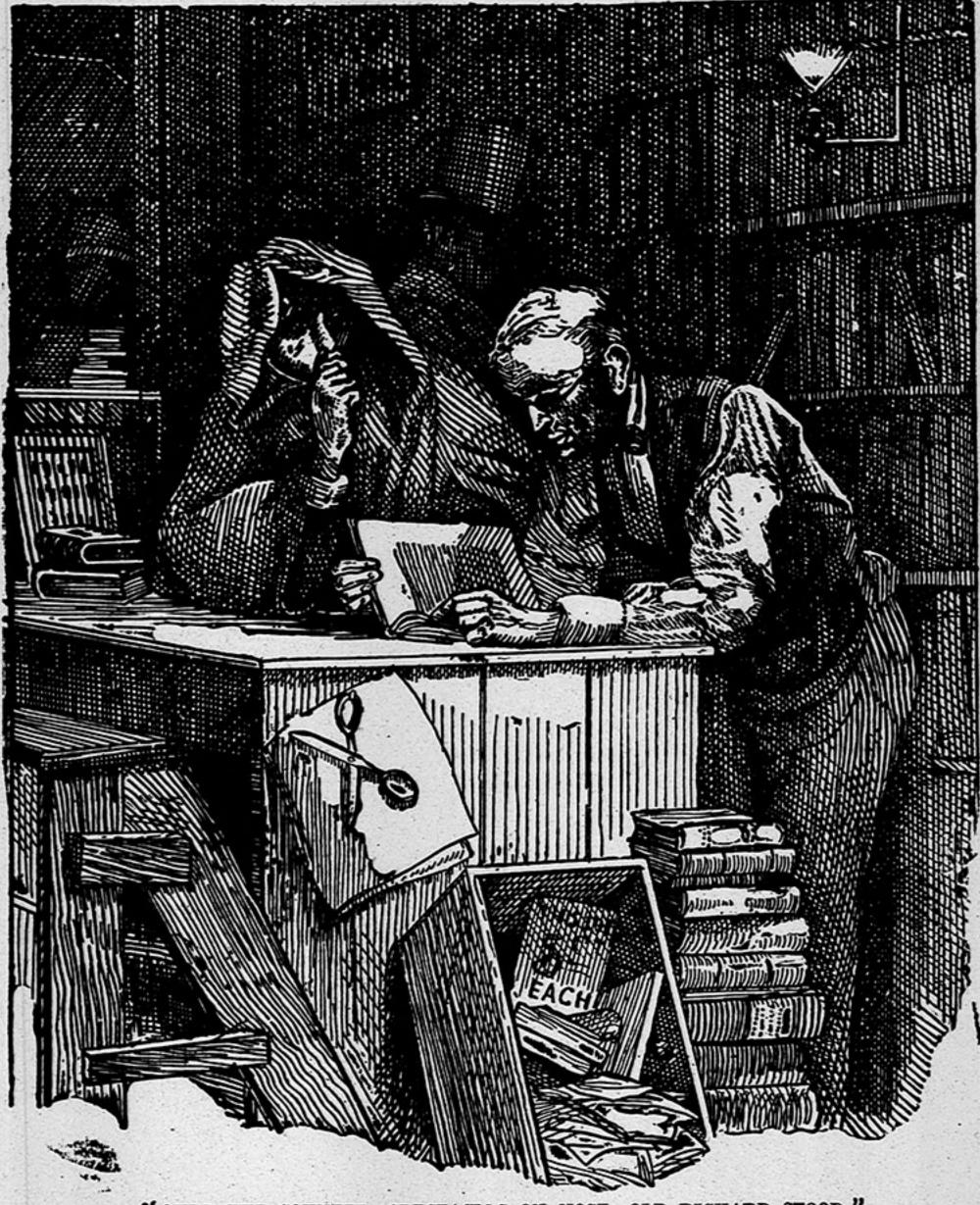
THE BOOK OF GOLD.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

By J. T. TROWBRIDGE.



