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"NEW-YEAR'S DINNER IN THE NURSERY."

A CHILD'S PUZZLES.

BY MRS. MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Pray where do the Old Years go, mamma,
  When their work is over and done?
Does somebody tuck them away to sleep,
  Quite out of the sight of the sun?
Or, perhaps, are they shut into crystal jars
  And set away on a shelf
In a beautiful closet behind the stars,
  Each Year in a place by itself?

Was there ever a Year that made a mistake,
  And staid when its time was o'er,
Till it had to hurry its poor old feet,
  When the New Year knocked at the door?
I wish you a happy New Year, mamma—
  I am sure new things are nice—
And this one comes with a merry face,
  And plenty of snow and ice.

But I only wish I had kept awake
  Till the Old Year made his bow,
For what he said when the clock struck twelve
  I never shall find out now.
Do you think he was tired and glad to rest?
  Do you think that he said good-by,
Or melted away alone in the dark,
  Without so much as a sigh?

Do I bother you now? Must I run away?

Why, that's what you always say;
The New Year's just the same as the Old;
I might as well go and play.
Oh, look at those sparrows so pert and spry!
They are waiting to get their crumbs.
For the New Year's sake they shall have some cake,
And I hope they'll fight for the plums.

MAX RANDER ON A BICYCLE.

BY MATTHEW WHITE, JUN.

We left Germany early in October, and went back to England. Father took lodgings in a pretty little village, where I might have led an untroubled existence, after my thrilling experiences among the Prussians, if it had not been for one thing.

It was this: The pretty little English village was situated very near a large town where bicycles were manufactured, and before I had been there a week the mania to ride one seized me. I knew at once what it must come to, and I will now proceed to relate what it did come to.

One morning father and mother set out for London, leaving Thad and me behind in charge of the landlady, a kind, motherly person who would see that we did not break any bones playing horse with her furniture, or make ourselves sick by eating too much of her jam.

"Now, do be careful, boys," said mother, just as the train was about to start. "Don't get your feet wet, nor try to stop a runaway horse; stay away from the pond; and you, Max, keep a close watch over your brother."

I listened to these instructions with a light heart, and promised a dutiful obedience, for had not the things I was not to do been mentioned by name, and certainly the riding of bicycles was not among them. When the cars rushed off from the station I made up my mind that my destiny could be avoided no longer.

"Maximilian," a voice seemed to mutter within me, "all obstacles have vanished as if by magic from thy path. Four shillings and sixpence hast thou in thy pocket, so seize the opportunity ere it be too late."

And I seized it; that is to say, I went straight home with Thad, and telling him to amuse himself with anything short of pulling the cat's tail or fooling with ink-bottles, I left him there, and hurried off to the bicycle head-quarters to hire a machine.

"What size?" asked the man, when I had made a deposit of my silver watch as a guarantee that I wouldn't run away with his property.

Of course, never having ridden before, I hadn't a very clear idea of what this question meant; so the young fellow, seeing my confusion, promptly whipped a tape-line out of his pocket, and proceeded to find out how long my legs were.

"A forty-six-inch'll do you," he informed me, adding, "Tall of your age, too."

As this implied that he thought me rather young, I put on my gravest look, and pretended I didn't hear him, and while he went to bring out the machine, I resolved that nothing should induce me to ask for any "points" about the management of it. Besides, hadn't I often watched fellows mount, dismount, coast, and take "headers"?

"Only get started, and you're all right," was what I had heard riders say over and over again; so I determined to set the thing going the best way I could, and then stick to the saddle.

But when the man appeared again, pushing before him the bicycle, I must confess the big wheel looked very big, and the little seat very little and terribly far from the ground.

Still, I had no cowardly thoughts of giving way to my fears; for had I not ridden a three-wheeled velocipede for two years around our block home in New York without falling off a single time? And by quickly doing a sum in mental arithmetic, I found that the proportion of seven hundred and thirty days as against one hour was greatly in favor of my not tumbling during the hour.

Considerably strengthened in my purpose by this method of reasoning, I seized the handle with a flourish, and started to trundle the machine out into the road.

"Be careful there," suddenly cried That Man, as my flourish nearly caused the bicycle to take a "header" on its own account.

After pushing the machine as far as I dared without giving rise to the suspicion that that was the only way I could make it go, I brought it to a stand-still, placed both hands on the handles, a foot on the step, and—waited a minute.

I finally nerved myself to take the flying leap, which sent me into the saddle so surely and swiftly that I could not rest there, but in my high ambition kept on going until I found my hands on the ground, the handles knocking against my knees, and both wheels running up my back.

I knew at once that I had taken a "header," and so I did not feel as badly as I would if I had fallen in a manner not dignified by a special name.

I had simply been too eager, and resolving to profit by experience, I began hopping again; then gave a gentle—a very gentle—spring, which landed me on the extreme rear of the saddle, where I hung helpless for a few seconds, with both feet wildly pawing the air in search of the pedals, which of course I could not reach.

There could be but one end to this gymnastic exhibition, and while I lay on the road, with the bicycle on top of me, I vowed I would try but once more, and if the magic third time did not inspire me to success, I would give it up, push the machine back to the shop, and ever afterward look upon the sport as a mere "craze" that would soon die out.

Again I broke into that everlasting hop.

"Not too fast,
  Nor yet too slow;
Gently, quickly,
  Here I go."

I don't know whether it was owing to the rhyme, but at any rate my next attempt to mount resulted in my sliding nicely into the saddle, while at the same time my feet bore down upon the pedals, which sent me skimming along famously. On and on I went, gliding as smoothly and easily over the fine road as if in a carriage.

Of course the faster I went, the easier it was to balance the machine, so I kept rolling on further and further away from the village, until at last I hadn't the slightest idea where I was or whither I was going. [Pg 147]

"This will never do," I finally decided. "It will be lunch-time before I can get back."

Then a brilliant thought struck me. I would turn around at the next cross-roads, where there would be plenty of room.

About five minutes later I reached one, and making a wide circuit, had nearly accomplished my object in safety, when a farmer's wagon appeared upon the scene, almost in front of me.

"Hold on a minute!" I shouted; but it was too late. The horse could not be stopped short enough, and I stopped too short, being sent sprawling on the ground right where the wagon's hind-wheels had been two seconds before.

This final and worst fall of all left me so bruised and sprained and strained that I found it impossible to get into the saddle again.

If I had been in America I might have climbed up by the help of a fence, but in England the fences are all hedges. So there was nothing left for me to do but push the bicycle back to the village again, and walk myself every step of the way. I don't know how far it was, but going out it seemed about a mile, and coming back I thought it must be five.

That Man did not ask me if I had had a pleasant run, but when I had paid him for the two hours I had been out, and he was handing me back my watch, I saw him look down at the dust on my shoes in a way that made me hurry off home, feeling like the dying swan I've read about somewhere that only sings one song in its life, for I had ridden a bicycle for the first and last time in mine.

THE TALKING LEAVES.[1]

An Indian Story.

BY W. O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER XIII.

For a moment Murray and Steve stood looking after the retreating forms of Red Wolf and his sisters.

"I say," exclaimed Bill, "you're a pretty pair of white men. Do you mean to turn us three over to them Apaches?"

"Who are you, anyway? Tell me a straight story, and I'll make up my mind."

"Well, there's no use tryin' to cover our tracks, I s'pose. We belong to the outfit that set up thar own marks on your ledge thar last night. It wasn't any more our blame than any of the rest."

"And you thought you'd make your outfit safe by picking a quarrel with the Apaches."

"Now, stranger, you've got me thar. 'Twas a fool thing to do."

"Well, I'll tell you what we'll do. You three stand up and swear you bear no malice or ill-will to me and my mate, and you and your crowd'll do us no harm, and I'll let you go."

"How about the mine?"

"Never mind about the mine. If your Captain and the rest are as big fools as you three, there won't any of you come back to meddle with the mine. The Apaches'll look out for that. There'll be worse than they are behind you, too."

He was speaking of the Lipans, but Bill's face grew longer, and so did the faces of his two friends.

"You know about that, do ye?"

"I know enough to warn you."

"Well, all I kin say is, we've got that dust, bars, nuggets and all, and we fit hard for it, and we're gwine to keep it."

"What can you do with it here?"

"Here? We're gwine to Mexico. It'll take a good while to spend a pile like that. It took the Chinees a year and a half to stack it up."

"Well, if you don't start back up the pass pretty soon, you won't have any chance. Do you think you can keep your word with us?"

"Reckon we kin with white men like you. So'll all the rest, when we tell 'em it don't cover the mine. You take your own chances on that?"

"We do."

"Tell you what now, old man, there's something about you that ain't so bad, arter all."

"You and your mates travel!" was the only reply.

They plunged into the thicket for their horses, and when they came out again Murray and Steve had disappeared.

"Gone, have they?" said Bill. "And we don't know any more about 'em than we did before. What'll Captain Skinner say?"

"What'll we say to him? That's what beats me. And to the boys? I don't keer to tell 'em we was whipped in a minute and tied up by an old man, a boy, two girl squaws, and a red-skin."

"It don't tell well, that's a fact."

Murray had beckoned to Steve to follow him.

"They might have kept their word, Steve, and they might not. We were at their mercy, standing out there. They could have shot us from the cover. That's the kind of white men that stir up nine-tenths of all the troubles with the Indians, let alone the Apaches; that tribe never did keep a treaty."

"The one we saw to-day looked like a Lipan."

"So he did. And he stood right up for the girls. Steve, one of those young squaws was no more an Indian than you or I be. It makes my heart sore and sick to think of it. A fine young girl like that, with such an awful life before her!"'

"The other one was bright and pretty too, and she can use her bow and arrows. Murray, what do you think we'd better do?"

"Do? I wish I could say. My head's all in a whirl. But I'll tell you what, Steve, my mind won't be easy till I've had another look at that ledge. I want to know what they've done."

"The Buckhorn Mine? I'd like to see it too."

"Then we'll let their outfit go by us, and ride straight back to it. Might as well save time and follow those fellows up the pass. Plenty of hiding-places."

