



12-29-1871

The Waterville Mail (Vol. 25, No. 27): December 29, 1871

Maxham & Wing

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/waterville_mail



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#), [American Popular Culture Commons](#), [Journalism Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Maxham & Wing, "The Waterville Mail (Vol. 25, No. 27): December 29, 1871" (1871). *The Waterville Mail (Waterville, Maine)*. 435.

https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/waterville_mail/435

This Newspaper is brought to you for free and open access by the Waterville Materials at Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Waterville Mail (Waterville, Maine) by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby.

A STRANGER IN THE PEW.

Poor little Bessie! She tossed back her curls, and, though she is often the sweetest of girls, she was something she couldn't and wouldn't endure. "Twice the meanest, most hypocritical act, she was sure. And a thing, she declared, that she never would do: To go to a church where one didn't belong. Then walk down the aisle like the best in the throng, and seat one's self plump in another one's pew."

Humph! Didn't her father own his seat and out, and didn't they fill it up full, just about, when mamma and papa, and herself and the boys, were seated? And didn't their boots make a noise in moving about to make room for a stranger? And wasn't it cool, with the brimstone face, to expect at each hymn to find out the place where one didn't belong, but there wasn't much danger?

With such feelings at heart, and their print on her face, last Sunday Mrs. Bessie hitched out of her "place" to make room for a girl, very shabby and thin, who had stood in the aisle till mamma asked her in. The poor little thing tried her best not to crowd; and Bessie, forgetting her place, and the place she was in, slipped from her dress into a nap.

From which she awakened by crying aloud. Poor Bessie sat upright, with cheeks all aflame. At sleeping in church, and we felt for her shame; but Bessie, now gentle as gently could be, took the hand of the girl, and the girl in the pew, and with her out of the church with a smile. That she through the tears in her eyes all the while, and brightened her face with a radiant new.

"Good-by," whispered Bessie at parting, "and mind our pew's forty-five, with a pillar behind." Then she stole to her mother. "Oh, mother, I dreamed such a curious dream! I was no wonder I screamed. I thought I was sitting in church in this dress, with a girl like a beggar-child right in my pew. We were sitting alone in our seat, just as we were. And I felt more ashamed than you ever could guess."

"When, all in a moment, the music grew loud, and it came flooding a beautiful glow. They were angels, I knew, for they joined in the song, and all of them seemed in the church to belong. Slowly and brightly they sailed through the air; the rays from the windows streamed crimson and blue, and lit them in turn as their forms glided through; I could feel their soft robes passing over my hair."

"One came to my side. Very sadly she said, 'There's a stranger in here.' I lifted my head, and looked at the poor shabby girl with disdain. 'This is not she,' said the angel; 'the naughty and vain are the strangers at church.' She is humble and true. Then I cried aloud, and the minister spoke, and just as they floated away I awoke, and there sat that dear little girl in my pew!"

—MAYE WOOD, in *Harper's Magazine* for January—(Illustrated).

FIFTEEN YEARS.

BY VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND.

"Strange!" "What is that you are saying, Ned?" "Bessie Drew turned and asked this question, going over the stile in the stone-wall, just a glimmer of an amused smile on her eyes and lips, but something in the tone which made you feel that the sayings of this "Ned," whoever he might be, possessed an interest for her. It was a summer afternoon, dipping toward sunset; such an afternoon as set Tenyson's poem of the "Lotus-Eaters" singing and dreaming among one's thoughts with its slow, delicious sweetness, until it might be, away off in the dim horizons of one's fancies, there were glimmering phantoms of a strange, shining beach, with a star-brown roll of waves upon the sands of the "melancholy, mild-eyed" faces that gathered around the keel of the mariners. Through the still sunshine, there was the soft, low humming of insects, and bright fishing of small wings—bugs and butterflies, and sometimes a whisper of winds, so hushed you might have thought it the far-off response of worshippers at prayer.

This Bessie Drew, turning to speak as she went over the stile, seemed the fit product of such an afternoon—the perfect blossom of its warmth and glow and richness. She was young—not out of her teens—and so pretty, as a woman would put it. She was brown in hair and eyes and complexion, with sparkle and gloss and glow. There was such a dainty fish about the girl. Nature had done her part well from the beginning, but such matrons as this Bessie Drew are not formed by nature alone. Simple and unaffected as the girl was in herself, you knew with the first glance, that culture and training had had a great deal to do with making her just the bewitching embodiment of youth and grace which she seemed when she turned, going over the stile, that summer afternoon, and asked, "What is that you are saying, Ned?"

