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THE SNOW ANGEL.

BY WALLACE BRUCE.

The sleigh-bells danced that winter night;
Old Brattleborough rang with glee;
The windows overflowed with light;
Joy ruled each hearth and Christmas tree.
But to one the bells and mirth were naught;
His soul with deeper joy was fraught.
He waited until the guests were gone;
He waited to dream his dream alone;
And the night wore on.

Alone he stands in the silent night;
He piles the snow in the village square;
With spade for chisel, a statue white
From the crystal quarry rises fair.
No light, save the stars, to guide his hand,
But the image obeys his soul's command.
The sky is draped with fleecy lawn,
The stars grow pale in the early dawn,
But the lad toils on.

And lo! in the morning the people came
To gaze at the wondrous vision there;
And they called it "The Angel," divining its name,
For it came in silence and unaware.
It seemed no mortal hand had wrought
The uplifted face of prayerful thought,
But its features wasted beneath the sun;
Its life went out ere the day was done;
And the lad dreamed on.

And his dream was this: In the years to be
I will carve the angel in lasting stone;
In another land beyond the sea,
I will toil in darkness, will dream alone;
While others sleep I will find a way
Up through the night to the light of day.
There's nothing desired beneath star or sun
Which patient genius has not won,
And the boy toiled on.

The years go by. He has wrought with might;
He has gained renown in the land of art;
But the thought inspired that Christmas night
Still kept its place in the sculptor's heart;
And the dream of the boy, that melted away
In the light of the sun that winter day,
Is embodied at last in enduring stone,
Snow Angel in marble—his purpose won;
And the man toils on.

—*Harpers Monthly.*

THOSE RED ROSES.

A Christmas Story.

BY EMILY READ.

Our Sunday-school room, usually in good order, seemed to have suffered from an upheaval. Most of the benches and chairs were piled into chaotic heaps, certainly not desirable to sit upon. Long ropes, stretched longitudinally, formed Rubicons that even a desperate Cæsar might hesitate to cross; and great heaps of kalmia, or American laurel, were piled up in the corners. A large stove in the centre of the room was blowing red-hot in the laudable attempt to heat the atmosphere; and around it was grouped a bevy of girls still in their wraps, warming themselves before they began the formidable task of making the mass of greens into wreaths and garlands to adorn the church. They were talking eagerly and somewhat incoherently, each one more intent upon being heard than listening to the information imparted. They were not discussing the Christmas decorations, but a bit of village gossip; and there was evidently much to be said for and against the people implicated.

"I don't believe it. It is not in the least like Mary," asserted a girl in a plaid blanket shawl, pinned comfortably, though not artistically, around her shoulders.

"As if one can answer for another! For myself, I believe the whole story, and, what is more, under the circumstances I would have done precisely the same thing."

There was a small storm of remonstrance; for Eveleen Ewing, though she looked pretty enough in her seal cap to delude a saint, was eminently proper, and what they were so early discussing was Mary Sinclair's surreptitious walk that morning with Charley More. Charley is my far-off cousin, and I am very fond of him, but I was not sure that I approved of his falling in love with Mary, who is a small heiress in her own right, and for whom her guardian has higher aims than an ensign in the navy.

It was the sight of me that broke up the group of girls around the stove. They did not care to discuss Charley before me; and they were at once busy in making the laurel into wreaths. In the midst of the cheerful hubbub the door opened, and Mary Sinclair came in leisurely, bringing a great draught of cold air with her. She seemed in no haste to begin work, but stood warming herself by the stove, asking questions about the plan for the decorations and criticising those adopted, somewhat ruthlessly.

"Why not have something new?" she said; "not those everlasting heavy wreaths that would crush one if they fell."

"They would only ruin your bonnet. Besides, in all these years one has never been known to fall. So that there are lots of green, I, for one, don't care how they are put up," said Eveleen, who was making one of the objectionable wreaths.

"Everything in the mass suits you. You have no eye for minutia," said Mary, good humoredly.

"I care for small things on occasions. Just now, for instance, Mary, you are roasting gradually. Do take off your jacket and come and bunch for me."

Mary did as she was bidden, a little lazily. She did not seem to be much interested in the work before her. She is a tall girl, with a superb figure, and to see her do even so simple a thing as to hang her jacket on the peg is a pleasure. A moment afterward she had filled her arms with the sprigs of laurel and deposited them on a bench by Eveleen. Then she sat down on the end of the bench and began to bunch the greens in a lazy way. Evidently she was thinking of something else. I was busy breaking the branches into convenient lengths, and was so near the two girls I could not help overhearing what they said. For once in my life I am glad I was an eavesdropper.

"You are not just from home," Eveleen asserted rather than questioned.

"No? By the way, do you like large or small bunches? Medium ones? I suppose most things in life one had best take moderately, though to do so always is, don't you think, a little tedious?"

"Mary Sinclair, I am ashamed of you! Moderately, indeed! Do you think no one knows how long a time you have been walking this morning?"

"And down by the river which was imprudent, for the air is keen. But so was Charley for that matter. He is tired of all this indecision on my part, and I do not blame him."

"Tired! Has Charley given you up?" asked Eveleen, breathlessly.

"I should like to hear him say so. It would certainly be an old sensation. No, my dear, it is not that he is tired of me, but of the uncertainty. And he does not fancy the secrecy, supposed though it be, of our meetings. I don't suppose a sailor likes to feel uncertain on land; he has so much of the sensation at sea. Fancy what it must be never to be sure of your footing!"

"I wish you would not talk nonsense, and also that you would give me better bunches."

"I thought that I was talking the baldest common sense," said Mary, arranging the next bunch with deliberation. "The facts are these: Charley joins his ship to morrow night, Christmas though it be; for the next day he is to sail, or to be exact—to steam for a couple of years in the celestial seas—"

"I think you are verging on the flowery"—interrupted Eveleen.

"That is because Charley is going to China. He pays me the compliment, God bless him, of thinking my word is as good as my note, which is gibberish to me; and he pretends to be afraid that I may be persuaded to forget him during his absence, so of course he can't go away without a decided pledge on my part."

"And you have promised to marry him, oh, Mary!" said Eveleen, breathlessly.

"No such good luck. Indeed, I am such a coward, I have not even engaged myself to marry him when he returns, and I am of age—of course I will; but I have not pledged myself."

