HAIL! MERRY DAY.

Oh, blessed, blessed day on which our Lord
was born!
Thy glad return we celebrate once more;
While everywhere sweet bells ring in the
Christmas morn.
And nations sing His praise whom we adore.

While the sweet church bells ring—
Hail to our Savior! King!
Our Lord, whom we adore!
Born in no earthly fane,
Yet shall He ever reign
Our Christ, forevermore!

Now gather happy hearts around the Christmas
board,
And joyous greetings pass from each to each;
While young and old bring forth their precious
hoard,
And distribute their gifts with merry speech.

While the sweet church bells ring—
Hail to our Savior! King!
Our Lord, whom we adore!
Born in no earthly fane,
Yet shall He ever reign
Our Christ, forevermore!

Lilla N. Cushman, in St. Louis Magazine.

SAVED AS BY FATE.

"What can it be, Louise, that is so charming about Alice? Any one but her would be pronounced homely, with those features; besides, she is a 'strawberry blonde,' she is freckled, and she has the most immense feet—wears a six at the very least."

"I am sure I cannot say, but fascinating she certainly is; it must be in her manner or in her accomplishments. Who would ever have thought when she came here six months ago that she would now be the belle of Lancaster?"

"I didn't, I'm sure, or I never would have allowed papa to offer her a home with us; just listen to that voice!"

And Jeannette Taylor paused as the sweet tones of her cousin's voice came floating up to them from the music-room.

"She is practicing up for the concert. I'd give the world to keep her away from there. Claude Moltrop is sure to fall deader in love with her than ever, for she does look stunning in her concert dress, in spite of her red hair."

"Do you think that would make any difference, Jeanne? Wouldn't he follow her just the same if she did not attend the concert?"

"Hardly, for, you see, Claude knows nothing of this sudden summons Alice has receive from Uncle George, and if he should not meet her to-night, I feel sure I could secure him before Alice would ever see him again, for you know she goes in the early train."

"I rather think so myself," mused Louise Lorton, Jeanne Taylor's married sister. "He seems to be almost as attentive to you as he is to Alice; it may be only her singing which attracts him. What are you going to wear to-night, Jeanne?"

"My white tissue, but I know it's all vain to think anything about it, if she sings at that concert. I wish I dare send her away this minute," and Jeanne Taylor looked at her sister with despair and anger in her black eyes.

"It was a mistake, father's bringing her here," said Mrs. Lorton. "But you must do nothing rash Jeanne; perhaps I may find a way to prevent her attending the concert."

"Oh, Louise, how? I have positively begged her not to go, have hinted that it was unladylike to sing in public, but she is not to be turned from her course a single iota."

Mrs. Lorton smiled, and, bending over, whispered in her sister's ear a few words which acted like magic upon the despairing look in Jeanne's face.

"Oh, Louise, if you only could," she said.

"I think I can," replied Mrs. Lorton. "And now go down stairs and offer to help Alice with her packing and then when you are both dressed come to me in the dining room where, I will have a glass of lemonade prepared for you."

Jeanne departed with a little triumphant laugh, and Mrs. Lorton took up her sewing with a self-satisfied look.

Alice Taylor was an orphan. Her parents had left her a small fortune, and when her uncle Harvey had offered her a house with his own daughters she had accepted, not because she could not support herself, but for the companionship she had hoped to find with her cousins, who were about her own age. She had missed something in their demeanor from the first, but they had never been particularly unkind. Still the lonely girl missed the love she craved with such intenseness. Soon after her arrival, her cousin Louise had married, and was soon her father's housekeeper, and acted as chaperon for Jeanne and Alice on all society occasions.

After she had been in society a w times people had discovered that plain Alice Taylor possessed a beautiful voice and an indescribable charm of manner, and she began to be courted and flattered until six months after her arrival she was the acknowledged belle of the small town.

Mrs. Moltrop, one of the leaders of society, had decided, just as the story opens, to get up a charity concert for the benefit of the indigent of Lancaster, and Alice Taylor's voice was to be the particular attraction. Mrs. Moltrop was very popular, and her only son Claude was considered the best "catch" in town, and Jeanne Taylor, before Alice's arrival, had been reasonably sure that the prize was her own. But there was a change, yet she strove with all the tact which is given the young society lady to place herself first in his regards, but, alas for her. Alice's company was preferred to her own. She was secretly very angry, and Alice perceived an unpleasant change in her, which she could account for on no other grounds than the true ones.

