

AROUND THE HEARTH.

**FOR THE PINE KNOT.
THE GIFT.**

The cool gray light crept on apace,
And in the east such heavenly grace
As shines upon a dying face
Grew wide o'er sea and land,
The sleeping city moaned and stirred;
A thousand sounds of life were heard,
And from a hundred clock-towers whirred
Sweet chimes on every hand.
But to one deep embowered room,
Through bar of silken folded gloom
And silence deeper than the tomb,
No sound of life made way.
There, motionless from head to feet,
Lapt in soft dreams and visions sweet,
Fair Madeline woke not to greet
Her dawning wedding day.
Full well she slept, for she had prayed;
No sin was on her conscience laid,
And in the world no purer maid
Could anywhere be found.
She slept, nor ever woke again
To narrow joys or sordid pain,
To sense of earthly loss or gain
That hems the spirit round.
For she had seen a presence bright,
A face of tenderness and might,
And through the darkness of the night
These cheering words were borne—
"To thee I've come from distant skies,
On swifter wing than sunlight flies,
And brought a gift that mortals prize
To grace thy wedding morn,
"This potent charm that I now bestow,
'Gainst all the ills a wife must know,
Sorrow and care and child-birth' woe,
Take thou with thankful heart.
"I touch thy lips;
They shall not press
Cold lips with any last caress.
"I touch thy breast;
It shall not feel
The stab of scorn like piercing steel.
"I touch thy feet;
They shall have rest,
Nor weary in a hopeless quest.
"I touch thee thrice" the presence said;
"I speak the charm; thy life is sped;
I am the Angel of the Dead,
But bear no hateful dart."

—B. A. Goodridge, in *Weekly Magazine*.

"THE WHIP OF THE SKY."

[CONTINUED.]

It is related of a family whose sojourn in one spot was measured by months rather than years, that the hens had become so accustomed to moving that whenever they saw a furniture van stop in front of the house they immediately threw themselves on their backs and put their feet up to be tied. This may not be strictly true.

But the season is moving too. Leaf follows upon bud, and blade upon seed come in quick succession. Almost as soon as the last furrow is planted the first ones must be hoed. The whip of the sky cracks loudly and the sweating farmer hurries on his work. The hoe handle gets hot in the sun and burns the farm-boy's fingers. He casts longing glances at the cool covert of a neighboring trout stream and wonders if fish wouldn't bite well today," but the farmer without pausing replies grimly, "Never fear! sonny. You keep at work and they won't bite you." Close upon the heels of hoeing comes haying. How the grass grows! in a night as it were. One day we look forth over fields, but faintly streaked with dawning greenness and the next, lo! the tall grass is beckoning to the mower. Now the contest grows fiercer. Now doth it behoove the farmer to be wary. Let him not trust to a smiling sky. Fickle jade! Her smiles are too often followed by tears. Advantage must be taken of every minute of fair weather for the hay crop is too valuable and too easily spoiled to be left to the chances of rain and sun.

It has been good hay weather for three or four days past, the best of the crop has been cut and is cured just right. It is now Saturday afternoon and the tired but exultant farmer sees the huge fragrant loads going barnward and thinks of the satisfied rest of the morrow. But it is not all under yet, several great windrows are waiting to be gathered up and even now there is a black frown on the face of the west, and ominous whip crackling from the overcharged clouds. How the field hands hurry and scurry! The brawny wielder of the pitchfork tosses aloft great masses of hay like a giant at play with little hills. The boy who treads is almost buried alive and gasps and splutters as he leaps wildly from one end of the load to the other in frantic endeavor to keep pace with the great forkfuls. Sweat pours down like rain and even the big slow oxen come as near to hurrying as oxen can. Perhaps the last load rumbles into the barn just as the flood comes down, if so, it is a jolly though tired crew of men that stand safe under cover of the big barn and listen to the clatter of the rain upon the roof, if not, the rain seems to soak into their very souls and make them soggy, spiritless and depressed. The man who gets ahead of New England weather has reason to congratulate himself, for not often is it granted to anything mortal to win such victory.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

**FOR THE PINE KNOT.
KNOTS**

Address all communications to "Knots," PINE KNOT office, Southern Pines, N. C.

HIDDEN FABRICS.

1. I saw a chair which Napo'e on sat in.
2. During the revel veterans and boys, matrons and maidens gaily danced.
3. On a certain steamship line no accident has ever happened.
4. Homer, I notice, is often quoted.
5. In some towns crime is rife.
6. We sent a box containing sweetmeats, a cheese, clothing, books and toys.
7. I paid him ten cents in cash merely to satisfy him.
8. She is very musical. I could hear her sing for hours.

DECAPITATIONS.

1. Situation. Behead me and I am a delicate fabric; again and I am a unit.
2. Over-exertion. Behead me and I am moisture.
3. A sharp cry. Behead me and I am a scum; again I am a certain amount of paper.
4. To terrify. Behead and I am trouble; again and I am a verb.
5. To supplicate. Behead I am light; again and I express assent.
6. Good for coasting. Behead me and I am past tense of a verb meaning to guide; again and I am a boy's nick-name.
7. Used to drive away a small animal. Behead me and I am the animal; again, and I am a preposition.

Answers in two weeks. All our readers are invited to send solutions of the puzzles and to contribute original puzzles.

ANSWERS TO "KNOTS" OF JAN. 1.

- Numerical Enigma—"A Happy New Year."
Word Puzzle.—1, All, ell. 2, All, ill. 3, Pine, mine. 4, Nine, dine. 5, Pour, sour. 6, Elder, alder.

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