"Poor Charley! I am sorry for him—"

"You need not be," interrupted Mary. "I have not an idea of keeping him on the rack for over two years; though I have heard five fathoms of salt water cures love-sickness."

"Another meeting? Mary, it is not prudent. You are the town talk already."

"I know it, and I do not intend to gratify the village gossip with my affairs. Charley's plan is quite fanciful. He is to send me some roses—where he is to get them at this season I can't think, but that is his affair. If I decide to hold myself engaged to him during his absence, I am to wear the roses. A pretty conceit, is it not? I am only afraid if Charley is given to forming graceful devices he is not trustworthy."

Just then some one called me to consult about the window trimmings, and Mary followed me to give her opinion. I knew very well that she knew of my proximity during her confidence with Eveleen, and as Charley's kinswoman counted on my sympathy.

At twilight I was resting in my own special chair at my own fireside. We had worked up all the greens, and it being Christmas eve, the wreaths were to be hung, and the old church decorated—a bit of work that would take us at least until midnight. So I had come home for a cup of coffee and a little rest.

I think I must have been dozing in my chair, for I did not hear Charley come in. Poor boy! I disliked this Chinese cruise almost as much as he did, for I was very fond of him, and two years is a great slice to be taken out of any one's life. Besides, we always associate Christmastide with reunions, which make separations at that time doubly doleful. Of course, the young sailor was not hilarious. A man in love easily slips into confidences; and as I proved a good listener, Charley was contented with me, stirred the fire into a flame, and drank more coffee than was good for him.

Two years did not seem so interminable after we had talked an hour; especially as during them he hoped to receive his promotion, and Mary would would be of age, and her own mistress. Certainly the young ensign was more cheerful when he got up to leave, than he was when he roused me out of my doze.

"By the way, Charley," I said, "have you sent your roses? Are they not rather imprudent love-tokens to promise in December?"

"Mary has told you of our device? She was opposed to another clandestine meeting; though we might have met here, might we not?"

"Perhaps. The roses are more uncertain mediums, I must confess than maiden ladies."

"Not in these days of improved horticulture. I have only to telegraph an order, and I will get them by this evening's mail."

"I hope you may; but if they fail you come to me. See what lovely roses the Tracys have sent me for a Christmas gift."

"It isn't quite the sort of gift I would suppose Tracy capable of giving," said Charley, his nose well buried in my bowl of roses.

"No! something very costly and decidedly showy would be more in style. But his wife is different, and is too well bred to take advantage of holiday gifts to put one under a heavy obligation."

Charley laughed.

"I shall never burden any one by my gifts."

"No, you barter your roses for a lady love. It reads something like a fairy tale—Beauty and the Beast—only you are not ugly enough for the beast, and you are not an enchanted prince. Now go and find your roses, for the mail must be in and I ought to be at the church."

I had barely time to get on my wraps before Charley came back again, and I had the pleasure of saying, "I told you so." The mail had brought him no roses; so he came to beg as many of mine as I would give him. Red was Mary's color, but Mrs. Tracy's white ones were the handsomest, and there were more of them, so I made them into a bunch, leaving my bowl sadly depleted.

"Now," I said, "be off. Mary must be wondering where her roses are. She will serve you right if she does not wear them, after all."

"They are too lovely for any girl to reject, even if a lover were not implicated. How shall I ever thank you for this wholesale robbery? Shall I bring you a tea pot or a chest of tea from the Celestial country as a token of my lasting gratitude?"

"An invitation to your wedding will suffice. Now go, before the roses fade."

An hour later Charley came over to the church. He whispered to me that the roses had been duly received, and then went among the young people in search of Mary and his nosegay, not waiting to hear me say she had not come yet. She had been late at all our working gathers that year, so no one remarked upon her absence. And when at last she came every one was busy, so she did not once throw off her wraps, but went from one little group to another, chatting gayly, though with a subdued ring of excitement in her voice.

Some one had carried poor Charley off to the organ-gallery to wreath it, just before Mary came, so that he stood looking down on her, ten or twelve feet of empty space effectually separating them. Mary never looked up, though the carmine in her cheeks deepened under Charley's gaze. She wore her favorite color in her blushes, so it was just as well that Charley's roses were pale.

"Mary, how idle you are! Do take off your wraps and go to work. We'll not get through before midnight," called out Eveleen, who was working as if her life depended on her efforts.

Mary moved slowly, taking off her jacket a little shamed-facedly. Eveleen was watching her; Charley leaning over the gallery in imminent danger to his neck. He held a hammer and nail in his hand preparatory to fastening up a wreath; but it was Mary who should have held Jael's insignia of murder. Men say that a woman can never slay in a fair fight. Perhaps it is her physical weakness that causes her to wait her chance rather than make an attack. So a hammer often has suggested murder to a masculine mind, while a nail has given the hint to the feminine intellect.

Mary's jacket was not easily removed, and I offered her my assistance. How very handsome she looked in her black, well-fitting dress, that showed her beautiful figure to perfection. She wore no ribbons to relieve her sable gown, but a great bunch of blood-red roses. I don't think that I, for a moment, was ever more surprised, since I had selected from my bowl the white ones for Charley. Of course, the next moment came the only solution to the mystery—Charley's red roses must have arrived, after all, and my lovely white ones were cruelly sacrificed. After all, that is the common fate of old people when they are too ardent in their offer of help to the young. I had robbed my parlor of my bowl of roses and had foolishly sacrificed a kind friends Christmas gift.

Charley's hammer had a vicious sound. Talk of a woman's never hitting a nail on the head—judging from Charley's blows, a sailor is not a whit more fortunate. And not only my young kinsman's carpentry, but his manners, were atrocious. He scarcely spoke to any one; gave what few services he was called upon to make, grudgingly; and was altogether most disagreeable. His usually pleasant cheerfulness had, like Bob Acre's courage, oozed out of his finger ends. His going to sea next day accounted for his low spirits; but his loss of temper needed a different rendering. And our good-natured gossips were not long in finding it. Since he, with much ostentation, kept away from Mary Sinclair, it was patent that he had discovered that she had been flirting with him, and that all of their surreptitious meetings had only been a passing amusement to her. The sympathy was with Charley; and his manners, for which I blushed, were, under the trying circumstances, excusable. I have always held that the highest compliment paid to a woman is that she is never apologized for. Condemned she often is; but when she fails she is considered a ruin; which means that a failure is not so very common that the world grows used to it.

