THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE.

Christmas Dreams on Christmas Eve.

The winter winds blustered through the pine woods. The soft snow fell on the dark-green foliage, and all but covered it. Through the clouds the moon peeped down on the scene and cast a silver sheen over the white-topped kings of the woods and their smaller companions, making a fairy scene far away in those distant States designated as "down East." It was hearty Christmas time. The spirits of the pines were abroad, and whispered together in the wind. At once a voice, loud and imperative, broke in upon their murmuring. It was the spirit of the oldest and most weather-beaten of the group, which thus addressed the others:

"Harken, O my sisters! The frost, the snow, the piercing wind, all tell us that the time of the holy Christ-child is about to come. I, your king, bid you be ready, if a mission to mortals be given you. The fatal axe will fell some of you; the sap which fills your limbs will be stopped forever in its course, but back here, O ye spirits, ye will come! If to mortals you have done all in your power to brighten the feast of the holy Christ-child, I, your king, will give a new lease of life to you. With spring's first breath you will begin a new life, and aid your sisters in beautifying the landscape once more."

The great voice paused; in soft, low, quavering accents, a small bent tree at its feet broke the silence which followed.

"What could I do, O king, if I am taken from you, misshapen, small, as I am?"

"Your best! your best!" sang out the spirit of the great tree, and the other trees, joining in, sent forth on the wings of the wind a repetition of their great king's command,

"Do your best! Do your best!"

* * * * *

The horse, the stir of a great city. Towards one of the large markets a country cart is being drawn by a stout pair of horses. Many people as they hurry along pause to look at the pretty sight—the sight of a cart load of green in the dark, dingy streets. How many thoughts it conjures up in the minds of the onlookers. Christmas is coming, is all but here. Visions of pleasure and festivity fill the minds of some; others, too poor, too wretched to be affected by anything, scarce glance at the load as it passes its way market-ward. A jam in the roadway. Ah! A small bent piece of green has fallen off. It would be crushed under foot but for the little street Arab, who, almost at risk of his life, plucks it from under the horse's feet and hurries away with his prize.

Christmas Eve! What a world of joy and happiness those words imply!—to some, but not to all. Alas! Little Jim, the street Arab, who lived no one knew how, crawled up the ladder to his wretched quarters, on that blessed night, as cold and as hungry as usual. He had made no money for more than two days. No one had called him from his usual post on the sunny side of the street, by the high church railing, to hold a horse or run a message. He was literally starving to death, and his teeth chattered as, arrived in the cold attic where he spent his nights, he covered himself as best he could with the few thin, tattered pieces of carpet which, with a scant supply of straw, formed his bed. From among these uninviting bed-clothes he carefully extracted a long branch of pine. Then, hunting in his pocket, he produced a match and a small end of candle, such as are used on Christmas trees. Feeling about him he found a wide crack in the floor, into which he stuck the green bough, and producing a pin from his ragged coat he carefully fastened the candle on to the bough.

Now came the business of the evening. How carefully, poor lad, he struck the one match; it flickered—the attic was very draughty. Was it out? No! The candle was lighted, burning beautifully. Jim clapped his little wasted hands in ecstacy. "By gum! don't he burn nice, though," he said aloud. Then sinking back on the wretched apology for a bed, he watched the little candle splutter and burn with delighted eyes.

Soon, with hunger and cold, the poor little urchin fell asleep. The candle burnt on for a while, then, after a few flickering efforts, went out.

A lovely presence filled the lonely attic room. It bent over the little sleeping boy, and laid a soft, shadowy hand on his head. It was the spirit of the pine—of the bent, misshapen pine, which had been told to do its best in the mission to mortals on the Christ-child's holy night.

What dreams the poor, neglected, lonely child had, to be sure. Such dreams! The thin, drawn lips shaped themselves into a smile; he even laughed aloud; and by his side stayed the gentle spirit and watched him with loving eyes. The sweet odor of the pine penetrated the room, no doubt the child's dreams were leading him among the lovely forest trees, by babbling brooks, in summer time, strange scenes which he had never even imagined, having never seen. His short, pitiful life had been spent in the by-ways and alleys of a great city; his master want, his teacher neglect.