"Did I speak out loud, Bessie? I fancied I was thinking only my own thoughts." "I've no doubt. You fancy that very often. Ned, when you break into your silence with a thunder-clap of a word or two, as you did just now. What is 'strange,' I wonder!"

She looked around her for an answer, on the green, fresh meadows in the happy sunshine, on the hot sandy road, like a great leathery yellow felt stretching up among the pastures, and on a boy with a big head, and a mat of brick-red hair, and bare, dirty feet, lying in the cool, damp grass by the horse-trough on one side of the road, catching flies there. Nothing very strange in all that, certainly, to Bessie Drew's eyes.

"I meant it was 'strange,' if you will have me paraphrase my monosyllable," answered Ned Ashleigh, not altogether graciously, "that when God set about making this planet, he didn't finish it up better, and not leave things so much at loose ends as he has done!"

"Oh, Ned!" exclaimed Bessie, a little shocked at some irreverence in this speech, and yet struck with something fresh and strong in it too. There always was a relish of "Atter salt" in Ned Ashleigh's talk, wholly unlike the common-place chatter and flatteries of the west of her admirers, if Ned really did belong to this class; she was not quite certain; she thought he did, sometimes.

"I shock you, do I? Well now, look at that miserable biped lying down there, dirty and half clothed and half starved. It isn't his fault that he is in the world, you know, and yet what a wretched tug of it he has had so far; and what kind of a chance is there for his future? What is he to do with himself—to make of his life? It would have been better for him if he had never been born; and it seems to me that is something which can honestly be said of more than half of God's creatures. Looked at on one side it may be doubted whether the world is such a grand success after all!"

He was a young man who said this, just out of college—a rather tall, broad-breasted young fellow, with good features of a Saxon mould, and gray eyes that smiled pleasantly once in a while, and long lightish hair—nothing very remarkable about the youth's appearance, you see, and yet he would, anywhere, I think, have been taken for a gentleman, at least in culture and in good breeding. As for the inward, essential courtesies, it takes time to find and prove them. Ned Ashleigh had a good many virtues, counter-balanced by a good many faults. He was cynical and satirical, and people to whom he did not choose to make himself agreeable, were apt to be a little afraid of him. But he had wonderful powers of attraction when he chose to exert them, and those who knew him best liked him most, and stoutly affirmed there was a fine, rich nature hidden within the acid rind of the young man's disposition. Prosperity, after all, was responsible for his indolence and luxurious tastes; and there is no fee so deadly subtle as she is, with her fair face and her song of the sirens. She had beamed on

Ned Ashleigh from the first hour of his life. He was the only child of parents who idolized him, and did all they could to spoil him with all sorts of petting and indulgence.

There was some sort of connection between the Ashleighs and Drews, which had brought Ned and Bessie together frequently from their childhood, and in consequence of which a certain cousinly freedom and intimacy had always existed between them.

Bessie Drew thought Ned marvellously bright and original; enjoyed the flash and fencing of his satire; it stung her own wit into new life, and was so much more enjoyable than the thin sour gabble which passed current in society.

The two were the best of friends; indeed Ned Ashleigh was always his best, most genial self in the presence of this young girl, who was puzzled and a little hurt to find the impression which this critical, fastidious youth made on the majority of people; but she always felt back on the soft cushion of the thought that most folks could not understand Ned.

As for Bessie, she had her turn equally at petting and spoiling, but these had not turned the sweet cream of her nature. She had one that, like doves,

"Flew straightway to the light."

She, too, was an only and idolized child—her father a wealthy merchant, who had recently purchased a summer residence at Nutlands, a little drowsy village in a green lap of the hills, less than twenty miles from where an arm of the sea pushed inland on the Massachusetts coast.

Here, Ned Ashleigh had come on a visit to his connections, to hunt and ride and sail, in short—to enjoy himself to the top of his bent, and I was going to say, to flirt with Bessie Drew; but that would not be just true, although the two were constantly together, indoors and out, in walks and drives, reading poetry and bits of philosophy, such sparkle and fire of jests, striking off the brighter from the grave moods which scarcely seemed to belong to their youth; but all this certainly was not flirting.

