The Memphis Appeal.

THE MISTLETOE.

A CHRISTMAS TOCK.

Sweet emblem of returning peace,
The heart's full gush, and love's release,
Spirits in human fleshes now
And greet the yearly Mistletoe.

Many a maiden's cheek is red
By lips and laughter thither led;
And thrilling hearts come and go
Under the dead Mistletoe.

Dear is the memory of a theft
When love and youth and joy are left—
The passion's blush, the rose's glow,
Accept the Caged Mistletoe.

Oh! happy, trick-some time of mirth
Given to the stars of sky and earth!
May all the best of Boding omens
The custom of the Mistletoe!

Spread and the board and the bay,
Fire chimney-place and window gay;
Scour the brass gear—a shining row,
And finally place with Mistletoe.

Married and single, proud and free,
Yield to the season, arise with glee!
Time will not stay,—he chases us so—
A kiss!—to grace!—the Mistletoe.

S. P.

THE WAITS.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

The cold Christmas moon was shining on the sleeping village of Cheriton. It lit up the long, straggling street, and made every object almost as distinctly visible as at noonday. But in the spiritual light they appeared very different. A beautiful quietude, solemn, yet serene, seemed to rest on all things. The quaint houses, with their high roofs and oddly-clustered chimneys, looked as if they brooded over the recollection of the long past times they had known; and the grand old church looked doubly reverend, with the frost-work glittering about its Norman-arched windows, and on the boughs of the huge cedar which towered beside the doorway. The moonbeams lingered lovingly about the gray walls; they fell, too, on the white gravestones in the churchyard, and made each one shine as with a still, calm smile—happy and holy. It was a sight on which thoughtful men might gaze, and feel rising in their hearts simultaneous hope for earth and aspiration to heaven.

Very quiet was the place, as the moon went on her way, looking down with her clear, chill lustre on it as she passed. And there was one house isolated from the others by a somewhat extensive domain of shrubbery and garden, about which the moonlight seemed to play as if in curiosity. It was a primitive, old-fashioned abode; window-shutters and blinds were few, save in the lower rooms, and the moonbeams penetrated unhindered into the chambers, and played fantastic tricks upon the walls and floors. Into one little room the chilish rays darted on a sudden, as the moon, rising higher in the heavens, escaped the shadow of a projecting buttress in the wall; and the pale light fell full upon a little white draped bed, wherein lay two young boys. One, the oldest by some years, was asleep, and the quivering light fell on his face—a face every lineament of which was so full of nervous energy, that even in sleep it did not wear an expression of repose. His brother's pale, delicate features were, on the contrary, distinguished by a sort of sculptural calm. He had a high, straight, thoughtful brow, and that sensitive mouth, which to the most masculine face always adds an almost woman-like sweetness of expression.

The two boys seemed apt illustrations of two differently-constituted beings. The one all heart, the other all thought; if the life of the first might be a picture, that of the second would be a poem.

The younger brother was awake. His eyes of dark, deep, liquid hazel, were thoughtfully fixed upon the sleeping face beside him, and now and again, as with a tender impulse, his hands gently put aside the clustering brown curls from the broad forehead of the sleeper. Presently he drew back the white curtain, and looked out at the quiet, homely scene stretched out in the moonlight—at the foreground of trees, leafless, but clothed in a fairy robe of rime, and (in the far distance, strangely clear that night) the wide wonders of the silent sea. He looked—his face lit up—glowed with a nameless rapture. Unuttered prayers swelled in the young heart—instinctive hopes—blessed beliefs rose unbidden to his mind.

And even while he thus gazed, and felt, and pondered in the stillness of that wintry midnight, the stillness was broken. Vibrating on the frosty air came solemn strains of music, played with untaught skill on two or three old-fashioned instruments. It was an ancient English air, with a kind of patriarchal simplicity in its character, half carol, half hymn, which harmonized well with the place and the time. As the very voice of the quaint and peaceful village came the clear, sweet sounds, blending like a visible actuality with the wintry stars dotting the dark sky, with the snow-covered roofs, and walls, and trees, and with the pure, passionless moonlight shining over them all.

"Laurence, wake! Listen to the Waits!"

It was some time before the subdued voice and the gentle touch disturbed the sleeper from his dreams. When at last he was aroused, he started up suddenly, crying aloud—

"Who calls? Oh, Willie, is it you?" he added in a sleepy tone. "What do you wake me for? 'Tisn't morning!"

"Hush! speak low! Don't you hear the music?"

There was a pause. The two boys listened in silence.

"It's old Giles Headforth, with his violoncello," at length broke in Laurence, "and John Read, with his cracked hautboy, and little ——."

"Ah, don't!" cried the younger boy, with a gesture almost of pain; "never mind who plays. It sounds so solemn now, so ——."

His words died away in the intentness of his listening.

"Queer old tune, isn't it?" presently said Laurence, "and queer old figures they look, I'll be bound, standing in the street, with red noses and frozen eye-lashes and muffled in worsted comforters up to the chin."