It was a bold thing to do, but they did it, and they were lying safely in a deep ravine that led out of the pass, a few hours later, when the "mining outfit" slowly trundled on its downward way.

Long before that, however, Bill and his two friends had made their report to Captain Skinner.

They had a well made up story to tell him, but it was not very easy for him to believe it.

"Met the two mining fellers, did ye? And they're friends with the 'Paches. Wouldn't let 'em do ye any harm. How many red-skins was there?"

"Three. We never fired a shot at 'em nor struck a blow, but one of thar squaws fired an arrer through my arm." [Pg 148]

"It's the onlikeliest yarn I ever listened to," said the Captain.

"Thar's the hole in my arm."

"Not that; it isn't queer an Apache wanted to shoot ye—I can believe that. But that you had sense enough not to fire first at a red-skin. You never had so much before in all your life."

"Here we are, safe—all three."

"That's pretty good proof. If there'd been a fight, they'd ha' been too much for you, with two white men like them to help. Well, we'll go right on down. It's our only show."

"That isn't all, Cap."

"What more is there?"

"The old feller told me to warn you that thar was danger comin' behind us. He seems to know all

about us, and about what we did to the ledge."

"We're followed, are we? What did he say about the mine?"

"Said he'd take his chances about that. We agreed to be friends if we met him and his mate again."

"You did? Now, Bill, you've shown good sense again. What's the matter with you to-day? I never heard of such a thing. It's like finding that mine just where I didn't expect to."

Danger behind them; they did not know exactly what. Danger before them in the shape of wandering Apaches; but they had expected to meet that sort of thing, and were ready for it. Only they hoped to be able to dodge it in some way, and to get safely across the border into Mexico with their stolen treasure. They had at least made sure of their wonderful mine, and that was something. Sooner or later they would all come back and claim it again, and dig fortunes out of it. The two miners would not be able to prove anything. There was no danger from them.

Perhaps not; and yet, as soon as they had disappeared down the pass, below the spot where Steve and Murray were hiding, the latter exclaimed, "Now, Steve, we won't rest our horses till we get there."

They would be quite likely to need rest by that time, for the old man seemed to be in a tremendous hurry. Steve would hardly have believed anything could excite the veteran to such a pitch, if it had not been that he felt so much of the "gold fever" in his own veins. It seemed to him as if he were really thirsty for another look at that wonderful ledge. They turned their horses out to feed on the sweet fresh grass at last, and pushed forward on foot to the mine.

"They've done it, Steve."

"I see they have. Our title's all gone."

He spoke mournfully and angrily; but Murray replied,

"Gone? why, my boy, those rascals have only been doing our work for us."

"For us? How's that?"

"It was ours. They've set up our monuments, and dug our shafts, and put in a blast for us. They haven't taken anything away from us. I'll show you."

He had taken from a pocket of his buck-skins a small, narrow chisel as he spoke, and now he picked up a round stone to serve as a hammer.

"I'm going to make a record, Steve. I'll tell you what to do about it as I go along."

Captain Skinner's miners had been hard workers, but Steve had never seen anybody ply a chisel as Murray did. He was not trying to make "pretty letters," but they were all deeply cut and clearly legible.

On the largest stone of the central monument, and on the side monuments, and then on the face of the cliff near the ledge, he cut the name of the mine, "The Buckhorn," and below that on the cliff and one monument he cut the date of discovery and Steve Harrison's name.

MARKING THE BUCKHORN MINE.

"Put on yours too, Murray."

"Well, if you say so. It may be safer. Only I turn all my rights over to you. I'll do it on paper if I ever get a chance."

"I only want my share."

All the while he was chiselling so skillfully and swiftly, Murray was explaining to Steve how he was to act when he reached "the settlements," and how he should make a legal record of his ownership of that property.

"You must be careful to describe all these marks exactly; the ruins, too, the cañons, the lay of the land, the points of the compass—everything. After all, it may be you'll never be able to work it. But you're young, and there's no telling. The first thing for you to do is to get out of the scrape you're in now."

Steve felt as if there were no longer any doubt of that.

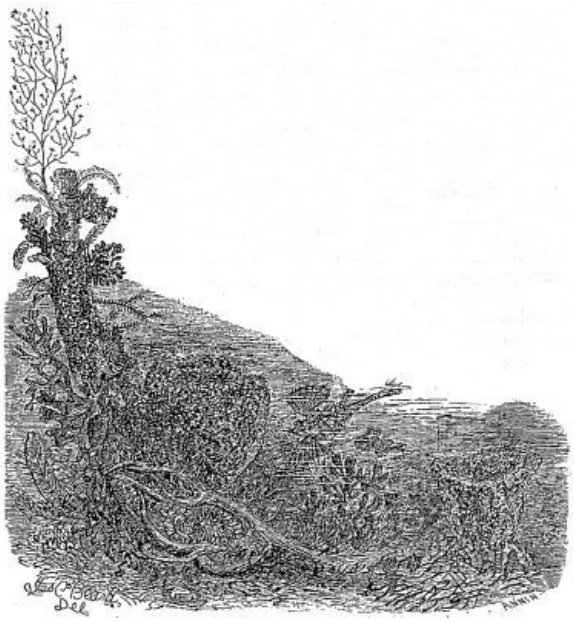
During the busy hours spent on the ledge by their masters the two horses had been feeding and resting, and both Murray and Steve felt like following their example.

"Start a fire, Steve; it'll be perfectly safe. I'll try for a deer, and we'll cook enough to last us for two days."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

SPONGES.

BY SARAH COOPER.



SPONGES GROWING.

Sponges are so common and so familiar that many of us have used them all our lives without stopping to admire their curious and interesting structure, or to inquire into the history of their past lives. We may, indeed, have noticed that they can be squeezed into a very small space, and that they will return to their natural shape when the pressure is removed. We have perhaps noticed also that they are full of little holes or pores, and that they will absorb an astonishing quantity of water.

You know there has been a doubt whether sponges belong to the animal or to the vegetable kingdom. For a long time naturalists were in doubt about the matter, but it is now settled that they are animals, living and growing on the bottom of the ocean. The only part of the sponge that reaches us is the skeleton. The living sponge is a very different object. Shall we see what we can find out about it?

Upon naming the word "animal," a picture comes before our minds of some creature having a mouth to eat with, and eyes to see with, and possessing feet or wings, or some other means of moving about; but the sponges are far from this. They are probably the lowest animals with which you are acquainted. They have no nerves, no heart, no lungs, no mouth, and no stomach.

Live sponges consist of jelly-like bodies united in a mass, and supported by a frame-work of horny fibres, and needle-shaped objects called "spicules,", which you will see in Fig. 1, and which we must examine further after a while. This jelly-like flesh, covering all parts of the skeleton, is about as thick as the white of an egg, but it decays immediately after the death of the sponge. During life the flesh presents many bright colors; in some species it is of a brilliant green, while in others it is orange, red, yellow, etc.

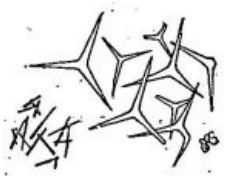


FIG. 1.—GROUP OF SPICULES.

The frame-work varies in different kinds of sponge. In those which are valuable for our use it consists of horny fibres interwoven in all directions until they form a mass of lacy net-work. This you can easily see with the naked eye, but by looking through a microscope you will see beauty you had not imagined, and which but for this valuable instrument would never have been dreamed of. In our ordinary sponges these fibres are all that remain of the former living-animal, the soft flesh having been removed. It is found that the horny fibres are composed of a substance very similar to the silk of a silk-worm's cocoon. They are exceedingly tough and durable. Most of us have discovered that a good sponge becomes like an old and tried friend, and that unless it is abused it seems as if it might never wear out.

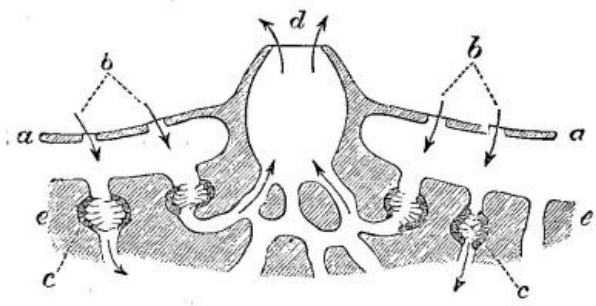


FIG. 2.—CIRCULATION OF WATER THROUGH THE

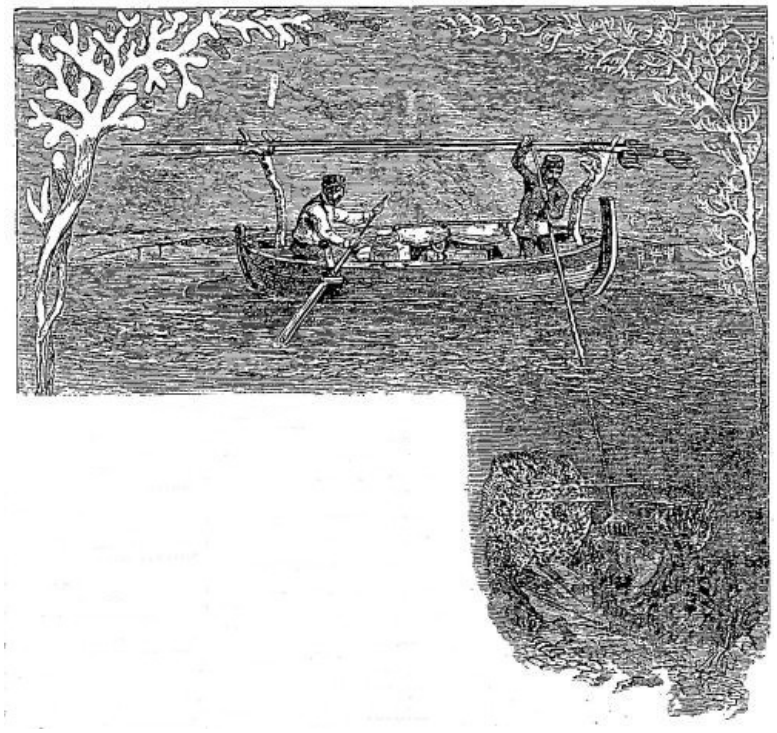
In looking at any sponge you will notice large holes through it, with many small pores scattered between them. The living sponge is constantly drawing in water at the small pores. This water passes through a set of branching canals, and is thrown out from the large holes on the surface, as seen in Fig. 2. (The arrows show the direction of the current.) With a microscope little fountains may be seen constantly playing from the large holes of a living sponge. The circulation is kept up in the canals by the movement of "cilia," which are delicate threads waving

gently but continually. The word cilia means "eyelashes"; let us remember it, for this is a name we shall often want to use. The cilia are shown in those cup-like hollow places in the canals (Fig. 2). The stream of water thus passing through the sponge brings to every part of it small particles of food, and all the air it needs for breathing purposes.