Bessie Drew turned and looked at the boy who had inspired Ned's criticism on creation and its author.

The creature had risen now, and was staring at the two, out of a pair of big, lightish eyes, as odd and unattractive a human biped as you can well imagine, with his large mouth wide open, his mop of red-brick hair, and his skin tanned to a yellowish brown.

Bessie wanted to laugh, and then was ashamed of herself for the impulse. Ned Ashleigh turned and looked too, and the eyes of the three met. What an immense contrast there was between the elegant, high-bred young man and woman, and the big lumpy figure in its rags on the grass! What a different world this planet is, to the people who inhabit it, and who live so near that they jostle each other, breathe the same air, the same ray of sunshine striking across them, and the same kindly earth opening at last to take them all into its brown soil warmth, with a hush for all the pains and heart-aches, softer than a mother's!

"He is a text for a sermon, isn't he?" asked Ned, lowering his voice a little—he had been speaking in rather a raised tone.

"Yes a powerful one. Have you any money with you, Ned?"

The young man drew out his pocket-book. He was always generous—when he thought of it.

"How much will you have?"

"Whatever is convenient—two dollars at most."

"There are two of them,"—placing the note in her hand.

Bessie Drew went back over the stile to the boy lying on the grass; and Ned, leaning with graceful indolence on the stone wall, watched the two.

"What is your name?" asked the girl, and her voice was soft and sweet—such a vision of grace and loveliness might have stepped out of the fair purple vapors of the sunset. The boy gazed at her with drooped under-lip and amazed eyes; whatever impression, whatever aesthetic sense was in him, the vision of that girl must appeal to them.

For a few moments the boy seemed quite too dazed to reply to her question; when, however, he had gathered his scattered wits, the answer was to the point.

"Dick Hackett."

"Well, Dick, what are you doing here?"

"I came out to look for work."

Not a bad voice, either, though it was a little gruff. Catching flies, however, by a horse-trough, in the heat of a summer afternoon, was hardly the liveliest way for Dick Hackett to succeed in his quest. That struck Bessie; and Ned, too, probably, leaning against the stone wall and enjoying this scene in his lazy, amused way.

"Here is some money for you, Dick, to help you along until you find the work. If you take my advice you will set about doing that at once," and she pressed the note into the soiled paw which, it may reasonably be suspected, had never held such a sum before.

"Thank you, ma'am," answered the boy, staring at the giver and then at the money.

"Good-bye," said Bessie, with a smile and a graciousness that would have fascinated any of her cavaliers.

To her surprise the boy rose up. He must have had some native instinct of politeness at bottom, for he made her a bow, so awkward that it was really grotesque.

"Good-bye, ma'am," he said.

Ned Ashleigh afterward told Bessie Drew he would have given a ten-dollar bill to have indulged in a hearty guffaw at that precise moment, but he was a gentleman—at least so much of one that not a muscle of his face moved.

So the two went down through the pastures, in their youth and grace, like beings from another sphere, and left the boy watching them by the horse-trough, in the sunset, with his lips apart, and some thought awake in the big, light eyes under the red-brick hair.

Dick Hackett's story can be told in a few words; pitiful as it is, it is common enough:

His father was drowned at sea before the boy could remember. His mother slipped out a little later, and left the child homeless and friendless in a great city. In one way and another he had managed to mine and worm his way up into his fifteenth year. It was the life of a boy down among the lowest strata of humanity in the city—black boots, selling

newspapers, clearing pavements—doing anything to keep the soul God gave him in some kind of a body.

Dick Hackett had taken a strange notion to go off into the country this summer and try his luck among the farmers. It was rather singular—for hot sidewalks, and the roar and crowd of great cities, have a wonderful attraction for his class; but the thought of great, shadowy trees, and wild, cool fields, enticed him from his old haunts, and so, doing chores for the farmers, and taking his pay out mostly in meals, and lodgings in barn-lofts, he had made his way out to Nutlands, still in quest of work.

Dick Hackett had heard every word of Ned Ashleigh's speech that afternoon—the boy had quick senses of sight and sound.

