

THE APPROACH OF CHRISTMAS.

It was the calm and silent night! Seven hundred years and fifty-three Had Rome been growing up to might, And now was queen of land and sea! No sound was heard of clashing wars, Peace brooded o'er the hushed domain; Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars Held undisturbed their ancient reign, In the solemn midnight, Centuries ago.

"Twas in the calm and silent night! The Senator of haughty Rome Impatient urged his chariot's flight, From lordly revel rolling home! Triumphal arches, gleaming, swell His breast with thoughts of boundless sway: What recked the Roman what befell A paltry province far away, In the solemn midnight, Centuries ago?

Within that province far away, Went plodding home a weary boor; A streak of light before him lay, Fallen through a half-shut stable-door. Across his path. He paused, for naught Told what was going on within: How keen the stars! his only thought; The air how calm, and cold, and thin, In the solemn midnight. Centuries ago!

Oh, strange indifference!-low and high Drowsed over common joys and cares: The earth was still, but knew not why: The world was listening-unawares! How calm a moment may precede One that shall thrill the world forever! To that still moment none would heed, Man's doom was linked, no more to sever, In the solemn midnight, Centuries ago!

It is the calm and silent night! A thousand bells ring out, and throw Their joyous peals abroad, and smite The darkness-charmed and holy now! The night that erst no shame had worn, To it a happier name is given; For in the stable lay, new-born, The peaceful Prince of earth and heaven, In the solemn midnight, Centuries ago!

For the Companion.

WHEN HE SAW HER LYING DEAD.

She had certainly been a trying mother. While there are trying people in the world, it follows naturally that some of them will be mothers, and Deacon Hanson's wife was one of them. The deaof the composure of his nature came from that. He was a stolid sort of man, some people said; | that!" but that was just what Deacon Hanson was not.

He was simply a patient man, believing that God ruled the world, and that it was an ill thing to pull against providence. Moreover he had in him a wonderful capacity for unselfish and longenduring love.

her, and he loved her still, when she was fifty years old, a wiry, fretful woman, in whose worn and worried aspect no suggestion of her sweet youth was left for any other eyes than his. He looked at her through the mists of vanished years, and saw with some second-sight of the heart, the roses of long ago on her cheeks, and the light of other days in her eyes.

ever since he could remember she had been fretful and hard to please. Only when he had been ill, at times, she had nursed him so tenderly that he began to find out the mother side of her nature, and half-longed to be ill over again, when he got well, and all this unwonted softness vanished.

He used to envy boys who could go to their mothers with all their little troubles and joys- describes his dream as depending upon that of sight. their failures and their successes. His mother deseemed to him in the first place to claim his con- thousand years ago, declared,fidence as a right, and then to use it as a text for fault-finding. So-instead of trying to thaw her your sheaves stood round about." out with the sunshine of his love-he shut his heart away from her, and never spent a moment licked his sores. with her that he could possibly avoid. Thus there grew up between them a sort of wall, over which she looked at him sometimes, as he then thought, that his image addresses itself. sullenly. He knows now, too late, that it was with dumb longing in her eyes.

For suddenly she was taken ill, and her illness one? was sharp and short. Her son was away from must come by touch or hearing, without a gleam of is caught in his own toils. The following true incihome. They sent for him; but when he came it fancy or imagination. Yet if questioned, he will tell dent, taken from an Irish memoir, may serve as was too late for her to turn back from the gate people, and dreams quite as often as they do illustration of such poetic justice. McCluskie was a of the other world to speak some last word for this. He went into the house, into the well-known room, and there he saw her lying dead.

"Did she leave any last message for me?" he

"Not exactly. She only cried out, just as she | was going, 'Oh, if Charley and I could only have basket-shop where I work, I know I am there by the been like other sons and other mothers!' And then, before I could answer her, she was gone. I what you cannot see?" always knew you didn't understand her, Charley; but she loved you, all the same. She never had one day of really good health after you were born, my tools out." and she suffered so she couldn't be gay and chipper and easy-going. But she did love you, Charley."

her with his love, he might have found out her suffering, and cheered her with his tenderness, and notice.

other mothers." And so knowing, over his heart there fell the shadow of a sorrow and a self-condemnation which will not leave him while life shall

Ah, let us be tender and pitiful to our own, now, sions. to-day, and not wait until we see them lying dead.