Everything that lives must eat and breathe, but how is the sponge to eat without a mouth? When the food touches any part of its body, the soft, jelly-like flesh sinks in to form a little bag; at the same time the surrounding parts creep out over the morsel of food, until it is entirely covered and digested. After this the flesh returns to its original position, and any shell or other refuse that remains from the meal is washed away. [Pg 150]

Sponges have a curious manner of producing their young. At certain seasons very small oval masses of jelly are formed on the inner surface of the canals, which finally drop off. They remain in the canals for a time, and become perfect eggs, after which they are thrown out by the stream issuing from the fountains, and instead of falling to the bottom, as we might suppose such helpless masses of jelly would do, they swim around as if they meant to have a little sport before commencing the sober realities of life.

You will be interested to know that while these jelly-like eggs were resting in the canals of the parent sponge, delicate cilia (which we learned about just now) were forming at one end of the egg. These cilia strike the water with a rapid motion, and the eggs are rowed about through it until they settle down and attach themselves to some rock or shell on the bottom of the ocean, and finally grow up into the perfect sponge. The waters are swarming with these eggs at certain seasons, and great quantities of them are eaten by larger animals.



SPONGE-FISHING.

Sponges are common in nearly all parts of the world, and they differ greatly in size and quality, but few species being useful to man. Some species are nearly round, others are always cup-shaped, some top-shaped, and some branched. A fresh-water sponge is frequently found in our streams, growing upon sticks and stones. It is of a bright green, and when seen under the water in a flood of sunlight it is very pretty.

The spicules of sponges grow in a variety of elegant shapes, but they are visible only with a microscope. They are composed of lime or flint, and are generally sharp-pointed. They are imbedded in the flesh as well as in the horny fibres, thus serving to protect the helpless creatures from being devoured by fish and other animals. In our fine sponges, the skeleton is almost destitute of spicules, while in some others the flesh is supported wholly by spicules, giving them so loose a texture that they are of no value for domestic purposes.

Fine sponges are used by physicians in surgical operations, and are sometimes very expensive. Should you at any time take a fancy to a dainty little sponge in the druggist's window, and step in, thinking to buy it, you will probably be surprised at the price asked for it. Our finest sponges come from the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. They are obtained by divers, who search for them under rocks and cliffs, and who remove them carefully with a knife, that they may not be injured; The Turks, who carry on the trade, have between four and five thousand men employed in collecting sponges. The value of the sponges annually collected is estimated at ninety thousand dollars. Coarse varieties are found in the Gulf of Mexico and the Bahama Islands. They are scraped off the rocks with forked instruments, and consequently they are often torn.

The demand for sponges has increased so much during the last few years that there is cause to fear the supply will be exhausted, unless some way can be found to cultivate them by artificial means. With this view, attempts have recently been made to raise sponges in the Adriatic Sea by

taking cuttings from full-grown ones, and fastening them upon stones on the bottom of the ocean until they attach themselves. These experiments have been successful, but the operation is a delicate one, requiring great care not to bruise the soft flesh. It is necessary to keep the sponge under sea-water during the process.

Some of the glass sponges are exceedingly beautiful. The delicate "Venus's flower-basket" grows in the deep sea near the Philippine Islands. It looks like spun glass woven into a beautiful pattern, and is so exquisite we can scarcely believe that it is the skeleton of a sponge. Fig. 3 shows a remarkable specimen of the sponge family, taken between Gibraltar and the island of Madeira by the scientific party on board the famous *Challenger*, which ship was sent out for the express purpose of exploring the animal and vegetable wonders of the great deep.

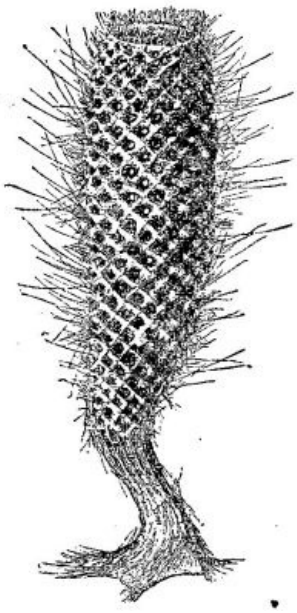


Fig. 3.—Glass Sponge.

This sponge, reduced in the illustration to one-third its size, is composed of bands of spicules running lengthwise from end to end, with cross bands at right angles. The corners are filled up with a pale brown corky-looking substance, reducing the spaces to little tube-like holes, and rising into spirally arranged ridges between them. The ridges, instead of having a continuous glassy skeleton, have their soft substance supported by a multitude of delicate six-rayed spicules interspersed with what under the microscope look like little stars and rosettes. The whole sponge is covered with fine hairs, and the mouth is closed by a net-work of a jelly-like substance supported by sheaves of fine needles. The glass-rope sponge roots itself in the mud by twisted fibres.

The boring sponge spreads itself over the shells of oysters and mussels, boring them through and through, and dissolving the shell. It even bores into solid marble, and will, in time, utterly destroy it.

Flints are exceedingly hard substances—so hard that when we wish to be emphatic, we sometimes say that a thing is as hard as flint. Yet all the flints in the world are supposed to have been formed from soft sponges. By examining small pieces of flint under a microscope the texture of the sponge, in a fossil condition, is often clearly seen, and the spicules peculiar to sponges are recognized.

MARJORIE'S NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

BY MRS. JOHN LILLIE.

I.

Marjorie was sitting curled up in a big easy-chair before the fire. The room was her own school-room, and the fire-light danced and played on all sorts of beautiful, luxurious objects—everything for making the young mistress of the big house comfortable. But Marjorie had come to believe herself the most wretched of all young people, and while the fire-light seemed to redden and glow with happy beams on everything else, it darkened the look on Marjorie's little face. Now and then she tossed her little curls; sometimes she puckered her lips, and frowned and nodded; [Pg 151] evidently she was thinking very hard and very unpleasantly. If her thoughts had been expressed, they would have shown that she thought Christmas week had been "just perfectly *horrid*—not one nice thing about it. Uncle John away—gone to see those miserable Williamsons, who had taken this time of all others to be ill. And Miss Marbery talk about her having so many blessings! A lot of horrid old presents, no tree, and Miss Marbery"—the governess—"looking so tired all the time! And after all she had said to Uncle John, he hadn't got her a new French doll, and her old one looked like a perfect fright."

Poor silly little Marjorie! After she had gone on thinking half an hour or so, she gradually concluded she was a victim of the cruelest circumstances, and that in spite of all the love and beauty and tender thought in the life around her, she just had nothing at all done for her comfort, happiness, or well-being.

Marjorie glanced about the room as the twilight gathered. Snow was falling outside the luxuriously curtained windows, so that the cheer within ought to have been peculiarly noticeable; but to Marjorie nothing looked very pleasant anywhere just then. Her toys were scattered about, the despised doll was nowhere to be seen, the rocking-horse of last year was in the centre of the room. The big map Uncle John had had made to interest her in geography loomed up on one side of the wall in a way Marjorie didn't think at all agreeable. This map could be taken all to pieces; even the rivers were made so that they could be taken out, and made to bend little joints here and there in and out of the countries. Marjorie had thought it the greatest fun imaginable to play with this map when it first came home, but she had tired of this as soon as of everything else. Somehow, as she sat in the fire-light, it fascinated her to try and read the various names of the countries. She was looking very steadily toward what she certainly thought was China, when suddenly the letters seemed to change curiously. "Is that China?" Marjorie said, half aloud. China

on Marjorie's map was a yellow country, and so, certainly, was the piece she was looking at; but the name gradually seemed to unfold itself before her wondering eyes. "Why," said Marjorie, really speaking out loud this time—"why, it's Christmas-land! How funny I should always have thought it was China!"

"Didn't you know that?" said a queer voice near by. It was more a sort of squeak than a voice; but Marjorie turned her head, and saw her rocking-horse rocking violently.

"Did you speak?" she asked, a little startled.

"I rocked a few words," answered the horse, without altering the very decided expression of his eyes. "I asked you if you had never known that before."

"Known what?" said Marjorie.

"Look and see," rocked the horse, and so Marjorie turned her eyes back to the map. Another change had occurred—indeed, not one, but many. The windows seemed to have melted away into the snow-storm outside, and the map, which usually hung between them, had slowly changed, every country and every river fading away, until Christmas-land only seemed to remain. But even that was changing too, for now it no longer looked like a picture on the map, but a real country. Marjorie started forward toward it. Fir-trees were loaded with icicles; a snowy road seemed to stretch away ahead of her out of the place where the windows and the map had been; and the horse? He too had undergone a change, even while Marjorie's eyes were looking at the windows. Instead of his usual old harness, he had a comfortable saddle and substantial bridle. Then his hair had grown thicker, and he had a splendid blanket, and a collar of bells.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Marjorie.

"I don't see that it's particularly 'dear me,'" said the horse. "I came from Christmas-land last year, and now I'm going back—that's all. New-Year's Eve is our time. Come, hurry up; if you want to go, you must be quick about it."

"Oh, I'm all ready!" Marjorie exclaimed; and with what seemed no trouble at all she sprang into the saddle, and was delighted to find the horse turning carefully about toward the windows.

