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THE

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In the Interests of the Colored People of the Country.

Able and well-known writers will contribute to its columns from different parts of the country, and it will contain the latest General News of the day.

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Careful observers assert that the postal receipts and operations afford as accurate indications of the conditions of the business of the country as any figures that are officially compiled. With the close of the summer, there began an upward movement of the most substantial and steady character, free from the unstable nature of a boom, but indicative of a gradual reawakening from a period of business inactivity.

The latest invention of car brakes which promises a fortune for the inventor, has just made its appearance in Pittsburg. It is intended for freight cars. The officers of the Pennsylvania road have offered $70,000 for the exclusive rights, but the inventor, a laborer by the name of Timmins, refuses to sell it. The contrivance is so arranged that a train of fifty or sixty cars, running at a speed of thirty miles an hour, can be stopped by the use of the brake within a space of very few feet after the pressure has been fully applied to all the cars. It can be worked by any of the brakemen on top of the cars, or can be used from the engine, or the caboose at the rear of the train. It is so simply constructed that it can be put on with one hand, and contains such a power of compressed air that it can lock the wheels of a locomotive in three seconds at a speed of forty miles. That, at least, is what is now claimed.

The New York *Sun* relates that while Thomas C. Acton was Sub-Treasurer he had for a visitor a young Connecticut miss, and he instructed Cashier Floyd to show her and her mamma through the vaults and let them see how compactly Uncle Sam stored $140,000,000. Mr. Floyd is one of those jolly old gentlemen who believe in pleasing the young folks. He took from one of the vaults a package containing $6,000,000 in $10,000 bank notes, and handing it to the young miss, said, "I guess we can spare that for you." She looked pleased, folded the package of new bills in the middle, opened her hand satchel, and was about to drop the big fortune into it when Mr. Floyd, noticing that she was in earnest, told her that the Government was a little short that day, and he would have to postpone the gift to some other time. The young miss lives in Forestville, Conn., and only recently she thought her papa might let her come to New York and get the present awaiting her at the Sub-Treasury.

A reporter who recently visited Sing Sing prison found that Ferdinand Ward's lot there is not as hard as might be expected. His cell is carpeted, and there are pictures of his wife and his son on the wall. Every two months he gets a good box from home, full of boned turkey, lobster salad, boned chicken and other luxuries. He reads a great deal, and takes several magazines. His favorite books are novels. He talks seldom, but when he does talk he is very interesting. He said that one day he was walking down Broadway, and saw a handsome plate in front of a shop. He picked it up and asked the price of it, and was told $100. He bought twenty-four of the plates. He says that General Grant signed the Grant & Ward papers without looking at them. Ward sings in the choir Sundays, and is accounted a good tenor. "Boodle" Alderman Jaehne occupies a carpeted and comfortable cell, and is in good health and spirits. He also gets boxes of boned turkey and honey from his friends. Every prisoner gets a two-ounce package of tobacco every Saturday night, and Jaehne is employed over the prison bakery in wrapping up these two-ounce packages for the prisoners.

SONG OF THE CHRISTMAS WIND

As on my roving way I go
Beneath the starlight's gleaming,
Upon a bank of feathery snow
I find a moonbeam dreaming;
I crouch beside the pretty miss
And cautiously I give her
My gentlest, tenderest little kiss,
And frown to see her shiver,
Oho! Oho!
On bed of snow
Beneath the starlight's gleaming,
I steal the bliss
Of one sweet kiss
From that fair friend a-dreaming.

I scamper up the gloomy street
With wild, hilarious shrieking,
And each rheumatic sign I meet
I set forthwith to creaking;
The sooty chimneys wheeze and sigh
In dismal apprehension,
And when the rich man passes by
I pay him marked attention.
Oho! Oho!
With gusts of snow
I love to pelt and blind him—
But I kiss the curls
Of the beggar-girls
Who crouch in the dark behind him.

