break. Here were tears of joy, however, and soon gave way to laughter, as she noticed the little three-year-old tugging in a turkey almost as large as himself. All the children took a hand, and the sleigh was soon emptied of its contents, part of which the father carefully concealed in the wood shed.

There was a whole barrel of flour, piles of groceries, apples, and other edibles too numerous to mention.

The mother seemed suddenly to grow ten years younger, and romped about with the children, opened the parcels, and soon had the old stove sizzling and steaming, and sending forth most appetizing odors of ham and eggs, and pancakes. The transformation from despair to joy was complete, and after the children had been finally noticed to bed, Jack went out and returned with his arms full of parcels. There were drums and all conceivable instruments of torture for the boys, dolls and cradles, and what not for the girls.

Sturdy boots, warm socks, neat suits, and rolls of calico and cloth, were then opened up for the mother's inspection. For herself, it seemed that Jack had purchased everything she needed, and a fine gold watch and chain, which he hung around her neck, was never more worthily bestowed.

But it is time to drop the curtain, and so we will say farewell to Jack and Molly, and all the little ones who are now assured of the merriest of Merry Christmases.

This may be decidedly pathetic, but is it true? Old Dynamite turns up his nose, and says—"I know what Jack would really do under the circumstances. He would not hurry home, not he. He would go in for a regular time, and paint Halifax red. I think I see him swelling around with his pockets full of money, and with lots of new-found friends, willing to stick to him until death—no, until his money was gone. He might reach home by the end of a week very penitent, to be soundly berated by his wife, but a consolator in the shape of a bottle of gin would prove like oil poured on troubled waters, and poor Molly, whom poverty had driven to seek consolation in "something hot," would soon be oblivious of "earthly cares."

Very well, Mr. Dynamite, we know that you will have your own way, so we will close the discussion, by admitting that both scenes may possibly apply to different types of mining life.

We are in danger, as Lord Beaconsfield said of Gladstone, of becoming intoxicated by the exuberance of our own verbosity (the only method of intoxication now legal), and so wishing all our mining and other friends a very MERRY CHRISTMAS, we will close with the toast of Rip Van Winkle—"May you live long and prosper."

GOLD RIVER DISTRICT.—If there is one thing more than another that requires perseverance, it is prospecting for gold. For weeks it may be the prospector continues at his work, alternately filled with hopes and fears. Boulders indicate that there must be a gold-bearing lead somewhere in the vicinity, and he trenches and burrows under the ground, baring the rock, and eagerly scanning each foot of the way. If lucky, he may cut a promising vein after a few days, and knock off work at night, filled with hope, and eager for the coming morrow to continue operations. A pouring rain floods the trenches, but all undismayed, he proceeds to bail out. Hours may thus be lost before the trench is clear, enabling him to strip the lead and test the value of the vein with a shot. The tiniest sight of gold gives him renewed courage, and he may work on for a month, only to find that the lead is practically valueless. Thus he may continue at work all the season, and in the end be no more successful than at the start. Prospecting may well be called a lottery, in which there are many more blanks than prizes. Where it is carried on on a large scale, the manager in charge has no sinecure. He has to direct a number of men, and lay out their work, so that no unnecessary expense is incurred in thoroughly testing his property. The men being paid by the day, all the responsibility and anxiety are transferred to his shoulders. He has no reward unless he is successful, and knows full well that if he fails, no matter how skillfully he may have conducted operations, he will generally be considered a bungler. Skillful prospectors are few in number, and their services are in constant demand. Great as are their trials their reward is equally great when they "strike it rich," and after thoroughly testing the value of the find, hurry into Halifax with a fine collection of samples, their beaming faces attesting their success.

When the Bridgewater Company, composed of a number of gentlemen of that thriving town, gave the charge of their mining operations at Gold River to Mr. C. E. Willis, they picked out the right man. During the past summer he has pushed operations with his usual vim and ability, and has developed a number of valuable veins. One of them, the "Captain," has now been tested to a depth of twenty-five feet, and the pay streak has proved of the same uniform value as at the surface. The lead is from 10 to 14 inches wide, and is well charged with both coarse and fine gold. We had the pleasure of examining some samples which Mr. Willis had in his room at the Halifax Hotel, and found them equally as rich, if not richer, than those which Mr. Foster, of Messrs. Gammon, Fulton & Foster, has now in his office, and which are from the same district.