Well, it was a queer experience. They seemed only to float out—out into the frosty, snowy air. The motion was delightful; but what were they riding on?

"Excuse me," said Marjorie to the horse; "what are we riding on?"

"Why, don't you see?" he answered—"on the snow-flakes. They always hold me up going back to Christmas-land."

"Isn't it delightful!" sighed Marjorie. And so it seemed. On they floated, past church towers, snowy streets, and open country. The bells grew fainter and fainter; Marjorie felt more and more comfortable. It seemed to her as if they were entering a beautiful snowy forest—the same she had seen slowly growing on the map, now so far away, at home.

Then she seemed to doze a little, but only to be roused up by a swift rushing of three or four rocking-horses apparently floating on in the same delicious fashion. At the same time Marjorie observed they were in one of the long aisles of the forest, at the end of which lights from a thousand windows were twinkling. She tried to discover who were the strange-looking people on the rocking-horses flying past her, but although she saw familiar signs about them, she could not quite remember where she had seen them before. Finally, with a whirring noise, she saw one of the dissections of her map right beside her; but how queerly it was changed! It was certainly "Augusta, on the Kennebec"; she was sure of that; but instead of just being a little town mark, she was a funny little figure with round eyes, and a good-humored expression, only it was certainly *on the Kennebec*. Almost at the same time a second figure on another horse flew by. This figure seemed to be made up of round balls, and it nodded to Marjorie's horse laughingly, saying, "How much am I?"

"I know," cried Marjorie; "you're Nine-times-naught."

"It's well you knew," said the horse, "for where we are going you may be asked that a great many times."

"Where are we going?" said Marjorie, a little timidly; "and isn't this Christmas-land?"

"WE ARE GOING RIGHT TO SANTA CLAUS'S CASTLE."

"Of course it is," answered the horse, "and we are going right to Santa Claus's castle."

By this time Marjorie saw that there appeared on all sides of the wood, a great many strange characters. It was five or six moments before she could place them, and then she remembered having seen them in various houses or toy-shops, and one or two looked as if they had come from her own play-room. They were all sorts of toys, mostly broken down and decrepit; but they moved about, talking and laughing with each other, and every one seemed to recognize Marjorie's horse as he skimmed past.

"Well," thought Marjorie, "if I hadn't seen it, I never should have believed it."

But her wonderment was not to end there, for the next minute the horse had ridden up to a heavy gate in a high wall, where with his mouth he clanged a great bell. Marjorie's heart stood still. Back flew the gate. Marjorie saw that it had been unbolted by a little dwarf, to whom the horse nodded in a friendly way.

"Are we late?" said the horse, drawing a long breath.

"Not very," said the dwarf. "But hurry in."

And in they went. For a moment Marjorie almost screamed with delight. Never had she seen anything so beautiful. She was in a garden which seemed to be hung with every possible flower that ever grew, lighted by every soft light; and yet it was winter-time. Around the garden wall the fir-trees from the forest reared their heads laden with snow, and above all shone the radiance of moon and stars. [Pg 152]

Marjorie seemed to be lifted by unconscious hands from her saddle, and to find herself on a smooth, springing turf, where little violets lay nestling under the starlight.

"Why, how can they grow?" she exclaimed, in shy delight.

"Shall I tell her?" said the horse.

"You may if you like," answered the dwarf. "Only I am afraid she never would understand it."

The horse waited a moment, and giving one or two rocks, said:

"Well, these flowers grow for every kindly Christmas deed done by any child out of Christmas-land, no matter how poor or simple the child is. Do you see that rose-bush?"

Marjorie looked and saw a lovely garland of red roses filling the air with fragrance.

"Well," pursued the horse, "that grew when a little child in a hospital shared its toys on Christmas-eve with one who had nothing."

"And the winter frost does not hurt them?"

"How can it, when a good deed has given them life? Their kind of perfume can't be touched by snow or frost."

Marjorie paused a minute; then she half-whispered, "No flower ever grew here for me?"

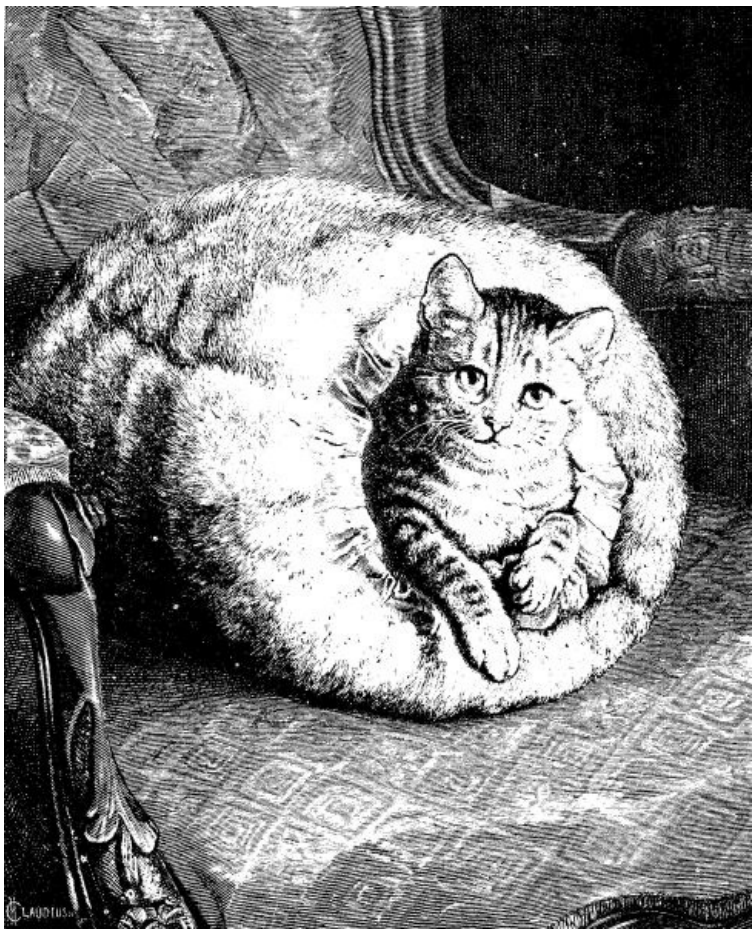
The horse rocked rather angrily. "No, it didn't," he answered. "Now good-night. Follow the dwarf. If I am allowed to take you back, I'll be here at midnight."

In a moment he had rocked himself out of sight. Marjorie looked about for the dwarf, and

followed him down the garden to a second gateway. From this they reached the castle steps. Lights blazed everywhere. Marjorie followed the dwarf up the steps, and into a huge hallway glittering with icicles and snowy branches of fir. She was given no time for wonderment. The dwarf pulled a huge key from his pocket, and unlocking a safe, drew out a number of smaller keys with labels attached. He chose one, and handed it to Marjorie, saying, "Go down the corridor to the left until you come to the room labelled as this key is. Go in there, and wait until you are sent for."

Marjorie took the key in rather trembling fingers, and turned in the direction he had commanded. It was a wide icicle-hung corridor, with doors on either side. They were all labelled. Marjorie went down comparing each name she read with that on her key. The name written there was "Unworthy."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



WINTER QUARTERS.

Look at me here in my mistress's muff;
My proper name is Vanity Puff;
My striped coat is, of course, very fair,
But silver-fox has a stylish air.

The muff, you see, is jolly and warm,
And suits a cat that's afraid of storm.
Snow is a nuisance, and cold I hate;
It suits me exactly to sit in state

On a damask chair with a robe silk-lined,
And comfort take with an easy mind,
While I feel myself an aristocrat,
And not a commonplace household cat.

HOW TO PLAY.

BY HUGH CRAIG.

The first thing one ought to do after learning the multiplication table is to learn some good honest out-of-door game.

I put the multiplication table first, because in all games one has to count and add up the score. You can not be always asking your playfellows, "How many am I?"

In most cases they can not tell, for if they are sensible fellows, they have enough to do in minding their own business; that is, in keeping their own score. Of course they will keep an account of all that you win, but they do so for their own guidance, and to check any false claim. And it is only fair that you should be able to check them. [Pg 154]

Some people say boys and girls play too much nowadays. I do not believe them. I think both boys and girls do nothing a great deal too much. Looking at your friends playing and talking about their play is nothing but laziness. Anybody can sit on the grass and sing out, "Butterfingers!—missed an easy catch like that." I like the boy who tries, even if he misses. You may depend upon it, if he tries often enough, he will not miss it every time.

A good game teaches you many things which you will not find in your lesson books. In the first place you must know the rules of the game. Then you will find that boys can not play unless they comply with the rules. When they become men, they will see that men can not be free unless they comply with the law. You must also know the rules of the game so well as to see at once when anybody is playing unfairly.

The plain English for unfairness is dishonesty. Boys who can not or will not play fair are left out of every game. Men who can not play the game of life go to the poor-house, and men who will not play fair end in State-prisons. Let us say, then, that you know the rules of what you are playing, and play fairly, what else do you learn?

You learn, first of all, how to take a good beating without losing your temper. You may be disappointed, but as everything has been fair, there is nobody you can be vexed with. You must acknowledge your defeat with a good grace, especially as the victors are your friends and playmates.

Another lesson you will learn in time is how to gain a victory without being puffed up, or boasting, or bragging about it. You will see that as there was in the case of defeat no reason for being annoyed at your conquerors, so, in the case of triumph, there is no reason for crowing over your antagonists. You will learn to play your best and fairest at all times without regard to winning or losing. You will admire a good player none the less because he is occasionally beaten, and see how a boy can lose a game without losing his honor. You will see, in fact, that the first thing in this world is to do your best, and to put up with the result, whatever it may be.

Nothing is better training for you than to play a good up-hill game where you are overmatched, and feel sure you can not win. An up-hill game brings out your best points, just as a struggle with adversity brings out a man's best qualities. At the same time that you are compelled to rely on yourself, for nobody but you, let us say, has the bat, still you must remember that there are others on your side, and you must play so that they can do their part also. You must remember that you are one of a society, and that if you are selfish, careless, ignorant, or unfair, all the society will suffer. Above all things, play heartily; then you will study heartily, and when you are men you will work heartily.