"OVER THE COUNTER SPECTACL'S ON NOSE, OLD RICHARD STOOD."

I. - CHRISTMAS EVE.

One snowy Christmas-eve it came to pass, As Richard Ray was turning down the gas In the old book-shop, casting into gloom The dusty rows on rows that lined the room, And antique folios piled on shelf and floor, Two strangers meeting, halted at his door, And entered singly.

Short and slight the first, In short black coat with ample cape reversed Above his head to shield him from the snow-A quaintly improvised capote; below, A strange bright face, large-eyed, intense, peered out:

A man of forty years or thereabout.

Lightly the snow-flakes from its folds he And from his cloak produced a ponderous

"A fine old Burton ! I dare swear," quoth he; "There's not another such this side the sea. Since I am here to turn an honest penny, I ought to laud my wares; but what can any Reasonably fair and candid villain say In praise of friends he's plotting to betray? My rare old Robert Burton! there he lies!

Scanning the shop-man with deep wondrous Full of unspeakable great thoughts. 'Bow

This leather fellow at your Midas-touch Should turn to gold; and gold I need, Heaven knows."

Over the counter, spectacles on nose, Old Richard stooped: "Ah, surely; so it is I ought to find a purchaser for this:" And named a price that touched the stranger's pride.

"What ! sell a life-long friend so cheap?" he cried. "I'd sooner seek an air-hole in the ice

And drown myself !"he vowed-and took the price. Then, with a smile so quaint it well might

Another's tears: "Who knows but this may prove The nucleus of a fortune? Thanks!" he said. Flung the black cape once more above his head, And went his way.

In dark and silent mood, Aside, meanwhile, the second stranger stood: A tall fair youth, but anxious-eyed and wan ;

Brows nobly arched, but all their freshness Withered and parched by fires that raged

The hidden fires of suffering and of sin.

Why he had entered there I scarce can tell. He neither came to purchase nor to sell; But, as a hunted wretch, in desperate strait, Remorse and terror knocking at his gate, Seeks any corner, Maurice Allanburn, Harassed, beset, not knowing where to turn, Had paused at Richard's door. If all were

Perhaps he would have clutched the old man's gold.

For Allanburn, a pious widow's son, Affianced, loved, even to the verge had run A secret course of ruinous excess. Till he was ready, in his dire distress, To fling himself on any frantic deed, To mount unbridled violence as a steed, And leap the abyes, or perish utterly.

"Dishonor I will never live to see : When all has failed, then this !" he said,

and pressed A hidden vial sewed into his vest. "The swift news of my death shall overtake The rumor of diagrace, and kindly break

Their poor hearts first." What hope is there? Suspected Already by the house he serves ; detected,

He fears, and tracked by spice this night Is menacingly nigh. And now the friend, The fend proud mother, and the proud fond With whose forged same he has been forced

Some thousands in his absence, comes to-Gold, only gold, much gold this very night, Or ignominious and precipitate flight-

"There's none so wretched, so insnared, as | The scene of half his losse". Seated there,

Naught else can save him; and he will not

So Maurice stood and watched, alcof in The shop man and the stranger at their

"What furious need of gold to such as he?" He mutters. "I could laugh at poverty, And welcome toil, no matter where or what, With but a crust by honest labor got, Has he staked all upon some reckless

The hopes of youth, an honorable name? Is life itself, and more than life, at stake-A mother's love, a girl's heart to break? If not, let him be happy."

With the air Of one who had a common errand there, Maurice drew near, and cast an absent look Over the pages of a little book Which lay upon the counter, till by chance A single sentence riveted his glance.

Turn back, turn back; it is not yet too late: Turn back, Oh youth ! nor seek to expiate e ds by worse, and save the hand from

By plunging all thy soul into the flame.