Mr. Willis was naturally exultant, as who would not be under the circumstances, and has the highest opinion of the value of the Bridgewater Company's property. The samples, which he stated were only average ones, and not picked specimens, indicate that his opinion is well founded. We had been led to expect great things from this district, and the success of Messrs. Willis and of Messrs. Gammon & Co. prove that we have not been misled.

CARLTON DISTRICT.—Work is being pushed on the W. H. Turner & Co. property. The office, engine-house, blacksmith-shop, shaft-house and barn, have all been completed. The main shaft has been sunk to a depth of 60 feet, and the "Jumbo" lead struck in the north drift. In the south drift three leads have been cut, all showing, it is reported, fine gold. Both New York and Boston parties have been looking over the property.

WHITELAND DISTRICT.—The McGuire mine yielded 208 ounces in November from 46 tons crushed.

CARBOL DISTRICT.—*Moor River Mine.*—Mr. D. Touquoy arrived in town on Wednesday, with twin gold-babies, weighing 150½ ounces, from 185 tons crushed. The average is not as high as usual, but this is accounted for by the fact that considerable refuse stuff was crushed. Mr. Touquoy has the work well advanced for his water-mill, which will consist of 15 stamps instead of 10, as at first reported by us. The water-power is continuous the year round, and the head is sufficient to drive many more stamps than he intends to put up. The gold is very pure, and the bricks are really beautiful specimens of Nova Scotia gold.

Furs, Furs, Furs.

COLEMAN & CO.

Have completed their importation of English and Canadian Furs. Ladies' Alaska Seal Jackets, (London Dye) Ladies' Astrachan Jackets. Ladies' Baltic Seal Walking Jackets. Capes, Collars and Muffs in fashionable furs Long Boas, in Bear, Blue Fox, Squirrel and other furs. Fur Trimmings, Gloves, Mitts &c., &c. Silk and Cashmere Dolmans, Fur Lined. Children's Plush Jackets, Fur Lined. Children's Furs of every description.

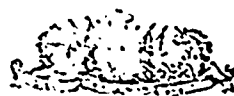
—ALSO—

Gentlemen's Fur Capes, Gloves, Collars and Coats, Robes, &c.

FURS ALTERED & REPAIRED

AT

143 Granville Street.



MAIL CONTRACT

SEALED TENDERS, addressed to the Postmaster General, will be received at Ottawa, until Noon, on FRIDAY, 20th January, for the conveyance of Her Majesty's Mails, once per week each way, between HALIFAX AND LOWER PROSPECT, under a proposed contract for three years and 11 months, from the 1st February next. Printed notices containing further information as to conditions of proposed Contract may be seen, and blank forms of Tender may be obtained, at the Post Offices of Halifax and Lower Prospect, and at this office. CHAS. J. MACDONALD, Post Office Inspector. Post Office Inspector's Office, Halifax, 25th Nov., 1887.

LYONS' HOTEL,

Opp. Railway Depot.

KENTVILLE, N. S.

DANIEL McLEOD, - Prop'r.

MOIR, SON & CO.

Mammoth Works.

CAKES & CONFECTIONERY

FOR CHRISTMAS.

CANDY IS BEST WHEN FRESH.

In our six story Candy Factory we have seventy people making a full assortment, FRESH EVERY DAY. An immense variety of

Fancy Sugar Toys, CASSACQUES, BON BONS, ETC

Be sure you get a supply of our CLEAR BARLEY SUGAR TOYS. The best candy for children.

FINE CHOCOLATE CONFECTIONERY A SPECIALTY.

OUR PLAIN AND FRUIT POUND CAKES Are unrivalled for Richness and flavor.

The Largest Variety! The Best Goods!

Retail Store, Corner Argyle & Duke Sts.

MONTREAL, 172 DALHOUSIE ST. TORONTO, 233 TO 271 KING ST. BALTIMORE, 11 McWILLIAM ST. E. WINNIPEG.

Maritime Lead & Saw Works.

JAMES ROBERTSON,

Iron, Steel and General Metal Merchant and Manufacturer,

Robertson's New Building, Cor. Mill and Union Streets, Works and Iron Yard—Cor. Sheffield and Charlotte Streets,

ST. JOHN, N. B.

HEADQUARTERS

GOLD MINING SUPPLIES.

H. H. FULLER & CO.

45 to 49 Upper Water Street HALIFAX, N. S.