And Mary—well, she worked diligently, and perhaps only a near observer would have noticed she was nervous. She was busy in one of the transeps, and Fred Hastings not only helped her, but looked pre-eminently happy. Why, puzzled me; for I was never one to doubt cause and effect; and besides, I heard Mary give him such a decided snub, that nothing but a transcendent hope could have tided him over it. Altogether, I was sorely perplexed, and began to think peace on earth was the holy angels' wish rather than a reality.

"Miss Alethea, what can Mary mean?" asked Eveleen, in great distress. "She wears Charley's roses, and then flirts with Fred Hastings."

"Does she wear Charley's roses? I at first thought she did; but judging from my kinsman's behavior, I am sure they are not his. And also from young Hastings' manner I rather opine he is the giver."

"But, Miss Alethea, if they were Fred Hastings', Mary would not wear them. Even if she cared for him, she would not treat Charley so to-night," said Eveleen. "And besides, why should Fred chance to send roses to-day?"

"Just because it is to-day. Why, I have had a Christmas gift of them myself—a gift I appreciated, but foolishly squandered."

I saw Eveleen looked perplexed.

"There is a mistake somewhere," I explained. "Only I don't intend to put it upon Mary, until I know I must. She wears her red roses loyally, even if under a mistake."

"But think how awfully unlucky, if Charley should sail under a misapprehension," began Eveleen.

"Which he must not do."

Just then Charley came to where we were.

"Cousin—" he said, quite calmly—"I am going to leave in the earliest train to-morrow, and—"

"Will have no Christmas service, and no dinner," I interrupted. "Well at least you shall not miss *my* Christmas gift, which I intend shall be quite valuable. If you are tired, you can go over home; and if you want to smoke, you can light the gas in the dining room. I will come as soon as I can; and if you want my blessing and an old woman's Christmas gift wait till I come."

Charley went away making no promises. I grew tired and impatient before the church was dressed; for the clock in the tower struck twelve just as we finished. As the new day rang in, all of our busy workers gathered round the organ and sang the Gloria in Excelsis, the great Christian hymn. It sounded sweet, though a little weird, as it floated through the dark, empty church, seemingly all the darker in its heavy shrouding of green.

I was sitting in a front pew close to the chancel. The transepts were in complete darkness. "Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy," sounded like a wail through the empty church. I thought I heard a sob quite near me; and putting out my hand, I touched a bowed head. Some one was kneeling in the side pew. At my touch, the head was quickly raised, and my hand fell on the soft petals of roses.

"Mary—" I whispered—"come home with me. I have something to say to you."

She at once rose obediently. I could hear her footstep on the brick aisle as we together stole out of the church into the churchyard. The great, triumphant words of the angels' hymn seemed to follow—"Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord." I slipped my hand through Mary's arm, and hurried her on. A moment more, and Fred Hastings' deep bass would cease, and he would be hunting for her.

"Had you no other roses to wear to-night?" I asked, abruptly, being well out of the church-yard and making a rapid and oblique transit over the green toward my own domicile.

"Mrs. Tracy sent me some white ones," said Mary, indifferently.

"Mrs. Tracy?"

"Yes, do you not remember when we went through her conservatory last week and admired the white roses? Well, she sent me a great bunch. I knew them at once."

"Oh! you did! Yet you are mistaken. I sent you the roses, or rather Charlie did."

"And the red roses?" she asked breathlessly.

"Well, of course I can't say; but from observation I think they were young Hastings' Christmas gift. Quite nicely thought of," I added in approbation. And then, having reached my own threshold, I added, "Come in my dear. I have a gift which I might as well give you now, since it is really Christmas morning."

"It is so very late," she said, demurring on my doorstep, which is so hospitably low I had no trouble in drawing her into my tiny hall; and then I shut her in.

The odor of tobacco smoke was not to be denied. A stranger would have convicted me of smoking. Just then I preferred the odor to that of roses or any other blossom, Charlie was waiting for me. He did not see who was with me when he tossed the remains of his cigar into the grate.

"I thought you would never come," he said.

I made no answer, but closed the door on them. I was very sure that one glance at Mary's face would bring Charlie back to his old allegiance; and I also noticed that Mary wore no roses.

Next day I heard that Fred Hastings found his way to church strewn with red roseleaves, which I hope he found suggestive.

And—well, I had a cozy Christmas dinner in my little dining-room. There were just four of us—Mary, Eveleen, Charlie and I. We were a right merry party, even though one of us was *en route* for the Antipodes; for we had a firm belief in the stability of the world and that Christmas comes once a year; and for two of us roses bloomed in the holidays.—*Arthur's Home Magazine.*

WESTERN TENTED TOWNS.

Mushroom Camps along the California and Oregon Railroad Line.

(From the Sacramento Bee.)

During the progress of the extension of the California and Oregon Railroad from Redding towards the Webfoot State dozens of camps have been located and have been dignified by being called "towns." Being located in wild and beautiful mountain regions they have been given romantic and poetical names differing from the style of the Argonauts, who gave their camps such euphonious titles as Buzzard's Roost, Poor Man's Gulch, Whiskeytown, Hangtown, or anything else that happened to suggest itself by some incident. The railroad camps have always been lively places, occupied by from 1,500 to 4,000 men, whites and Chinese. They have comfortable tents and live a very happy life in the mountains where the air is pure and bracing, the water cool and clear, and where the atmosphere is made healthy by the pines and firs.

As might be expected, one of the first tents generally put up is that of the saloon-keeper, and in that he drives a lively trade dealing out his "Dew of Death," his "Coffin Varnish," his "Bug Juice," and other choice brands. In connection with his "sample rooms" he keeps a "hotel," providing blankets for travelers and giving them a "bed" on the ground, but under cover of his canvas roof. But no one ever complains of such accommodations—they are the best to be had, and then it might not be safe to find fault.

At Delta, which was for a long time the terminus of the railroad, the Southern Pacific Company has erected a neat and substantial passenger depot and freight house, and the saloons and restaurants that were once kept in tents are now occupying buildings of board and shakes. At Dunsmuir, a few miles north, the architect's skill has not been put to use, and the place has nothing but tents. In front of one canvas establishment is the following sign:

> SLOON & RESTRANT,
> good Whiskey and meals.