About this time she received a letter from another uncle here, who wished her to fill a daughter's place to him. She hailed the change with joy, and had planned to start for his distant home the morning after the concert.

All this had been kept perfectly quiet by her cousins, for they feared she would receive an offer of marriage from Claude Moltrop before her departure. Alice knew all this, but she expected to meet Claude once before leaving, and her gentle heart fluttered at what might happen on that portentous evening.

She was, therefore, a little surprised at Jeanne's kindness that afternoon when she came down and offered so pleasantly to help her about her packing.

"I am sorry you are to leave us, Alice," she said; "although I don't doubt you will like it at Uncle George's."

"I hope so," said Alice, brightly; "and I never shall forget your kindness in giving me a home when I had none, Jeanne."

"That was nothing," said Jeanne. "How time does fly; we ought to be dressing now, and Louise has set out a lunch for us before we go,"

Alice did not know what to make of this unusual kindness, and went away to her dressing room thinking that she had possibly misjudged her cousins after all, and they were sorry she was leaving them.

Dress made a great change in the plain little girl's looks, and it is an airy, graceful figure that accompanied Jeanne to the dinning room where Louise, also attired for the concert, was awaiting them.

"We will have to go alone girls. Papa and Mr. Lorton will drop in before the concert is over," she said, and then she observed, "I have some splendid lemonade here, as cold as ice can make it. I thought you would like some, it is such a warm evening."

"Thank you," said Alice, "I do not care for anything to eat, but I will take a glass of lemonade."

"I knew your taste, you see, my dear coz," said Louise lightly, handing each of the girls a heavy goblet which stood ready filled at her elbow.

"How do you like it?" she asked, when Alice had half emptied her glass.

"It is excellent," was her smiling reply.

"We must get on our wraps," said Jeanne, hurridly, setting down her glass. "It is getting late; drink up your lemonade, Al. I hear the carriage."

Alice drained the last drop of the delicious draught and followed her cousin into the sitting room where her wraps were lying.

"Sit down in this chair, Al, and let me arrange those lilies of the valley in your hair," said Louise, "That could not have been our carriage, Jeanne."

Alice sat down, and that was the last she remembered distinctly, for she fell into a deep doze, and soon after the two sisters laid her limp form upon the couch in the corner of the room.

"You are sure it will not hurt her, Louise?" asked Jeanne, a little regretfully.

"Of course not," was the reply. "I've taken it for neuralgia a great many times; she will have a dreamless night's sleep—that is all."

"And then?"

"Then she will start for Uncle George's in the morning train, and you, if you play your cards right, will marry Claude Moltrop."

Jeanne threw a shawl carelessly over her white-robed cousin, overlooked her toilet, and then followed her sister to the carriage and was driven to the large hall where the concert was to be given.

The two ladies rustled to their seats, and it was not long before Claude Moltrop joined them.

"Did not Miss Alice come with you?" were almost the first words he said.

"No," replied Mrs. Lorton, "She starts for the East in the early train, ank so gave up attending."

"But what will we do without her solos? My sister will be at a complete loss."

"That's just the way with Al," replied Jennne. "No one can depend upon her in the least if she gets a little miffed at anything; she always acts just so."

Mr. Moltrop said but little more to the two ladies, and then made his way back through the hall, which was crowded, to the green-room.

"Mary," said he, Alice Taylor is not going to come. What will you do?"

"Not going to come?" questioned Mrs. Moltrop, in excited surprise. "She must come; we would not have any concert at all without her. What is the matter? Is she ill?"

"I believe not. Mrs. Lorton, or rather Jeanne Taylor, gave me to understand she was miffed at something.

"Impossible," said Mrs. Moltrop. "Claude, you get the carriage and we will go after her. I would not disappoint this great audience for anything. If Alice Taylor is in town she must sing."

They had driven but a block or two when the fire bell began to ring excitedly, and the street idlers rushed toward the indicated locality.

"That's somewhere near the music hall," said Claude, as he harkened to the bells.

"That's true," said Mrs. Moltrop. "What if it should have caught fire? It was fearfully warm."

"Let's go back," said Claude.

Their forebodings were too true. When they arrived a frantic mass of people were pouring from the building, and the engines were pouring a steady stream of water upon the roaring flames.

It was not long before the fire was subdued, but the scene was a heart-rending one when the mass of burned and crushed humanity was taken from the crowded building. Many lives had been lost in the swaying living mass who had wildly attempted to escape, and many had been more or less burned by the hungyy flames.