METALS, MILL, MINING,

FISHING SUPPLIES

GENERAL HARDWARE.

THE MANIAC SKATER.

On one of the Canadian rivers—a branch stream that empties itself into the Ottawa, many miles above the modern Canadian capital—stands the town, or village, of P—. It is a pretty place picturesquely situated on the river's bank, and backed by hills of bold outline, upon whose sides the maple sheds its broad, bright leaf, while their crests are covered by forests of the evergreen hemlock and spruce.

Romantic in appearance, the little town is also of romantic interest in its history: having been in the earlier days of Canadian colonization a noted rendezvous of fur traders, trappers, and *voyageurs*—the boatmen made immortal by Moore in his celebrated song.

That was in times past. The fur-bearing animals are still found near it, but not in such numbers as of yore, and the trade has sought other centres of activity, and other depots, further off in the great north-western wilderness of Prince Rupert's Land. Still, the town of P— has not been deserted. A considerable population yet remains in it, chiefly descendants of the ancient trappers, *voyageurs*, and *coureurs du bois*; while the axe of the colonist, echoing in woods, where once was heard only the crack of the rifle, has brought a new era of prosperity to the place. Above and below it, on the river's bank, large clearings have been made, and handsome houses are seen, reflecting their images in the water.

A mile below the town, and just before the stream mingles its waters with those of the Ottawa, it makes a leap over a bar of rock that runs transversely to its course—forming a beautiful waterfall of forty or fifty feet in height. Although the stream itself is of inconsiderable size—that is, for Canada—the rocky ridge, thus damming it up, gives it a breadth of two or three hundred yards, which is continued up to the town, and for some distance beyond. This also imparts tranquility to the current, leaving the river surface smooth as a sleeping lake; so that during the long Canadian winter the ice formed upon it is of the very best quality for skating.

As a large proportion of the inhabitants of P— are of French origin—*habitants*, in short,—it need not be told that they are fond of cheerful amusements, and take full advantage of the pastime thus afforded them. On the bright, crisp evenings, almost peculiar to the Canadian winter, men, women, and children may be seen in scores, costumed in garments tastefully trimmed with furs, standing in groups upon the smooth, shining ice, or shooting and circling about in every direction; while the air resounds with their merry laughter, and the metallic ringing of their skates.

Contests are often carried on between them, as to who can perform the most difficult feats, and cut the most complicated figures; and excellence in this pastime—in Canada truly national—is held in high estimation.

About Christmas time these contests are especially common, and full of exciting interest; for in Canada, as in all Christian lands, this is the season of most merriment. Fortunate it is for the villagers of P— when the ice during the last day of December is in good condition; that is, free from snow. If not however, they will not be balked of their sport. A band of volunteer sweepers, armed with birchen brooms, will soon clear space sufficient for this, and if the white mantle be too deep and heavy for brooms, horses and the snow-plough will be employed in its removal.

On a Christmas eve some few years ago the villagers of P— were out in force upon the ice. This was in perfect condition—clear as plate glass. Not a smirch of snow could be seen on the long reach of the river extending below the town; although a white mantle covered the earth on either bank, and even the dark leaves of the hemlocks, and the spreading fronds of the spruce trees were loaded with snow-flake.

On this Christmas eve King Winter seemed to have taken especial delight in spreading a table, so attractive as to draw from out their houses nearly the whole population of P—. Men, women, and children had assembled on the river ice to participate in the delightful sport of skating, or to watch the evolutions of the skaters.

It was, in truth, a grand sight to observe hundreds of both sexes dressed in various costumes, and gliding rapidly over the smooth, translucent surface; while shouts and peals of laughter rang mellow and merry on the still evening air. The low winter sun had already sunk behind the hemlock-hills, and a bonfire, kindled on the ice, sent up its flames, and cast their red glare far along the river. From the quiet village nestled near its bank the light glistened away to the frosted forest on the opposite side—rendering the scene so wild and fanciful, that the skaters as they swept to and fro might easily have been taken for the ghostly inhabitants of some supernatural world.

"What splendid skaters!" was the exclamation passing through the crowd, as a young gentleman and lady made their appearance upon the ice, coming up the river from below. They were skating hand in hand, now backward, now forward, now performing some difficult feat, or whirling around in wide sweeping circles.

"Who are they?" was the question asked by many among the spectators.