In summer time a posy fair
Bloomed on the distant heather,
And every day we prattled there
And sang our songs together;
And thither, as we sang or told
Of love's unchanging glory,
A maiden and her lover strolled,
Repeating our sweet story,
* * * * * *
"Oho! Oho!"
We murmur low—
The maid and I, together;
For summer's sped
And love is dead
Upon the distant heather.

—*Eugene Field.*

A CHRISTMAS SURPRISE.

A STORY OF THE MINES.

A California mining town, away up amid the snow-clad, rock-bound peaks of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

The town was irregularly laid out, and was scattered along a creek which emptied into the Consummes River several miles below. Both the dwellings and business houses—or, more properly speaking, cabins—were constructed of unhewn pine logs, the crevices between the timbers being "chinked" and plastered with mud. The town contained at least a dozen saloons, or saloons and gambling-houses combined, and in these hells much of the hard-earned money of the miner parted company with him, to take up its temporary abode in the saloon till or the pocket of the professional gambler. The dwellings of the town were scattered along the creek or built on the side of the mountain, the majority of them being rough "bachelor-dens," for women were very scarce in the newly-discovered diggings.

In a small cabin in the upper end of the town sat a woman in widow's weeds, holding upon her knee a bright eyed, sunny-faced little girl about five years old, while a little cherub of a boy lay upon a bear-skin before the open fire-place. It was Christmas Eve, and the woman sat gazing abstractedly into the fire. She was yet young, and as the glowing flames lit up her sad face they invested it with weird beauty.

Mary Stewart was the widow of Aleck Stewart, and but two years before had lived comfortably and happily in a camp on the American River. Aleck was a brawny miner, but the premature explosion of a blast in an underground tunnel had blotted out his life in an instant, leaving his family without a protector and in straitened circumstances. His daily wages had been their sole support, and now that he was gone, what could they do?

With her little family Mrs. Stewart had emigrated to the camp in which we find them, and there she earned a precarious livelihood by washing clothes for the miners. Hers was a hard lot, but the brave little woman toiled on, cheered by the thought that her daily takers stood between her darling little ones and the gaunt wolf of starvation. Their clothes were patched and shabby, and their food plain and sometimes scanty, yet they were never reduced to absolute suffering.

Jack Dawson, a strong, honest miner, was passing the cabin this Christmas Eve, when the voice of the little girl within atracted his attention. Jack possessed an inordinate love for children, and although his manly spirit would abhor the sneaking practice of eaves-dropping, he could not resist the temptation to steal up to the window just a moment to listen to the sweet prattling voice. The first words he caught were: "Before papa died, we always had Christmas, didn't we, mamma?"

"Yes, Totty darling, but papa earned money enough to afford to make his little pets happy at least once a year. You must remember, Totty, that we are very poor, and although mamma works very hard, she can scarcely earn enough to supply us with food and clothes."

Little bright-faced Benny raised his curly head from his soft rest in the warm bearskin, and cheerfully said: "Des' wait till I dit to be a man, mamma, an' 'oo won't have to work. I'se doin' to be a dreat bid miner, like papa was, an' dit 'oo ever so much money, but I won't do near 'em hateful blastin' fings an' dit tilled like papa did."

Jack Dawson still lingered upon the outside. He could not leave, although he felt ashamed of himself for listening.

"Why, bless my little man," returned the mother, "what a brave future he has planned! I do hope and pray, darling, that you will grow up a strong and a good man, and one who will be a blessing and a comfort to mamma when she gets old."

"We hung up our stockings last Christmas, didn't we, mamma?" questioned the little girl.

"Yes, Totty, but we were poor then, and Santa Claus never notices real poor people. He gave you a little candy, then, just because you were such good children."

"Is we any poorer now, mamma?"

"Oh, yes, much poorer. He would never notice us at all, now."

Jack Dawson detected a tremor of sadness in the widow's voice as she uttered the last words, and he wiped a suspicious dampness from his eyes.

"Where's our clean stockings, mamma? I'm going to hang mine up, anyhow; maybe he will come like he did before, just because we try to be good children," said Totty.

"It will be no use, darling. I am sure he will not come," and tears gathered in the mother's eyes as she thought of her empty purse.