SELF-RELIANT.

James Hogg, the rough Ettrick Shepherd, is one of the quaintest of Scotland's uneducated writers. His native ability pushed him up into literary eminence, while the personal charm of the man made society tolerate him, though he outraged its decorous man- for you, but it is not so for me; what relation is there ners. His egotism was so frank and simple as to be entertaining. "I like to write about myself; in fact, Newton, give me light!" there are few things which I like better," is the sentence that begins his autobiography.

Once, when he had sung a song, the company applauded, and Hogg, echoing the applause with his own broad hands, said, "That song never will be sung so well again by any one after I ha' done wi'

Blackwood, the Edinburgh publisher, invited Moore, the poet, to a supper. Scott, Lockhart, and two peeresses, who had begged for an invitation, were among the guests. When the supper was halfover, Hogg appeared, coming straight from a cattlefair, and the unsavory odor announced his approach before his presence was visible. He was seated between the two noble ladies, and soon made himself at home with them.

When the cloth was withdrawn, a song with a chorus was sung by one of the gentlemen, the company joining in the refrain. The two ladies were too languid in their singing to please Hogg.

"Noo, then, leddies," he shouted, slapping each of them on the back, "follow me! 'Heigh, tutti, tutti! Heigh, tutti, tutti!"" He must have been not only magnetic, but very in-

teresting, for high-born ladies to tolerate such freedom in him. In one of his poems, which he sent to Blackwood's Magazine, Hogg dabbled a little in metaphysics. Blackwood insisted that the obscure passage should be omitted. Hogg refused to omit it or to make its

meaning clearer. "But, man," said Blackwood, "I dinna ken what ye mean in this passage."

"Hout tout, man! I dinna ken always what I mean myself," answered Hogg, impatiently. It was one of his peculiarities, that when he had once written a poem or a story he would not alter a syllable.

it out and correct it mentally, or to write it on a slate and then copy it on paper. One day, while driving a herd of cattle to Edinburgh, he thought he would publish a volume of poems. But as he had no manuscript poems with him, he tried to remember verses he had written. As often as they recurred to him, he would run into a shop, borrow pen and paper, and note them down. By the time he reached Edinburgh he had provided copy enough to make a small volume, and a good-natured printer published it for him. A gentleman who praised to the poet his "Queen's

Wake" was met by the reply,-"But aiblins ye think owre muckle o' the 'Queen's Wake.' It's tolerably gude, I'll no deny that; but,

eh man, that's naething compared wi' what I am able to do! I hae a grand poyem upon the sclate con was of German descent—and perhaps some [slate] yenoo, that fashes me rather, for it wants to rise faster than I can copy wi' the pen. Ye'll think but little o' the 'Queen's Wake,' when ye come to see

The gentleman, seeing the "sclate" before the poet, covered with close writing, expressed a wish to hear him read a portion of "the grand poyem." "Na, na, fules and bairns should never see work

half-done!" answered Hogg, briskly. "But," insisted the gentleman, "Scott used to consult William Erskine and other friends about his

poems while writing them." "That's vera like a mon that's frighted to gang by He had married Jane Grey because he loved himsel, and needs somebody to lead him. Eh, mon, neither William Erskine, nor any critic beneath the sun, shall ever lead me! If I hae no sense eneuch to mak and mend my ain wark, no other hands or heads shall meddle wi' it; I want nae help, thank God, neither from books nor men!"

THE MYSTERIES OF SLEEP.

The mystery of sleep is one with which we have greatest lift without moving the wheel in the least. become familiar through long acquaintanceship. We But that was what her son could not do. He forget that it is as great a marvel as death. More said. had no memories of days older than himself; and than that, the experience of seeing gorgeous pageants came down the road, swinging her long arms, and spread before us in these periods of quiescence, of whistling gaily. being delighted by sweet sounds and sights, or terrified by goblins, is a calmly accepted one. Dreams, like the growth of the plant from the seed, are not often food for wonderment, simply because we are so accustomed to them. The National Review, in considering the general subject, draws attention to the hop into the buggy, and take the lines." fact that the dreamer in possession of all his senses

In that most famous vision upon record, Jacob saw sired, indeed, to be informed of his; but she the ladder upon which angels ascended and descended. The dreamer in the harvest-field of Canaan, three

"Behold! we were binding sheaves together, and lo! my sheaf arose and stood upright; and behold!