He started, read again, and still again,

With a strange fascination. But just then-'An admirable book," the old man said;

"Right Thinking and Right Living: 'twill be And, I predict, be famous, centuries hence. The author is a man of wit and sense-Charles Masters. Out of print, I think, just now.

Only a shilling. Thank you," with a bow, "A merry Christmas to you, and good-And Richard Ray once more turned down

And with a quick glance up and down, to If he is spied and followed, Allanburn

Goes forth again into the the whirling storm. The crowd sweeps by : the shop-girl's flitting

The brisk mechanic coming from his work; The prosperous merchant, and the honest

The happy poor man, with his pack of toys, The Santa C'aus of his own girls and boys; The fatherless apprentice lad, who stops To feast his eyes before the glittering shops-

His dreams with presents, and be happy The sleighing parties, in their fairy shells, The muffled drivers and the jingling bells; The cherry newsboy, shouting through the

No Christmas gifts for him, but he can fill

(Blowing his finger-tips to keep them warm) The last great forgery, the awful crime. "Whose turn," thinks Maurice, "will it

be next time ?" And hears in fancy, " Shocking suicide !"-His own dread fate by all the newsboys cried.

In groups, or friendly couples, or alone, Rach with a hope and purpose of his own. He sees them pass; and thinks what pleasant things

The season to the humblest fireside brings. Happy alike who give and who receive : And all his memories of Christmas eve-The expectant stockings by the chimney

The sweet conspiracies of old and young ; The Christmas-tree, with its surprising fruits-

Toys, candies, picture-books, the boy's first The days of innocence and hope and joy;

Rush over him; and he beholds even now. In their suburban home that mother wait, And listen for his footstep at the gate, While with light hand some graceful task

she plies. Preparing still for some sweet surprise. And M urice stifled in his throat the cry. "There's none so wretched and so base a

Her image haunts him, waiting there in And conscience urges with its stinging pain; And Maurice, entering at a well-known As on like errands, many a time before,

Snatches his pen and sets himself to write ' Mother do not expect me home to-night; Important business.

Flashing through the

The words will find the widow by her fire; And she will sigh, " His work is never done. Ah, Laura, what a husband you have won !

So faithful, so industrious, so sedate ! No wonder he is pale and worn of late, with so much business on his hand"-the while

He hastens to the bar-room to beguile His misery for a moment, and impart Fresh resolution to his faltering heart.

He meets a friend ; puts on an easy air Of galety, and sees through his despair A sudden gleam. "Ah, Murdock, you're my man!

Lend me a trifle-any thing you can; For Christmas gifts have ruined me, and I Have still to purchase "- forging lie on lie. The loan obtained, they chat and clink their

And Maurice notes a short slight man who Advancing to the bar with eager pace, In short black mantle, and strange bright

The wondrous eyes and the great soul Glow with deep fervor as he calls for gin.

He lifts with nervous hand the glass and

drinks, And pays with Richard's coin. And Maurice thinks: "Was this his fearful need, his mad desire, To quench a fiery thurst with fiercer fire?

No hope for him! but I may yet restore

All I have periled, by one venture more." Straight to a gaming palace he repairs; (limbs with quick step the too familiar

The hot hope mounting to his head like Of maddening wine, he walks the gilded

To Heaven, or Chance, or Fate, he breathes a prayer, To look with favoring eyes upon his sin, The last, he vows, if he may only win. Not for his own, but for his mother's sake,

For Laura's, he implores; and his last stake On the green cloth with trembling hand lets Wins, loses, wins again, and loses all.

And all is over. Mother's eyes no more Shall meet him with glad welcome at the

No more for him the rose of love shall And trance the senses with its charmed per-

Beauty delight, or social pleasure blow The heart's dull embers to a heavenly glow. The world its myriad industries shall ply, And all its vast concerns full-sailed sweep | And Maurice lived. And as a traveler-

shall trim Her deathless lamp, but never more for him.