He laughed, and then yawned.

"I think I shall go to sleep again. These fellows don't seem inclined to leave off. I shall be tired of listening before they are of playing I expect."

"Keep awake a little longer, Laurence dear," pleaded the other. "It's only for one night, and 'tis so nice for us to hear the music, and look out upon the moonlight *together*."

"Very well, Willie," assented the older boy, nipping a fresh yawn in the bud, "anything to please you, old fellow."

"There—put your arm round me—*so*," pursued Willie, always in the same hushed whispering tone, "and let me lean my head upon your shoulder. Now, that is pleasant. We love each other; don't we Laurence?"

And the tender, childish face looked upwards, smilingly.

"I should think so—slightly! You're a dear old chap, Will, though you *have* rather odd, old fashioned notions."

He stooped down, and pressed a hearty kiss on his young brother's delicate face.

And then the two boys remained silent, watching the flickering moon-rays, and listening to the simple music without.

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There are some recollections, oftentimes trivial enough in themselves, which yet remain impressed upon the mind through a whole life, outstanding the memory of events far more striking, and more recent in their occurrence.

Laurence and William Carr grew to be men, went out into the world, and were battlers for fortune; and one of them, alas! in fighting that hard fight became hardened in nature, so that scarce a trait remained of the generous, loving boy of yore. His soul was chilled in the stony routine of that life which is so scrupulously practical—one might almost say, material—the life of a London merchant, devoted heart and soul to his calling, and to the ambitions of his class. His old instincts were almost dead within him; his old aspirations, his boyish predilections, were crushed out, effaced, as though they had never been. And yet the cold, hard, money-getting man of the world never lost the vivid remembrance of that Christmas night, years and years ago, when his little brother lay with his head leaning on his shoulder, and they listened together to the village waits.

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The brothers were separated now—worse, they were estranged. The world came between them, and effaced the frank, free love which each, though in so widely different a way, had felt for each other, ever since the childish days when they had played together about the old house at Cheriton, and prayed night and morning, at their mother's knee.

The two boys were left orphans before William was twenty years old, and with but little wish which to begin life. Laurence's desires had been all for a life of change, adventure, and travel; but instead, he was compelled to take the only opening which offered to him; and, before his father's death, was established in the counting house of a wealthy relative. He soon learned contentment with his fate. To pursue an object, be it fame, or power, or wealth, seems an inherent instinct in man's nature. It fills his energies, satisfies his restlessness, and insensibly, but gratefully, ministers to that vague yearning for dominion, which is the inevitable birth-right of every man since the beginning of the world. Laurence, shut out from worthier aspirations, found his ambition run high—to be *great* in the sense by which all those around him understood greatness. He would be rich. He would work his way to fortune, to position, to influence. Keeping that goal ever in view, he would struggle through every difficulty, force his way over every obstacle, but he would gain it at last. So he said to himself, silently, many times during the weary time of probation, when obscurity and hard work seemed to be his allotted portion then and always. But this dark period did not last long; it was not likely that it should continue. He had talents, quickness, vigor, untiring perseverance, and unfailing health. His progress was rapid. He climbed the hill with seeming ease; as they were soon said and when his father died the old man left early on the scene of his children's prospects and ultimate success.

But meanwhile William had remained at home, pursuing his self-imposed and dearly loved studies, reading, thinking, dreaming his hours away in perfect happiness.

From this contented life was rudely aroused to the dread realities of death and poverty. The pleasant home and the familiar faces which made it so dear, seemed to slide from him, and left him wandering alone in the bleak world, which was so cold and strange; like one who, reared in an Arcadia, is on a sudden thrust into the midst of the fierce turmoil of a battle.

He sought his brother—but the two natures, always different, were doubly so now, when a life of active business had hardened the one, rendering it more than ever stern and uncompromising; while years of quiet retirement had made the other yet more refined, more visionary, more sensitive. And from Laurence, the younger brother met with no sympathy in all those innermost feelings of his soul; the closest, dearest portion of himself. There was in William Carr that inexplicable, intangible something, which marks one man among his fellows—the Poet—even though he be dumb to his life's end.

The man of business shrugged his shoulders, knitted his brows at William's strange fancies. He did not comprehend—he did not care to, it seemed. The first step towards their estrangement was taken when William declined, gently and thankfully, but decisively, a situation in the same house where Laurence was now high in trust.

"It is of no use, brother; it would not be right to accept it. I am not fit for such a responsibility. It would be a wrong to my employers to burden them with my incapacity.

"You will improve. You may leave them to protect their own interests, believe me."

William shook his head.

And in brief, the elder brother found the delicate-looking youth immutable in his decision, and left him, with words of impatience and anger on his lips.