Oregon-bound travelers, who leave the train at this point to take the stage, nearly always get their suppers at this dining station, and despite its uninviting appearance, first-rate meals are provided. The food is not dainty, but it is solid and wholesome, and the meat is nice and tender, superior to a great deal served in some of our best hotels and restaurants.

The railroad camps contain a rough set of men, but in many instances, hard-working, honest fellows are found. The mushroom villages have been followed from the start by blacklegs, who have waxed fat from the earnings of the hardworking men. Right after the pay-car arrives and distributes the wages, these sports produce cards and dice and in a very short period many men who have been toiling with pick and shovel along the rocky line find themselves without a nickle to show for their labor. There is one thing remarkable about these camps, and that is that good order has been maintained and a few fights have occurred. Every man who comes along the road is offered work and there is no necessity for idle men in the country. The big camp, made of track-layers, is now above Sissons, at the base of Mount Shasta, a region of cold and snow, and as a hard winter is anticipated, the tents will soon have to be struck and sent down to the valley.

Beyond the Court Jurisdiction.

Perhaps the most astounding case of contempt on record is the one in which Chief Justice Miller, of Iowa, was nonplussed years ago. The five members of the supreme bench were rectifying the errors and approving the decrees of the lower courts with the usual precision and dignity. Among the lawyers sat a man distinguished in the western part of the state for his great talents and reckless conviviality. He blinked and nodded insensibly at the court. The case in which he appeared as plaintiff's attorney he had won step by step through months of litigation. When it was called he arose uncertainly to enter appearance, and added: "May it please the court, I am convinced of having committed a great mistake in this case. Justice and truth are on the side of the defendant. All my simpathies are with the defendant, and if your honors will decide in favor of the defendant I will give you $5."

The silence of several minutes following was almost stifling. At length Justice Miller found speech. "Sir," said he, puffing with apoplectic symptoms, "your condition cannot excuse nor your reputation save you. Such an indignity——"

"May it please the court," interrupted the lawyer, steadying himself with the back of his chair, "I think you misapprehend me. What I intended to say was that if the court decides this case in favor of the defendant I will give *each* of your honors $5.

At this the chief justice collapsed, and the offender was led from the court room. The bench decided the commensurate punishment was beyond the jurisdiction of the court.—*Chicago News.*

A Serious Conflict.

A combat between a cow and a gander is described by a newspaper of Albany, Ga. The cow made a violent attack on the gander, when, with much deliberation and coolness, the bird, as the cow rushed upon him, caught a strong hold with his beak on the hair and hide between the horns and flapped his wings furiously. The astonished cow was glad to shake her antagonist off. But, after retreating a few feet and looking upon the proud neck and insignificant form of the haughty bird, she concluded to try him another round, and again dashed at the gander, who was a little more deliberate if possible in taking his hold, and with swift and strong wings, he showered his blows on the eyes of the foe. The cow had evidently miscalculated the prowess of her diminutive enemy, and, after considerable effort, shook the pugnacious bird off and beat a retreat.

AN EXPLOSION.—A Rome, N. Y., girl filled three stone beer jugs with wet sand, corked them tightly, and set them in the oven to heat, so that she could warm her bed with them. The heat generated steam from the wet sand, and an explosion followed, which filled the room with flying sand and fragments of beer jars. The girl and the rest of the family were badly scared but unhurt.

A STRANGE RACE.

OUTLAWS DWELLING ON THE BENNEWATER LAKES.

Their Origin unknown—Queer Habits and Customs—Scenes at their Midnight Orgies.

[From the N. Y. Herald.]

KINGSTON, N. Y., Dec., 1886.—About three miles west of Kingston commences a chain of five lakes known as the "Bennewaters," the largest being about one mile long and three-quarters of a mile broad. The scenery is of a wild and romantic character, and, as the lakes are well stocked with fish, it has long been a favorite resort of anglers as well as tourists. For between one and two hundred years a curious tribe of people has dwelt upon the borders of the lakes. Though they possess certain patronymics, they are not known by them, but are described under the general term of the "Bennewaters." No proscribed caste of India was ever more thoroughly set apart from its fellows than are these people. Whence or why they came has often been made a matter of surmise, but has never advanced beyond the region of speculation. In appearance they convey the impression of being descended from the red man, having in the majority of cases the high cheek bones, black hair and swarthy skin which are characteristic of his race. They are moreover, never met in groups abreast, but always walk in Indian file, and in this order may be met any day walking to and from their homes to Kingston. As opposed to this theory, however, it may be mentioned that in no case do their names betray Indian origin. They have been so long isolated that, though they undoubtedly possess certain points of resemblance in common, they would hardly be claimed even as remote kindred by any known tribe of Indians. In some respects they more nearly resemble the gypsies, though they are not nomadic, and many incline to the belief that they are descendants of some foreign gypsy tribe.

Like Indians and gypsies they show a deep rooted and ineradicable distaste for active labor, and it is probably that the comparative ease with which life can be sustained in the neighborhood of good fishing ground first attracted them to the Bennewater lakes. They never acquire property and possess no animals except certain wolfish looking dogs. It is rare to see a "Bennewater" unattended by one of these ill fed and hungry looking beasts. Unlike the Indians, they have no taste for fighting, and during the late war were notorious "bounty jumpers," deserting almost without exception as soon as they received the bounty. This region and the Shawangunk mountains became in consequence a veritable city of refuge for deserters and other criminals, and raids were perpetually made at that time by the authorities on the "Bennewaters," who it was well known freely offered sanctuary to all offenders against the law, even when not of their race. It will be remembered that on the occasion of the abduction of Charley Ross, in consequence of its being believed that he had been taken across the river at Rondout at midnight in a small boat, the whole district of the Bennewater lakes was subjected to a thorough search by Pinkerton's detectives, in the belief that the stolen child would be found secreted with these people. Although the search, as far as Charley Ross was concerned, proved fruitless, evidences which led to the elucidation of other mysterious crimes were discovered.