So Allanburn upon that Christmas eve. His ruined youth despairing to retrieve. Locked in his malancholy lodging sits And meditates, or walks the room by fits, And writes his everlasting sad farewells To those he loves, until the Christmas bel Peel joyously upon the stormy air-Peel sweet and clear, and through the tumult bear

The golden tidings of the reign of Peace. "For love is born : let wrong and sorrow

Sorrow no more! hope evermore!" they "Hope evermore! love evermore! they

To all the world; and all the world is blest

To all the world but one, for whom no rest, No respite from despair and anguish, save A shameful death and a dishonored grave, And after death? He will not pause to

think: Resolved to leap, why falter on the brink? Folded his letters, with a strangely steady, Cold hand he seals them, and now all is

He reaches for the vial at his breast, And finds instead, forgotten in his vest, The little book placed there some hours ago. The leaves fall open in his hand, and, lo! Before him, like a flaming sword that turns

All ways, once more the fiery sentence burns. Turn back, turn back; it is not yet too late: Turn back, O youth! nor seek to expiate Bad deeds by worse, and save the hand from

By plunging all thy soul into the flame! He started to his feet, dashed down the

book. And too and fro across the chamber took Quick freezied strides; then hurriedly pre-

The deadly draught, and in the mirror glared At his own spectre, ghastly pale and grim,

With glass uplifted, coldly mocking him. "Tis but a shadow, and what more am I Come, Nothingness ! and, World and Life,

good-bye !" He raised the glass—the shadow did the He closed his eyes, and suddenly, like flame,

Leaped forth the warning to his inner sight, In living letters read by their own light: Turn back, turn back; it is not yet too late. Be it Charles Masters, Providence, or Fate,

Something has stayed his hand. From off He takes the little book and reads once

boy:
And many a fault and many a broken vow One sacred solace, after all our pains;

Go log the head and meep thy tears, O youth ! Tired Nature lets her starry A wintry quiet falls on all the

Still as he reads, the Christmas bells he And in their frozen sources start his tears. As Allenburn, with homeward have Dismiss the evil counsel of Deceit,

Fling off the mask, and downward to thy Let the false vesture of concealment fall, And, owning all thy wrong, atone for all.

At every word he feels the searching steel That probes the quivering heart, but probes

Every false path, though fair and long Leads to some pit; and happy thou may'st

Thy wayward youth, whose lesson comes not

O fortunate, when most unfortunate! So Allanburn, with soul absorbed, intent, Read on; and each prophetic word seem

For his own heart; such broad bright wi dom shines. Such swift conviction lightens in the lines. And all the while the holy bells are ringing,

Filling the stormy world with hymns of "For Love is born : let wrong and sorro

The spirits of the Christmas bells are sing-

Sorrow no more! hope evermore!" they "Hope evermore! love evermore!" they

And all the rock of self is cleft and shaken And deep within, sweet blessed springs awaken Of comfort and new courage, not to die

This coward's death, and like a traitor fly The demons he has conjured, but to live, Strong in the strength which only truth can

A tingling frost is in the silent at His own breath whitens on his

Awakes the echoes of the icy star

The shops, on Christmas-eve able Are closed and dark on this cold Con

But in the homes about him Marie What pleasure sparkles and what The dance, the song and story, tolder Smiles from the elders, laughter in Enraptured childhood with its no

The homely games, uniting youth with Scenes which the curtained window And all the joys which friends and ha

In that glad time-with sympathiche He seems to see and hear and take In all; and now his eager fancy run Before to his own home and little one

There waits the partner of his Their mother and (ecstatic thought)

The ever-faithful Laura. Fondly then His own good mother from her care Watches the baby Maurice on the floor, Upbuilding still, to see it fall once His toppling house of blocks; or be

On little Laura by her side the while Bending in the warm light her glowing Hushing her doll and putting it to bed

The last house falls in ruins; in the bar Are packed at last the bright new Chris blocks;

The doll's asleep, the cradle put away. And so the happy children end their play And in imagination now he sees



" HOPE EVERMORE! LOVE EVERMORE! THEY, SING."