His heart reproached him for it afterwards. He was not all encrusted as yet with the ossification of worldliness. The next day he again went to his brother's lodgings. But William was no longer there—he had left London, they told him; and it was not till he reached his own home that he received a letter of explanation:

"DEAR LAURENCE: I thought it best to go. Forgive me if you think it wrong. I am not able to struggle with the fierce multitude of money-getters in this dreary London. My old master, Dr. K——, has offered me a situation as classical tutor in his school. I have accepted it. It is the best thing I see to do. So farewell.

"Ever yours,

"WILLIAM."

"And my brother will be the paltry usher in a country school!" muttered Laurence, as he crushed the letter in his hand. "Gone, too, without consulting me, his elder, his natural adviser. It is badly done."

And so the cloud between the brothers grew dark and palpable. They occasionally corresponded; but each succeeding letter, instead of drawing them nearer together, seemed only to widen the gap. They did not understand one another. Besides, Laurence was becoming a rich man, had become a partner in the house where once he was a clerk; while William still remained poor and obscure, with no prospect of his circumstances improving. And when the breach between two brothers or friends once exists, difference of worldly position fatally, icily increases it.

Laurence married brilliantly, choosing his wife from a noble but impoverished family, who were glad enough to ally their aristocratic poverty with his wealth, merchant and plebian though he was. It was while on his wedding tour, with his handsome but somewhat *passee* bride, that he received a letter from his brother, forwarded to him from London.

"From William—my brother," he remarked, explanatorily, as he opened it; "in answer, I presume, to the announcement of my marriage."

The frigidly high-bred lady responded by a slight bend of her long neck, and buried herself with her chocolate and muffins, while her husband perused the letter. When he had finished, he refolded it carefully, and placed it in his pocket, then turned in silence to his breakfast. His wife never noticed any peculiarity in his manner; she was one of those by whom it is seldom considered good *ton* to be observant of other people's emotions, even a husband's. Lady Henrietta Carr was scrupulous in her attention to such points of etiquette. One more loving than she was, might have divined how much was concealed under the pale face, the bent brow, and the remarkably quiet voice of Laurence Carr that morning. One more tender, might even have drawn the secret disturbance forth, and pleaded the cause of the absent offender, instead of leaving the wrath to ferment hidedly in the stern man's breast.

"I will never forgive him—never, never! I will never look upon his face again. I will never give him help—we are strangers from this hour. Let him travel his own road—and starve."

These hard, terrible words the brother passionately uttered, as he trod the room to and fro, when he was alone, and after again reading the letter.

"DEAR BROTHER LAURENCE: (it ran)—"Your letter, with its brief announcement of your marriage, gave me great pleasure, not only for the sake of its intelligence, but because of the kindly manner in which you conveyed it to me. Perhaps, brother, it is an equal reproach to both of us, that the cordiality was strange as well as pleasant. Let us be friends again, in heart as well as in name; we were so once, but it is a long time ago. In our new happiness we may surely drown all past offences. For I also am married—not to a peer's daughter; no, Laurence, with you alone will rest all the brilliances and grandeur of life; I only ask for a little quiet—I am easily content. My wife you may remember; we all knew her when we were boys at school—Mary Elliott, who, though her father was a village tradesman, has had the education, and innately possesses the refinement of any lady in the land. I have loved her, and she me, for six years. She is an orphan, too, and has been governess all that time. We are rich enough to commence housekeeping, though on a modest scale. We are very happy; I pray that you may be the same with my new sister, to whom I beg to offer my affectionate regards. Mary also joins me in the same to yourself, my dear brother. And believe me ever yours faithfully,

WILLIAM CARR."

"The daughter of a country shopkeeper and the daughter of the Earl of Tynford to call each other sisters! And he has done this! He will repent it; he must, he shall. He is a disgrace, a shame to me. He might have been an aid—he might have helped my plans. But now—to marry *thus!*"

Such were some of Laurence's disjointed exclamations, as he tore the letter in pieces, and flung them into the fire. Then he joined his bride. In the course of the day he informed her that his brother had irremediably offended him, and that he would never speak to him or see him more. Lady Henrietta elevated her handsome eyebrows in a momentary amazement, then restored her features to their habitual expression of repose composure, and, without any remark, suffered her husband to turn the conversation.

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Time passed on. The wealth of Laurence Carr increased yearly; his name grew glorious in the cars of business men. His house was a palace; his wife was jeweled like a queen. He himself still burrowed daily in dusty city holes, whence all his riches seemed to spring; and every year he became harder and more impassible, and more devoted to the one aim and end of life—money-getting.

It was his sole ambition now—he had no hope, no joy in anything beyond. There was no happiness in his gorgeous home, no tenderness in his majestic and aristocratic wife. No one who looked on him would have imagined that he felt the want of love; that there was any remnant of the generous, warm-hearted boy's nature still lingering in the old grim merchant—old before his time, but hard and cold, and piercing as a steel poniard yet. But it was so. There were moments when his thoughts wandered at their own will—when he *remembered*. The face of his mother shone on him sometimes; and then would come a flash of memory—of the old childish days. And ah, so strange! the childish feelings of those days.