The night, the Christ-child's Eve, wore on. Ere dawn a chill presence filled the attic room. It was Amaranth, an angel of Death. Softly she gathered the sleeping child to her bosom. The spirit of the pine fell at her feet, awed at the dread presence. Amaranth pointed to the pale face of the little sleeper. "He smiles," she said softly. 'He smiles, and it is thy doing. Henceforth, O! Spirit, be thy mission one of healing. Sweet fragrance shalt thou distill, thou and thy fellows. Thou hast woven dreams to cheer the poor outcast, to his face thou hast brought a smile with which he will enter the presence of God! Adieu!" Amaranth was gone! Joyously through the wintry air flew the spirit of the pine, distilling sweetest fragrance as she went. Many others joined her, their sister, in her flight. Their several missions done, they hastened back to their forest home to report their various happenings to their king. And the spirit of the misshapen, small tree had done her best and received a reward above all the others; the reward of perpetual fragrance above her species. And long after, as she raised her graceful head above her fellows and looked up hard to the sky, the spirit of that fragrant pine was given a vision, in the stillness of the night, of the beautiful green pastures far away above the sky, where the little children play through the long, endless beauties of the New Jerusalem. A little, smiling face was always there; the face of him who once on earth was neglected, cold and starving—Jim, the street Arab.

* * * *

"Dear me! I must have been asleep; and *such* a dream as I've had! All about the fragrant pine. You see, I fell asleep with the pine cushion that your mother sent me under my head. What strange fancies our surroundings cause. Pick up my specs and hand me my knitting, there is a dear grandchild. The Spirit of the Pines! Ah me! It is a lesson to all to do the best they can for every one this merry Christmas time."

F. H. Holland.

Men Who Distribute Money by the Carload Once a Month.

The paymasters of the several railroads running into the city are getting ready for their regular monthly trip over the lines. The Pennsylvania Railroad and the Pennsylvania Company have the largest number of men on their pay-rolls. The latter company have in the neighborhood of 11,000, who draw over $500,000 monthly. The men are paid in cash—generally gold. The car, after paying all the employees in Pittsburg and Alleghany, goes out upon the road about the 11th of each month. They reach Chicago about the 21st. The men along the road are given notice that the car is coming by the train preceding it carrying blue flags on the engine. On the flags are the letters "P. M.," meaning paymaster. To guard against attacks of robbers at night very little money is kept in the car. Before the paymaster starts out he telegraphs to banks at different points along the line that he will be there at a certain hour on a certain day with cheques to be cashed. The cheque is just for about the amount that is to be paid that day. The first point cheques are given is at Salem, Ohio, where very often the amount is $60,000. A representative of the bank meets the car at the station and exchanges the money for the cheque. There are always three or four men besides the train crew on the car. The paymaster and his assistants go heavily armed, and it would be a hard matter for anybody to rob the car. The car stops at all stations along the line, and the employees in the immediate vicinity are supposed to be on hand to receive their money. The paymaster counts the money out before them and they sign the roll in his presence. J. H. Fredericks, one of the oldest employees of the Pennsylvania Company, is the paymaster. The Pennsylvania Railroad have about 10,000 men on the three divisions between Pittsburg and Philadelphia. All the employees in this city are paid in checks on the Merchants and Manufacturers' Bank. The cheques are received by mail and distributed by the officials of the various departments. Those out on the road get their cheques from the pay cars. There is one car for each division. They pay out about $500,000 monthly. If the employee wishes to get his money, for good cause, before the regular time, he is paid out of the contingency fund. The Baltimore & Ohio road pay about 2,500 men between Pittsburg and Cumberland. The officers and others in this city receive cheques and the employees on the road are paid in cash. About $200,000 is paid out. The Pittsburg & Lake Erie has about 1,500 men on their rolls who are paid about $75,000 in cash. Each man's money is put in an envelope with his name, number of days he worked and amount of money he is entitled to. It takes two and one half days to pay them. The Panhandle railroad car disburses about $160,000 between this city and Columbia. It also pays the Cleveland & Pittsburg employees. —*Pittsburg Commercial Gazette.*

Objected to Her Photograph.