Though not communicative to strangers they are not surly, neither are they quarrelsome, except when they yield to their craving for drink. In summer they devote themselves to berry gathering and the supplying of bait to the anglers who visit the lakes. Their knowledge of the arts and industries is extremely limited, being confined to the making of coarse baskets and mats of straw and corn husks, which they peddle in this city and the neighborhood with an importunity that is only equalled by their persistency in begging. Certain rude attempts are occasionally made at wood carving, but these are generally the results of instructions received during a residence in penitentiaries. These visits are by no means infrequent, but are rarely for crimes of a serious nature. A weakness for petty larceny clings to the "Bennewaters" for life. When by chance any one of them meets with an unusual amount of good fortune he is not backward in sharing the fruits of it with his fellows. On fine evenings, when these occasions happen, the whole fraternity gathers out of doors round a large bonfire, when over a feast of roasted corn and stolen chickens, washed down by liberal potations of the rawest whiskey, they present in the early hours, with the effective setting of a dark background of woods and hills and the glow of the flaming fire a highly picturesque and gypsy like scene. These gatherings generally degenerate into orgies of the worst description, the scenes enacted being worthy of the witness' revel on Walpurgis Night.

The chief person at these feasts, whose word then and on all other occasions is all powerful, is a man of unusually large stature and weight and of commanding will, who represents in his person all the law and government which exists among them. The use of soap and water appears unknown, while their dress is of the poorest description, shoes and stockings being rarities, and even to this day soldiers' overcoats used during the war in the last stage of decay, may be seen. But despite their rags and dirt they vie with the savage in their love for gay colors and for ornaments of a tawdry and striking kind.

Taken collectively they are the reverse of well favored, though occasionally a young girl may be met possessing singular beauty, but this rarely lasts beyond youth.

Their houses, which are the most miserable of shanties, are almost entirely devoid of furniture. They have no stoves, and their whole mode of life is as wretched and debased as can be found within the limits of the world's civilization. The house consists usually of one room, in which a whole family and visitors live and sleep.

Marriage, as an institution, is as little understood as chastity, and the laws of consanguinity are utterly disregarded, to which doubtless can be attributed their mental and physical inferiority and their steady decrease in numbers. They are entirely destitute of education and tradition, and do not seem to have the faintest idea of religion or morality. Of the church and schoolhouse they are like ignorant, the only public institutions with which they are familiar being the asylum, the prison and the poorhouse. When any of their number die he is buried without service of any kind near the lakes, the grave in every case remaining unmarked, and thus they have lived and died for generations.

Christian communities would do well to turn their attention to those pariahs of the Bennewater lakes, whose degraded and miserable condition can hardly be exaggerated; people in whom the moral sense does not seem to exist, and who are as completely heathen as if the first words of Christian teaching were yet to be heard in the land.

STRANGE as it may seem, when money is close it is difficult to get very near it.

A LITTLE HAND.

And How Useful It Was in an Unfortunate Dilemma.

[From the Chicago News.]

"I saw an amusing incident the other evening," said the treasurer of a Chicago theatre," and one which revealed a woman's true character. Just before the curtain rose a carriage drove up in front of the office and a young gentleman alighted, followed by one of the prettiest young ladies I have ever seen. There was considerable of a crowd just then in front of my window and it was two or three minutes before he reached me. Finally he appeared and asked for two seats in the orchestra circle. I had none left that suited him, but offered him a box. He concluded to take it and put his hand in his pocket for the money. The lady stood just behind him, but outside the little brass rail. He evidently had searched for his money in the wrong pocket, for his hand came out empty, only to dive into another. His face gradually flushed as the search proceeded, until it grew flaming red. I should have been perfectly willing to let him have the box, as I knew who he was, and guessed that in changing his dress he had forgotten his money; but I wanted to see what he would do.

"The little woman waiting for him became impatient at the delay. The nervous tapping of her fan on the rail was not exactly in unison with the strains of the orchestra that could be heard from the interior. At last, realizing that he had forgotten his pocket-book, the young man addressed me by name and said:

"'I-er-have left my-er pocket-book in my other trousers, but I will give you my card, and if you will oblige me with the tickets I will send you the amount in the morning.'

"Here he made a dive into his inside pocket for his card-case, but failed to bring it to light. He had forgotten his cardcase as well as his purse.

"I was about to hand him a blank card when I caught sight of the lady's face. Her right hand held a handkerchief to her lips, while her eyes, brimming over with laughter, sparkled merrily. She was evidently enjoying his discomfiture to the utmost, and I was mentally reproaching her for lack of sympathy, when I spied just under the elbow of the now thoroughly embarrassed man a small hand pressed against his arm to attract his attention, while in its grasp was a dainty purse of shell and gold.

"The young man saw it just as I did, and with a sigh of relief took the proffered pocketbook, but not without a gentle pressure on the hand that so thoughtfully and delicately had tendered its offering. I doubted if the purse held enough to pay for the box, but as he opened it my doubts fled. I could plainly see two or three $10 bills, neatly folded, in one corner, while in the other were a flower and two or three pieces of cloth, evidently some of the samples to be found in every woman's purse or pocket.

"The tickets being paid for the couple entered, and through the little door in the back of my office I saw them stop in the vestibule and engage in courteous discussion. He seemed to wish her to take back her purse, which she finally did, and, opening it, gravely took out the little wad of bills and put it in his hand. He at first refused to receive it, but she persisted and he accepted the loan. His hand closed over hers, and if ever a man's face could show absolute devotion his did then. I honestly believe he would have proposed to her on the spot had she not, with a woman's intuition, foreseen the probability, quietly taken his arm, and moved toward the entrance of the box. I saw them later during the play, and I am sure he watched her face much more closely than he did the stage. After the curtain fell I stood on the sidewalk and heard him tell the driver to go to a fashionable restaurant. I am willing to bet a bottle of wine that their engagement is announced before a month is passed."

Standing by the Soldier.

Circuit Judge McCallum, of Iowa, began his career at the bar characteristically. His first case was before a justice of marked morality, who was extremely harsh with criminals. The weakness of the old Puritan was his veneration for veterans of the war, all of whom he esteemed as unrewarded heroes. McCallum had fought four years. His client was a thief. "The only thing I can do for you," said McCallum, after having gained the man's confidence," is to implore the mercy of the court. When you go on the stand tell the whole truth."

The man had stolen a cow, killed it, sold the hide, and taken the carcass home to his family, which was really suffering for the necessaries of life. The prosecution, with a long line of witnesses, had made a perfect case, and the brow of the justice was draped in ominous frowns when the prisoner was called. The latter did as directed by his attorney, concealing nothing—from the almost starving condition of his wife and family to the dressing of the stolen beef.

