THREE LETTERS.

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SEND you by express
(she wrote)
Your presents
every one.
Our friendship's past
And I (a tear)
Am sorry it began.

Now that it's Christmas time, you
vain
(Her eyes begin to
swell)
Bestow them on some
other girl.
You hateful man!
Farewell!

The things came
back (was his
reply)
Your note came with them, too;
And really, dear, I've sought in vain
Some girl to give them to.

I'm in despair, and only you
Can help me, that is plain.
Come, say you'll be another girl,
And take them back again.

Dear John, you're right (she wrote again),
Return the gifts to me,
And after this, as you suggest,
Your sister I will be.

TOM MASSON.

THE SMUGGLER'S WEDDING.

Being a Story of a Christmas of the Long Ago.

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Down among the cliffs of Devon—those mighty ones which guard the southern English coast eastward from Sidmouth, and not far from the quaint, rock bound village of Vere—Isabel Venn, the comely, brown haired fisherman's daughter, reigned over the sturdy hearts of the sea, subjugating alike the brawny fisher lad who swept the channel through the starlight nights of winter and the man-o'-war's man home on leave, while half the coast guards lapsed into chronic jealousy, and a few wild spirits, the special care of the coast guards, who traded secretly with Cherbourg, were among her most ardent admirers.

It was on Robert Dare, young, handsome, fearless and the most accomplished smuggler of the coast, that Isabel's choice fell. Devonshire smuggling over fifty years ago was a daring, almost chivalrous, enterprise, and from this and other causes it was tolerated by the people. Many a magistrate has traced his cellar's pride to a Vere fishing boat, and a lord bishop has sent from afar for the pale French essence ere it had blushed itself brown in bond. Nor were mysterious sources wanting to supply the means. When Robert Dare needed funds for a voyage he used to say that he was "going up the landside a little," and that night he would come back with the needful. The third week in December, 1838, opened a cold, blustering time. Wreaths of fine snow wound round the doorsteps and hung over the small, diamond paned windows of Vere. Times were hard; the coast guards vigilant. Prudence must defer the marriage of Robert and Isabel, which was to have come off at Christmas. The cronies of the Ship Inn deplored the prospect for the poor and shook their heads in sympathy as mild expiation for their comforting "rummers" of grog.

"Good evening, doctor," squeaked old Solomon Quigley, the parish clerk, as genial Dr. Bowlby came beaming in. For Dr. Bowlby came from Bovey manor, where Lady Lee had commissioned him to buy a hundred and fifty geese for the Christmas dinner of the needy. But Exeter and Honiton had absorbed the supply, so said the farmers present. Then up spoke Robert Dare:

"Geese are plentiful and cheap in France. I will get them by payment for my time."

Dr. Bowlby assented, the company applauded, and the grizzled coast guard captain stared over his long clay pipe at Robert in a look of dazed solicitude.

"Good night, my darling Belle," said Robert, kissing her at her father's cottage, "and may good luck attend me. I must go up the landside a little to-night."

The seagull sailed out of the cove of Vere, and in due time sailed back again, a harbinger of good cheer for the poor.

"A welcome cargo," said Dr. Bowlby. "Take care of them to-night, Robert."

"Yes, a good selection," muttered the grizzled captain, peering into the recesses of the boat, "very good. There is absolutely nothing but the geese," he whispered dejectedly to himself; then louder to his neighbor:

"I say, Mr. Quigley, there is really nothing but the geese, you know."

"Nothing," piped Solomon, "unless there may be any ganders among 'em."

"Bah!" said the captain. And now the Ship Inn is a bower of evergreens, for tomorrow is Christmas eve.

"I hear," observed Mr. Quigley in a low, commanding tone, as he slowly filled his pipe, "that Robert Dare and Isabel Venn are to be married to-morrow."

"Yes," said the doctor, glancing from the punch bowl to the captain; "by license."

"I wish I may die," wheezed the landlord, "if I warn't told that Robert had bought Rose cottage, in Seaford lane."

"And he is gone off today for furniture," said the captain; "mysterious, very."

"And quite a party is invited to the breakfast at Venn's afore they're off for a London honeymoon," gasped the landlord. "There's the wicar and squire and the doctor and the cappen and Mr. Quigley and I, and some of the littler folks."

It was a pleasant wedding breakfast, in which the joy of the young people blended with the happy spirit of Christmas; the flag waved from the tower of the old gray church, and the notes of the bells floated down the valley until they were lost among the rocks.

"It is not true," said Robert in responding to the toast of bride and bridegroom, "that I have purchased Rose cottage; we are going into an established business at Exeter; but perhaps it is fit that I should explain some of the features of my last trip across the channel. The sage and onions that will fill the geese of our poor friends to-morrow will only succeed a far different stuffing. My neighbors all," and here Robert smiled brightly on the grizzled captain, "stowed in each goose, and now safe from the Philistines, was several guineas' worth of the most costly lace."