"I don't care—I'm going to try, anyhow. Please get one of my stockings, mamma," pleaded the little girl.

"Your clean stockings are on the line outside, and I cannot go out and hunt for them this bitter cold night. You may hang up your old ones; but oh! darling, I fear you will be so terribly disappointed in the morning. Please let it go until next Christmas, and then we may be richer."

"No, mamma; I am going to try, anyhow."

Jack Dawson's great, generous heart swelled until it seemed bursting from his bosom. He heard the patter of little bare feet on the cabin floor, as Totty ran about hunting for hers and Benny's stockings, and, after she had hung them up, heard her sweet voice again as she wondered over and over if Santa Claus really would forget them. He heard the mother, in a choking voice, tell her treasures to get ready for bed; heard them lisp their childish prayers, the little girl concluding:

"And oh, Lord, please tell good Santa Claus that we are very poor, but that we love him as much as the rich children do, for dear Jesus' sake. Amen."

After they were in bed, through a small rent in the plain white curtain, he saw the widow sitting before the fire, her face buried in her hands, and weeping bitterly. On a peg, just over the fireplace hung two little patched and faded stockings; and then he could stand it no longer.

He softly moved away from the window to the rear of the cabin, where some objects fluttering in the wind met his eyes. Among these he searched until he found a little blue stocking which he removed from the line, folded tenderly and placed in his overcoat pocket, and then set out for the main street of the camp.

He entered Henry Hawk's gambling hell, the largest in the place, where a host of miners and gamblers were at play. Jack was well known in the camp, and when he got upon a chair and called for attention, the hum of voices and the clicking of ivory checks suddenly ceased. Then in an earnest voice, he told them what he had seen and heard, repeating every word of the conversation between the mother and her two children. In conclusion he said:

"Boys, I think I know you, every one of you, and I know what kind o' metal yer made of. I've an idee that Santy Claus knows jist whar that cabin's situated, an' I've an idee he'll find it afore morning. Hyar's one o' the little gal's stockings that I hooked off'n the line whar I heard the widder say she'd hung 'em with the washin'. The daddy o' them little 'uns was a good, hard-workin' miner, an' he crossed the range in the line o' duty, just as any of us is liable to do in our dangerous business. Hyar goes a twenty-dollar piece right down in the toe, an hyar I lay the stocking on this card-table. Now chip in, much or little, as ye kin afford."

"Hold them checks of mine on the ace-jack," said Rocky Clark, a gambler, and, leaving the faro table, he picked the little stocking up carefully, looked at it tenderly, and, when he laid it down, another twenty had gone down into the toe, to keep company with the one placed there by Dawson.

Another and another came up, until the foot of the stocking was well-filled, and then came the cry from the gambling tables:

"Pass her around, Jack!"

At the word he lifted it from the table, and started around the hall. Before he circulated it at half a dozen tables, it showed signs of bursting beneath the weight of gold and silver coin; and a strong coin bag, such as is used for sending treasure by express, was procured, and the stocking placed inside of it. The round of the large hall was made, and in the meantime the story had spread all over the camp. From various saloons came messengers, saying:

"Send the stockin' round the camp; the boys are a-waitin' for it!"

With a party at his heels, Jack went from saloon to saloon. Games ceased, and tipplers left the bars as they entered each place, and miners, gamblers, speculators, everybody, crowded up to tender their Christmas gift to the miner's widow and orphans. Anyone who has lived in the far Western camps, and is acquainted with the generosity of Western men, will feel no surprise or doubt my truthfulness when I say that, after the round had been made, the little blue stocking and the heavy canvas bag contained over eight thousand dollars in gold and silver coin.

Horses were procured, and a party despatched to a large town down on the Consummes, from which they returned near day-break with toys, clothing, provisions, etc., in almost endless variety. Arranging their gifts in proper shape, and securely tying the mouth of the bag of coin, the party noiselessly repaired to the widow's humble cabin. The bag was first laid on the step, and the other articles piled up in a heap over it. On the top was laid the lid of a large pasteboard box, on which was written with a piece of charcoal:

"Santy Claus doesn't always Give poor folkes the Shake in this camp."

