## CHRISTMAS COLUMN

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

They are ringing, they are ringing, Our merry Christmas bells, In the village, in the city, In the dale-church, o'er the fells.

Be our ways of life so varied, Be our fortunes poor or bright, Hand in hand with all our brothers, We are one at least to-night.

Nor the noble in his mansion, Nor the sovereign on his throne, Nor the beggar in his hovel Will enjoy themselves alone.

We all seek the kindly greeting Of some dear, familiar face; We all know that hermit feeling For to-night is out of place.

But one night! Why not for ever Should we bind the golden chain That shows man his poorest fellow Was not sent to earth in vain? That each sorrow hath a purpose,

That each gift hath an alloy, That ever finely balanced Are the scales of grief and joy, Spare a little, then, ye rich ones. From your laden coffers now; Bring to poverty a sun-ray, Bring a smile to sorrow's brow.

Take it gratefully, ye toilers, Toilers up earth's weary hill; 'Tis a green spot in your desert, 'Tis a good sprung from your ill.

Yes! be rich and poor united, 'Tis most grand in Heaven's sight, And a blessing, not earth's blessing, Is on all the world to-night! ASTLEY H. BALDWIN.

## Andrew Walter's Christmas Eve.

BY ROBERT MUDSON.

CHAPTER I. VOX POPULI.

If The whole town said, with scarcely a dissenting voice, that Andrew Walter's mistortunes, and this last misfortune in particular, were a judgment upon him. For, as the reader may have noticed, communities have usually much less difficulty in perceiving disasters to be judgments than they have in

perceiving prosperity to be a just reward. One might have been disposed to call the town a village had it not from time immemorial returned a member of Parliament. But, in the pride of that distinction, East Wykeham held itself far above villages.

We are not sure that the East Wykehamites are yet agreed as to which of their own sins it is that has called down the ludgment which has fallen upon them in the loss of their member by the new Reform bill. In fact, the great majority of the pure and incorruptible consider that by the disfranchisement of their borough a gross injustice has been done them, and that they have sustained a definite and calculable pecuniary loss for which they have an equitable claim for compensation from the

Should the reader be disposed to ask further, what manner of place is East Wykeham? we are sorry we cannot say it is pretty well, or pretty lively, or pretty clean, or indeed pretty anything, unless we say it is pretty nearly the embodiment of dullness and stupidity. It is a place that has fallen out of the track of modern improvements. When other towns subscribed for railways, East Wykeham petitioned against them, stuck to its canal, and now beholds with envy the main line that passes at eight miles distance, and with disgust its own slimy, weed-grown, deserted wharves. (East Wykeham is trying now to get up a branch line.) When that new-fangled, dangerous explosive called gas was discovered, East Wykeham stuck to oil and candles, by which alone to this night its streets are illuminated. (East Wykeham is negotiating now for a secondhand gasometer, retorts, etc., outgrown at the neighboring junction.) But it would have to be a very bad light indeed that would not be good enough to exhibit the contents of the High street windows, or the grass that grows

down the middle of the High street itself. The tradesmen, who are much given to standing at their doors and talking to each other, chuckle and rejaice over the extremely small sum it takes to keep their streets in good repair, and on the whole they don't ob-

ject to grass. As for society, there are the usual two docters, two lawyers (one of whom was never known to have a client), the vicar, two or three dissenting preachers, two grecers, two drapers, two tailors, and the rest; in all numbering a population, according to the last census, of we really cannot say precisely how

At any rate they have never been too few for the development among themselves of every known variety of evil speaking and uncharitableness; nor were they, as we began by saying, too many to agree in the case of Andrew Walter that his misfortunes were a judgment upon him, and that to sympathize with him would be little short of impious.