Loud was the laughter and cheering, which only subsided as the last toast was given:

"A merry Christmas to all friends here and everywhere, and a happy New Year when it comes!"

At this juncture the grizzled captain, who had been missed for a moment, reappeared with a florid face and sheepish air. He had taken off his uniform jacket with its gilt buttons and availed himself of the doctor's overcoat. Thus, with a lightened conscience, he joined in the toast with its "three times three."

The heads of several respected families in professional and trade life in the west of England are the sons and daughters of handsome Robert Dare and beautiful Isabel Venn. JOHN ALDERGROVE.

CONCERNING THE MISTLETOE.

An Exotic Shrub Which Has but Recently Been Introduced to America.

The mistletoe hung on the castle wall,
And the holly branch shone on the old oak hall.
And the baron's retainers were blithe and gay
Keeping their Christmas holiday

At this season of the year the mistletoe is a welcome addition to the stock of our florists, being intimately associated, as it is, with Christmas sports. It is new, however, to this country, and it is not much more than a decade since the first venture was ever brought here. The shrub is mostly tropical and parasitical, and authorities on the subject tell us that there are over four hundred known species of the order. There is only one species known to Great Britain, the common mistletoe—the viscum album, as it is botanically known—and it is with that particular species that we have to deal.

It is popularly supposed that the mistletoe grows exclusively on the oak tree, but this is a mistake, as it is found on the oak in very rare instances, while it grows with great profusion on the apple, the pear, the hawthorn, and also on sycamores, limes, poplars, locust trees and firs. In some portions of the south of England it is very abundant, and its evergreen leaves give a peculiar appearance to the orchards in winter, when the bushes of mistletoe are very conspicuous among the naked branches of the trees.

There is a superstition connected with the mistletoe that it is unlucky to fell an oak on which it grows, and the author of "Magna Britannia" describes a great wood belonging to the archbishops of the Hundred of Croyland, said to have consisted wholly of oaks, and among them was one that bore mistletoe, which some persons were so hardy as to cut down for the gain of selling it to the apothecaries of London, leaving a branch of it to sprout out, but they proved unfortunate after it, for one of them fell lame and others lost an eye. At length, in the year 1678, a certain man, notwithstanding he was warned against it, upon account of what the others had suffered, adventured to cut the tree down, and he soon after broke his leg. To fell oaks had long been considered fatal, and such as believe it produce the instance of the Earl of Winchelsea, who, having felled a curious grove of oaks, soon after found his countess dead in her bed suddenly, and his eldest son, Lord Maidstone, was presently killed by a cannon ball.—New York Press.

FISHERMEN CAPTURE A BUCK.

"What is it?"

"The sea serpent."

"No; it's got horns."

"Well, it's a fresh water sea serpent. They're different from those seen in the ocean."

This colloquy took place between Capt. G. P. Sprague and Mr. Rollin Jones, both of this city, as they stood in their little skiff opposite Millstone Point, on Lake Winipisseogee, whither they had gone to try their luck in hooking a mess of bass, which are said to inhabit those waters. While patiently waiting for the nibblers to come along one of the gentlemen noticed a strange looking object putting out from the shore, and called the attention of his companion to it, when ensued the above conversation.

"If that is a sea serpent," continued the captain, "I want a closer look at it, as our friends in Boston will be inclined to doubt our story unless we can give the fullest kind of detail regarding the appearance of the strange looking animal. They will also declare we paid more attention to pulling corks than we did to pulling in fish, unless we can show them something to confirm our yarn."

"Well, then, if our reputation is threatened by any such danger I am with you," responded Mr. Jones.

A few tugs at the anchor rope and their skiff was free. Each manned an oar, and the little craft went dancing over the shining waters like a streak of light. When within a few rods of the object of their investigation the captain turned his gaze in the direction of the horned curiosity and immediately exclaimed:

"It's a deer! it's a deer—an old buck! pull for your life! He's making for Snake Island, and if he ever gets into the bushes it's the last we shall ever see of him."

"Are you quite sure it's a buck and not a sea serpent?" inquired Mr. Jones disappointedly, as he had been exhausting his strength in the happy anticipation of at last beholding a member of this somewhat doubtful family of torquatas.

"I am an expert on bucks," responded the captain, who was now in a fever of excitement. "Pull for your life!" he again shouted, as he noticed Mr. Jones' lagging oar.

In a few moments they were abreast of the frightened animal, whose horns rose above the water like two stout branches of a tree. He gave up all efforts to get away, and quietly submitted to having the painter of the skiff made fast to his antlers. In this manner he was towed ashore and led to the camp of Mr. Jones. He is a beautiful representative of his species, and weighs fully 200 pounds.—Boston Herald.