And his two children. The boy he often pictured to himself as born to continue the greatness of his family—as enjoying, like a prince, the wealth and luxury he had labored to acquire. And the fair, gentle girl, whose progress to womanhood he had followed in his thoughts; whose birth softened his harsh heart to absolute tenderness. She it was who would cling to him lovingly in after years—whose soft lips would press upon the wrinkles of his worn face—whose gentle voice would always have the power to win him out of his harder, sterner self. If either of his children had lived, Laurence Carr might have been a different man; but both of these blessings which he had prayed for—dreamed of as the solace and delight of his old age, were only granted to him for a brief space, and then—left his sight forever.

The blow rent his heart sorely. It was so deep a grief, even, that at first he forgot the check to his ambition it involved. No son for his wealth to carry his name into future ages—no descendants of his were destined to make illustrious the plebeian family he had first raised from obscurity. When this remembrance came, it added to his affliction a something that was cold, stony, and almost defiant. Bereaved love mourns, but blighted ambition erects its head in very impotence of pride against the hand that chastises. Laurence's heart grew hardened. He buried himself anew in his grim pursuits; they seemed the be-all and end-all of his existence now. He said to himself it was enough; he would make it enough.

Yet, spite of all his inward protestations, he looked curiously, and sometimes with a feeling less selfish than envy, at the happy parents of blooming children. He would have given well nigh all his hard-won wealth for one such boon as was so freely granted to many. Against his will he often found himself musing thus, sorrowfully, yearningly. He would awake himself with stern resolve; the one-half of his nature would shrink into itself, while the other looked on with a sardonic kind of pity.

Yet again and again came these softening reveries. It was in the midst of one of them, in the twilight of a dreary December evening, that he was roused by receiving a letter from William.

It was the first since many years, during which the stern elder brother had suspended all intercourse, and had never sought to know what had become of the other. He had known somewhat, however; for William had come to London and had commenced the new life of authorship, and Laurence had occasionally met his name in passing periodicals. But direct communication between the two had altogether ceased. He frowned as he recognized the hand. Perhaps, had this letter come at any other time, he might have returned it unopened. Oh, men! ye who pray, pray for your fellow-men whose *hearts are hardened*. Oh, angels! plead for them, strive for them; for verily if there be a place in all His works where God does not dwell, and where no saving spark of divinity can linger, it must be in the sterile heart of a world-hardened man.

Laurence frowned; but he tore the letter open so soon as the servant had left the room, and he read:—

"I had almost sworn never to address you again, after that last letter you sent. In that you bade me never to trouble you more; you told me you would neither listen to me nor assist me, however sore my strait might be. I forgot you were my brother when I read those words: the devil rose within me, and I had uttered—what hereafter it might have withered me to think of, only my wife came up to me and looked in my face, and, God bless her, while her eyes rested on me I could not speak, nor even think of what was hissing at my heart. I tell you this that you may judge what it costs me to write to you now. 'I might starve,' you said. Laurence Carr, since then I have learned what starvation is like—I have traveled very near its utmost brink; it is a word the meaning of which I *know*. That would not drag me one quarter inch toward your threshold; its worst agony is not within a twentieth part of that which even the thought of addressing you for help would have cost me. But that anguish now is swallowed in a greater. I ask your help—I entreat you. I beseech you to assist me. Laurence, we are brothers, the children of one mother; do not deny me. Give to me as you would to a beggar—fling me some money into the street. I care not how, so you be not deaf to my cry—only be prompt, for Death is pitiless.

"Brother! God look on you as you hearken to me. *My child is dying for want of food.* I wait.

"WILLIAM CARR."

Laurence rose from his gilded chair, and traversed the luxurious chamber wherein he had sat, stately and solitary. He opened the door—there he paused. Then, as if with new resolution, he stepped forth into the hall.

In a remote corner, which even the brilliant lamp failed to illumine, he distinguished a tall, thin figure—a pale, pinched face, with gray hair falling tangled over the broad brow! Did Laurence see then the vision of the bright-haired child, who slept on his breast one Christmas night long years back? Who can tell!

Howbeit, he retreated into the room before he was recognized, or even seen by his brother; and it was by a servant that he sent to William a small but heavy packet. He eagerly seized it, with a kind of smothered cry, almost like a sob, and the next instant had left his brother's house.

The child was saved; and then William had time to think on the sacrifice he had made to save it. His proud heart was torn at the remembrance that he had been a wailing petitioner in the hall of his brother's house, and had been relieved at the hands of his brother's lackey. He could not know that Laurence, hard man as he was, had tried to face him, but could not; that he had watched him as he darted away through the street; that he had thought of him often, since, with something almost approaching tenderness.

He did not know this; so he starved and toiled with desperate energy, till he could give back his brother's gold, and then returned it with a slight acknowledgment. He added—"It is best for us both to forget our humiliation, for you degraded both in me. Let us be strangers again."