If he had not sown the wind, they argued, he would not have reaped the whirlwind. If he had brought up his boy better, as they, for example, had each of them brought up theirs he, having only one boy, surely might have done), he would not then have been

lamenting the lad's loss at sea. It was an established axiom at East Wykeham that going to sea was about equivalent to going to penal servitude. And though a pench of magistrates may be found here and there to give a man three weeks' hard labor fer picking up an apple, no one gets penal servitude if he has done absolutely nothing to deserve it. Andrew Walter, a man living on his own land, had sent his only son to sea. the excuse being that the boy had a liking for

it, and had no taste for farming. But East Wykeham knew better than to set any value on such an excuse as this. A lad living in an inland county clearly had no right to have a taste for the sea. To have such a taste showed a natural depravity of character, which a judi-cious father would have subdued with the proper number of stripes. And as he had not subdued it, it was only in the nature of things that he should hear in due time that the ship, the 'All is Well,' had gone down with all hands, and should see himself left without the one who should have been the prop of his age, and the help of his motherless young daughters after he should have gone.

Neither were the townsfolk pitiful as regarded that matter of the bond. He had much better have never learned to write at all than show such fatal facility in writing his name. What matter that it was his own brother for whom he had become bound Likely enough the brother might have paid his debts, and everybody had their due, if he had had his health. But he had never known what health was for years—a puny, sickly young man who never ought to have got married; and as a matter of course he had died deeply involved in his mill, and leaving wife and family quite unprovided for, whom people did say Andrew Walter had maintained ever since his brother's death, which, if true, was clearly reckless extravagance. Could any one wonder, reckoning up the loss he had on his brother's death, the expense ever since of maintaining the family, the cost of his son's vessel, and of the valuable cargo with which he had freighted her, that all these things rogether had found the end of his resources? The latest report, indeed, was that he had just failed to effect a further mortgage on his property; that the present mortgagee, who had given notice to foreclose at the end of the present quarter, could not be pacified or paid, and that there must be a sale.

'And so,' concluded Mr. Botley, the grocer, to Mr. Skinner, the draper (each of whom had a bill of a few shillings against poor Andrew Walter)—'and so it is one makes bad debts, and loses one's money by other folks' anlt, as doesn't care to work so hard for it.'

'Just so,' said Mr. Skinner. 'And no doubt we shall have our fine gentleman here in a few days,' remarked Mr. Botley again, 'to offer us half a crown in the pound.' 'And,' said Skinner, 'if he comes I shall be sure to give him a piece of my mind; I shall be sure to do it.'

> CHAPTER II. IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

Andrew Walter's house pleasantly overlooked the town, both house and inmates being happily litted above their neighbors' spite and unfriendliness. Though-not to be too hard upon the town-we will bear in mind that it it is not always the people who say the un-kindest words who do the unkindest deeds, and will hope that East Wykeham, too, should Andrew Walter ever have to ask it for bread, will at least not give him a stone.

If, as the winter day closed in, the reader could have walked up the well-kept gravelled path, defended by choice shrubs, and could have stood at the bright window, whose panes flashed beneath the firelight, this is what he would have seen inside as snug a room as he

could wish to look upon. First, a man squewhat past the middle age, well knit and sinewy, with a face kindly and pleasant, though not without lines of care, and at present full of perplexity. He sits with his elbow on his knee, and his chin upon his hand, looking steadily into the fire, in which he does not seem to read any clear answer to the question he is asking. This is Andrew

Next, a girl of about eighteen, but looking older and as if a premature responsibility had sobered her merry face. She sits at a table which is covered with evergreens, and is busy stitching ivy leaves on strips of cardboard which in a little while will be shaped into letters. This is Maggie, Andrew's eldest

Next, another girl, some four years younger. wonderfully like her sister, but more like her father. She, too, is busy constructing, with wire and string to help, a long rope or ropes of leafy green. This is Edith, the second

Last, the Mite; as Andrew often calls her, sadly, 'the widower's mite.' She is a wee maiden of only six years old, but persuades herself she, too, is usefully busy, with needle and thread, making a necklace of the scarlet

holly-berries. Her name is Lucy. The girls, it is to be noticed, are all in black, seemingly of the newest and deepest; and there seems to be but little speaking amongst

One could not look upon the man without eeling that he was a man of strong passions and affections; nor on the girls without feeling they were all in all to each other and to him.