Claude Moltrop assisted Edgar Lorton, as he brought out his dead wife, all crushed and bleeding, and Jeanne Taylor was found with her beautiful face and hands deeply burned by the falling embers. It was the saddest occurrence which had ever happened in the little town, and the survivors never forgot that scene to their dying day.

Poor Jeanne Taylor was scarred deeply for life, and when at last her cousin and Claude Moltrop were engaged, for Jeanne would not let Alice leave, she told them the whole story of the evening of the concert.

Alice freely forgave her, as she looked at her scarred face, and thought that she herself had been saved as by fate.—*Sara B. Rose, in Chicago Ledger.*

A Celebrated Thoroughfare.

The famous shell road of New Orleans is a boulevard of almost snowy whiteness, nearly 200 feet in width and 9 miles it length, extending from the western limits of the city to Lake Pontchartrain. A summer evening drive along this road, through the forests of cypress and oak, the black moss hanging in festoons across the way, presents a weird and novel sight. St. Charles avenue, the aristocratic residence street of the city, is in the southern or new portion of the town, and is, perhaps, the most beautiful of all. It is paved with asphalt, and from its begining at the Tivoli circle, where stands the Lee monument, to its ending in a country road far beyond the villiage of Jefferson, are magnificient houses, homes of the wealthiest men in the city, varying in style of architecture from the typical Southern house, with its great pillars and broad galleries, to the latest craze, the Swiss cottage. Beautiful lawns and gardens surround them, from which the rich perfume of orange, myrtle, Cape jasmine and magnolia combined fills the air.—*Mobile Register.*

Wind Against Steam.

E. Vinton Blake contributes a capital story of ice-yachting on the Hudson to the January *St. Nicholas*, from which we print the following vivid account of a trial of speed between an ice-yacht and the fast express:

"There is a roar and rush behind them. What next?

"The down train! The boys look over their shoulders as the big black monster shoots past. The whistle blows sharply; there are handkerchiefs waving from the windows. The ice-yacht is just now holding nearly across the river.

"'A race! a race, boys!' cries the skipper, as he gives a quick turn of his hand, and with a sheer and a spring they are off after the train.

"Now the race—the race, boys! Steam against wind! How they fly! Everything is blurred and melted together and indistinct. The ice is all a bluish white haze, with that diamond sparkle from the runners blazing up.

"The windows of the train are filled with heads: they seem to shout at the party on the ice-yacht, who hear only the rush and roar of the wind and the runners. The wind increases; the boat rears higher; the windward runner cuts fiercely through the air, and the crushed ice flies in a shower. Almost up with the train, now; and creeping on!

"Will the wind hold? But never fear; this is no flaw, but a steady gale. It seems as if the black train were slowing up; yet no,—it is the yacht which is flying faster, literally on the wings of the wind. And now—a crack in the ice ahead!

"The skipper raises himself and scans the ice with eager eye. An old hand at ice-yachting is he.

"'We can do it, I think,' he says.

"Now, brave 'Rondina!' And the train sees the crack, too; the cars seem alive all their long length with heads and gestures and warning shouts. Do they think everybody is asleep there on that light, flying, feathery wanderer?

"The upper edge of the crack is higher by full six inches than the lower; and between swirls the black, treacherous water. They are upon it.

"Whiz!—Splash!—as the edge ice sags and the runner catches the cold tide. There is a wild, tremulous swing and sway, a toss of the windward runner, and the crack is far astern. How the train cheers! And look, now, the black, snorting engine falls behind! Wind against steam! Give them three cheers, boys, and swing your caps, and hold fast while you are about it. The track is clear ahead; the locomotive whistles and snorts and shouts in wild salute at the yacht's victory. Faster, —faster,—till there is only the ring of the runners, the roar and rush of the wind, the tremble and leap and swing and sway of the wayward craft."

Among the most valuable experiments made recently with a view to ascertaining the difference in the consumption of coal between running a train very rapidly and at a very low speed, those upon the Pennsylvania road, near Philadelphia, present the most pertinent and definite data for arriving at a conclusion. According to the published account, the same conditions, same number of cars, and similar engines were employed, and the trains in each case went the same distance—119 miles out and back, with same stops. The fast train ran on schedule express time and consumed 6,725 pounds of coal; the slow train ran at twelve miles an hour, and consumed 4,420 pounds, being a saving of 2,305 pounds.

A man in Tuscarora, Nev., teased a big tarantula with a little stick. The venomous insect jumped about four feet and bit its tormentor on the wrist, inflicting a wound that cost him a doctor bill and a long lay off from work.