"Now, your honor," said McCallum, "the defense has no witnesses. My client is guilty. He has hidden nothing from this court. It is the first time he ever transgressed the laws. He was inspired to do wrong by that instinct we even admire in brutes." Then turning to the prisoner as if the fact had nearly escaped him, McCallum said: "By the way, you were a soldier in the late war, were you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Weren't you at Gettysburg?"

Yes, sir."

"So was I. And you were in other historic battles, fighting for your country, while your wife and family suffered from want at home?"

"Yes, sir."

The prosecution at this point saw the way the case was drifting and attempted to ridicule the "old soldier defense," as the prosecuting attorney named it.

The effect on the old justice was to arouse all his loyalty and indignation. "Enough of this," said he, bringing his hand down on the desk in front of him with a thundering thud. "No soldier, no man who has shed his best blood for his country, not even if he be a criminal, can be reviled in my presence. The prisoner is discharged. And, sir, when you are suffering for the necessaries of life again come to me."

The joke was too good to keep. McCallum told the justice one day that the old soldier was an ex-Confederate, but never again did McCallum practise in that court.

A True Story.

Apropos of domestic wars and rumors of wars, I can tell a true story. A husband who is fond of his one little girl, and has been in the habit of cultivating her acquaintance and taking an interest in her knowledge when he got home in the afternoon, left town for a few days. When he got back he took his pet on his knee and proceeded as follows:

"Do you know how many commandments there, my darling?"

"Oh, yes, papa; nine."

"No, no, dear, there are ten."

"Ah, there used to be, but nurse says mamma broke one while you were away."

A BATCH OF STRAY JOKES

GATHERED IN FROM ALL QUARTERS FOR ONE TO SMILE OVER.

How to Arouse Ambition—Willie was Hungry—It Stuck Like a Postage Stamp—Mock Turtle—A Grateful Waiter—Odds and Ends, Etc., Etc.

AROUSING HIS AMBITION.

"The boy is all right," said the doctor, "but you want to talk to him and arouse his ambition. Promise him that you will take him somewhere when he recovers sufficiently to go out; talk to him about playing tag with the boys; there are lots of ways in which you can interest him."

Then the doctor addressed the boy, who was just recovering from a fever, saying:

"Come, Mickey, cheer up, my boy; wouldn't you like to go and play tag with your playmates?"

A faintsmile stole over the boy's face, but that was all.

"Stop, sir," said the father, "I'll arouse him. See here, Mickey," he asked, addressing the boy, "wouldn't yez like to go out and trow a rock through a Chineyman's windy?"

The boy immediately sat up in bed and asked for his trousers.

"I thought that 'ud fetch 'im," said the father, with a proud smile, "he's all right, doctor dear."—*Boston Courier.*

JUDICIOUS LITTLE WILLIE.

Little Willie, who lives in a suburban district, bordered by a region where very many poor people live, was sitting at the side door of his father's house one day, eating a big sugared piece of bread and butter which his mother had given him, when a poor and very hungry-looking boy passed along outside the fence and looked wistfully at Willie's bread and butter.

"Don't you think, Willie, that it would be nice to give that poor boy half of your piece of bread and butter?"

"Half of it, mamma?"

"Yes, my boy; he looks very hungry."

"I'd like to give him some, but don't you think—he's so poor, you know—that if I gave him as much as half of it it'd make him kind of greedy?"—*Boston Record.*

CHESTNUTS.

A suburban gentleman tells this, apropos of the chestnut: He was sitting in his library the other day, eating some chestnuts, when a book agent was ushered in. The glib tongued canvasser opened his book, and as he was rattling on at a rapid rate the gentleman, to show his hospitality, pushed the dish of nuts toward him, with the remark to help himself.

To his great astonishment—for he was unmindful of the interpretation that might be placed upon the act—the agent stopped, gathered up his books, and shot from the door, only saying:

"That's an awful mean way to tell a man to shut up."—*Boston Record.*

JUST LIKE BOYS.

"If you don't get out of this alley, you'll hear from me!" shouted a Spencer street woman to a couple of boys, who were pounding on the fence.

"How?" queried one.

"I'll call for a policeman!"

"You will, eh? If you are the kind of a woman that wants to see two of three policemen hammered to death by two desperate boys who will never be taken alive, just blow your whistle! We wash our hands of all responsibility."

The sober second thought seemed to prevail with her, as she retired and left them masters of the field.—*Detroit Free Press.*

MOCK TURTLE.

A little boy came home from the country in high glee because he had caught five small mudturtles. "Here, mother. Here you are!" he said, putting all the turtles in her lap. "Now we'll have some turtle soup, won't we?"

"My boy," said the mother, giving him a kiss to pay for his disappointment, "that kind of turtle won't make soup."

With a quiver on his lips he was turning away, when his face brightened as asked, "couldn't you make mock turtle of 'em, mother?"—*Boston News.*

A YOUTHFUL POWDERLY.

"I told you this morning that I would whip you if you were not a good boy to-day, did I not, Johnnie?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you have been a good boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was it because you wished to please me?"

"No, sir."

"What then, Johnnie?"

"Because I don't believe in encouraging strikes."—*Detroit Mercury.*

HER.

Coming home from a service where I had preached from the words, "And Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands," says a clergyman, one of the congregation, a prominent man in the town said to me:

"I wonder you didn't touch on the argument in favor of female influence in that text to-night."

I replied that "I don't see where it comes in."

"Why," said he, "it says *her* stayed up his hands as much as Aaron did."

AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE.

"What's the speed of that horse," was asked of an old colored man who was leading a sad-looking equine into a blacksmith shop.

"Which way?"

"Why, I don't see that it should make any difference which way he's headed."

"Dat's kase you doan' own him, sah. His speed when he's gwine home jist keeps a stop-watch bobin' all over, but when he's comin' away fum de ba'n you kin kotch his time by a terbacker box."—*Detroit Free Press.*

PRE-ERVING THE RECEIPTS.

Omaha Lady—The paper says that in Vermont hereafter the women are to be allowed to vote.

Vermont Lady—Isn't that splendid, and I shall be home long before the next election, too. It's grand. But—are there any limitations?

"None that I see, except that a woman must prove that she owns $250 worth of property.'