EPH'S NEW-YEAR'S BOOTS.

BY FRANK H. CONVERSE.

The ship *Emerald*, under topsails, is plunging and rolling over and through great mountains of storm-tossed wintry sea. Mr. Kendall, the sturdy little second mate, makes his way for'ard by clinging to the weather rail. He casts a glance at the side lights to make sure that they are burning clear, and then, in a cheery voice, hails the look-out.

"Only five minutes longer, Ned," he bawls, encouragingly; for cold as it is on deck, he knows that facing the bitter blast on the exposed forecastle is a hundred times worse.

Ned Rand returns the customary, "Ay, ay, sir," and vaguely wonders if he ever *will* be warm again. Not only is he drenched and chilled through and through, but the cold, which is growing more intense, has stiffened his soaked oil-clothes until they seem like a suit of tin armor. Like a dream the remembrance of a year ago that very night comes to mind, how, sitting around the glowing grate in the cozy home sitting-room, he, with the family, watched the old year out and the new in.

Ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, ting, sounds faintly from aft.

"'Ring out the old, ring in the new,'"

grimly mutters Ned between his chattering teeth, as he strikes the knell of the old year on the big bell for'ard.

"Hillo-o-o in there! Eight bells, you sleepers! D'ye hear the news?"

As the sleepy, grumbling watch come on deck, the wheel and look-out are relieved.

"Go below, the port watch, but stand ready for a call," says Mr. Marline, the chief mate.

Ned is crawling stiffly down from the look-out, when very unexpectedly the long-legged overgrown boy who, without speaking, had relieved him, bawls in his ear, "Wish you a happy new year, Ned!"

Unexpectedly, I say, for the reason that the two boys, who were room-mates, have not spoken together before for a whole week. Ned hesitates a moment. Suddenly to mind come the familiar lines,

"The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false—ring in the true."

"Same to you, old fellow," he exclaims, as well as his chattering jaws will let him, and then creeping cautiously along the slippery, heaving deck, Ned enters the "boys' room" in the after-end of the house. Throwing off his oil-skins and drenched pea-jacket with a shiver, he is about to turn into his bunk, when he sees lying on his gray berth blanket a pair of half-worn rubber boots. Scrawled on a bit of paper tied to one of the loops are these words:

"A new yeres Presunt to ned i was keeping Them for you All the time from your aff shipmate, E Jackson."

As Ned reads this friendly message, his face begins to burn—perhaps from the heat of the coals of fire thus heaped upon his head; for the trouble between himself and his room-mate had begun about these very same rubber boots. Ned's had been accidentally washed overboard by a big sea a few days previous, he having laid them on the main hatch to dry; and vainly had he tried to buy this pair of Eph, who wore thick "cow-hides" in ordinary weather, keeping the rubber ones for extraordinary.

"You're a mean, contemptible skinflint, Eph Jackson," Ned had angrily exclaimed.

"Mebbe I be," returned Eph, as a dull red tinged his homely face; "but, all the same, you can't buy them boots: I've got another use for 'em."

High words followed. Ned called Eph "a hay-seed-haired countryman." Eph, in return, taunted Ned with hanging back when a royal had to be stowed or the flying jib furled; "a sogerin' skulk" was the uncomplimentary epithet which he applied to his room-mate, if I remember aright. Since which time, as I have said, no word had passed between the two until Eph had broken the ice with his New-Year's greeting.

"He's not such a bad lot, after all," said Ned, aloud. "The boots are a couple of sizes too large," he added, as he pulled them on over a pair of dry socks; "but they'll keep out the wet and cold, anyway."

But there was a sort of unconscious patronage in his way of accepting the welcome present, after all; for Ned Rand's father, who owned two-thirds of the *Emerald*, was a wealthy ship-builder of East Boston, while Eph Jackson was an uncultured young fellow from the country. Ned was making this his first sea-voyage "just for the fun of it"; Eph, because he had an old mother up among the Berkshire hills, for whom every cent of his wages was meant. [Pg 155]

"Some day I cal'late to be a officer, an' git my forty or fifty dollars a month," said Eph, sturdily, to himself.

Ned had obtained his parents' consent that he should make a trial voyage with Captain Elton. "But don't favor him, Captain," privately suggested Mr. Rand.

"Favor him!" echoed the plain-spoken Captain; "I *guess* not. There's no favor shown aboard ships. Your boy will be treated the same as that long-legged young chap from the country who shipped yesterday—no better and no worse." Which assurance Ned has found to his extreme disgust is carried out to the very letter.

But the voice of the storm without grows louder and fiercer.

"I thought so!" growls Ned, as two hours later he hears the command to "turn out and shorten sail."

Ugh-h-h! It is ten degrees colder at least than when he went below. Mast and spar, brace and rigging, alike are cased in thin ice.

The upper topsails have been lowered on the caps, where they are thrashing as only stiff, half-frozen sails can thrash.

"Jump up there lively, and roll up the main topsail first," bellows Mr. Marline, and in a moment wiry little Mr. Kendall is in the main-rigging. Closely following him is Ned Rand, but not from any desire to show unusual activity. He has learned that in furling a sail the extremity of the yard is the easiest place, for here he has nothing particular to do except to hold on by the "lift" with one hand, and pass the yard-arm gasket to the man who stands next inside.

The sail is "picked up," and secured after a fashion, for it is as unmanageable as an oak plank. The gaskets are passed, and the men descend the slippery rigging. Ned delays as long as possible, for the fore and mizzen topsails have yet to be furled.

"You, Ned, are you going to stay on that yard all night?" thunders Mr. Marline from below, at which gentle hint Ned bestirs himself.

Crawling cautiously along the slippery, swaying foot-rope, one moment high in air, and the next with the boiling, seething sea beneath his feet, Ned is nearly half way in, when, as the ship rolls

heavily to leeward, his mittened hands slip on the icy iron jack-stay, and with a wild cry, which is heard even above the storm, he is launched into space.

"Man overboard!" yells Mr. Kendall, who is very excitable.

Eph Jackson, who has been sent to the lee, hears it, and stooping, "yanks" the grating from under the helms-man's feet, sending it spinning over the rail.

Captain Elton was never known to be excited in his whole life.

"Put the wheel down, Jerry, and let her head come up in the wind." Raising his voice a little, he then orders the after-yards braced aback, and the fore stay-sail sheet raised.

While one watch is obeying this order, others of the crew clear away the port quarter boat. But when there is a call to man it, one and all hesitate, for verily it is venturing into the very jaws of death.

Eph Jackson suddenly leaves the lee wheel, and follows the plucky little second mate, who is shipping the rudder.

"If that young chap is goin'," mutters Bob Stacy, "blowed if I'll hang back;" and in another moment the boat is manned, and afloat in darkness and storm.

Meanwhile, what of Ned Rand? This: As his head disappeared under the icy waves he felt as though a terrible grasp had seized his ankles and was dragging him deeper and deeper despite his efforts to rise.

"It's my heavy boots," was the thought which flashed like lightning through his brain; and thanks to their size, he slipped them off one at a time, coming to the surface just as it seemed to him that his lungs were about to burst through holding his breath so long. Dashing the water from his eyes, he struck out manfully, yet with a sense of utter hopelessness, when his hand struck the grating, to which he clung convulsively. He saw rockets and blue-lights thrown up from the ship's deck, and shouted himself hoarse, for the *Emerald* was not a cable's-length distant.

But as he felt an awful numbing chill steal over him, against which he vainly struggled, he was dragged in over the bow of the *Emerald*'s boat by the nervous arms of the bow oar—Mr. Ephraim Jackson.

"Darned if he ain't lost them boots a'ready!" exclaimed Eph, as the insensible boy was laid face down in the bottom of the boat.

Well, through God's mercy and Mr. Kendall's skill, they reached the ship in safety, but Eph—or indeed any of the boat's crew—will never forget the terrible pull, or how near they were being crushed by the ship's side in taking the boat inboard.

Ned was rubbed, filled to the throat with hot coffee, and stowed away in his bunk, so that by morning he was all right again, but, to his great joy, was excused from further duty, the ship being now off old Boston Light.

"You saved my life, Eph," says Ned, gratefully, as in high glee the two boys begin to pack their chests in readiness for going ashore, "and how shall I ever repay you?"

There was no mock modesty about Eph Jackson. "It ain't wuth mentionin'," looking up from his work, "but seem' 's you make so much of it, if you're a mind to buy me a pair o' new rubber boots, we'll call it square."

Which Ned afterward does, and, better still, invites Eph home to stay until the ship is again ready for sea; for Captain Elton has offered to take him as able seaman on the next voyage. A year later, and Mr. Jackson is second mate of the *Emerald*.

"Them rubber boots," he remarks aloud, as he incloses a money order for fifty dollars to his proud mother—"them rubber boots was a lucky New-Year's present for me."

"And for me too, Eph," smilingly returns Ned Rand, who stands close by.

BITS OF ADVICE.

BY AUNT MARJORIE PRECEPT.

AT THE MATINÉE.

"Oh, Aunt Marjorie," cried Susie, "we're going to the matinée."

"Well," said I, "I hope you'll enjoy it. I did not enjoy the last one I attended; but it was not my own fault, nor that of the performers."

"Whose fault was it?" asked Susie.

"Just behind me," I replied, "sat two well-dressed, fine-looking young people. What do you think they did through all the sweet music—solos, arias, quartettes, and choruses? Why, they simply talked and laughed. Sometimes they whispered, sometimes they giggled, sometimes they conversed audibly. People around them were terribly annoyed; but they did not seem to care how much they disturbed their neighbors.

"I have been told, Susie dear," I went on to say, "that among the Japanese it is part of a young lady's education to be taught to chatter, that is, to talk of little things gracefully. These American young people chatter without having been taught the art. The trouble was, they did not know when to keep still."