A case which created some interest was adjudicated upon at the Woolwich County Court by Mr. Powell. Messrs. Long & Faulkner, photographers, Woolwich, sued Mrs. Pearson, wife of an arsenal employee, for £2 6s. 6d. for portraits supplied to her order. Plaintiffs stated that when the photographs were complete Mrs. Pearson called with her husband and saw them, promising to call again and pay for them. No complaints were made, and as she did not call the likenesses were sent home, and subsequently returned with some frivolous complaints. An action was then brought against the husband, but it fell through, the wife asserting that she had a separate income. Two photographers now attended and expressed an opinion that the likenesses were correct, but admitted that the negative had been "touched up" to meet a common requirement of customers to look their best. Mrs. Pearson said she did not wish to be "flattered and tittivated up." In trying to make her look younger they had almost wholly lost the likeness. They had made her hair waved, whereas it was not so. Plaintiff, in reply to the judge, said it was not within the photographic art to make hair which had been photographed plain appear to be waved. The judge said the photograph certainly made the lady look younger than she now appeared to be. She did not give the photographer any specific orders to make her appear "just as she was," and the ordinary course of procedure—viz., to make the customers look their best—was followed. He considered that they were reasonable likenesses, and ordered the payment of the amount sued for.

Putting His Foot In It.

She—"And do you still squeeze up the ladies' feet in your country?" He—"On the contrary, madam! That is a Chinese custom. We in Japan always allow the ladies' feet to grow to quite their full size. Not that any would ever rival yours, madam!" (Is delighted with his neat little compliment!)—*Punch.*

A Philadelphia grocer who had three hams stolen from his store wrote and pasted up a paper which read as follows: "I know who stole the three hams from the front of my store. They are worthless to any one but myself. If returned in twenty-four hours no arrest." When the clerk opened the store the next morning the hams hung outside. They were made of sawdust and only for show.

"You cannot," said the schoolmaster, place *a*, the singular article, before plural nouns. No one can say *a* cows, *a* women." "Why not?" said the good boy. "When we go to church we say *a*-men!"—*Judy.*

OLD WORLD GOSSIP BY MAIL

From England.

Mr. Joel Walker, farmer, Heanor Gate Farm, Heanor, has just gathered a fine crop of Swede turnips on his land. Three turnips filled a large wheelbarrow. One of the turnips weighed 25 lbs.

As some men were pulling down an old shop at St. Mary Cray, recently, they discovered a very large number of Bank of England notes of a generation ago. Their disappointment was great on discovering that all the notes were cancelled a short time ago.

The Lord Mayor of London is said to have singled out two days of next year for his grand efforts. He will make them renowned in civic annals. They are the Jubilee Day on the Queen's coronation, and the day on which the Prince and the Princess of Wales will celebrate their silver wedding.

A man got into a London theatre the other night in a curious way. He had gone out between the acts, but having lost his check, the attendants who did not remember his face, would not readmit him, so he asked them to look at his coat-tails. The paint on his seat had adhered to them. The attendants were convinced, and passed him in.

One morning recently a little boy, aged 3 years, and his sister, aged 5 years, the children of a beerhouse-keeper named Eastenby, at Blackburn, went into the kitchen in their night-dresses. The boy lighted a piece of paper and set fire to his sister, who was so shockingly burned that she died in Blackburn Infirmary the same day.

From Ireland.

The Duke of Abercorn has been invited to accept the office of President of the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland for next year.

An old woman named Lyons was found dead one day recently at her cottage in a lane out of Lower Leeson street, Dublin. Her skull was fractured, and there was a quantity of blood in the room. She was supposed to possess money, but except some trifling articles nothing seems to have been stolen.

At a Dublin Police Court one day recently a man named Walsh was charged with drunkenness. The evidence showed that when he was arrested his 4-year-old son was lying dead drunk beside him in the street. The father had taken the child around to a number of taverns and given him liquor to drink. By means of a stomach pump the child's life was saved and the father was fined ten shillings.

From Scotland.

The epidemic of measles is still raging in the island of Eriskay. There have been eleven deaths from measles in the island within about two months.

One afternoon recently when the inspector of the Port Glasgow Waterworks examined the filters at Parkhill he found the supply from Auchendores almost completely stopped. On further examination at the valve he found the pipe choked with a large eel 3 feet 2 inches in length, and weighing 4½ lbs.