Christmas morning dawned bright and beautiful. The night had been a stinging cold one, and when the rising sun peeped over the chain of mountains to the east, and shot its beams upon the western range, the sparkling frost flashed from the snow-clad peaks as though their towering heads were sprinkled with pure diamonds.

Mr. Stewart arose, and a shade of pain crossed her handsome face as the empty little stockings caught her maternal eye. She cast a hurried glance toward the bed where her darlings lay sleeping, and whispered:

"Oh, God! how dreadful is poverty!"

She built a glowing fire, and set about preparing the frugal breakfast. When it was almost ready she approached the bed, kissed the little ones till they were awake, and lifted them to the floor. With eager haste Totty ran to the stockings, only to turn away, sobbing as though her heart would break. Tears blinded the mother, and clasping her little girl to her heart, she said in a choking voice:

"Never mind, my darling; next Christmas, I am sure, mamma will be richer, and then Santa Claus will bring us lots of nice thiugs."

"Oh, mamma!"

The exclamation came from little Benny, who had opened the door and was standing gazing in amazement upon the wealth of gifts there displayed.

Mrs. Stewart sprang to his side, and looked in speechless astonishment. She read the card, and then, causing her little ones to kneel down with her in the open doorway, she poured out her soul in a torrent of praise and thanksgiving to God.

Jack Dawson's burly form moved from behind a tree a short distance away, and sneaked off up the gulch, great crystal tears chasing each other down his face.

The family rose from their knees and began to move the stores into the cabin. There were several sacks of flour, hams, canned fruits, pounds and pounds of coffee, tea and sugar, new dress goods, and a warm woolen shawl for the widow, shoes, stockings, hats, mittens and clothing for the children, a big wax doll that could cry and move its eyes for Totty, and a beautiful red sled for Benny. All were carried inside, amid alternate laughs and tears.

"Bring in the sack of salt, Totty, and that is all," said the mother. "Is not God good to us?"

"I can't lift it, mamma; it's froze down to the step."

The mother stooped and took hold of it, and lifted harder and harder until she raised it from the step. Her cheek blanched as she noted its great weight, and carried it in and laid it upon the breakfast table. With trembling fingers she loosed the string, and emptied the contents upon the table. Gold and silver—more than she ever thought of in her wildest dreams of comfort, and almost buried in the pile of treasure lay Totty's little blue stocking.

We will not intrude longer upon such happiness, but leave the joyful family sounding praise to Heaven—and Santa Claus.

The whole story soon reached Mrs. Stewart's ears. She knew Jack Dawson by sight, and when next she met him, although the honest fellow tried hard to push by her, she caught hold of his coat and compelled him to stand and listen to her tearful thanks. The tears shed were not all hers, for when Jack moved away there were drops of liquid crystal hanging to his ruddy cheeks.

Four months from that "Merrie Christmas" Mrs. Stewart became Mrs. Jack Dawson; and every evening, when the hardy miner returns from his daily labor to his comfortable and happy home, Totty and Benny will climb upon his knees, and almost smother him with kisses, while they lovingly address him as "Our Santa Claus papa."

Thomas Jefferson's Last Hours.

On the day that John Adams died at his home at Quincy, and only a few hours before Adams's death, Thomas Jefferson expired at his seat at Monticello. Mr. Jefferson suffered from a diarrhœa of long standing, but was confined to his bed only a week. During his last illness his only wish was that his life might be prolonged until the Fourth of July. The fulfilment of his wish was accorded him and he died soon after midday on the anniversary which he created, and which must always hold the first place in the hearts of the American people.

The coincidence of the death of the two ex-Presidents who did more than all others in Congress for the success of the Declaration, which has become a charter of liberty for all the world, was universally commented on at the time, and ever since, when the demise of one of these great men has been talked of, it has always suggested the almost simultaneous death of the other. Mr. Jefferson's last words were: "I resign my soul to God and my daughter to my country." There was Jeffersonian simplicity at his funeral, which was attended only by his former neighbors and the professors and students of the University of Virginia at Charlotteville. When the news was spread abroad, however, that the two ex-Presidents had died on the same day, and that day the Fourth of July, there were imposing funeral processions in honor of both in all the leading cities.