Its meanings, too, had penetrated to that slow brain of his. He could not, for his life, have put them in language; but they kept working and working in the silence, as seeds quicken in the dark and stillness of the mould—seeds scattered by swift winds or careless hands.

The vaporous purples of sunset had faded and the dews were falling, before the boy gathered up his big bundle of overgrown limbs from the grass by the horse-trough. There are hours in some human lives which are like great pivots, on which all our destinies turn. Such an hour had come now to Dick Hackett by the horse-trough. He knew what his past had been, and that the young man crossing the stile had told only the hard, bare truth about it; he knew, too, what sort of a doom had been pronounced on his future. That woke up something strong, aggressive, defiant in his soul. The words seemed to shake and sting him. He would not have his life a misery and a failure. He did not say this, but he felt it no less, because the dumb ache and restlessness could not have got themselves into intelligible speech.

But he drew long, hard breaths, and looked his big fingers together, as he went up the road in the brown twilight, in his loneliness and rags and dirt.

The soul behind the light blue eyes was awake at last, and spurring and stinging the wanderer into new thoughts and purposes.

It was days afterward, and the two-dollar note which had been such a godsend, had dwindled frightfully before Dick Hackett found any work among the farmers; but it came at last, and all the while the words of Ned Ashleigh kept ringing and ringing through the boy's brain.

Fifteen years had passed since that summer afternoon when Bessie Drew, crossing the stile, turned to gaze at the boy lying by the horse-trough in the sunshine.

This time it was a midsummer night, with unveiled faces of stars away off in dark blue skies, and a full moon amongst them, holding her state, solemn and lonely and beautiful, as moons have been from the beginning.

Two men paced the deck of an ocean steamer that summer midnight. The vessel was one of the finest and fastest of the line. She had made an unusually rapid voyage through the blanket of days and nights, and, in a couple more, there was every prospect that she would come in sight of land.

Now, all around the ocean opened its great heart to the still, white passion of the moon; nothing possessed the sea but that wide, silver glory, and in it the old, hoary thing rested, hushed, transfigured, holy in its pulses throbbing in a soft rapture, as though they had forgotten forever the call of the winds, the wrath of the storm.

Perhaps both of those passengers pacing the deck, when all the rest had sought their berths, thought something of this sort, for they occasionally stood still, and gazed upon the night, or down on the entranced waves; yet the men were evidently strangers, for beyond a touching of hats, the merest formality, they never spoke to each other.

They were youngish men, both of them. If there were any difference of years, you would have been puzzled to say which was the older.

Yet these two were totally unlike in face and figure. One was tallish and slender, with a light colored, heavy beard, and an unmistakable air of a man of the world, of culture and breeding, in his looks and movements.

The other was some inches shorter and a good deal stouter. He looked like a man—which is something better than looking a mere gentleman, after all. There was something, too, sturdy, honest, self-helpful about this passenger. He had square, rather heavily moulded features, and pleasant, shrewd, gray eyes, and thick, reddish hair and beard.

Well, there is no use going around the facts: one of these men was Ned Ashleigh, and the other Dick Hackett. One was returning from a long, continental tour, a little sated and disgusted with travel; and the other, from a first business trip, out of which he had managed to gripe a couple of days for Scotland, and make a breathless sort of visit to the Tower, and Hyde Park, and the British Museum.

As for Ned Ashleigh, all these years had been years of travel, of culture, of dilettantism to the young man. He had lounged and luxuriated most elegantly along the summer gardens of his life. He had been a graceful figure—it would hardly be fair to say anything more than that, with his passion for art, with his aesthetic culture, with his delight in study, with his fine social gifts.

But, after all, when you come to the heart and core of the matter, what had this man, Ned Ashleigh, been making of his life—what work had he done—what good had he achieved in this world, where the Eternal Powers set him for some task which he was to find out and see that he accomplished?

He had no aim in life, except the rather ignoble one of enjoying himself—in graceful, intellectual forms, it is true, but with all his fine, critical tastes and his culture and ideals, self was the pivot on which all his actions turned; and this selfishness was slowly corroding his heart and soul.