Dives in his palace beholds new tables spread with a thousand dainties; Lazarus sees the very dogs that

Shakespeare, in the vision of Clarence, presents a succession of pictures to the eye, and when Dido "I'm glad I happened along." dreams of her lost Æneas, it is to the sense of vision

Now, what must be the dreams of those who have been blind from birth? Since they have never beheld a real object, how shall the brain conceive of

It is clear that whatever comes to the blind man

people, and dreams quite as often as they do. "I often dream," said a blind boy, "about people. his voice; I am in the places where we used to be before he died." "But how do you know you are in a certain place?"

the fields; I tread on the grass, I smell the fresh "If I dream," said a blind man, "that I am in the

size of the room, the length of it."

own old place where I work." "You sit on your own box, then?" "Yes, I touch it, and if the dream goes on, I get | tragic voice.

"When I dream," said a blind tramper, "it's jest | ing, and no one answered. the same as I am now; I dream of hearing and touch-And there she lay, dead-and the boy felt that house-I knew it was hers by the sound of my foot he smiled no more. if he had but drawn nearer to her, and warmed in it, and whether it was clean or dirty. As we sat a-talking, I heard a voice at the door, and I said,— | ventured. "Bless me, if that aint John!" But he took no

tasted the sweetness of being "like other sons with by the sleeve; it was his shirt-sleeve, I felt, and I missed them"-

was half-afraid of him, and surprised he was out weeks before his time."

rest of the world, that in dreams the senses wake to My good fellow, do something for me, if you can." keener, swifter intelligence; his visions exist as a mere string of more or less vague and faint impres-

Having never seen a definite image, he cannot comprehend one, even in his waking moments. Hence arises a tendency to scepticism, which leads him to as I can to the next station," said McCluskie, whipdoubt the existence of things he cannot touch, as in ping up his horses. "You poor, unfortunate soul! the case of Nicholas Saunderson, one of the most But bear up, and you'll live till we reach a doctor." gifted blind men that ever lived.

"If," said he, as he lay dying, "you would have me his groans. Alternately he called upon his patron saints, and reproached himself for his theft. believe in a God, I must feel Him."

"Touch, then, your own frame," was the answer, 'and find God there in His noble handiwork."

"All this," said the dying man, "may be enough him.

For the Companion.

ONE THING NEEDFUL.

Soft came His words in music through the gloom.

In Martha's house the weary Master lay, Spent with His faring through the burning day. The busy hostess bustled through the room On household cares intent; and at His feet The gentle Mary took her wonted seat.

Cumbered about much serving, Martha wrought, Her sister listening as the Master taught, Till something fretful an appeal she made:

Doth it not matter that on me doth fall The burden? Mary helpeth not at all. Master! command her that she give me aid."

Ah! Martha, Martha, that art full of care, And many things thy needless troubles share,"-Thus with the love that chides, the Master spake-"One thing alone is needful,—that good part Hath Mary chosen from her loving heart, And that part from her I shall never take."

One thing alone we lack! Our souls, indeed, Have fiercer hunger than the body's need. Oh! happy they that look in loving eyes! The harsh world round them fades; the Master's voice In sweetest music bids their souls rejoice, And wakes an echo there that never dies!

London, England. BRAM STOKER.

ABASHED.

A man, full-statured and at his greatest strength, naturally feels himself superior physically to all wom-Hogg's method of composing poetry was to think en, and it gives him a sensation as if he were forced to travel far down into the valley of humiliation, when some splendidly endowed Amazon makes him come off "second best" in a test of strength.

> Young Mr. B- was quite an athlete, and absurdly vain of his fairly good physique and rather unusual strength.

> His vanity would have received a most serious shock if any one had suggested a possibility of there being in existence a woman whose physical strength was equal to his own.

> His vanity was not lessened by the fact that he was a "lion" among the ladies, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to "show off" before them.

> Mr. B-drove into the country one afternoon in company with two young ladies, upon whom he was anxious to make a favorable impression.

Recent rains had made the roads muddy, and a back wheel of the buggy sank quite to the hub in a very me mos' skeered to death! I jest rolled over an' muddy place in the road, and the horse came to a standstill. Here was a chance for Mr. B--- to display his athletic powers.