It is always claimed that Jefferson died poor, but among his effects sold at auction were not fewer than 130 negroes. The slaves were said to be the most valuable part of the estate.

A progress of constructing mirrors upon which old impressions can be reproduced at will at any time, is said to have been discovered by two French scientists. The secret is said to be the peculiar action of light upon the metal selenium fortified by aid of electricity.

TEMPERANCE.

Prohibition.

A wily spider's net was spread
With the remains of hapless flies;
No valiant arm avenged the dead,
Where duty watched with sleepless eyes.
The matron, chancing there one day,
Beheld the tyrant in her room,
Darting upon his struggling prey;
She swept him with her legal broom!

A gaunt and hungry wolf, whose lair
Was littered o'er with whitened bones,
Grew fat upon his dainty fare;
He heeded not the victims' moans.
What's death to lambs, to wolves is fun.
High living made the wild beast bold;
But Justice shot him with his gun
To save from death the harmless fold.

A vulture, flying from its nest
Upon the mountain's cloud-capped height,
Went forth a-foraging in quest
Of doves that ventured in their flight
Fron the protection of their cote.
A marksman with unerring aim
Fired well a prohibition shot
And brought to terms the fluttering game.

A dog was foaming at the mouth,
Dragging along a broken chain;
He hated water, though a drought
Scorched his hot, open jaws with pain.
He was a dangerous beast; would bite
With fatal fangs mankind or brute;
But he fell in his tracks, despite
His barting at the men who shoot.

—*Geo. W. Bungay, in National Advocate*

Appalling Figures.

That we are a thirsty people is pretty generally submitted, but few suspect just how much fluid, besides water, it takes to keep the throats of our population in a satisfactorily moist condition. The records of the Internal Revenue Bureau throw some light on the question, and, being official besides, leave no room for doubt or dispute. If all the beer drank last year by our people was impartially alloted to every man, woman and child in the nation, in equal quantities, it would give each one ten and three-quarter gallons. To this must also be added one and one-fifth gallons of spirituous liquors.

But pursuing these figures a little more closely gives us other results worth mentioning. Not every man or every woman drinks beer and whisky, and none of the children. It is safe to assume that one-third of our population, or about twenty millions of our citizens, absorb all the strong drinks of the country. This would make the allotment of beer to every drinker at least thirty-two gallons and nearly four gallons of whisky.

But they indulge in other luxuries also. Enough cigars are smoked in the country to give forty-two to every inhabitant, besides several cigarettes and three and a quarter pounds of chewing tobacco. It is estimated the cost to the American people of drinking and smoking, if equally distributed among that portion of our population which does drink and smoke, would give an average cost to each of $57, or enough to buy all the food they can consume in a year. The army ration costs the government $38 per annum, and it gives the soldier more than he can eat. In short, the drinking portion of our population consumes enough beer, tobacco and whisky to buy them food supplies for the entire year.

But study the following recently compiled by a Hartford (Conn.) contemporary as showing how we spend our money:

Liquor	$900,000,000
Tobacco	600,000,000
Bread	505,000,000
Meat	303,000,000
Iron and steel	290,000,000
Sawed lumber	223,900,000
Cotton goods	210,000,000
Boots and shoes	196,000,000
Sugar and molasses	155,000,000
Public education	85,000,000
Home and Foreign Missions	5,500,000

Thus our liquors cost nine hundred million dollars ($900,000,000), or

One-eighth more than all our meat and bread.

Three times as much as our iron and steel.

Ten times as much as our public education.

Our tobacco costs six hundred million dollars ($600,000,000,) or

One-fifth more than our bread.

Twice as much as our meat and iron.

Three times as much as our boots and shoes.

Seven times as much as our public education.

Our, liquors and tobacco costs one billion five hundred million dollars ($1,500,000,000), or

Three times as much as our bread.