Until within the last year the current of his ite had flowed smoothly and prosperously. He had had but one great sorrow—the loss of his wife; and that sorrow having befallen him when his little maid was born, had been softened by time, though not (and not to be) forgotten. Now, however, he was indeed in troubled waters. That town's talk about money matters and an impracticable mortgagee was in the main correct. He had, in one way or other, lost nearly all he had. And at his time of life it was hard to have to devise plans of keeping the wolf from the door. All kinds of pecuniary loss, loss of position, loss of comforts and luxuries, were, nevertheless, but deprivations of things he might hope to win back again; or, failing that, he could face the want of them with manly fortitude and

resignation. The one loss to which he could not bring himself to be submissive (being loss of that which no strength of arm or activity of brain could ever bring him back again) was the loss of his boy. 'The sea, indeed, shall give up its dead,' he said to himself, 'but not

He took from his pocket-book and read once more the account, cut out from a Calcutta newspaper, of the great catastrophe in the Hooghly which had bereaved him. It gave, as far as was known, the names of all vessels lost, with the port to which they belonged, the captain's name, and a brief description of the nature of the damage in each case. The entry in which he was interested read thus: -

All is Weil known. Kn.wp. Suppled C ew and known. Kn.wp. Wasler.

Now his son James had sailed from England not for Calcutta but Hong Kong, and it was

clear he must have encountered such terrible | or go out at once into the world and seek weather as had first driven him far out of his course, and, at the last, compelled him to run for the Hooghly, just at the time when that river was a vortex of destruction to every craft that entered it.

In addition to the particulars got from the newspapers, he had obtained, through the consular agency, this further information:— The evidence on which the name of the captain had been published as 'supposed J. E. Walter' was that, entangled amongst the wreck of the 'All is Well' had been found a portion of a captain's coat, in the breast-pocket of which had been found several papers, all of which were quite illegible except one empty envelope, the address of which had been deciphered as 'Captain J. E. Walter, the "All is Well," Cape Town.' The English post-marks were 'East Wykeham' and 'London,' date illegible. This envelope Andrew Walter had procured to be forwarded to him, and had found the handwriting upon it to be his own. After seeing which he had given up all the faint hope to which he had clung, and had treasured this old envelope as the last link of communication which he knew to have passed between him and his son.

Restoring the piece of newspaper and the envelope to his pocket-book, he lit a candle, left the girls at their work, and went into an adjoining room. Leaning against the wall was a package wrapped in matting, small, but somewhat heavy. The contents, when un-wrapped and placed upon the table, proved to be a plain, white marble slab, bearing this in-

'In remembrance of JAMES EDWARD WALTER

(only son of Andrew Walter, of this place), who
was drowned in the River Hooghly, Bengal,
during the great hurricane of 186-. Aged 22
years. Rev. xxl, 1.

He had chosen to append this reference to a text of Scripture, rather than the text itself. Those who cared to turn up the passage in their Bibles, as they sat in church, would see that the comfert he found in it was in keeping before him the thought that though hereafter there should be a new heaven, and a new earth, there should be 'no more sea.'

The father called the girls in for a minute to look at the slab, and they read the inscription silently and tearfully. Then he covered it up again, and they went back.

The stone had been worked elsewhere and sent home to him that he might himself (as he had wished) superintend its erection over his own pew. Thus, he and his daughters had each a duty in church to-morrow-his, to go early with the mason and put up this stone; theirs, to go later and help the vicar's wife to affix the Christmas decorations; for the morrow was the eve of Christmas Day. And, moreover, there was one little chaplet of cypress and yew which Maggie and Edith had prepared to hang upon their brother's monu-

'I remember,' said Andrew, 'teaching him all about India, and the Ganges, and this very Hooghly itself, years and years ago; little thinking—ah! little thinking. The girls only shook their heads gently and

And I doubt and fear it was my teaching him so much geography that filled him full of longing to see the world, and the ways of strange people, and first made him impatient 'Impatient of it, but never of us, papa. Let

us be thankini for that, said mag 'Tired of us? No, indeed,' said the father with proud affection. 'I have known some sad days, and I doubt there are more in store for all of us; but the saddest day of all would be that on which I should think my children were tired of their father or each other.'

A little hand had stolen into his as he spoke and a little mouth had been upturned to kiss him, while two other faces had turned to him with looks more eloquent than words.