"Kate Mackenzie and Frank Scott," was the reply, pointing them out as belonging to the two most prominent families in the neighborhood, whose splendid mansions stood near the river's bank a little further down.

The two skaters, who had thus unexpectedly made their appearance, at once became the object of universal attention, and an admiring crowd soon collected around them.

Observing this, and not appearing to like such a public exhibition, the young lady whispered some words in the ear of her companion; who suddenly wheeling, so as to face down the river, and carrying her round along with him, by a few forcible strokes shot clear of the crowd, and skated rapidly away from it.

A murmur of disappointment followed their departure; while glances of something like disapproval were cast after them, as they glided off under the gleaming firelight. The villagers appeared to think they had been unfairly dealt with, to be thus cheated of a spectacle.

"They are vexed at our leaving them," remarked the young gentleman, as he swept along by the side of his beautiful companion, her hand held in his.

"For what reason?" she innocently asked.

"They don't often see such an accomplished skater as you, Kate."

"As yourself, you mean, Frank. It was your performance they so much admired; and, now I think of it, it wasn't very graceful in me to have been the cause of disappointing them. Suppose you go back, and show them a little more of your skill. Do, Frank! I can stay here till your return."

"Anything to please you, my dear Kate."

And so saying, the young man released the tiny-gloved hand of his charming partner; and, after a few long shots, was once more in the midst of the villagers, gratifying them with the display so desired.

More than five minutes were thus spent, during which time the accomplished skater was repeatedly cheered, and greeted with complimentary speeches. Then, bethinking himself of the fair creature he had left waiting alone and in the cold, he was about to break off, when the pleased spectators entreated him to remain a moment longer, and once more show them a figure that had especially elicited their applause.

He consented; repeated the figure called for; and then, resisting all further appeals, with one grand stroke he glided out from among the people, and off towards the spot where he had left the young lady on the ice.

On nearing the place, he saw that she was not there, or anywhere in sight!

Where could she have gone?

It occurred to him, that, while he was entertaining the villagers, she might also have rejoined them, and become one of the spectators.

With all speed he skated back again, and quartered the crowd—in every direction scanning the faces and figures by the red firelight.

But among them he saw neither features nor form bearing the slightest resemblance to those of the beautiful Kate Mackenzie.

"So," soliloquized he, "she's playing a little trick, to surprise me. She has slipped in under the river-bank; and while I am rushing to and fro in search of her, she is no doubt standing in the shadow of a hemlock, and quietly laughing at me."

Yielding to this conjecture, he once more plied his skates, and shot rapidly down the river—keeping close alongside the bank, and scanning every spot overshadowed by the dark fronds of the hemlocks.

But he saw no one there, either in the moonlight or shadow; nor was there any mark made by skates upon the inshore ice.

It now occurred to him, that he might discover where she had gone by getting upon the track of her skates and following it up. With this intent he hastened back to the spot where he had left her.

On reaching it a cold thrill shot through his frame, as if the blood had suddenly become frozen in his veins. In addition to two sets of skate tracks made by himself and the young lady in their passage up and down, he now saw a third, whose deep scores upon the ice showed them to have been made by a man! There were confused curves around the spot and zigzaggings, as if there had been a struggle, or some slight difficulty in starting; but beyond that point were two sets of straight continuous furrows, running parallel, and side by side, as if the skaters had gone away at a rapid rate, and with joined hands.

The direction was down the river—towards the home of Miss Mackenzie.

At a glance the young man recognized the thin tiny mark left by the slender steel blades on the feet of his late partner. But the man who had taken her off, skating so close by her side—who was he? This was the question put by Frank Scott to himself.

A painful suspicion shot through his brain. He remembered that, shortly after leaving the house, they had passed a man upon the ice, who was also on skates. They had brushed so near this man as to see who he was; and in the moonlight had beheld a countenance bearing a most sinister cast. It was the face of Charles St. Clair, a French Canadian; whom Frank knew to be a rival—like himself a suitor for the hand of Miss Mackenzie.

This man had made his appearance in the neighborhood, some three months before; coming no one knew whence. In fact, there was nothing known of him except his name; and this might have been an assumed one. He put up at the principal hotel of the village; appeared to have money, and to be a person of good education. Was it he who had joined Miss Mackenzie upon the ice, and carried her away with him? It could be no other; for Scott now remembered having heard the ring of skates behind, as they were coming up the river from the place where St. Clair had been seen, and where shortly after they had passed him.