He showed this in his relations with women—with one woman especially, whom he still thought more of than all the rest of her sex—and that was Bessie Drew. In all these years the girl had not married. Ned Ashleigh, in his secret soul, knew the reason why; it would have smote his heart with a terrible pang had she done so; yet he was so indolent, and he loved his own freedom so well, that he allowed the one woman of his heart's election to waste away the fragrance of her beautiful youth without making her his wife. Not that Bessie Drew was one of the moping, melancholy Ma-

rianna type of heroines—not she! She had blossomed into a fine and gracious womanhood, and the sweet face held still all the charm of its girlhood—for women like Bessie Drew do not grow old early.

But Ned Ashleigh had been the love and ideal of the girl's young heart, and it was a loyal one. The two were the best of friends—corresponded often during their long absences—and the thought of Bessie Drew's welcome home was perhaps the keenest joy to which Ned Ashleigh was looking forward on his return to his native shores; but he was by no means positive that their mutual relations would be changed by any act of his. This uncertainty was a cruel wrong to Ned Ashleigh's better self—a crueler one to her who had guarded her precious secret all these years with a woman's pride and reticence. Yet Ned Ashleigh plumed himself on his high honor, on his lofty ideals, on a life unsold before God and man.

Dick Hackett, pacing the deck that summer midnight, glanced up occasionally at the tall, handsome stranger when the two crossed each other, and the moonlight struck full upon them, and suddenly he said to himself: "I have seen that face before—I am sure of it."

Three or four times afterward Dick Hackett glanced a little curiously at the face of his companion, when it came within his range, and then, all of a sudden, the whole thing broke upon him—the summer's afternoon, the wide, warm brown air, the hum of insects, and the face of the girl, as it turned back on the stile to gaze at him; he saw the smile in the brown eyes, and the flush of the sunset in the brown luster of the hair.

The hour had struck in Dick Hackett's life at that moment. No question that his native forces and energies would, sooner or later, have made something out of the ragged, half-starved boy catching flies by the horse-trough that summer afternoon, but the talk of those few minutes had changed his whole life. That led to question of Ned Ashleigh's: "What is he to do with himself—what is he to make of his life?" echoed perpetually through Dick Hackett's soul, and stung and spurred him, and would give him no rest.

Well, he had a tug of it; only God and himself would ever know just how hard. First, it was the fight for bread, and some kind of standing room in the world; and then to make something of himself, to come out of that shell of ignorance, awkwardness, and general boresomeness in which his hard fortune had buried him from the beginning. Fifteen years and the results told for themselves. Step by step Dick Hackett had fought over the ground and won his way. He had no plumes, nor badge, nor titles of any sort to show at the end. He had risen from one position of labor to another, until by dint of shrewdness and pluck, and not in the least by any sort of good luck, he had become "one of the head clerks in a large commercial house, in whose interest he had just made a hasty trip to London, taking the place of the younger partner, whom a sudden illness had, at the last moment, detained at home."

Everything, you see, had been eminently prosaic and practical in the life of this Dick Hackett; indeed, he himself was this in his cast of mind; not, however, without a little crystal fountain of sentiment and poetry hidden somewhere within him.

He gazed now with a new interest at his silent fellow passenger pacing the deck absorbed in his own thoughts. What a debt, he felt, Dick Hackett, owed to this solitary stranger, but of the fullness of his heart, he would have liked to go forward and say to this Ned Ashleigh, to whom he had never spoken, who-name, even, he did not know: "If they were hard words, and if they hurt, yet I bless you for them, for they were a lever that lifted me out of the mire and darkness of my youth, and helped to make whatever of manhood there is in me to-day."

But Dick Hackett did not speak, and when Ned Ashleigh went below at last, he wondered a little in a vague way, what sort of man he had left pacing the deck in the solitary moonlight.

"Man overboard!"

The dreadful cry swelled above the roar, and the steady rush of the waves against the sides of the vessel, and every heart seemed to stand still at the sound. There was a rush of crew and passengers to the forward part of the vessel, where the accident had taken place.

To this day Ned Ashleigh cannot tell how it happened. He was leaning far over the guards when it transpired; a kind of numb faintness must have seized him—at very rare intervals he had been accustomed to these from his childhood—he lost his footing, everything about seemed whirling into a kind of black daze of death; the steamer lunged on one side and the next thing Ned Ashleigh knew, cold, and salt and hungry the waves were gulping him down.