"I hope, Aunt Marjorie," said Susie, "that you do not think that I would act as those ill-bred creatures did."

"I am sure you would not, my dear," I replied. "But it grieves me that so many boys and girls, from mere want of thought, whisper and laugh in public places, where their doing so is a trespass on the rights of others, and a great annoyance to speakers and performers."

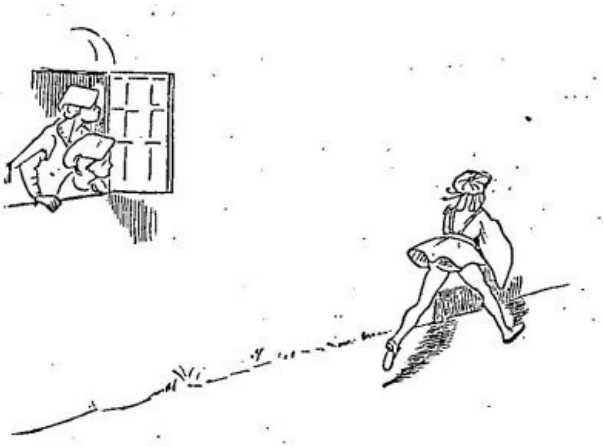
THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

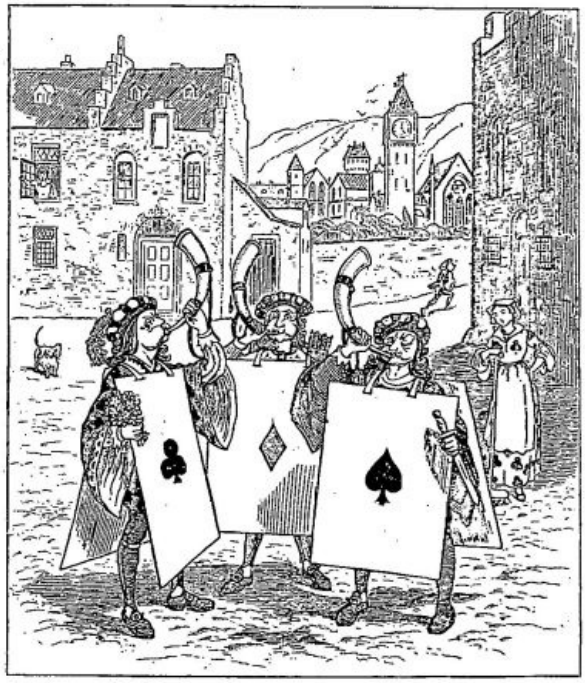
[Pg 156]

DRAWN BY R. CALDECOTT.

The Queen of Hearts,
She made some Tarts,
All on a Summer's Day:

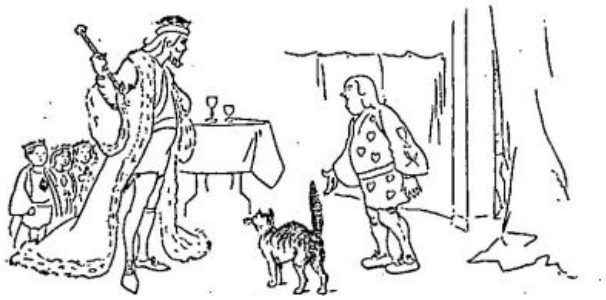
The Knave of Hearts,
He stole those Tarts,



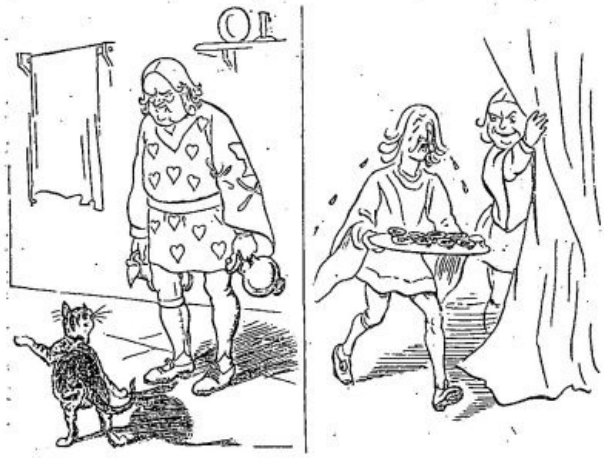


And took them right away.

The King of Hearts,



Called for those Tarts,



And beat the Knave full sore.

The Knave of Hearts,
Brought back those Tarts,
And vowed he'd steal no more.

RATON, NEW MEXICO.

I am going to write to HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE, to tell about the great traveller, Mr. Du Chaillu. Papa, mamma, and I met him in Raton as we were going to the depot. He is not at all like what I thought an author would be. I thought he would be tall, but he is very

short. He seemed very funny to me, and he was very pleasant to papa and mamma. He talked about his books, and other things too. Papa gave him a number of the *Athenæum*, an English periodical, which had in it a review of the *Land of the Midnight Sun*, with which he seemed very much pleased. When he left he said he would pay us a visit on his return next spring. He had been with Mr. Berghman in a train to the tunnel through the mountains going to Colorado, to take pictures for the book he is going to write about the Rocky Mountains. A banquet was given in honor of Mr. Du Chaillu by the Raton Literary Society, and papa attended it.

S. Georgiana M.

You will always be glad that you had the opportunity of meeting the genial traveller and story-teller, whose books will be the more interesting to you now that you have seen their author. And though you were only eight years old when you had this pleasure, perhaps you will live long enough to tell your grandchildren about it when you shall be ten times eight.

Springfield, Ohio.

I am nine years old. I have a pony named Flora; she is fond of cake and sugar. I drive her to a cart. I also have a pet cat; her name is Tittens. She has three kittens, but they are wild. Then I have a bird named Dick; he is almost as old as I am. I have taken Harper's Young People since it was first published, and like it very much.

John L. B.

St. Johns, Michigan.

I thought, as I knew a good noisy game, I would write to Young People, and tell the readers how to play it. It is called "Frog in the Middle."

A player, selected by lot, sits on the carpet, while the others form a circle round him, taking him unawares when his back is turned, pulling him, pinching him, buffeting him, and pulling his hair. When he succeeds in catching one of them, the captive must change places with him. As the players dance and caper around the frog they cry, "Frog in the middle—catch him who can!"

Robert G. S.

Is not Frog in the Middle rather too boisterous a game for the parlor? Is there no danger that the hair-pulling and buffeting may become too earnest for fun, and that there may be crying as well as laughing among the players? Please send us descriptions of quiet games as well as of noisy ones. We know that boys love noise; but somehow we always think that noise should be kept out-doors, where there is room for it.

Nevada, Missouri.

I am a little boy five years old, and my mamma buys Young People for me every week. I like it very much, and the funny pictures in it. I can read nicely in my Second Reader, and can write small words, though not well enough to write a letter, but will before I am six years old. (Mamma is writing this for me.) I am staying with my little cousin Berkeley; he has a canary-bird (Hattie), and I have one (Dick). I call Berkeley my little brother, because he is all his mamma has, and so am I all my mamma has. I have two more little boy cousins in Kansas—Fred and Luther—and one more in Philadelphia; his name is Joe. We have no girl cousins at all; we think it would be a change to have one. We get tired of all boys, but we are all going to try to be good men. Mamma reads me all the things in Young People that I can understand. I like Jimmy Brown best. Please print this for me, because I can read it. I am going to start to school next Monday. I have been to New York, and often been through Franklin Square.

Eugene W.

Northfield, Iowa.

I am a little boy five feet ten inches high, weigh 160 pounds, and am over sixty-one years of age. I do not go to school any more, only to Sunday-school. I take and read all of Harper's Young People, and think it is all first-class, only in the stories of "Toby Tyler" and "Tim and Tip" there is too much fondness of the boys—one for the dirty old monkey, and the other for the dirty little dog. Why, just think of it!—a boy sleeping with

a dirty old monkey or dog in his arms, and having his face and hands licked by it, and he kissing one or the other of them, as though it were a nice clean baby! The thought is enough to make one sick.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE has begat in the other children of the family a greater love for reading than all the other papers they ever read.

A. D.

There is nothing that gives us greater satisfaction than to receive the commendations of boys like yourself. Some boys and girls never grow old, and we are sure you belong to the number. But you will pardon us if we enter a protest against your condemnation of Toby and Tim. Under the circumstances in which those poor little lads found themselves, they would have been starved for lack of love and companionship but for their dumb friends; and what so natural as that they should caress the faithful animals, and take them in their arms when sleep brought forgetfulness of trouble? A boy is not going very far astray when he finds pleasure in the affection of a dog, or even of a monkey, though we agree with you in keeping our own kisses for sweet child pets.

JEFFERSON COUNTY, KENTUCKY.

I am a little girl nine years old. I have a brother eight, and a big sister fourteen, who has been at Shelbyville at school seven years. I am in the Third Reader, and study at home, and have never gone to school. I like YOUNG PEOPLE very much. I want you to commence that piece about Mr. Stubbs's Brother. I have three cats named Beauty, Punch, and Judy, and a large setter dog named Spot, and he will lie by a dressed shoat all night, and let no one take it. I go to Sunday-school every Sunday, through winter and summer, over two miles, and contribute a nickel to buy papers.

ROSIE K. B.

You are a faithful girl to take that long walk to Sunday-school every week in all seasons. Who else has to go so far as Rosie?

MOUNT VERNON, NEW YORK.

I went to the Dolls' Reception in New York, and liked it very much. I have a new baby doll that was bought there, and I call her Adele. She has everything she needs to wear except a cloak. I have a French doll; her name is Nettie. She was bought at the Dolls' Reception last year. I have a rag doll as big as a child three years old. I call her Clara Louise, after my Sunday-school teacher, but she used to be Jemima. I have another baby doll, Lulu, and a little French doll, Gracie, and "lots of little dolls." I love all my dollies dearly. I am nearly six years old, and I can print, but not write, so I have told mamma just what to write. I would like to tell about my kitty, but will do that another time. I hope to see my letter in the YOUNG PEOPLE.