II.—CHRISTMAS NIGHT.

And Friendship shall endure, and Hope By night upon some trackless prairie, By wind-driven, leaping flames, while ever

Sweeps the red-maned wild hurricane of

With hoof of thunder and devouring breath, And all the air is lit with lurid death -Kindles before his feet the crisp dry grass, And burns the path where he will safely She Was Fond of a Certain Him Hene And the flames die behind him, and the

Beholds him far on blackened plains forlorn; But life is left, and hope; so Allanburn, By frank avowal of his guilt and stern Self-condemration, quelled the rage of men, Forestalled his foes, and won his friends

As 'twere before he lost them.

Desolate And long the labor seemed, to re-instate Fallen fortune and lost honor to restore : But will and heart were strong, and eve

He kept the little volume by his side-His savior once, and now his secret guide And solace in the long ennobling strife, Incarnating its wisdom in his life.

To lose with high endeavor is to win; And they but fail who build success on sin, Whose giledd walls of happiness shall stand As baseless palaces on sea-washed sand.

Each day's experience taught him to construe Its old dry truths with meanings fresh and

Be then thy conscience as the eternal rock, Wave-buffeted, unmoved by every shock Of roaring condemnation, hate, and wrong: Set thou thereon thy pharos high and strong

Thus as he played his arduous daily part, He learned its lofty precepts all by heart. Let two allied and equal laws control

Thy being-law for body and law for soul As the steam-chariot, with obedient wheel, Plies safely on its parallele, of steel.

Nor prodent virtues only; rising thance, It taught him taith and wise beneficence, Religion is no leaf of faded green,

Or flower of vanished fragrance, pressed be-The pages of a Bible; but from seeds Of love it springeth, watered by good deeds.

So pessed the whirling years, some nine or And now the Christmas-time brings round

fasturer Opticism, 28 Maryland's Bood, List

tow Road, London W., England. 271-6m 270

Two cherubs in white night-gowns on the Mingling their curls before the mother

Lisping with dewy lips their evening proje. How sweet the picture ! Suddenly the pat Rises to dash it; and he starts agast, Seeing his own pale spectral image stant Within a mocking mirror, glass in hand. (TO BE CONTINUED

"It is a beautiful song," he said, w flute-like tones of her voice and the tum to of the piano accompaniment died away i the frescoes tf the ceiling, "but I am mi partial to secular music. I love the grad

old hymns best." "Indeed?" she said, as she ran her his fingers up and down the seven octaves. "Yes," he exclaimed enthusiation,

"the grand old hymns for me." "Well," she murmured, as a rosy his stole over her damask cheeks and long, en lashes shaded the bright and bestill eyes, and a sigh soft as the perfumed spare that rustles the leaves in the umbrages grove at eve when the diamond dendry trembles on the petals of the modest alightly stirred her bosom, "Well, I do st know that I can blame you, for I am foods a certain him myself. Then a season of osculation ensued, off

which we regretfully drop the curtain. A magician who can eat fire is satisfied. He is a light eater, you know. Is the vegetarian sufferer from corner

toe-martyr? Philippopolis presents a peculiarly page cious appearance for a place of "p's." A ghost without a head is reported

Lancaster. Some brave man ought to p a head on it. Next Easter Sunday falls on the 251 d April, a fact which has not occurred 1734, and will not occur again before 136 You always feel surprised when you a shooting star, do you not! That ! because you did not know the sty

los ded: Tigers will lie for hours in a single without attracting attention. And a large percentage of the reportorial of the average newspaper.