The returned money found Laurence Carr a ruined man. Sudden political troubles abroad, with their inevitable consequences—two or three mistakes in home commercial policy—had brought about this great change, and he was bankrupt. A day—two or three hours in that day—saw the fall, saw the ruin as its climax. The merchant prince was worse than penniless; for there were large debts which all his vast possessions—all his accumulated wealth, would fail to satisfy. His wife, naturally incensed at his misfortunes, betook herself and her liberal jointure to the paternal roof, and he remained alone to combat with ruin.

Then came out the finer part of his character. With courage he encountered the host of difficulties that pressed crushingly upon him. With scrupulous (some people called it Quixotic) integrity he gave up all he had, and quietly and simply announced his intention of paying off the residue of his debt to the uttermost farthing, if he lived. Then with a proud, silent bravery, he accepted a clerkship in some brother-merchant's office, took a humble lodging, and began again the life he had commenced in his early youth.

The world—even the world of business and money-getting—is not so wholly bad as we read of in novels. Laurence received many offers of assistance, and one or two good hearts persisted for a long time in following him with their active friendship. But he was not great enough to feel gratitude, or to even thoroughly appreciate their goodness. His pride was but the pride of a strong, bold, determined man. He disdained sympathy, and sullenly repulsed all proffered generosity.

The wheel of fortune had made a complete revolution. While depressing one brother, she elevated the other. William was growing into that *rara avis*, a flourishing author. He was sufficiently far from being wealthy, certainly; he was at an equal safe distance from want. And now—Oh, beware! ye who hastily write resentment—he felt as though he would gladly return to his old poverty, if he could only recall the few lines he had sent awhile since to his now ruined brother.

It was long before he dared to approach him with attempts at reconciliation. He felt keenly, with anguish, the fresh bitterness he had himself added to the former estrangement. If desperate then, it was surely hopeless now. Yet he tried. He wrote again and again, and his letters were returned with their seals unbroken. He laid in wait often, and essayed to speak to him—to grasp his hand. He was coldly thrust aside, without a word, without a look. He was always denied admittance at the door, when time after time he sought the poor abode where the former *millionaire* had his shelter.

One less tender, less patient than William, had been effectually repulsed with half the rebuffs he met with. But his exceeding love and yearning over his brother, besides the consciousness of having outraged that brother's pride, now he was fallen from his high estate, smote him with an intense, sharp remorse. Only a man can wholly sympathize in a man's pride. William's own heart, different as it was, told him how great was the barrier he had set between them.

At length William and his wife bethought themselves of another plan. Their child, the girl that Laurence's assistance had saved from death, was now grown into a fair damsel of some fourteen years. She was like her father, with golden hair and brown eyes, such as he had.

"He cannot turn HER from him," said the father and mother, as with glistening eyes they watched her on her way. She led her brother by the hand, and these two presented themselves before Laurence, as he sat reading in the quiet sunshine of a Sabbath afternoon.

"We are Willie and Alice," said the girl timidly, looking in his face.

He knew them at once, though his eyes had never rested on them before. Alice was his mother's name, and his mother's face seemed bent on him now, longingly, yearningly.

William and his wife were right—he could not turn her from him.

"Uncle, won't you look at us?" said the pleading voice again; "won't you speak to us—me and little Willie?"

"Papa's own little Willie," chimed in the boy inopportunely.

"Go home to your father said Laurence in a harsh, constrained voice; "I have nothing to say to you. Go home. I do not wish," he added in a softer tone, "to be unkind to you, but—but—you must leave me."

The girl stood drooping and tearful; the little boy gazed at him with wondering eyes. He was fain to escape from them, and so passed from the room.

After that William grew hopeless. He had exhausted his stock of expedients; all his patience, endurance, seemed in vain. He despaired of ever softening his obdurate heart.

Time passed on, and Laurence was untroubled by his brother. His persevering industry was working its own way, too, and he was already clear of the barren poverty he had at first experienced after his ruin. Each succeeding year found him advancing to ease again, if not to affluence; and he was stern, cold, and unbending as ever.

Another Christmas-tide drew near—forty years after that Christmas when the moon shone on the little white bed at Cheriton. It was Christmas-eve, and Laurence had been detained in the city, balancing some complex accounts. It was past midnight as he wended his way homeward. It was a frosty night, and moonlight, and the suburban streets were quiet and slumberous; Laurence's footsteps, echoing on the pavement, alone breaking the stillness. Somehow, without his own will, almost in spite of it, indeed, his thoughts turned back to old times, and there rose before him a vision of the quaint house in the country, where his boyhood had been passed; the large rambling garden, the big mulberry trees, and the wood near the village where he and Willie had used to gather nuts. He and Willie!—there he frowned and sternly refused to dwell on the retrospection. He walked quickly on, with his lips sturdily compressed and brows knitted, resolved to shut his mind on all softening influences; but he could not—the thoughts came again, and would not be repulsed. He lifted his eyes to the sky, and the myriad stars were shining down on him with a kind of smile—the same smile as that of long ago. He could not sleep that night. He lay very quiet, but with a world of busy thoughts fluttering about his heart, striving for entrance. The moonlight streamed in through the crack in the blind, and lit up the dreary, comfortless room. Laurence closed his eyes suddenly. The moonbeams brought a remembrance with them that he would not welcome.