AMIE H.

SWARTHMORE, PENNSYLVANIA.

I suppose you have heard of the burning of Swarthmore College. We live just across the road from it, and a little while after the fire broke out mamma took us out to see it. The sparks flew toward our house, and we thought it would go too, but the slate roof saved it. The students were rushing around, dragging furniture and clothes. Oh, how frightened I was to see that great building in a blaze, though it was a beautiful sight! The sparks fell in such showers that we were afraid our dresses would catch fire. Some of the dead branches of the big trees flamed up, and looked very pretty. We were up all night, and a good many students came to our house, and the next day people kept coming and going all day long. It is very lonely now without the students.

I am ten years old. I like YOUNG PEOPLE very much.

LAURA B.

This is a letter from Laura's sister. It was printed beautifully:

I think I will write a letter to you. To-day my sister and I went to a little brick house which is being built, and when we got there Laura made a brick house, and I made a cake: and it began to rain, and so we came home, and I thought I would write a letter to you. We have two cats; one of them is black, white, and yellow. I am seven years old.

CLARA D. B.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA.

In the summer I was staying at Newtown, Pennsylvania, and there were a number of Indians there from the training school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. They were sent to Newtown for the summer, and one was staying opposite us, and one in the house with us. We invited several of them to take tea with us, and after tea we went out on the lawn, and had a game of bow and arrows, and they are all experts in archery. For one of the girls my aunt dressed a doll, and she was delighted with it. One of the girls, seventeen years old, weighed 157 pounds; was not that heavy? One Sunday my aunt and myself took four of the Indians to church. I think they understood the service very well. One of the girls, Maggie S., taught me to say, in the Indian language, "Be a good girl" and "Be a good boy," but as I do not know how to spell the words, I can not write them for you. In my last letter I said I would exchange shells for stamps, but my shells were soon exhausted, so I can not exchange any more. I am eleven years old. I hope Jimmy Brown will write another story soon.

JULIA M. PIERIE, 2403 Spruce Street.

The two little letters which follow were sent us by the teacher of Nettie and Phebe:

BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY.

Every Tuesday morning my teacher sends one or two scholars up to the Post-office to get HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. My teacher has taken the paper ever since September, and all of us are glad when we see the pretty green cover, and all of us try to be good all day, so that we can take it home. I have just commenced writing with ink, so please excuse my bad writing. Please publish this letter to oblige

NETTIE K.

BLOOMFIELD, NEW JERSEY.

My teacher takes HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE, and I think it is very nice. I have a yellow cat. Papa has two yellow cats, and one stands right up on its hind-legs. I go to Berkeley School, on Bloomfield Avenue. I have not seen any letter yet from Bloomfield, so will you please publish this letter. Please excuse writing, for I am just beginning to write with ink.

PHEBE C.

Neither of you need have apologized for such distinct writing.

NEW YORK CITY.

I think those little country boys and girls who have never been in the city would like to see our fire-engines and elevated railroads.

We have two pet cats at our house, one all white and the other all black. The white cat's name is Nellie, and the black cat's name is Nig. If I say to Nellie, "Kiss me," she will do so; and if I say to Nig, "Give me your paw," she will obey me.

I saw some ragamuffins on Thanksgiving-day in a place that they call the Fire Points, and they were very nice. They had a little fellow dressed up in a monkey skin, and they had a platform built on a horse's back, on which was an organ-grinder. Another horse was led by a string from the monkey, and a great many very comical figures were in the procession.

HENRY F.

It does not seem quite kind to speak of the poor children at the Five Points as ragamuffins, though we do not imagine that you intended any contempt of them. You were glad that they had a pleasant time, were you not?

ORANGE, NEW JERSEY.

When my grandmother was a little girl at school, she, with the other girls, used to practice spelling the word sis-ne-chris-to-var-van-pro-van-tim-tam-tire-live-mack-feign-well-squire to help them in pronouncing syllables correctly. I wonder if any of the readers of YOUNG PEOPLE know a longer word than that? Arithmologantotype is another queer word.

Rudy.—Many thanks for your little story about Dollie and her trials. We read it with great pleasure, and wish we could print it, but we have not room. It was a happy thought of yours to send Miss Dollie, after her ups and downs, and her life with the spoiled child Dune, to stay with that dear little Nellie, who had no other toys and no playmates, and of course took the new treasure right to her heart. Sometimes when we think of the girls who have rooms full of dolls, and then of the other girls who have no dolls at all, we wish we could pull a string somewhere and shake things into evenness. But that we can not do with a wish. Still, it may be that some of the fortunate little women will try for themselves how much happiness they can get by making others happy. We hope so.

Bessie D., in Lowell, Massachusetts, discovered a dandelion in bloom on December 9, and E. B. D., in Grand Rapids, Michigan, felt very happy when she found a pansy in her out-door garden December 10. Brave little flowers they are that dare to laugh in the very face of old winter in latitudes so cold.

Dick K.—We state for your benefit, and for that of other new subscribers, that the privilege of exchanging useful and interesting articles is extended to all readers of Harper's Young People. The editor reserves the right of excluding certain things which are not regarded as legitimate for exchanging. Among these are birds' eggs and fire-arms. Articles which are offered for money, and are consequently for sale, do not belong to the exchange department, but are properly advertisements. It is the aim of the conductors of Young People to make the exchange department not only a means of entertainment and accommodation to correspondents, but also educational. [Pg 159] The postmarks, stamps, pressed leaves, specimens, and curiosities sent by young collectors to each other are valuable object lessons in geography, history, and natural science.

C. Y. P. R. U.

A. B.—You ask why Holland is said to have been reclaimed from the sea. Holland is an abbreviation of Hollow-land. It is a low, flat country on the North Sea, and is composed mostly of deposits from the Rhine and other rivers, and of sand thrown up by the sea. Some parts of it are even lower than the sea itself; and to keep the water out, strong walls called dikes, made of great stones, timber, turf, and clay, have been built along the shores. The land was formerly very soft and swampy; but it has been filled up, or drawn out by hundreds of pumps, which are worked either by windmills or steam-engines. The water is pumped into canals, which take the place of streets, and the people go about on them in summer in little boats drawn by horses or by dogs, and in winter they travel merrily over the ice on skates, which men, women, and children use with ease and grace.

> Dear Postmistress,—My cousin Tom says he does not think you are a real Postmistress, but only the Editor. He wouldn't wonder if you were a man, for he says women don't know very much about affairs. We have had a quarrel about it, and I made up my mind to ask you. Papa says, "Always go to head-quarters when you want information."
>
> Bessie T.

Your cousin Tom is complimentary. Only the Editor! And thinks I am a man! I wish he could see the great basket of stockings I darn every week of my life, and taste the nice muffins and corn-bread I sometimes make after reading a bagful of letters from the C. Y. P. R. U. As for his disdain of women and their knowledge of affairs, I beg his pardon, and hope he is not related to a certain old fellow named Rip Van Winkle, who once fell asleep, and slept ever so many years, while the world went rolling on. Your papa is a sensible man. I am sure he did not agree with Tom.

> Can the Postmistress tell a busy mother how to make a nice wholesome pudding, which does not require eggs, and which the children may eat without fear of indigestion.
>
> H. I. T.

With pleasure. Take two cupfuls of Graham flour, one of molasses, and one of sour milk; one tea-spoonful of salt, two of soda, and one cupful of fruit. Flavor highly with cinnamon and cloves, and

steam the pudding two hours, popping it into the oven finally just long enough to harden the crust. Serve hot, with clear sauce.

VERSES FOR AN ALBUM.—When I am asked to write in an album, I feel very much as my troubled little correspondent does. I wrinkle up my forehead, purse up my lips, and say to myself, "Dear me! what shall I write?" But I begin to think of the friend who has desired my name in her pretty little book, and I always conjure up something. How would this do for you?

The snow-flakes flutter from the sky,
  Like merry little birds:
As fast as they my fond thoughts fly,
  And still I have no words
To write for you my name above.
And so I'm only yours, with love.

A WOULD-BE CADET.—By writing to the Commandant at West Point you can obtain the information you wish. Inclose a stamped envelope addressed to yourself for his reply.

This week we have had prepared for the members of the C. Y. P. R. U., by a lady who has made a special study of queer inmates of the animal world, an article on "Sponges." It is beautifully illustrated with engravings and diagrams, and tells the story of these common but curious objects that puzzled the world so long as to whether they were really living creatures or simply plants. Then when this subject has been investigated, there is a capital article for boys and girls, by Mr. Hugh Craig, who throws a fresh light on what we fancy they think they know a great deal about already, that is "How to Play." "Aunt Marjorie" also reads us a dear little lecture on how to behave ourselves in public places, which some old people, as well as young people, might pay attention to with a good result.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S COT.

Contributions received for Young People's Cot in Holy Innocent's Ward, St. Mary's Free Hospital for Children, 407 West Thirty-fourth Street, New York:

Susie Morrill, Hiawatha, Kansas, $3; Addie C. Webb, Culleoka, Tenn., 8c.; Maud's gift (in memoriam), Bluehill, Me., $2.10; Walter Gray, Monmouth, Ill., 50c.; Fannie and Emma Pearson, Springfield, Ill., 50c.; Harry W. B., Savannah, Ga., 25c.; Carl and Harry Hutchins, Keene, N. H., $2; Ruby Wickersham, Alleghany City, 25c.; Leonard C. Richardson, Lincolnton, N. C., 25c.; Herby, Jenny, and Mary C. Willis, Brooklyn, 75c.; total, $9.68. Amount previously acknowledged, $191.71; grand total, $201.39.

E. AUGUSTA FANSHAWE, Treasurer, 43 New St.
December 15.

Received books from M. D. L. for Holy Innocent's Ward, St. Mary's Hospital.