Most of the suburban burghs of Glasgow are showing much activity on the Boundaries question. They have united in stating a general case in opposition to the elaborate annexation scheme. The Secretary for Scotland has appointed the Earl of Elgin and Mr. Crum, of Thornliebank, additional members of the commission. Pollokshields has voted in favor of annexation to Glasgow.

A Remarkable Ferry Steamer.

There will soon be launched at Detroit a vessel which, aside from her size, is one of the most remarkable ever built on the lakes. It is a car ferry boat for the Mackinac Transportation Company, and when completed is to ply on the Straits of Mackinac between Mackinac and Point St. Ignace. She is 235 feet in length, 52 in breadth, and 25 in depth, and is to carry ten freight or eight passenger cars. But it is as an ice breaker that the new boat is expected to be remarkable. Everything that modern ship-building, practice and experience can suggest to make her successful has been done. She has fine lines, bow and stern being nearly the same form, and it will be an impossibility for the soft ice, which so often hinders the passage of ordinary ferry boats, to cling to her sides. Her bow, on the inside, is a mass of framing as strong almost as solid timber, and the outside planking is six inches thick. Besides this, the hull is to be sheathed outside with steel plates one-quarter of an inch in thickness, which will effectually prevent the ice from scoring her sides.

Terrible Ravages of Diphtheria.

Reference was made the other day to the sad affliction of a family living on Metcalfe street that recently moved to town, the members of which were all down with diphtheria. Three of a family of six have already succumbed and the others are in a dangerous condition. The two who died yesterday were the two eldest of the family, aged 17 and 14 years respectively. The family, whose name is Smith, removed here from Burford.—*Woodstock Sentinel-Review.*

Brought His Man Down.

Rogers used to tell this story: An Englishman and a Frenchman fought a duel in a darkened room. The Englishman, unwilling to take his antagonist's life, generously fired up the chimney and brought down the Frenchman. "When I tell this story in France," pleasantly added the relator, "I make the Englishman go up the chimney."

A Disguised Statesman.

Hon. William Elvin, of Hamilton, Ont., is a guest at the Hall.—*Montreal Star.*

Now, who is the "Hon. William?" Hamilton has not many "Hons.," but the crop seems to be larger than the directory makes out.

Cotton Mill Shut Down.

The Kingston cotton mill has closed for three weeks in accordance with an agreement between the mill owners in Canada to prevent over-production.

Emperor William, according to a prophecy based on his handwriting, is to live to be 100 years old.

A clam weighing a pound and five ounces was dug up at Plymouth, Mass.

ORIGIN OF OLD PHRASES.

"Cutting a Dido," "Catching a Tartar," and "He has an Axe to Grind."

Dido, Queen of Tyre, about seven centuries before Christ, after her husband had been put to death by her brother, fled from that city and established a colony on the north coast of Africa. Having bargained with the natives for as much land as could be surrounded with a bull's hide, she cut the hide into narrow strips, tied them together and claimed the land that could be surrounded with the line thus made. She was allowed to have her way, and now, when one plays a sharp trick he is said to "cut a dido."

A tailor of Samarcand, Asia, who lived on a street leading to the burying ground, kept near his shop an earthen pot, in which he was accustomed to deposit a pebble whenever a body was carried to its final resting place. Finally the tailor died, and, seeing the shop deserted, a person inquired what had become of its former occupant. "He has gone to pot himself, was the reply by one of the deceased's neighbors.

During a battle between the Russians and Tartars a private soldier of the former cried out: "Captain, I've caught a Tartar." "Bring him along," said the officer. "He won't let me," was the response. Investigation proved that the captive had the captor by the arm and would not allow him to move. So "catching a Tartar" is applicable to one who has found an antagonist too powerful for him.

While lying on the ground over a slow fire St. Lawrence—in whose honor the Escurial was built by Philip II., said to the Emperor who was watching his sufferings: "Assatus ess, jam versa et manduca;" which one translator, not quite literally, but appreciatively of the same grim humor characterizing the original, rendered:

> This side enough is roasted,
> Then turn me, tyrant, and eat;
> And see whether raw or roasted
> I am the better meat.

Hence, "Done to a turn."