Five times as much as our meat and iron.

Seven times as much as our lumber.

Seventeen times as much as our public education, and these two items alone cost more than four-fifths of all the rest.

—*New York Herald.*

A "Georgian," writing of prohibition in Georgia, says: "No county, locality, town, or city in the State has ever yet returned to the liquor-traffic after the two year's trial of prohibition by a vote of the people."

Whatever be the merits or demerits of alcoholic drinks, the man who sells them seems always prone to become a social nuisance, and his shop a fountain of evil.—*New York Nation.*

The Soldiers' Beer.

Those who do not drink beer or any other intoxicant can scarcely realize in how many quarters beer is a burning question. Now the temperance women are bringing it before Congress, as it relates to the inmates of the National Soldiers' Homes. They ask that beer be abolished as one of the comforts and luxuries of the ex-soldiers, and that its sale be no longer permitted within the limits of these establishments. We have a communication in defence of the sale of beer at the Homes, which is so extraordinary that it would be considered by our readers as a flagrant attack on the management of the Home mentioned. It is argued that the soldiers will have their beer at all hazards, that the saloons in the neighborhood are vile and dangerous, that in these soldiers have been drugged, robbed and murdered, and therefore it is much better that the Home should provide the beer and have it drunk on the premises. This is a mere hint of the part which beer plays in the life of the retired warrior. His beer in town sent him to the station-house and enriched the saloon-keeper, while his beer in the Home deposits him where he can be taken care of and lessens the anxiety of his guardians. In answer to all this and much more of the same kind, the ladies will say that the temptations to the sober of beer at hand in safety, more than counterbalance the evils of danger and distress of the inveterate beer-drinkers who will get it in the saloons. It is remarkable that such a matter can be discussed at the present period in the history of reform. If the government is to provide beer for its pensioners, or make it easy for them to get it, it may as well go into the business on a larger scale, and protect the rest of the nation from the dangerous and rapacious saloon-keeper.

—*New York Observer.*

Action by Canada Methodists.

The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at its late session in Toronto, adopted the following: "That in view of the importance of the temperance question in our country today, and in the certainty that in the near future legislation in the line of entire prohibition of the liquor traffic will be obtained, it is desirable to appoint a permanent committee on temperance; therefore resolved, that a committee of seven persons, laymen and minister, be appointed to watch the interests and phases of the temperance question, and to make such representation to the governments and Parliament of the Dominion as shall secure prohibitory legislation, for which we believe the country is ripe, co-operating with ecclesiastical and temperance organizations through existing parties, or, failing our end through these, the formation of another and prohibitory party." The motion was subsequently changed in regard to the appointment of a committee, and three committees were appointed, one each for the East, for Quebec, and for the Western conferences.

A Growing Organization.

The Church Temperance Society, established five years ago, has now among its Vice-Presidents fifty Bishops. It already has organizations in thirty-five dioceses. It publishes a mothly paper, has created a temperance literature on Scriptural principles, has drafted and introduced a new license law for the State of New York, has largely influenced the government of the city of New York in the enforcement of the law; and during the past year has carried on in the same city, in connection with the Sunday evening services, the work of personal rescue and reform. No other fact need be given in defense of this movement than that in our own country $900,000,000 are annually spent for strong drink against $505,000,000 for bread.—*Living Church.*

A Decided Change.

A decided change has occurred in the views of medical men as to the use or the necessity for alcoholic liquors in case of sickness. It is now generally agreed that alcohol has no restorative power except as a stimulant, and that the reaction following its use more than offsets its supposed benefits. We do not use so much strong liquor per head as a hundred or more years ago, when its use was nearly universal among the early settlers. It is true, however, that liquors in those days were less adulterated and less injurious than those which are sold now, many of which, aside from their alcohol, are poisonous compounds.—*Boston Cultivator.*

The great underlying evil which paralyzes every effort to get good laws and to secure the enforcement of such as we have is in the system of local politics, which gives the saloon keepers more power over government than is possessed by all the religious and educational institutions in the city.—*New York Times.*