He took the young child upon his knee, and wound her curls about his rough, strong fingers, as he spoke again. 'And I won't say that he was wrong to choose the sea. Could any lad have done better at it than he has done? Would not his masters have made him captain at twenty-one of their own vessel if I had not bought him a ship myself, and

freighted it?' 'And he never once,' said Edith, 'spent a holiday anywhere but here.'

'I wonder if it was the name that did it, pondered Andrew, who was not without his uperstitions. 'I wonder if I tempted Providence when I would call the ship no other name than "All is Well?"

'The ships that went down in the storm that day had names of all kinds, ' said Maggie, 'and one name had as little protection in it as an-

There, as the outer darkness deepened, they eat by the fire and talked. The little one on Andrew's knee.

It seemed a transition almost from night to lay when they passed from talk of the lost oy to talk of the mere loss of money, so much had the greater trouble exceeded the less. But it was not till Maggie had peeped over her father's arm into the small face and said 'she's asleep,' that they spoke quite freely of their pecuniary difficulties. The father had taken is elder girls wholly into his confidence, knowing that he could trust them. And they seeing themselves so trusted were cheerfully making the least of all difficulties.

The solicitor through whom all Andrew's money transactions had hitherto been arranged was an old schoolfellow of his, whose probity and kindness of heart he had long known. His position was rather that of an intimate and affectionate family friend than a legal adviser. But the letters of this friend, which had of late been many, had, in spite of all his wishes to serve, come to be looked on almost with dread. Their appearance and their prim little eal were well known by all the family. Even little Lucy knew so well that these letters were different from other letters, that she had way of propping them up and lecturing them eriously before they were opened, and sometimes even went the length of whipping them very severely, with a view to impressing upon them that they really must be good and try to please papa when he opened them. A mote of treatment which had as yet produced, to her

regret, no salutary effect. Andrew had written to this friend a few days before, making some final suggestions towards the renewal of the mortgage, and though he had but the faintest hope of the reply being such as he could wish, his heart

sickened that he had got no reply at all. 'To-morrow there will surely be a letter, he said: 'and if there is I shall quite dread to read it.

For indeed it depended on this letter whether they should stay in their old home,

'But now, Maggie,' he said, 'as this may be the last Christmas we shall have here, we must not keep it quite like a common day, even though we cannot keep it as we used to do. Put on your bonnet and go into the town with me. Poor little Mite, how soundly she sleeps; see, she has not waked by my putting her on Edie's knee.'

As the door closed gently on them, however, up sprang little Loo and drew aside the curtain, peeping after them, and laughing. 'I've never been asleep a minute, Edie,' she

whereupon Edie having first assumed what she supposed would be the appropriate manner of a lady of about fourscore, talked down to the young deceiver from that great elevation, in an impressive way, and having rung for Martha, inexorably told that maid to take

Then she herself set to work again with busy fingers amongst her holly leaves, her ivy and laurel, until she had got length nough, as she thought, of bright green rope. After which she gave the finishing touches to Maggie's letters, and fixing a white table cover against the piano, pinned them on it,—the scred monogram

her off to bed.

to try their effect against the clean white linen of the communion table. Last of all, making haste, she swept away her greenery and had a cheerful, homely supper on the table when father and Maggie came in with the heavy

night-rime hanging on them.

They had made the little purchases for the Christmas Day, buying on a humbler scale than usual, and, as Maggie told her, had sent at the miller scale than the miller scale than usual. to the widow's house at the mill exactly the same as they had bought for themselves, for Andrew's dainties would have had no relish had he thought those who were so near to him, and had been so dear to his dead brother, did not share in them.

> CHAPTER III. 'ALL IS WELL.'

Next morning Lucy was up early, and the season being one of those mild and open ones which have of late taken the place of the severer Christmases of our fathers, she ran out and amused herself, as children like to do, by

digging.
The place she chose for digging was just in side the garden gate, where she was acous-tomed to wait on fine mornings to get the letters from the post office.

The garden gate was not quite visible from any of the windows of the house, the path being curved; but Edie running out betimes (for they were all early risers) found the child busy there. She had excavated a very neat little grave, and was just giving the finishing touches to her work. 'Who are you going to bury to-day, Loo?'

she asked. 'Oh, I know,' said the child, 'you go long. It's not you; it's a wickeder than you. 'I see the postman coming round the cor-ner,' said Edle; 'run in as soon as you get

the letters; and beche left her.