Although I am not a little girl, I once was, and feel just like little girls do about letters going into the scrap-basket. I want to write a letter to all the little girl or boy readers of YOUNG PEOPLE who contribute to or take any interest in our Cot. Don't forget what we are working for, nor be discouraged. Those who live in the country, or are there in the summer, have, I am sure, climbed a mountain. Well, when you first started, and looked at the top, how high it seemed! and, oh! so far off; you wondered if you ever would get there. A little way up you saw a large oak-tree, and you made for that, and some way further was a clump of elms. A little effort brought you there, and as you looked back, you saw you had accomplished something, and the top was not quite so far away, and so on to the end of your journey. At the top you gave a loud hurrah, waving your hat, and felt well repaid. We are climbing a very high mountain. Three thousand dollars is a real mountain for small hands and feet to climb: but we don't intend to get discouraged. We won't look up at the top all the time, only keep it in mind. We are not very far off now from the oak-tree, and when there, we can look back and see "something accomplished, something done," and then keep on until we reach the elms; and then some little way further will be a short level place in the mountain, with a little stream and trees, and when we shall reach this and look back we will find we have gone one-third of our journey, and feel quite fresh for another start. Who will write me, through the Post-office Box, the names of these three fresh starting-places? Only remember we

are not *there* yet, but are going to travel on steadily, and get there *sure*. Our Treasurer wants to send more names to the YOUNG PEOPLE. I will look for an answer to my questions, and hope soon to send you some account of the little people in our ward. So good-by.

AUNT EDNA.
NEW YORK, 1881.

HIAWATHA, KANSAS.

This is the first year I have taken YOUNG PEOPLE, and I like it very much. Jimmy Brown is too funny for anything. All of us like "The Cruise of the 'Ghost,'" the best.

There are three of us children. I am the oldest, and our ages are six, nine, and ten. My sister and I each have a pony, and we have fine horse-back rides over the prairies. My little brother is just learning to ride. My sister is very fond of pets, and has four cats, and says she is going to have a hospital for sick animals when she grows up. We send three dollars for the Young People's Cot—one dollar for each of us.

SUSIE MORRILL.

SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.

I am a little boy seven years old. My uncle has brought me HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE for a long time. I like the stories and letters so much! I send you twenty-five cents I earned myself for the Young People's Cot.

HARRY W. B.

BLUEHILL, MAINE.

Miss E. A. Fanshawe:

Inclosed please find a Post-office order for $2.10 for Young People's Cot, St. Mary's Hospital for Children, and accept it as Maud's gift (in memoriam). My little sister was an invalid for several years before she died, and I send this money belonging to her because I know if she had lived she would have been glad to have aided in the work; and I send it too in the hope that it may do some little one good, and it may perhaps help some one afflicted as she was. She enjoyed reading HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE, and always read the letters in the Post-office Box first.

ALICE A. HOLT.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

We want to send some money to the Cot. We each send twenty-five cents. At first we wanted to buy a book, but afterward thought we had better send it to the Cot now, and wait to buy the book. Emma was sick for six weeks, and she knows what it is to suffer. We will send some more as soon as we can save some. We take HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE, and like it very much.

FANNIE and EMMA PEARSON
(aged 9 and 7 years).

PUZZLES FROM YOUNG CONTRIBUTORS.

A great many puzzlers entered into competition for *The History of a Mountain*, by Elisee Reclus, offered in No. 105 as a prize for the best puzzle which should be sent in before December 7, 1881. After careful consideration, the book has been awarded to Miss Ethel J. Stokes, of Richmond, Virginia, for her arithmetical puzzles, which follow this announcement:

No. 1.

ADDITION.

1. Add a poet to a hint, and make to blind.

2. Add an exploit to a personal pronoun, and make a plume.

3. Add a covering for the head, a vowel, and a part of the body, and make a monk of the Order of St. Francis.

4. Add a man's name to a tree, and make islands.

5. Add a grain to congealed water, and make an ornament to a window.

SUBTRACTION.

1. Subtract to perform duties from cautious, and leave a color.

2. Subtract a contest between two states from a timid person, and leave a fish.

3. Subtract to petition from a useful article, and leave a wager.

4. Subtract the first boat ever launched from an emporium, and leave the past participle of meet.

5. Subtract a name for rail-bird from an island in the Arabian Sea, and leave a small bed.

MULTIPLICATION.

1. Multiply an abbreviation by two, and make a near relation.

2. Multiply an adverb by two, and make a doubtful expression.

DIVISION.

1. Divide a farewell by two, and obtain a French pronoun.

2. Divide a monotonous sound by two, and obtain an insect.

3. Divide a table relish by two, and obtain a Chinese name.

4. Divide the rustling of silken robes by two, and obtain three-fourths of a preposition and a vowel.

ETHEL J. STOKES.

No. 2.

CHARADE.

My first is an action common to all,
'Tis done by the great, and done by the small.

My second a measure will proclaim
Known by the world, if not to fame.

My third is a weed that grows in the marsh;
It's sometimes smooth, and sometimes harsh.

But what is my whole, I hear you cry,
The name of a hero, is my reply.

CENT A. PIECE.

No. 3.

ENIGMA.

My first in youth, not in age, you will find.
My second in gather, but not in bind.
My third is in world; though not in sphere.
My fourth is in danger, and also in fear.
My fifth is in grass, but not in fern.
My sixth is in scorch, but not in burn.
My seventh is in wind, but not in blow.
My eighth is in learn, but not in know.
I spread my roots o'er time's great well.
Among gods, among giants, among demons fell.
Mysterious Hinndall 'neath my branches sings
Of the terrible woe Skuld the mist-robed brings.

The tree of the world am I.
Can you my name descry?

NITA.

No. 4.

DIAMOND.

1. A letter. 2. A bar. 3. Relating to a celebrated ancient city. 4. Existing in name. 5. A fop. 6. A negative. 7. A letter.

BOB.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN No. 111.

No. 1.

S P O R T
T U B E R
A R E N A
R E S T S
T R E S S

No. 2.

Eugene.

No. 3.

M
H O P S
H U R R A S I N
M O R N I N G S I N E W
P R I N T N E W
A N T W

No. 4.

Tortoise

Irma's Puzzle—Splinter.

Correct answers to puzzles have been received from Ella Chirney, Elbert E. Hurd, Belle Smith, Grace Fletcher, Arthur P. Grimshaw.

[*For Exchanges, see 2d and 3d pages of cover.*]

ENIGMA.

[Pg 160]

Read forward, I'm a color
Of rather sombre hue;
At least I'm not as brilliant
As scarlet, pink, or blue.

Read backward, I am sometimes used
As synonym for poet;
Now tell me, puzzle-loving girls,
Do any of you know it?

AN EVENING WITH CHARLEY SPARKS.

BY FRANK BELLEW.

The other evening I went to call on my friend Browser. Browser is one of those people who, somehow or another, makes his house exceedingly attractive to young folks. He does not say much nor do much, but seems to enjoy their society in a quiet, comfortable kind of way. Perhaps the attraction to them is that he lets them do as they like. If a lamp shade is broken, or something spilled on the carpet, or a hole burned in the table-cloth, he does not care; he has it repaired, and there's an end on't. The young people run all over the house, capturing materials from the bedrooms to make tableaux, invading the kitchen, pestering the cook, and taking possession of the cold meats in the larder to make little suppers. Even when little Robby Rounder brought some Indian arrows, and fired them into his parlor door, he did not even so much as scold him, but only laughed, and said that if the red men could be made to suffer as much as his doors from the effects of Robby's arrows, they would soon be put an end to. I don't think there is another such house in New York. He holds the opinion that the house was made for his comfort and pleasure, and that he will not make himself a slave to his house.

Well, when I called there the other evening I met a whole bevy of youngsters, including Browser's only daughter, and with them was Charley Sparks, with, as usual, a whole museum of tricks and contraptions. As I entered he was attempting to imitate the song of the canary—at least he said so. I never should have guessed it myself. The sound was more like the song of a conscience-stricken bull-frog than anything else. But he explained that he was only a beginner, and that it required much practice to master the higher branches of this art. When, however, he tried his hand at the pig and the horse, nothing could have been more perfect. There was an oily depth of expression about the grunt which was absolutely perfect. After the pig, he took a little instrument from his mouth (see Fig. 1), and showed it to us. It was simply a piece of the leaf of the leek, from which he had scraped away a semicircle of the soft part, leaving the thin membrane which covers one side intact. This he held against the roof of his mouth with his tongue, and by blowing in the proper way, produced all kinds of sounds. Practice is of course required, but with one of these little things I have heard an expert imitate most exquisitely every bird of the woods.

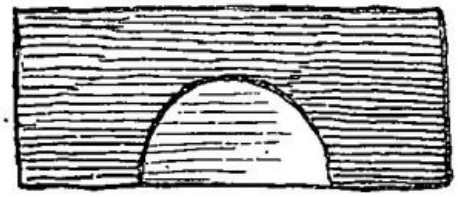


Fig. 1.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen," said Charley Sparks, "I will give you an imitation of Mr. Punch, of the great English *Punch and Judy* troupe," and he produced from his pocket a little instrument like this (see Fig. 2). It was made of two pieces of pine-wood, with a piece of tape stretched between them, the whole being bound together with thread wound round and round. This he placed in the back part of the mouth, near the opening of the throat, at a very great risk of choking himself, and forthwith issued from his mouth the funny "Root-a-toot-a-too" of Mr. Punch.

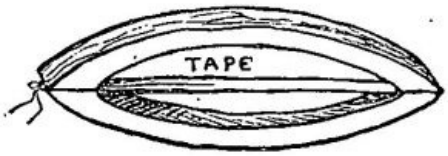


Fig. 2.

He gave us several of the most stirring passages from the tragedy of *Punch and Judy*, rendering the death-scene of Jack Ketch with such effect as to bring tears (of laughter) to the eyes of every one of the audience.

THE DANCING LESSON.

Keep time, little folks—
  One, two, three;
Turn about, twist about,
  Whirligee!

Right foot, left foot,
  Carefully now;
Turn about, twist about—
  Make your bow.

Hark to the music,
  Look at me;
Left foot, right foot—
  One, two, three;

Turn about, twist about,
  You see how;
Keep time, little folks—
  Make your bow.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Begun in No. 101, HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE.

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