The first thought of the lover was one of a most painful nature. It was, in fact, the bitterest pang of jealousy. The whole thing had been pre-arranged, and she had willingly gone away with St. Clair, who, though a stranger to others, might be better known to her. The French Canadian, if not what might be called a very handsome man, was, nevertheless, good-looking enough to give cause for jealousy.

It was a fearful reflection for Frank Scott, who was exasperated beyond bounds at being, as he fancied, both duped and slighted. It passed like a spasm; another nearly as painful taking its place. He recalled a rumour, that had been for some days current in the neighborhood—of a strangeness observed in the behaviour of St. Clair, that had caused doubts of his sanity. And more forcibly came back to Frank Scott's mind, what he had heard that very morning; how the Frenchman had presented himself at the house of Miss Mackenzie's father; proposed marriage to her; and, when refused, had acted in such a strange manner—uttering wild speeches and threats against the life of the young lady—that it had been necessary to use force in removing him from the premises.

Could this be the explanation of her disappearance? Was the man in reality a maniac? Was he now in the act of carrying out the threat he had

made—some terrible deed of vengeance—under the wild promptings of insanity?

The thoughts came quick—for the whole series of conjectures did not occupy ten seconds of time—and with the last of them Frank Scott threw all his strength into a propulsive effort, and shot off like an arrow down the ice-bound river.

A bend was soon turned, beyond which appeared a stretch of clear ice extending for more than a mile. On this, and away at its farther end, two forms were dimly discernible; while upon the still frosty air could be heard the faint ringing of skates at quick intervals repeating their strokes.

Frank Scott had no doubt about one of the distant figures being that of Kate Mackenzie.

Nerved by the sight, he threw fresh vigour into his stroke, and went sweeping over the smooth surface like a bird upon the wing.

On, past rock, and tree, and hill, and farm-houses sleeping in silence; on in long nervous strides; his eyes flashing, but fixed upon the two forms—every moment becoming more discernible, as the distance lessened between.

And now he was near enough to see that one of them was Miss Mackenzie, the other St. Clair.

The latter, glancing back over his shoulder, recognized his pursuer: and taking a fresh hold on the wrist of his apparently unwilling partner, he carried her onward with increased velocity.

She had looked back, and saw who was coming after. The silver light of the moon, falling upon her face, showed an expression of sadness, and denly changing to hope; then raising her gloved hand in the air, she sent back a cry for help.

It was not needed. The wan countenance, seen under the soft moon in its appeal for protection, was enough to nerve Frank Scott to the utmost exertion of strength; and he kept on without speaking a word, his whole soul absorbed by the one great desire to overtake and rescue her.

From what? From the grasp of the destroyer—a maniac, as the behaviour of St. Clair proved him to be.

Merciful heaven! What is that sound heard ahead, and at no great distance?

Scott did not need to ask this question. He knew that it was the roar of water—he knew that a cataract was below, for, on sweeping round another curve of the river, the black smooth water could be seen shooting forth from under the field of ice, quick whitened into ice as it struck against some rocks that created the fall.

The pursued saw it first; but soon after the pursuer.

"My God!" gasped the latter, in a voice choking with agony. "Can the man mean to carry her on—over? Stop, madman!"

St. Clair heard the call, and looked back. The moonlight, falling full upon his face, revealed an expression horrible to behold. His eyes were no longer rolling, but fixed in a terrible stare of determination; while upon his features could be traced a smile of demoniac triumph. He spoke no word, but raising his unemployed arm, pointed to the cataract.

There could be no mistaking his gesture; but what followed made still clearer the dreaded design. Giving a loud shriek, that ended in a prolonged peal of laughter, he faced once more in the direction of the open water. Then, throwing all his mad energy into the effort, he shot straight towards it, dragging the young lady along with him.

The crisis had now come; a moment more, and Kate Mackenzie, struggling in the arms of a madman, would be carried over the edge of the ice—over the cataract, and down to certain destruction on the rocks below.

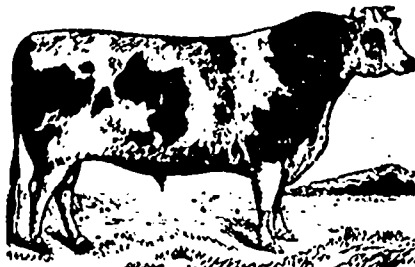
With heart hot, as if on fire, her lover saw her peril, now proximate, and apparently impossible of being averted. But his head was still cool, and at a glance he took in the situation.