Then came a sound of music outside in the frosty street.

The Waits! And they played the old, old tune two boys had listened to years ago at Cheriton.

Very strangely it sounded on Laurence's ears—stranger of all because it seemed so familiar. With a mysterious, irresistible power, the sweet, solemn strain smote on his closed heart, and even before he recognized it he had yielded to its power, and, wondering the while, felt the hot tears bubbling thickly to his eyes.

And then came thronging the recollections of the olden days—vanished the intervening years, like an obscuring smoke, leaving clear and vivid the memory of the happy innocent time when he was a boy, and Willie was his dear brother. The pleasant home, the kind father, and—gentlest thought of all—the mother who had been wont every night to hang over her boys in their little white bed, and, lingering, kiss them ere they went to sleep. How plainly he remembered all—the childish face with its golden curls; he opened his eyes, almost expecting to see it on the pillow beside him. No! the moonlight only fell on his own thin, wrinkled hand, worn and shriveled with the troubles and the cares of well-nigh sixty years.

Prayerful thoughts, long strange to him, alas! came instinctively to his mind, and he heard, low and soft, but clear, and blending with the music in the street, the voice of his mother, sounding as of old when she read to her little sons from the large book on her knee. He heard solemn, slow, and sweet, the Divine words: "*And this command I leave with you, that ye love one another.*"

He saw the dear mother's eyes as they rested on her boys with such an infinite yearning tenderness in their depths. He could tell *now*, what that earnest look meant. He could guess, too, something of what were her thoughts, when often in their childish quarrels she would draw little Willie close to her side, and then pass her arm round the strong, active, vigorous Laurence, whispering, "Don't be harsh with Willie; take care of Willie. Love each other always, my boys—my darlings."

The waits ceased—the air was silent—but there was music still in the heart of Laurence Carr.

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Christmas day at Cheriton was drawing to its close. The evening bells were ringing—the stars shone in the dark colorless sky. The murmur of the waves beating on the shore came ever and anon—a quiet sound and happy.

Only two days before William Carr had come to live at Cheriton in the old house. It was nothing altered; there were the same many-paned windows, quaint corners and gabled ends; the same surrounding domain of garden, with the grove of trees beyond, behind which the jolly moon was rising even now.

At the bay-window of the oak-panelled parlor sat William and his wife, with their two children, watching, the pale light trembling between the branches of the gloomy fire. The firelight flashed and glowed within the room, lighting up the pictures on the walls, the books and prints, and drawings on the table, and the graceful groups of winter flowers lavishly disposed, as women love to have them—everywhere. Alice rested beside her father—his hand wandered among her bright curls; but he was looking towards the fir grove, and his thoughts had traveled back, many years. His wife's eyes were fixed on his face; she knew how eloquently everything he saw spoke to his heart of the old happy childish days—tender, pathetic memories that she also loved so dearly for his sake. The children prattled gaily for some time, but at length their voices ceased; they were subdued into stillness by the unwonted gravity of their father. Never had they seen him so sorrowful, and they marveled in their innocent hearts, for he was happy, they knew, at coming back to Cheriton—to his old home. All the afternoon he had pointed out to them his favorite haunts—his garden, his tree with the seat under it, and the little room where he used to sleep. He had been so smiling and glad then. What could make papa looked grieved now?

Awed by the mystery, they gave their good night kiss with added tenderness, but silently; and silently followed their mother from the room. But she returned almost immediately, and stole softly behind the chair wherein her husband sat, still looking forth with that silent, longing, regretful look. Even when he felt her arm round his neck he did not turn. But she spoke softly—

"Dearest, *I know*. But be comforted. It will be made right some day. Perhaps before another Christmas. God has been so good to us, he will not deny this one blessing you so crave, so pray for."

And William folded her to his heart, and smiled. Mary's voice never sounded in his ears but to create peace or to add to content. When she left him again, the moonlight fell on his face, and showed it calm, hopeful and serene.

Then came a heavy tread on the stone steps, leading to the entrance door, and then the great bell rang startingly through the quiet house. William rose, and himself went to meet the intruder.

Fairly, clearly, purely gleamed the moonlight in at the window: warm and generous glowed the fire, revealing the pleasant home-like aspect of the room.

So William threw back his gray hair from his brows—a boyish habit, continued ever since the time of golden curls—and went to the outer door, unbarred and opened it.

A gush of chill, sharp air—the sound of the sea, like a far off chant—the moonbeams, white on the stone porch and pavement—and a dark figure standing motionless there;—this was what William felt, and heard, and saw, the first moment.

The next, a face looked on him, a hand was stretched towards him, and a voice uttered only one word—

"Brother!"