Formerly in London when a small dealer bought bread of the baker, for every dozen loaves purchased he was given an extra loaf as his profit, from which circumstances "a baker's dozen" signifies thirteen. Various origins have been assigned the phrase, but the above is the only one based on a sure foundation.

In a work, "Essays from the Desk of Poor Robert the Scribe," published in 1815, the author, O. Miner, tells the story of a boy who, by the offer of a liberal compensation, was induced to turn the grindstone for a man who desired to sharpen his axe. The promised compensation was never paid, and of one who disguises his own selfish aims under an appearance of generosity or disinterestedness it is remarked: "He has an axe to grind."—*Christian Union.*

People who Never Eat Meat.

There is no abstemiousness in the world, and no thrift, like the thrift and abstemiousness of the average native of India. Almost alone among the workingmen of the world he has raised himself nearly above wants, has stripped himself of all the impediment of luxury. Millions of men in India, especially on the richer soils and in the river deltas, live, marry and rear apparently healthy children upon an income which, even when the wife works, is rarely above 2s. a week, and frequently sinks to 18d., says the London *Spectator*. The Indian is enabled to do this, not so much by the cheapness of food—for, though it is cheap, a European who ate the same food would want five times the money merely to feed himself—as by a habit of living which makes him independent of the ordinary cares of mankind. He goes nearly without clothes, gives his children none, and dresses his wife in a long piece of the most wretched muslin. Neither he nor his wife pay tailor or milliner one shilling during their entire lives, nor do they ever purchase needles or thread, which, indeed, it is contrary to a semi-religious etiquette ever to use. The poorest peasant inhabits a hut containing a single covered room of the smallest size, with an earthen platform or two outside it, and as he constructs or repairs his own dwelling, he virtually pays no rent except for the culturable land. He never touches alcohol or any substitute for it. There is an idea in England that he eats opium or hemp, but he as a rule swallows neither—firstly, because he regards them with as much moral antipathy as any English gentleman, and secondly, because he could not by any possibility pay for articles which in India, as everywhere else, are exceedingly expensive. He eats absolutely no meat nor any animal fat, nor any expensive grain like good wheat, but lives on millet or small rice, a little milk, with the butter from milk, and the vegetables he grows. Even of these he eats more sparingly than the poorest Tuscan. Once a quarter, perhaps, he eats enough, during some festival, but, as a rule, he knows accurately what will sustain him, and would be enraged with the wife who cooks for him if she prepared more. He is assisted in this economy by a religious rule which we have never seen a Hindoo break, and which is undoubtedly, like the rule against killing oxen, a survival from a military law or custom of the most remote antiquity.

An Accomplished Wife.

"Well, Nellie, does your husband still drink?" "Yes, mother, and it's worrying the life out of me." "Did you try the plan of breaking him of the habit that I suggested to you?" "Yes." "Did you put whisky in his coffee?" "Yes." "What did he say?" "He said I was the only woman he had seen since his mother died who knew how to make coffee as it should be made."

A Stylish Christmas Present.

"What are you going to buy your wife for a Christmas present?"

"I am thinking of getting her a piano."

"Can she play?"

"Of course not. Do you suppose I'd be such a fool as to buy her a piano if she could play? I am going to get her a piano because it makes the parlor look so stylish."—*Texas Siftings.*

Christmas Preferences.

Tailors prefer a Christmas turkey; they have a goose all the year round.—*Toronto World.*

The engaged young man has a similar preference; his general "table fair" is duck.

GUARDING RUSSIA'S CZAR.

He is Constantly Surrounded by Swarms of Soldiers and Detectives.

A few nights ago I attended the illuminations at Peterhoff in honor of the Czarina's birthday. The Czar's palace is on a peninsula and the grounds and buildings occupy almost a mile square—the most superb structures, fountains, and miles of the finest parking and drives in the world. Scores of buildings and fountains, hundreds of trees and great crowns, crosses and figures, besides miles of high walls, were covered with colored lamps. There were millions of lights, and it required a regiment of soldiers and hundreds of civilians weeks to put them in place. All was paid for from the public treasury, or rather a Czar's treasury repleted by the people.