In another minute the child had the letters from the postman-some four or five; and in an instant (as soon as his back was turned) had selected the wicked one (the London letter with the prim little seal, which she had so in vain) had pitched the little grave, deftly filled in the earth, and made all smooth above it, then ran into the house with the rest of the letters, out of

'Nothing again,' said Andrew, as he turned them over. 'But I doubt no news is not good news this time. Franklin would have written. I am sure, if he had had anything to write which would do us good. Sare you have not dropped any letters, Loo?" when he looked round he found the child had slipped out of the room, and nothing more

was said when she returned. Neither he nor the girls indeed made any mention of the letter which had been expected, or of the subject to which it should have referred; but that subject weighed not

the less heavily on all of them. To each of them it was clear now that in this matter of the mortgage nothing could be done, that the money must be paid, and that to pay it there must be a sale, and they must leave the dear old house. As they passed from room to room that morning, or from walk to walk in the garden, a feeling grew upon them all that they were taking farewell looks of all. And as the girls decorated the pictures and mirrors with the Christmas holly, they thought sadly that when Christmas came again other hands would cut the hrubs and trim the rooms for other people.

Happily those duties which lay nearest to each of them were sufficient in great measure to distract their minds from dwelling too much upon the future. Let come what would tomorrow, to-day had its own work waiting for

While the girls were busied therefore about their household morning work, doubly diligent that they might hurry to the church, Andrew Walter went with the mason and saw the memorial he had provided for his son erected

over his own pew. This did not occupy him long, and he was soon at home again, walking briskly in his fields, perhaps hoping to find in weariness of limb some rest for over-anxiety of spirit. As for the fine old church, when the bright

sunlight poured in through the many-colored window panes, and fell on the sweet patient aces of these girls as they wreathed the pulpit, the communion rails, and the grand columns of the nave-as they decked the holy table itself with living green and scarlet, and expended all their loving ingenuity and taste in the decoration of the quaint old rood screen, it was by no means a place of gloom. Even he time-stained monuments upon the wallsthe ancient knight and lady still uplifting stony hands in silent prayer-the grotesque aces of the corbels all seemed to wear a brighter, tenderer aspect under the influence of the Christmas green. The old dead stone and the young animated faces seemed alike touched with a new and deeper expression under the influence of the gracious season and the work that in itself was surely a sort of worship.

As column after column was finished, and arch after arch showed its rich free ontline in bright green; as one after the other the branching candelabra grew into graceful bushes of leaf and fruit, the sun sank down and the shadows crept out. Then when all was finished, and the old sexton with one solitary caudle was sweeping up the scattered fragments from the floor, the vicar's wife and the rest of those

who had been at work shook hands and parted. When all the rest had gone, however, Maggie and her sisters stayed behind. And with them stayed their cousin Minnie, from the mill, a girl of about Maggie's own age, who mourned for the lost sailor lad with a bitterness that was intensified by thinking that she had let him go when last they parted with

her love still unconfessed. The girls sat for a while all silent in the family pew. Maggie held little Lucy in her arms, and Edith rested with her head on Minnie's knee. The moon rose and poured its light with a glory of crimson and gold full on them and on the new marble slab, beneath which Maggie sat with her face buried on the

young child's shoulder.

It was Miunie who was organist at the church, and being there she must needs play over one of the anthems of the morrow. Elith went with her to blow the bellows. For a while Maggie continued to sit with bowed head, still weeping, but soothed and calmed by the strains.

The hymn was 'Hark, the herald angels sing;' and as the player forgot her sorrow more and more in the exultation of the music as the notes swelled more and more jubilant filling the church with grand old melody, the little voice of Lucy rose in Maggie's ear singing the well-known words, and Maggie hersel unconsciously joined in them and lifted up her

There in front of her, clearly defined by the moon, stood her brother-the dead brother who had been lost at sea. Maggie neither screamed nor fainted. He had been so entirely present in her mind-she had as yet been so wholly unable to think of him as anything but the bright, cheerful brother of all her lifethat to see him there seemed at first only natural. Then in a moment, however, the recollection of all that had befallen in the last mournful months flashed up. No fear came with the recollection; only an intense surprise. Why should she fear, if even this were the spirit of her much-loved brother? She clasped the little child (whose face was turned away) more closely to her, and leaning forwards in the pew, she shaded her eyes from the moon and looked steadily and earnestly into the face.