"Well, I've got all my millinery bills, thank goodness."—*Omaha World.*

A GRATEFUL WAITER.

Gentleman (to wife, after leaving restaurant)—The waiter seemed very grateful for the liberal tip I gave him.

Wife (sententiously)—Very.

Gentleman—Did you overhear what he whispered to the waiter at the adjoining table?

Wife—Yes, part of it.

Gentleman—What was it?

Wife—Something about fools and their money being easily parted.

SO SLOW.

Mistress—Why, Mary, where have you been all the forenoon? I told you you might go out for a walk for an hour, and you have been away three hours at least.

Domestic—Yis, Marrum; but then I'm an awfully shlow walker, ye know.—*Boston Transcript.*

NO WEDDING RING.

"Violet," said the young man with hair evenly balanced and creased breeches, "I have come to-night to ask you a question that has been on my mind for weeks."

"Well, Victor," said the shy goddess.

"I am anxious to know if you would take me 'for better or for worse'?"

"Well, Victor, to look at you, I should say worse!"

Victor is single yet.—*Yonkers Statesman.*

THE HEIR TO MILLIONS.

Bagley—Say no more, Aurelia, I forbid the match. Young Spriggs may be a gentleman, but he is poor.

Aurelia—But he is one of the heirs to the great Bogg estate of $64,000,000.

"Nothing of the sort, girl! He is deceiving thee."

"Why, pa, I'm sure that he told me that he is one of the lawyers engaged to defend the will.—*Philadelphia Call.*

STICKS LIKE A POSTAGE-STAMP.

"I have some doubts about the young man's stability," said the minister to Mrs. Funnybone, respecting one of her daughter's admirers.

"Have you? Well, if you only knew how he hangs on every time he comes, till the roosters crow, you wouldn't doubt his stability any longer." And the minister turned sadly away.—*Washington Critic.*

A SISTER'S VIEW.

First Omaha Girl—Have you had a sleigh ride?

Second Omaha Girl—Yes, I was out yesterday with your brother.

"Poor dear. How you must have suffered."

"Suffered!"

"Why, yes; he took me out once last winter, and I nearly froze."—*Omaha World.*

NOT A LOVE MATCH.

"Was it a love match?"

"Not exactly. She lived next door, you know. Charles had read somewhere that few women continue their piano-playing long after marriage, and he concluded to trust to it. We didn't want to leave the neighborhood, you see; so Charles married her. Very good in him, wasn't it?"—*Boston Transcript.*

A BROIL.

"I see you fry your beefsteak," remarked the tramp with his mouthful.

"Yes," said the woman, shortly, "how would you have it cooked. Roasted?"

"No, certainly not. Broiled, madam, broiled. I may be a tramp," he added plaintively, "but I'm no ostrich."—*Life.*

GREAT LUCK.

"What luck did you have, dear?" asked his wife, as he returned home from a day's fishing.

"Splendid," he said, "just look at them."

Opening his basket, he displayed a lot of sausages.

The butcher had mixed those baskets up.

THE WAY SHE SETTLED IT.

"So you have broken off with Mr. Smith," said Maud. "Well, I never could make him out."

"I found him a good deal of a conundrum, myself, replied Clara, "so I gave him up."

TRYING TO KEEP UP.

Passenger—What's the matter? We're running a little fast, ain't we?

Conductor—Yes, sir. The fireman's run ahead to chase a cow off the track, and the engineer's crowded on a little more steam to try to keep up with him.

ODDS AND ENDS.

AN exchange has an article on "Why Bees Make Honey." They make it to cell.

A FATHER may succeed in cutting off his son without a cent, but he can't cut off the lawyers.

SOMETIMES mothers secrete the erring boy for fear the father will hide him when he comes home.

IF a man borrows money he does not care to have it talked about. He wants to be quietly let alone.

THE rockers on a chair never stick out half so far behind at any other time as when a man is prowling around in the dark barefooted.

WHEN Georgiana was three, she said suddenly one day, after long quiet: "Mamma, where do the to-days go when they get to be yesterdays?"

THE sheep is a mighty useful animal; his body is good for meat, his wool for clothes, and his skin is manufactured into doeskin, and even kid gloves.

A DAMSEL gave this as an excuse for the size of her pedal extremities: She had rheumatism when a child, and her mother rubbed her legs the wrong way, and rubbed her calves into her feet.

A YOUNG woman in eastern Maine cries by the hour because she is tall.—*Ex.* This is a rather peculiar case, but we have often heard of a man committing suicide because he was "short."

YOU can always tell a man who has once been a clerk in a hotel, says an exchange. Our experience has been that you can't tell him much. He thinks he knows it all.

"I SEE that one of the new rules of the national game provides that where a batsman is hit by a pitched ball he is given his base. Now, what is to prevent a man getting hit on purpose to take his base?" "Have you ever been hit by a pitched ball?" "Never!" "I thought not."

The Cause of Earthquakes.

Professor J. W. Powell has an article in the December *Forum*, in which he discusses the cause of earthquakes from a geologist's rather than from a physicist's view point. He finds in the phenomena of displacements by faults, flexures and folds of the earth's crust an explanation of almost all earthquakes, and rather dismisses other causes which have been given by physicists a prominent place in the philosophy of seismism.

The strong point in Professor Powell's reasoning is that the evidence from structural geology makes it quite clear that the earth's crust is most probably not more than twenty miles in thickness and rests upon a fluid or plastic mass beneath. This theory was rejected by Sir William Thomson and other physicists some years ago, but upon grounds which M. Delannay, of Paris, and Hennessey, of Dublin, have shown to be hypothetical, and as Professor Newberry said in a recent lecture on earthquakes, the conclusions of Sir William Thomson are consequently "irrelevant and valueless." No doubt, as Professors Newberry and Powell admit, there must be a viscous zone of considerable thickness into which the solid crust from above and the fluid mass from the interior are very gradually changed. But apparently the fact remains that the earth's crust is generally of very insignificant thickness as compared with its diameter.

A MAN living in Armstrong, Mo., has just died from swallowing a white bean. It sprouted, produced inflammation, and six of the best physicians in the neighborhood could not tell what was the matter until they made their post mortem exploration.

THE LIME-KILN CLUB.

BRO. GARDNER SPEAKS OF A MAN AS HE FINDS HIM.

Interesting Proceedings—A Fine Remitted—Penstock Set Back.