He battled with them a few moments; then, as his strength gave way, and he felt the strong, live monsters of billows rise and drag him down with a shout that drowned his last cry to God, something grasped him and told him to hold on and take care, and afterward everything was blank.

They lowered a boat—they threw out ropes—in a moment more they would have been too late, and both the exhausted swimmers sucked down by the white lips of the sea; but with a last effort, the one who had sprung overboard seized the rope—he held on, and the sailors were strong and swift; he was dragged into the life-boat, and with him the man he had gone to save, and a wild shout from the great breathless crowd on the steamer rolled out into the face of the storm, and the winds seemed to stand still a moment and listen.

To this day Dick Hackett cannot tell you clearly how it happened. He only knows that he caught a glimpse of the face in the waves and knew it, and the next moment he was amongst them. He was a strong swimmer, or he never would have lived in those waves and dragged that other life out of it.

All that day, and for two that followed, the steamer was caught in the midst of one of the heaviest storms of the year. Ned Ashleigh lay in his berth, too much exhausted to move, but not to think; and he thought to more purpose, too, than he had ever done in his life before. How small and barren, and shrivelled it seemed to him, since he had faced death there under the waves. What was his indolent, graceful loitering through existence worth?

His fine culture, his passion for art, his taste

in all æsthetic directions, what had they done for the world, what even to himself, when it came to any broad, solid, helpful manhood, such as God wanted in the vineyard of his laborers?

How mean and false and selfish his whole conduct toward Bessie Drew looked to the man now. He almost wished he could die, to be rid of the terrible remorse and self-flaunting which pursued him, as he lay in his berth, listening to the storm outside, that, in its wrath, tossed the waves into mountains, and shook the massive ribs of the great steamer.

At last Ned Ashleigh came out of the bitter remorse and despair of his mood into something humbler and better than he had ever been in his life before. God had given this back to him at the last moment, and with it his help it should not "copy fair his past."

The old lounging, the self-indulgence, the dilettantism should be gone forever.

Then there was Bessie Drew—God bless her! What was he to do with that sweetness, and nobleness and faith? But he would atone for all at last, if a life's love and devotion could do it.

One day the man who had saved Ned Ashleigh's life came to the latter's berth. Dick Hackett had been confined to his state-room, also, from the exhaustion of body and soul which followed the strain of that awful moment. The two men sat up, and saved, grasped each other's hands, and for a long time neither could speak.

"Ah, my friend, what shall I say for that debt which I owe you?" at last stammered Ned Ashleigh.

"Say that I owe you another!" answered Dick Hackett.

Ned Ashleigh stared up in vague bewilderment at the face of his friend, who felt the time had now come to speak.

It was a long while before Ned Ashleigh remembered, but at last, the stile, and the old horse-trough, and the ragged boy with his mop of red-brick hair, and the purplish vapors of sunset, all drifted back into his memory.

He gazed in dumb amazement at the strong, manly face and figure before him. What a transformation; greater than any magic of classic, or Eastern fable, those fifteen years had wrought in the boy that lay by the horse-trough in the summer sunset!

And again the years rose up with their solemn, reproachful faces, and rebuked the soul of Ned Ashleigh.

"It was all Bessie's doing! What will she say when I come to tell her?" murmured Ned Ashleigh.

"Yes, it was her doing, and the good, salt sting in your words," answered Dick Hackett.

Then Ned Ashleigh seized the hands of his friend—the preserver of his life: "Ah, my friend," he said, "in my mad pride and blindness that day, I pronounced a verdict on your life; and now, fifteen years later, that life, brought face to face with my own, shows yours the true, worthy, honorable one. You have lived the heroism, while I, weak, and vain, and paltry—God forgive me—have been just talking it!"