By bearing direct down upon them he would only increase the momentum of their speed, and force both over the edge of the ice. His only hope lay in making one last vigorous effort to get between them and the open water. A grand sweep might do it; and, without waiting to reflect further, he threw his body forward in the curve of a parabola.

With hands and teeth both tightly clenched, with eyes fixed upon one point, and thoughts concentrated into one great purpose, he passed over the smooth surface like an electric flash. The effort ended in a shock, as his body came in contact with that of St. Clair. A blow from one arm, already raised, sent the latter staggering off along the ice, at the same time that it detached his hold from the waist of his intended victim. This was instantly grasped by her rescuer; who, continuing the sweep thus intercepted, succeeded in carrying her on to a place of safety.

In vain the madman tried to recover himself. The momentum he had obtained by his own previous speed, increased by the powerful blow he received from Scott's clenched fist, forced him on to the extreme edge of the ice; where, losing his equilibrium, he fell flat upon his face. Perhaps he might still have been saved, but for his own frenzied passion. But as the skaters, following along the curve already commenced, swept close to the spot where he was lying, the toe of the young lady almost touched him. Clutching rapidly out, he made an effort to seize hold of her ankle, still designing to drag her down along with him. In this fortunately he failed. But the movement was fatal to himself. The piece of ice on which he rested was broken. It gave way beneath his weight, breaking off with a hoarse crash; and the detached fragment, bearing his body along with it, in another instant went whirling over the fall—both to be shattered on the rocks below.

The lovers, now no longer in danger, stood hand in hand, silent, and listening. They heard the cauldron seething below, but nothing more. That one wild shriek that came from the maniac's lips—as for a moment his body balanced on the combing of the cataract—was his last utterance. It was succeeded by the hoarse monotone of the waters—to be continued on to Eternity!



J. R. FOSTER,

MONCTON, N. B.:

Importer and Breeder of

Thoroughbred Holstein-
Friesian & Jersey Cattle.

— ALSO —

REGISTERED BERKSHIRE SWINE.

Proprietor of Moncton Steam Flouring Mill

Manufacturing Flour, Corn Meal, Horse, Cow and Stock Feed, &c.

RHODES, CURRY & CO.

Amherst, Nova Scotia,

MANUFACTURERS & BUILDERS

1,000,000 Feet Lumber kept in stock.

Doors, Sashes, Blinds, Wood Mantels,

MOULDINGS, ETC.

Walnut, Cherry, Ash, Birch, BEECH, Pine and Whitewood **HOUSE FINISH.**

"Cabinet Trim Finish" for Dwellings, Drug Stores, Offices, etc.

SCHOOL, OFFICE, CHURCH AND HOUSE FURNITURE, etc.

BRICKS, LIME, CEMENT, CALCINED PLASTER, etc.,

Manufacturers of and Dealers in all kinds of Builders' Materials.

SEND FOR ESTIMATES.

WHITE & COLORED FLANNELS,

Blankets, Comfortables, Eider Down Quilts,

Horse Rugs, Carriage Rugs,

Men's L. W. Shirts and Drawers,

And a complete stock of Autumn and Winter Goods.

VALUE SECOND TO NONE.

W. & C. SILVER,

CORNER GEORGE AND HOLLIS STREETS,

"The Representative Music House."

PIANOS & ORGANS.

The Largest and Finest Stock in the Maritime Provinces!

Sole Agency for the Two Oldest and greatest Piano Makers of America, viz.,

CHICKERING & SONS,

(64 Years Standing.)

KNABE & CO.,

(50 Years Standing.)

And other Leading American and

Canadian Makers of **PIANOS.**

Sole Agency for the Province for

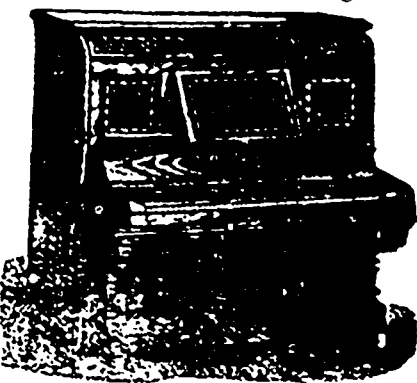
Canada's Great **REED ORGAN**

Makers, viz.,

W. BELL & CO.,

— AND —

The Dominion Organ and Piano Co



DON'T FAIL to write or call for
Prices, and you will save from \$25
to \$50 at least, and will be sure of a
first-class article.