[From the Detroit Free Press.]

"It am my painful dooty to inform dis club dat Brudder Arbustus Jenkens has passed from airth away," said Brother Gardner when the triangle had ceased to toll. "He was an honorary member of dis club, libin' in de Stait of North Caroliny, an' he was only fifteen cents behind in his dues. It kin not be said of Arbustus dat he was either a statesman, poet, philosopher, philanthropist or scholar. He was simply an eberyday man, who did not shrink endwise when he got wet.

"As a citizen of de United Staits he did not go braggin' aroun' about our bein' de greatest nashun on airth, but he had a hickory club laid away fur any country which might knock de chip off our shoulder.

"As an elector, he went to de polls ebery time dar' was a chance to wote, an' sometimes when deir wasn't, an' if he split his ticket it was bekase he was deeply interested in de matter of honest guv'ment.

"As a laborer he was worthy of his hire. When he wasn't workin' he was thinkin' fur the benefit of his boss. If de boss didn't know dis it was his own fault.

"As a naybur, he nebber borrowed coffee an' sugar w'dout makin' a mark on de tin cup, so he could return good measure.

"As a member of the community in which he dwelt he upheld de law in de daytime an' stole watermelyons under kiver of darkness, thereby settin' a good example fur de young.

"As a church member he prayed soft an' low, an' he was half a line behind all de rest in de singin'. In case he happened to be cotched wid a ham belonging to somebody else no reflecksnuns could be cast on de church.

"As a husband he bossed de cabin, an' as a father he brung his chill'en up to fear de law an' respect ole aige.

"We shall hang the usual emblem of mournin' on de outer doah, an' we shall feel a bit sorry dat a fair to medium man has passed away. Dat will be all. We shan't pass no resolushuns to send to his wife, who knowed him better dan anybody else, nor will we claim dat our heartfelt sympathies goes out fur de chill'en, who am probably no better dan anybody else's. It am 'nuff fur us dat we kin say Arbustus was up to the aiverage, an' dat death could have tooken a wusser man an' not half tried."

WILL GO TO HALIFAX.

A communication signed by forty-one leading citizens of Halifax was read by the Secretary. They desired the establishment of a branch club at that place, and petitioned that Giveadam Jones be sent down to found the organization and put it in good shape. Over sixty colored citizens, none of whom had ever been in jail, would be standing on the corners and awaiting his arrival. Brother Gardner announced that the petition would be granted and that brother Jones would be sent as soon as the moon reached her third quarter, which is the best time for securing cheap railroad fares. Brother Jones will carry a certificate of identity from the club, but for fear of accident it may be stated here that he stands five feet eleven, weighs 168 pounds, and has two front teeth out and a squint in his left eye. Whenever any one mentions persimmons to him he instinctively puckers up his mouth and gives himself away. The people of Halifax will find him modest, retiring and rather inclined to make his headquarters at a grocery where they sell two herring for a cent and throw in a handful of crackers.

REMITTED.

Some time since Trustee Pullback was fined $8,000 and costs for introducing a religious discussion into the club. He declared that the whale which swallow-Jonah was 200 feet long, and of course Elder Toots scaled the figures down to 125, and a row was the result. Sir Isaac Walpole now presented a petition signed by seventy-eight members asking that the fine be remitted. The petitioners had satisfied themselves that Brother Pullback introduced the topic inadvertently, having the subject of whaling on his mind, and that if Elder Toots hadn't jumped up and called him a liar there would have been no trouble.

Brother Gardner replied that he felt like respecting the wishes of so many petioners, and would remit the fine, but he wanted it understood in the most solemn manner that whales must not be introduced into the club again.

SOMETHING RICH.

A telegram sent C. O. D., was received from the Hon. Emblem Spooner, of Toronto, saying that he was about to start for Detroit to deliver a series of lectures on physiognomy to colored people only. Members of the Lime-Kiln Club would be admitted free of charge. Among other things the Hon. Emblem will convince his hearers:

That large feet denote great brain power.

That a red nose is the index of a soul which readily absorbs all that is beautifull in nature or art.

That a double-chin denotes a strong leaning towards murder.

That bow-legs and melancholy temperaments go together.

In brief the physiognomist will knock most of the accepted theries into the middle of next summer, and all at the low price of ten cents.

VOTED DOWN.

The Rev. Penstock then offered a resolution to change by law number 1,780 so that it should read:

"Any member of this club making use of ambiguous terms may be called to order by any other member and asked to make himself clearly understood."

"What's de object of dat, sar?" inquired the President.

"I suppose de cha'r knows de meaning of ambiguous?"

"He does, sah!"

"In a late speech in dis hall," said Penstock, "a member made use of de sentence, 'De monstrocity of de lyric comprehenshun.' I've sot still under such misuses of the English language as long as I kin."

"Brudder Penstock, what was wrong 'bout dat 'spreshun?"

"It didn't mean anything."

"Did it do any harm?"

"Perhaps not."

"An orator who don' do any harm orter be incouraged. Besides, it was purty clearly understood dat de pusson speakin' was referrin' to de boom in pollytical corrupshun. He simply swung his right a leetle too fur. I shall oppose de resolushun on varus grounds.

It was then put to vote, and the club by a vote of 113 to 4, refused to alter the by-law.

"Den, Misser Chairman!" exclaimed the indignant Penstock, "I would similibus perchance the innuendo of the cohesion!"

"Very well, sah," replied the President, "and if you decide to inflate de copartnership of de inscrutable conglomerate we shall hev no objeckshuns."

The meeting then adjourned.

How Hawks and Owls Eat.

The Atlanta Constitution, says: Capt. Tom Langston, who is one of Atlanta's most enthusiastic sportsmen, says: "Did you ever notice a hawk or an owl preparing to make a meal on a bird? The difference in their methods is very great. A hawk will first pick all the feathers off the bird and then tear it to pieces as it is devoured. He goes at it in a very systematic and dainty manner. Not so with an owl. After killing a bird the owl swallows it whole, feathers and all. He then sits quietly, and in an hour or so you will see the owl move his neck about as if he was trying to untangle a knot in it. Then he will sort of hump up his back, lower his head, and the next moment a ball of feathers will roll out of his mouth. The operation shows that the owl divests the bird of its feathers after swallowing it while the hawk plucks out every feather and quill before he takes a bite."