OUR TABLE.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE for December has nine illustrated articles. The following is the table of contents:

The Legend of the Mistletoe, Mrs. Mary M. Waggaman; Holland and the Hollanders, Junius Henri Browne; A Stranger in the Pew, Mrs. Mary E. Dodge; From a Barn to Drury Lane, S. S. Conant; The Danish West Indies, Mrs. Sarah B. Haynes; The Singer and the Song, Miss H. R. Hudson; A Visit to a Greenland Glacier, Dr. T. L. Hayes; The Mystery Case of my Friend and Acquaintance, Julian Hawthorne; A Good Investment, William J. Flagg; A Merry Christmas, Constance Fenimore; A Cup of Coffee, Schele De Vere; The Snow-bird, Dr. R. Castle; Is Alaska a Pay Investment? W. H. Ball; The Poetry of the Zodiac, Benson J. Lossing; The Reverend Sampson's Christmas Gift, Mrs. Frank McCarthy; Quiet Life in Some Danish Towns, Clemens Peterson; Misère, Saxer; The Little Slave, June E. Austin; The Growth of the Weather, Edward Howard; The Winter Wedding, Annie D. Green.

In its poetry, its stories, its illustrated papers, its miscellaneous articles, and its editorial departments, its number reaches the highest standard of excellence. Its twenty articles, eight are illustrated, the number containing altogether sixty-eight engravings.

Published by Harper Brothers, New York, at \$4.00 a year.

ARTHUR'S LADY'S HOME MAGAZINE, gives a new number for January, with illustrations and engravings being unusually fine. There are many excellent stories, and some well written papers on interesting subjects; "Pipsissewa Potts," begins her series of "Children's People," which will be found full of inherent quaintness, practical good sense, and quiet sarcasm, and "The Window Circle," "Evenings with the Poets," and "Current Literature" are all well filled.

Published by T. S. Arthur & Son, Philadelphia, at \$2 a year.

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR FOR JANUARY surpasses itself in pictorial and other attractions. We only repeat what has been said over and over again by the Press, when we say: "It is one of the best magazines for children in the world." Our little ones leap with delight at the opening of "The Children's Hour," a publication by T. S. Arthur & Son, of Philadelphia, at \$1.25 a year. 6 copies are sent for \$5. Liberal premiums are offered.

A MUSICAL TREAT.—Peters' Musical Monthly for January comes to us in a new dress. It is printed on thicker paper, and in every respect superior to its many predecessors. The selections are evidently made with great care, and it is really wonderful how few poor pieces appear among the hundreds that are given. Vol. IX, commences with the January number, price, 30 cents; or \$3 per year. The publisher offers 100 back numbers for \$1, and we advise all our Musical readers to take advantage of the offer.

Address, J. L. Peters, 599 Broadway, New York.

THE PHRENOLOGICAL JOURNAL for January is a well filled number, containing much spicy, vigorous, high toned reading, and makes a good beginning of the new year. We will not enumerate the contents, which are varied to suit different tastes. The usual number of illustrations are given.

Published by S. R. Wells, New York, at \$3 a year. Single numbers, 30 cts.

The Christian at Work says many persons feel that they are absorbed by their business and family obligations from many forms of more active Christian labor, but adds:

There is one method of an assault upon the works of the devil, which Christians can make, without turning aside one hair's breadth from their usual occupations. The mother need not leave her children, the clerk the counter, the mechanic his bench, to show by word and act, that they will have nothing to do socially with the profane and licentious, with drunkards and thieves, nor, above all, with those who tempt men and women over the precipice of ruin. Such discrimination requires rare courage and unselfishness; for many, whose lives are notoriously profligate, whose habits are known to be self-destructing and fatally contagious, stand high on the world's plane of social advantage. But it is an imperative duty to show such ones that character, not money, nor hollow gentility, nor popularity, nor any external qualification, renders a man fit to be received as a friendly

visitor. It is hypocrisy to denounce, intemperately, and then shake hands of welcome with a rum-seller. It is a cruel outrage, it is devilish indifference, to admit to the society of one's own family men, who destroy the happiness of other families by hideous, devouring lust; and the ignoring of fraud, whenever it is associated with high political positions, is an object-worshipping of the God of all iniquity. This field of work lies at the very hearthstone; the neglect of it is a sin no engagements can excuse.

Mr. C. L. Bruce, who is not wont to talk at random, disputes the notion that young women are ever—or often—driven to a life of shame, because of inability to earn a livelihood. He says, in a communication to the N. Y. Tribune:

"No young woman, who can use her needle, need 'make shirts for twenty cents,' or 'walk the streets homeless and helpless.' Numberless families in city and country need seamstresses and nurses; they are willing to pay high wages, give them comfortable rooms, take care of them when sick, etc.; but the trouble is, the 'girl cursed with beauty' is too proud to live