"Pray, keep seated, ladies," he said; "I will lift the wheel from the mud." He jumped lightly and gracefully from the buggy,

and, at the risk of ruining his gloves, grasped the spokes of the wheel, and gave a confident pull. The wheel did not move an inch. Mr. B-pulled again, harder than before.

up a good deal, and made them very red, but the

wheel remained immovable. "Awfully sticky mud," said Mr. B-, gaspingly. "Let us get out," said one of the ladies.

"I am afraid you'll have to," said Mr. B-, great ly embarrassed. The ladies alighted, but the horse was a little stubborn, and would not or could not pull the buggy from

"I'll get a rail and a stick of wood, and raise it," he But at that moment, a tall, angular-looking girl

"Stuck?" she said, taking in the situation at a

glance. "Yes," said Mr. B--. "Why don't you take that wheel by the spokes, and

h'ist it out of there?" "Easier said than done," replied Mr. B---. "Pshaw!" was the contemptuous reply, "you just

"It's no use," said Mr. B-; "I have tried that," but, thinking to abash the young woman, Mr. P --jumped into the buggy, and took the reins.

The girl seized the wheel firmly, straightened herself, and up came the wheel with her. "Touch up your critter," she said, still holding the wheel.

The "critter" was touched up, and in a moment the buggy was on hard ground. "There you are," said the girl, coolly.

Mr. B-'s friends giggled, Mr. B- blushed, and stammered out,-

"Well-I-I-much obliged-I'm sure." "Oh, that's all right," was the good-humored reply.

PUNISHED.

Practical jokes are in such questionable taste that we can but rejoice when the perpetrator of one famous guard on the Dublin and Boyle coach, some I dream of my brother. I know he is there; I hear fifty years ago. He was known all over Ireland, and town. He was a very poor man with a large family. many are the stories that cling to his memory. On account of his habit of travelling all day, he gener-"The impression of the place is with me; I feel I ally provided himself, before the morning's start, seemed inexpressibly grateful to me "for saving asked his father, who sat beside the bed, gray am there. Sometimes I dream that I am walking in with some eatables, which he stowed away in the

> A tourist one day discovered this small store, and | tionate words and way, fell into the habit of speaking when the guard had alighted at a station where the of her as "my good little girl." Thus we became mail was to be delivered, he quietly purloined and great friends. "Oh, the sound tells me pretty well. I am in my grin on the countenance of the tourist. He at once her from gathering a bushel of hickory nuts to be opened the boot and discovered the theft.

"Where are those sandwiches?" he called, in a The tourist could not restrain himself from smil-

"Gentlemen, where are those sandwiches?" cried ing. The last dream I had was about a blind chap McCluskie, in a tone animated by what seemed genu- he feared Sadie was dying. I hastened to her bedthat's in prison just now. I went into his wife's ine fright. The tourist's attention was arrested, and side, and found that it was even so.

"Reason!" shouted McCluskie. "Sir, if you had life.

"'Halloo!' said I, 'is that you?' And I took him for the keeper of — to use for cur dogs, and if you my," she gasped, and in a few moments my good lit-

"Oh mercy! mercy! How my throat burns! Wa. ter! water!" cried the tourist, his imagination sup-It is, therefore, not with the blind man as with the plying a thousand pangs. "Oh, what a fool I was!

"Did you eat them all?" inquired McCluskie, solemnly, looking at his victim with a world of simu-

lated compassion.

"Every crumb! Oh, how I wish I hadn't!" "Then all I can do for you is to drive along as fast As they bowled along, the victim rent the air with

When the station was finally reached, McCluskie deposited him at a physician's door, and there left

McCluskie for a long time kept his own counsel in between His handiwork and God? The world eter- regard to that day's occurrence, but it happened. nal! Time, matter, space, are but a point. God of some years after, that he came face to face with his

victim in Dublin. "Do you not know me?" cried the man, in a trans. port of delight.

"I-I think I've met you before," said McCluskie. retreating a step. With the lapse of time, he had in some degree repented of having taken so severe a measure.

"I can never forget you," continued the man, with warmth. "It was your sympathy and encouragement which upheld me, when I was not only poisoned, but nearly frightened to death. Believe me, I shall always remember you."

ONLY A ---.