How John Keeps Cool.

"The only people in New York who don't suffer much from the heat are the Chinese," said Dr. John Uhl recently. "Your Chinaman," he continued, "is a nerveless, unimpassioned animal, and doesn't let anything worry him. That is one reason. Another is that his food is largely fruits and vegetables during the warm months, when we hold to our heavy meats at least twice a day the season through.

"His great summer drink is tea, hot or cold, but never iced tea. Neither does he drink iced water, and thus produce an abnormal lowering of the temperature, which brings a consequent rise as far above the normal. Then his dress is loose, calculated far more for comfort, or rather for summer comfort, than ours, and altogether John gets through hot weather better than any other person I know. I have watched them here and in San Francisco for years, and I never knew of one being sunstruck, and I cannot recall ever having seen one of them in a profuse perspiration."—New York Letter.

The Newest Cruiser.

The new cruiser San Francisco is a sister vessel of the Philadelphia, which was recently fitted for sea. Her builders had the advantage of experience in constructing the Charleston, and that the work on her has been pushed may be inferred from the fact that actual construction did not begin until April 1, 1888, and she was launched Oct. 26, 1889. The Philadelphia was begun Oct. 27, 1887, and the vessel was launched in August, 1889.

As she is now, without guns or masts, the San Francisco is a handsomer vessel than the Charleston with all her fittings. Her lines are far more trim, and her greater length and the symmetrical shape of her hull give her the appearance of a fine steam yacht. All experts that have examined her declare her lines to be finer than those of any other vessel of the new navy, and that for this reason and the strength of her boilers she should also be the swiftest vessel among the new cruisers.—Boston Advertiser.

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— AND —
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—AT THE—
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MEERSCHAUM PIPES,
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Smokers' Requisites
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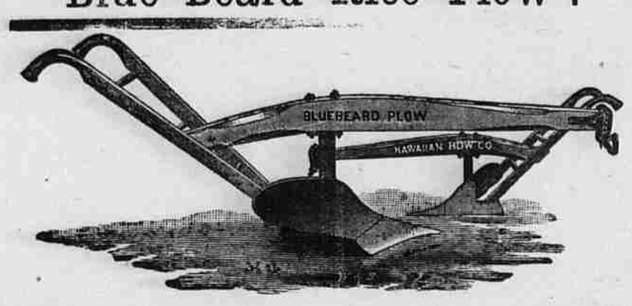

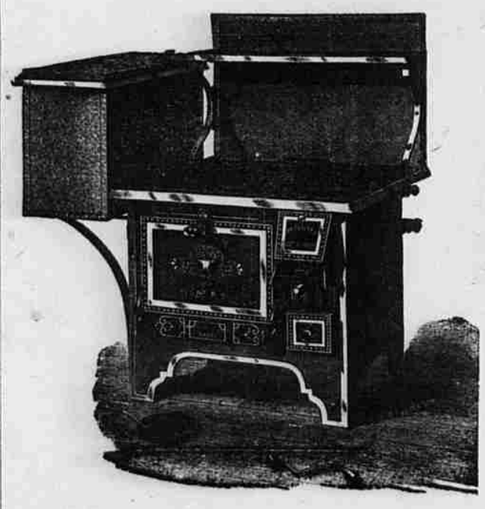

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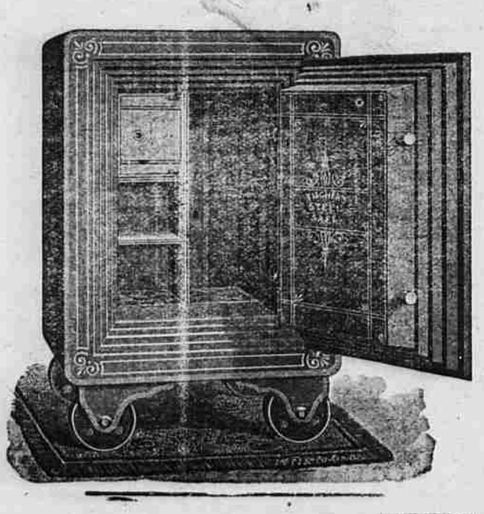

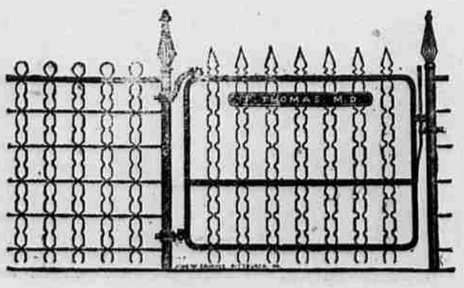

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