W. H. JOHNSON.

121 and 123 Hollis Street, Halifax, N. S.

XMAS NOVELTIES,
Now Opening at the
LONDON DRUG STORE,
147 Hollis Street,
J. GODFREY SMITH,

Dispensing Chemist, Proprietor Agent for LANCET'S ANTI-CUR PEARLS, SPECTACLES and EYE GLASSES, in Adamantine, Gold and Steel Frames.
A very Elegant line of

Christmas Cards, Novelties in Leather, Brass, Plush, Ivory, &c

A lot of First-Class WALKING STICKS, &c. Look for the SEMAPHORE LIGHT at night, on Hollis Street, which will direct you to the LONDON DRUG STORE.

NEW INVENTION
NO JACKS
RUNS EASY
This kind of screw has been tested by one man in nine hours. Hundreds have been used daily. "Greatly" what every farmer and Wood Chopper wants. First order from your vicinity secures the best. Write for illustrated Catalogue and price list. Address: **FOLDING SAWING MACHINERY CO.,** 308 to 311 S. Canal St., Chicago, Ill.



A Present for Every Boy.

ASK YOUR GROCER FOR
THE JOHNSTON FLUID BEEF
HOLIDAY PUZZLE.

And if you can't get one, enclose a One Cent Stamp to the Johnston Fluid Beef Co., Montreal and we will forward one. And bear in mind that Johnston's Fluid Beef is

The Great Strength-Giver,
And makes a Warming Winter Beverage.



CURES PAINS — External and Internal.

RELIEVES Swellings, Contractures of the Muscles, Stiffness of the Joints, Sprains, Strains.

HEALS Bruises, Scalds, Burns, Cuts, Cracks and Scratches.

Best Stable Remedy in the World!

CURES Rheumatism, NEURALGIA, Hoarseness, Sore Throat, Croup, Diphtheria, and all kindred afflictions.

LARGE BOTTLE!

POWERFUL REMEDY!
MOST ECONOMICAL!

AS IT COSTS BUT 25 CENTS. Druggists and Dealers pronounce it the best selling Medicine they have.

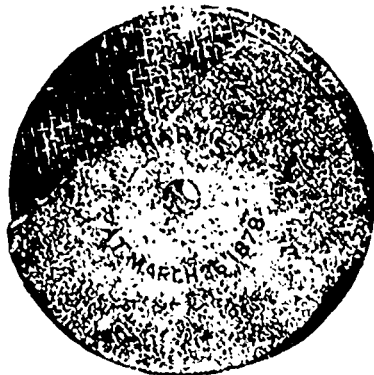
BEWARE OF IMITATIONS, of which there are several on the market. The genuine only prepared by and bearing the name of

O. C. RICHARDS & CO.,
YARMOUTH, N. S.

TESTIMONIAL.

O. C. Richards & Co — I had the muscles of my hand so contracted that I could not use it for two years. I used MINARD'S LINIMENT, and now my hand is as well as ever.

Yours,
Mrs. RACHEL SAUNDERS,
Dalhousie, Lun. Co.



IMPORTANT

TO
Gold Miners and other Users of
Machinery and Supplies.

Austen Brothers,

HALIFAX, N. S.

Are prepared to furnish Estimates for every description of MACHINERY and SUPPLIES at

MANUFACTURERS' PRICES.

Engines, Boilers, Stamp Mills, Rotary Saw Mills, Pumps, Heaters, Injectors, Wrought Iron Pipe and Fittings, Boiler Tubes, Copper Plates, Silvered or Plain; Beltings, Packing, Hose, Waste, Shovels, Picks, Wire Ropes, Dynamite, Powder, Fuse, Emery Wheels, Steel, Water Wheels, and Supplies of every description.

OILS. — In calling attention to our

LUBRICATING OILS,

We beg to say that we carry the largest and best assorted Stock in the Provinces; and if parties requiring Lubricants will inform us of the kind of work it is to do we will send an Oil, and GUARANTEE it satisfactory or no sale.

Remember, we have no fancy profits.