William's joyful cry answered him; then, like Joseph of old, "he fell on his neck, and wept."

And at the door where the two children had so often entered from their play the two gray-haired men stood, the Christmas stars shining on their faces.

A Dumb Lover.

At the time that Francis I., of France was taken prisoner at the battle of Paris, one of his officers, the valorous Chevalier Beauregard, smitten by the charms of an Italian lady named Aurelia, of a noble family, declared his passion to her. Aurelia, although she was flattered by the declaration, refused his pretensions, on the ground of the levity of French character and their national indiscretion. The extreme violence of the Chevalier's love, urged him to propose to the lady to put his constancy to any proof she should think proper.

Aurelia accepted the proposition, and engaged to marry him if he would consent to remain dumb for six months. The Chevalier promised, and from that moment never opened his lips.

He returned to Paris among his friends and relations, who lamented the singular infirmity he had brought with him from the army. Beauregard expressed only by signs. Physicians were sent for, but he refused their assistance.

The captive king was at length restored to his people, but his joy on his return was diminished by the unfortunate chevalier, who was honored by the kings particular friendship. Francis sent his best doctors to his favorite, who this time accepted the medicine but with no effect. The king went so far as to employ the charlatans, who, in his time, as well as the present, pretended to possess specifics for all evils. He even called in those who dealt in charms, but all to no purpose. All the court were hopeless of his cure, when a fair fortune teller presented herself and wrote to the king that she would undertake the restoration of the chevalier to his speech.

Being sent for she was introduced to Beauregard, when she addressed him thus:

"SPEAK!"

Beauregard immediately recognized in the stranger his beloved Aurelia, who had long witnessed his constancy and devotion.

Francis was sensibly affected at the event, and presented him with a rich marriage portion.

It is not now-a-days that men become dumb for love, though many keep silent for interest. There are few Beauregards in the present age.

THE VALUE OF WESTERN VIRGINIA TO THE CONFEDERACY.—In an article upon Cameron's proposed partition of Virginia, the Richmond *Dispatch says*:

The wealth in that section, as well as the majority of numbers, is on the secession side. In the thirty-five counties now unrepresented in the Virginia Legislature, there is a population of three hundred thousand white persons. There are in that district numerous oil wells, producing an article which the Confederacy so much needs, at the rate of over five hundred barrels daily, enough to supply the United States and all Europe. There are the Kanawha salt works, producing, at twenty-five and thirty cents a bushel, that invaluable article, which is now selling in Richmond at twenty-eight dollars per sack, and which has yielded annually ten millions of dollars worth of salt. Two hundred and fifty thousand head of cattle, and over four hundred and fifty thousand hogs and sheep were the product of the same section last year.

It is believed that twenty-five millions of dollars is a small estimate for the interests of northerners in the oil, lands, salt, and iron establishments of Western Virginia.

QUITE SAUCY.—Hindman's pickets last Saturday night met the Federal pickets, passed themselves off for Rousseau's men, went within eight miles of Columbia, captured John M. Fraine, acting quartermaster in Col. Grider's regiment, took twenty-five mules, two horses, cavalry saddles, and Enfield rifles, and on their return four of them met nine Federal pickets, gave them a skirmish, killed three, badly wounded one, took two, ran the balance off, got all their horses and guns, and returned unhurt. The Dogberry who commanded the post doubtless thinks this conduct is "tolerable and not to be endured."—*Bowling Green Courier.*

YANKEE JOCULARITY.

Under the head of "Early Lessons in Geography," the Cleveland (Ohio) *Plaindealer* gets off the following:

MISSOURI.—The modern and appropriate pronunciation of the above is "Misery." It we may believe the telegraph reports, and no one but a lunatic will, without considerable allowance, the inhabitants of Missouri are in a very bad *State*. A majority of the Union men are rebels at heart, plotting secretly in aid of secession, while a large proportion of the rebels are disguised Union men. A Union family tree will have a rebel limb or branch in the person of a son or a daughter, and the rankest rebel household will possess a saving clause in the person of a loyal offspring, who is proof against the poison of secession. Neighbors whose back yards *front* on each other and who have lived on terms of the greatest intimacy for years—their grown up sons and daughters sparking across the fence—fire real bullets at each other from chamber windows and back doors. Loyal neighborhoods possess little bands of determined rebels, who burn, shoot and destroy, and villages where rebels are greatly in the ascendency have Union clubs that cannot be repressed by any amount of cruelty and persecution. Queer state of things in Missouri.

John C. Fremont was a resident of Missouri for a brief period, but he moved away. Everybody has heard of his *removal*. He was a good man, but proved inadequate to manage a large tavern. The *Herald* of this city was so enraged at Fremont's removal, he being an extensive advertiser with them and getting his job work done there, they quit sending papers down the Mahoning railroad! The locomotives feel like death about it.

The Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad is in Missouri, and the trains run with regularity, although the bridges were all burned weeks ago. They don't mind the absence of a bridge at all, but jump their trains right over. The passengers get accustomed to it. The locomotives and tenders on that railroad look like sieves, they have so many bullet holes in them. The rebels along the line of the road are Spartans in courage. They pop away at a passing train from behind a tree with reckless bravery.

Lexington will always hold a prominent position in the history of Missouri, being distinguished for the gallant defense made by Colonel Mulligan and his brave Irish brigade against vastly superior numbers. They fought three days without Irish whisky, or even water, and were compelled to succumb—they couldn't get a *suck* at anything else.

Gen. Price is probably the most talented officer the rebels have in Missouri, although he was a good deal *run down* after the fight at Booneville. He was in bad odor for weeks after that affair, but we believe that he has succeeded in clearing his skirts of anything offensive.

**Public Acts and Resolutions of the Tennessee Legislature.**

Joint Resolution to provide Gunboats for the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers.

WHEREAS, The thorough defense of the Tennessee, Mississippi and Cumberland rivers, is a matter of the highest importance not only for the safety of private property, but for the State itself; and, whereas, the mode of offensive war meditated by the enemy, by means of gunboats, renders a resort to similar expedients on our part indispensable, therefore,

*Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee*, That one or more gunboats for each of said rivers ought to be supplied without delay, and that our members of Congress be requested to use their best exertions toward the procurement of suitable gunboats, and to have legislation upon the subject if necessary.

EDWIN A. KEEBLE,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.
EDWARD S. CHEATHAM,
Speaker of the Senate.

Adopted December 14, 1861.

A true copy: J. E. H. HAY, Sec'y of State.

An Act to amend the act of 1858, chapter 1, on the subject of the Register of the Land Office.

SEC. 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee*, That chapter 1 of an act passed in 1858, in relation to the Register of the Land Office, be so modified that hereafter Registers of the Land Office shall only be required to give bond for the faithful discharge of the duties of their office in the sum of three thousand dollars, with two or more good securities.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted*, That this act take effect from and after its passage.

EDWIN A. KEEBLE,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.
EDWARD S. CHEATHAM,
Speaker of the Senate.

Passed December 10, 1861.

**The Sumter—Her Escape from the Iroquois—Official Account.**

To the Associated Press North:]

WASHINGTON, December 15.—The navy department has received dispatches from Capt. Palmer, commanding the steamer Iroquois, in which he minutely relates his movements in order to capture the pirate Sumter. The government at Martinique refused to give the Sumter coal, but allowed her to come to St. Pierre, where she obtained a supply from English merchants. The Sumter had been received with courtesy at the seat of government, and Captain Palmer discovered, to use his own language, this farce of non-recognition of the Confederate flag in France and England is played out.

He had a correspondence with the government; the result of which was he was referred to a passage of Wheaton's international law, to the effect that a belligerent could not depart from port until twenty-four hours after another had left.

The Sumter at that time was in port, and the Iroquois was obliged to anchor one marine league from shore. The majority of the citizens of Port Royal were in favor of the Sumter, and were therefore anxious for her escape. Being French, they sympathized with Louisiana, to which State they thought the Sumter belonged.

Throughout the proceedings Captain Palmer was apprehensive and fearful the Sumter would escape him, and wished she was anywhere else than under French protection, as the authorities were throwing every obstacle in his way. The governor, however, repudiated everything like unfriendship in reply to Captain Palmer's complaint.

Owing to the distance from shore the Iroquois was obliged to occupy, and the fact that the bay is fifteen miles wide, and for the reason above stated, the Sumter succeeded in escaping. The Iroquois followed her, but could not find her.

**The Mammoth Cave—An Exciting Adventure.**

The Mobile *Register* publishes the following extract from a private letter written by a young Mobilian, dated at Cave City, Ky., Dec. 14, 1861:

Last night I was on duty, with a brother lieutenant, near Mammoth Cave. The wild idea occurred to us to visit the Cave, and press the guide to conduct us through. The danger of having to penetrate the enemy's country eight miles from our camp, made the trip look still more charming. So, trusting to fortune, we put spurs to our horses, and soon drew up in front of the Cave Hotel, summoned the proprietor—a rank Unionist—and told him our purpose. The man seemed somewhat startled at such a strange whim, and told us that the old negro guide was absent, but he would get another. We gave him to know that we were aware of our danger; that our lives were in his hands, and that he would have to accompany us in our adventure; that if, in coming back, we were not molested, and our horses were safe, we would release him. But should our horses be stolen, or we surprised by the enemy, his life should pay the forfeit. These terms seemed pretty hard, you will say; but once having taken the step, we had to secure ourselves, and that was the only way to do it.

Our Union friend assured us against molestation, and taking up our lamp and candles we proceeded to explore the great wonder. The time, circumstances, and all, made it one of the most interesting adventures of my life. From chamber to chamber, and chasm to chasm, we wandered through this natural palace, our eyes bewildered by the sublime scenery, and our ears ever anxiously listening for the least sound that