The other day, in New York city, Hon Ward Beecher was robbed of a mining watch. While walking along, thinking sternity, some one robbed him of his size An Omaha man offers \$10 for every killed in that city. Some may this is a low price, but a little figurise show that it averages about 7 cents P

We presume the reason a young me Its innecent revels, and draws near its close, him out of doors, as a pirate, is that the When homeward through the city Maurice man by the action acknowledges freebooter. BOOKE. Frank Lat Gus, Mach. he

tions in the Career of " NINA, THE NIHILIST,"

CHAPIER XVI. IL BE HER MISTRESS, AND THAT WILL

CONTENT ME." be feeling that he had drawn the ad thrown away the scabbard, Arabi. left the palace. As he passed out open air and the sunshine he met Pasha, still looking calm, smiling

the man whom he desired most and he immediately drew him aside. atle measures have failed," said he, must have resource to strong." ad as much from your face, also that committed us to the strong." it is too true. The Khedive is nd s'ubborn, and so we must ba de-

foresaw such a result and have al-

rovided for it. Tewfik has favored anger rather than his own people. ell, as he has sown the storm, so let lo the whichwind. Egypt will rise night and cast off the viper that she tured in her bosom, the Alban an who would take the bread of her and cast it unto dogs. I hail thee, Arabi, as our future Khedive." Ime only as the running safe who the approach of Prince Halim, our to ruler according to the law of the

and the Koran.

Prince Halim is a shadow and no ws if he still lives." s be the chosen of Allah, Allah will im to us at the proper hour; meanta year, a month, a week and a keep the silver throne empty and erself with the ivory footstool." be a wise plan, for the unselfish Sa wins respect, love and revermeanwhile would to Allah that Saltan would sanction our up- ot why should he not, for the Kheof late sent but little tribute Stamboul ?"

d glossy black limbs almost entireapproached the two conspirators, his woolly head so that his great ar and nose rings might jingle and widence of his proximity. gaudy butterfly look did that withnoise, and Arabi Pasha turning rarded him eagerly and keenly. apely boy's lips expanded in a grin aled rows of teeth as white as boil-

instant a little Nublan page, at-

stin and silver lace that left his

picturesque and scanty costume the

closed fist in the war minister's withdrew it, however, it had thing behind, and Arabi Pasha, lik

en with a salaam he advanced and

hastily at something, discovered it very pal ring. at once blazed as brightly, aye, po fidly too, as the red fire that seem. o am forth from the very heart of the ing making a rapid sign to the boy to me m at a little distance he returned

Pasha and said in an excited sh it me here, and perchance I will co eturn with that which we most re-The clouds of doubt and apprehen- in to be rolling away, leaving a clear | st d them. No more at present, for

that chafes at delay or tardy obethese words he darted once more liba's side, and a minute later was the Nubian page through an oranalmost deserved the name of a much space did it cover, and s)

ere the trees planted. had got to the other end of it, the page came to a full stop, seiz- ev minister by the arm, and first sign that he dayed go no further, ted towards a tree that was much an any of the rest, and intimated he mimic actions (for the poor little m ad had his tongue cut out in his ne fancy) that a second guide would ag

war minister gave him a handful A liver and passed on, to discover lo guide to be Elmar, the buffoon, led with the usual feminine dis-

and the loose capacious raiment, ered him from the crown of the esols of the foot, and caused him te a perambulatory cotton bale, Ford, and side by side with the al female jester and story teller, ntimating the waddle that charsiddle-aged Egyptian women, who walk on the flat of their feet, and legs wide apart, presently enterm of the Khedive. seder has accompanied him thith-

and Frank Donelly likewise, need to give a second description te. Suffice it, therefore, to say mch-guarded curtain was at last en the war minister found himpresence of the Princess Zeeneh. the Princess Zeeneh, for Elof on, had not entered the chamim, and each moment the patter ding feet sounded ferther away. reclined on a pile of crimson and was attired in a black fitted, sleeveless and very dies subroidered with silver, fartaning tightly around the plantal her little naked, ivory white which was thrust half way into bead embroidered slipper uncovered. The cut straight across her manner of our European plained behind in an inform and limbs by gold coins, were stud-

of throtheren at double more