At a time in the evening when the fountains and lights glistened most, the bands played the loudest, and the pyrotechnics and cannon from the men-of-war in the gulf glared and roared best, the royal family gave the assembled multitude a rare treat. It showed itself. Seldom it is that people in Russia see their Emperor, their Czar, because he suspects them of designs. I was making my way between two of the great blazing walls of colored lights, through one of the drives, when a detachment of Cossacks came dashing along, slashing their sabres and driving the people out of the way. In their wake came soldiers on foot and great detachments of men in citizen's clothing. The latter stationed themselves in front of the lines of the masses. A din of voices—lusty cheering is heard in the distance. It comes nearer, then nearer. More Cossacks, more soldiers, more men in citizens' clothing, and farther back we are crowded. The tier of officious citizens is re-enforced in our front and many linger in the driveway. Finally the caravan comes in view. More Cossacks, soldiers, citizens. Eight white horses, each one on the left bearing a liveryman, are next seen; then the royal equipage, an immense, gold-mounted chariot. The Czar, a great burly fellow, with full beard, crown and uniform, is on the left seat in front. The brother, the Crown Prince, the Czarina and grand dukes, etc., make up the load. On every hand of the carriage, four deep, are Cossacks, while the driveway in front and rear is blocked with soldiery, making a perfect shield against violent attack.

The "citizens" who were so very plentiful and officious were the most experienced detective and body-guards in the empire. There were thousands of them. It would have been impossible for one to raise his or her hand against the Czar or any member of his family. It is the boast of the Russian authorities that their detectives have eyes in every portion of their heads and bodies. The whole service of protecting the Crown and members of the family, and suppressing all thoughts of dissatisfaction with the present form of government, is in full charge of Gresser, chief of the secret service. The authority of this officer is appalling. He can order into exile or [illegible] execution yard any one suspected [illegible] lawful or disrespectful acts or [illegible] He attends [illegible] to run all p[illegible] displeased w[illegible] and there is [illegible]

A Modest [illegible]

A very remarkable story is told in New York boarding school circles about Miss Nellie Arthur, the daughter of the late ex-President. She was at Mrs. Lockwood's school, and had been there a year when one day she was missed by her little chums, who crowded around the Principal after the opening exercises to ask where she had gone. "Where's Nell?" they said. "Why, don't you know?" said the lady. "Her father, Gen. Arthur, died last night." "Was her father Gen. Arthur?" all asked as with one voice; "was she the President's daughter?" Miss Nellie had never hinted at what most girls would have told before anything else.

Comfortable All Round.

"You want something to buy mamma a Christmas present, do you?" said papa; "and want to buy it yourselves, hey? Well, well, that is right, my children. You shall have it. She has been a good mother to you all these years. If you could only find something," continued papa, as his blue eyes filled with tears, "that would keep your mamma's feet warm this winter I wouldn't begrudge $50."—*Chicago Tribune*

Those Good Old Times.

Wife (on Christmas Eve)—"Whew! What a lot of money it costs to get Christmas presents for all these children!"

Husband—"Yes, it's a pity we didn't live in the days of Henry the Eighth."

"Why so?

"Because it was not until after his reign that stockings became fashionable. Christmas didn't bankrupt a man in those days.'

A Hidden Sting.

A little three-year-old Rocklander went into market last week, and, helping herself to a green pepper, tried to eat it. After she had failed the marketman asked her what the matter was with the fruit, and she replied, between sobs, "Vere was a bumble bee in it"—*Middleboro News.*

Commercial Item.

"Pa," asked a bright-faced boy of his parent, "what is reciprocity that I hear you talk about so much?"

"Reciprocity, my son, is the very life of trade—especially the Christmas gift trade."

A Religious Man.

First Citizen—What makes you think your neighbor, Towson, is a religious man? Second Citizen—He always sifts his ashes on a still day.

The study of Volapuk, the new universal language, is obligatory upon the students of the Royal Gymnasia of Munich. In Russia it is permitted to be used in telegraphic transmission.

Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, the philanthropist, never goes to the theatre, and has read but two novels, "Jane Eyre" and the "Scarlet Letter." Her tastes are perfectly simple. She has a great liking for bread, milk and apples. It is doubtful if society ever heard of her. But she is the only woman who has the freedom of the floor of the House of Representatives, at Washington, a right which even the President's wife does not have.