A little coolness and courage, combined with careful investigation, will generally reveal the most mysterious and dreadful "harnt" with which any house is tormented. An old trapper tells how he brought to light an unseen and mysterious power.

"Fur my part," he said, "I never did go anything on yer ghost, or no other kind of a harnt; but I tell yew, boys, I did have a powerful skeer wunst." "How was that?" asked a solemn man, with long

"Wall, ye see, it was a night 'bout a year ago.] was layin' in my cabin up on the Little B'ar River. I woke up 'bout midnight, an' got to thinkin' 'bout my pardner, Grizzly Smith, as died in that very cabin the year afore-'twas jest a year that very night. Putty soon I felt somethin' touch the blankets kind o' soft like." "Rats," said a bystander.

soon I felt somethin' like a hand a-squeezin' my legs. I felt real skeert then, for I knowed there wasn't another human bein' in forty mile o' there. I was sleepin' in Grizzly's blankets too; so I sez,-"Is that you, Smith?"

"No, sir; there aint no rats in them parts. Putty

"And was it?" said the long-haired man. "No, they wa'n't nuthin' of the kind, but a kind of a buzzin' noise. Then I felt somethin' clammy tech me again."

"Rats," said the rat man again. "I tole ye ther wa'n't no rats up there!" growled the trapper. "I 'low I was badly skeert then. The cold sweat dropped off'n me.

"Then the buzzin' begun agin. Then somethin' touched my other hand." "You say 'rats' agin an' you'll be sorry!" said the trapper, ominously. "Wall, gents, it got so I couldn't

stand it any longer. I jest jerked them blankits off'n me, jumped up and struck a light." "And what did you see?" "Why, jest nuthin' at all, but a big rattlesnake, an'

laughed." "And the snake!" asked the crowd.

"The snake? Wall, I disremember what-I guess it wriggled away. I don't believe in ghosts."

COUNTRY LYCEUMS.

The country lyceum is sometimes made the subject A third and mighty effort puffed Mr. B-'s cheeks of ridicule. Its would be poets and orators are laughed at, and the subjects its members discuss are sometimes absurd and not well-timed. But great things have often come from these laughed at speak. ers and orators in country literary societies or lyceums. Men who have made their first speeches in these lyceums have sometimes made their last in the the mud. Mr. B-took off his coat, and gave his halls of Congress. Writers who have come timidly and tremblingly forward to read their first essays in little country school-rooms have had the world for their stage, and its delighted people for their hearers, in after years.

> Every school district should have a literary society for the long winter evenings. It is a never-failing source of enjoyment, and good is sure to come from

> Almost every neighborhood has readers and thinkers who can discuss clearly and intelligently all topics of general interest.

Every neighborhood has an organ and singers, and if the music is not very good and the singing not good at all, a desire may at least be awakened for something better.

A taste for good reading, good music, good stories. good singing and for good in all things has been created in country lyceums. Ridiculous things may be said and done, but a very wise man once wrote, "He who hath not a dram of

folly in his mixture, hath pounds of much worse matter in his composition." The amusing things of life play a most important part in bringing about general happiness and general good. Every man and every woman is better for a

hearty laugh once in a while. A literary society for young people, and particularly young people living in quiet rural districts, should always have an element of fun in it; and happily this element is seldom missing in such socie-

A CHILD'S GRATITUDE.

A physician tells the following very pathetic story of the gratitude of a little German girl:

I was called one day in October to the family of a German who lived on a small place three miles from One of the many children, a boy of ten years, had the diphtheria. I attended the boy and he recovered.

brother Jimmy's life." She always spoke of me as "the good doctor who saved Jimmy's life," and I in turn, won by her affec-

"But how can you judge as to the size or length of ate the package of sandwiches. When McCluskie re- Not long afterward Sadie herself had diphtheria, turned, his suspicions were roused by a suppressed for which she was very sorry, because it prevented

given to me for saving Jimmy's life. Her disease ran ominously, but at last she seemed convalescent, and one day her father called to say that Sadie was much better, and that I need not call

She knew me. Beside her in the bed under the "Ah-any particular reason for inquiring?" he ragged quilt, she had a small bag of hickory nuts, gathered by her the day before at the expense of her

brought along a package of poisoned sandwiches, She held out the bag,-"For saving brother Jimtle girl was gone.