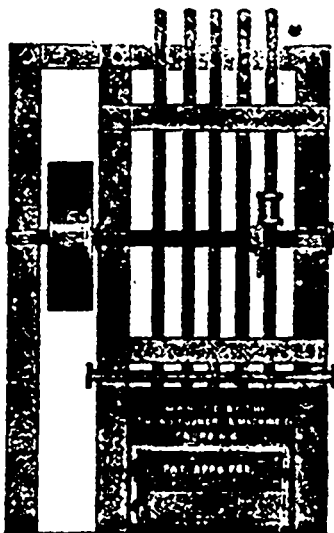
Our Motto — Quick Sales on COMMISSION.



MANUFACTURED BY
WINDSOR
FOUNDRY
COMPANY,
WINDSOR, N. S.

J. E. WILSON, Halifax, Agent,
208 HOLLIS STREET.

Truro Foundry and Machine Co.
TRURO, N. S.,
ENGINEERS AND FOUNDERS.



Our SPECIALTIES are—
GOLD MINING MACHINERY

Of every kind, with latest Western Improvements.

ROTARY SAW MILLS,

In Latest Styles, and

HOT WATER BOILERS.

Estimates furnished for Heating Dwelling-Stores, Churches, &c., with Hot Water or Steam.

—ALSO—

Manufacturers of Boilers and Engines, Iron Bridges, Stoves, Ship, Mill and General Castings.

WHY

Suffer from that distressing complaint
DYSPEPSIA
when by using a few bottles of ESTEY'S IRON AND QUININE TONIC

YOU CAN BE CURED.

It is the safest and best remedy ever introduced and we have yet to record the first case when it has failed. Hundreds can and do testify to its virtue. It acts directly on the Blood, driving away all impurities.

Be sure and get the genuine. Every bottle has our trade mark and signature on the wrapper. Your Druggist keeps it.

Price 50c.

PREPARED ONLY BY

E. M. ESTEY,
Pharmacist, Moncton, N. B.

WISWELL

Crushing Mills.

The British American Manufacturing, Mining and Milling Co.

Are prepared to furnish the above MILLS at short notice and on reasonable terms.

These Mills have been tested with all the other mills now in use, and are superior in their operation to any other, especially as regards refractory ores. Several tests made with this Mill at Yarmouth show a great saving over the Stamp Mill. Also, in cleaning up, which can be done in from Twenty-five to Thirty Minutes. It will perform the work of a 15 Stamp Mill, and do it better.

J. E. GAMMON,
Manager.

Address, P. O. Box 113, Yarmouth, N. S.

Western Counties Railway.

WINTER ARRANGEMENT.

On and after MONDAY 23rd Nov., 1887, Trains will run daily (Sunday excepted), as follows:—

LEAVE YARMOUTH, daily at 7.15 a.m., Arrive at Digby, at 10.45 a.m.

LEAVE DIGBY, daily at 3.30 p.m., Arrive at Yarmouth 7.00 p.m.

Trains are run on Eastern Standard Time. Connections at Digby daily (with Steamer "Evangeline" to and from Annapolis, Halifax, and Stations on the W. & A. Railway, with Steamer "Secret" to and from St. John every Monday Wednesday and Saturday.

At Yarmouth, with Steamer "Dominion" for Boston every Saturday Evening, and from Boston every Thursday morning. With Stage daily (Sunday excepted), to and from Harrington, Shelburne and Liverpool.

Through tickets may be obtained at 122 Hollis Street, Halifax, and the principal Stations on the Windsor & Annapolis Railway.

J. BRIGNELL,
General Superintendent.

Yarmouth, N. S.

W. F. FOSTER,

DEALER IN

Wool & Wool Skins, Ox & Cow Hides, Calf Skins, &c.

CONNORS' WHARF,
HALIFAX, N. S.

Post Office Box 172.

JAMES GRANT

144 Upper Water Street,
Opposite Jericho Warehouse, Halifax, N. S.

Importer and Dealer in

Uppers and Shoe Findings.

SOLE LEATHER A SPECIALTY.

FREE! 16 Grand LOVE STORIES, a package of goods worth two dollars to manufacture, and a large 100p Picture Book, that will surely put you on the road to a handsome Fortune. Write quick and send 5c silver to help pay postage.

A. W. KINNEY, Yarmouth, N. S.

Printed by Halifax Printing Co'v.
161 Hollis Street, Halifax, N. S.