The hands and arms of the figure came forward, stretching towards her in the pew. A voice came from the figure:—'Maggie, it is I;' and in an instant another voice-the voice of Lucy—screamed, 'Oh, Maggie! that is Jamie! my own brother Jamie!' and the child sprang from Maggie's knee, and was in his arms.

'And why should I have thought anything too hard for God? Why should I not have had faith that he who raised Lazarus would raise my brother too? Neither Martha nor Mary sorrowed more for their brother than I The words did not shape themselves; but

this, in all its fulness, was the thought that in a moment of time had passed through Maggie's mind. Then she was also in her brother's arms. For indeed it was he and none other,

Meanwhile the music had ceased, loss because the player had been interrupted by any noise than by reason of that subtle instinct which so often tells us, we know not how, that something wonderful and strange, in which we have an interest and a share, is happening near at hand.

One moment more and Edith and Minnie lso were clinging to him, solibing for lag, an the secret of Minnie's heart was a secret from him no longer.

They all sat down for awhile and looked at each other with an exultation strangely mingled with doubt. Joy was so much stronger than curiosity that none of them thought of asking any questions. It was enough that he was restored to them: it mattered not how. At last he pointed to the new marble above

the pew, and said, with a shaking voice-Oh! what grief it has been to you. We must have that down to-night.'

'It went up only this morning,' said Maggie 'Then you have not get the letter this mornng,' he asked, 'which was sent to tell you of my coming, and all about it? Indeed I am nre you have not.'

'No,' said Maggie. 'It was enclosed from London by Mr. Franklin.'

'In a blue envelope with a little red seal. said Lucy; 'and I buried it in the garden. because those letters have always been naughty, and vexed papa.'

In spite of all, what could they do but laugh at the child's explanation? even were it only to make her lift up her head again and be less ashamed of her guilt. 'The letter was to tell you how this sad, sad

mistake has arisen, and to say that Mr. Franklin and I were coming down to spend, as we shall find it, the happiest Christmas we have ever known. You were to send and meet us at the Junction, and we were to have been with you two hours ago, if we had not had to walk.

'And have you seen father?' the girls asked. 'Ne; he was not in the house. So I have left his old friend there, while I sought you and him. The organ was playing as I came to the church door, and that told me where to find you. But let us make haste home to

Andrew Walter was at home when they arrived, and had heard from the old lawyer the story of his son's return; but had as yet not succeeded in convincing himself that the reat joy was real. Not, indeed, until he had the young man in his arms did he fully believe it or dare to say, awe-stricken-

'The sea has given up its dead-given up its dead even to me.

We will not dwell upon that meeting of father and son, neither of whom had ever known what it was to doubt or mistrust, or waver in his affection for the other. There are some moments of bliss so unalloyed, so great, and so beyond the force of mere language, that only the human heart (which responds alike in high and low, when the great master hand of Nature sweeps the

hords) can conceive their perfectness. To give the necessary facts as briefly as pos sible, this was how the circumstantial evidence by which the young captain had been declared to be dead, and his ship lost, was shown to be worthless.

Innocent of plagiarism as Andrew Walter had thought himself in choosing for his vessel the name 'All is Well,' there was really another ship afloat, sailing from a German port, but owned by an English master, which bore the same name. When James Walter sailed into the harbor of Cape Town, he was smazed to read the name of his own craft as having arrived a week earlier from the Baltic, And having found out that this namesake of

his vessel was still in port, he was not lorg before he sought her out and made acquaint-ance with her captain. The two vessels sailed afterwards from Cape Town on the same day, Captain Jacobson bound for Calcutta, he himself for Hong Kong. Before parting they had got to like each other, and promised that on getting into port they would write and let each other know what sort of voyage they had. Walter distinctly remembered writing his own address in pencil inside an envelope which had contained his father's letter received at Cape Town, and giving this to Jacobson. The next he heard of his poor friend was that his vessel and he were lost in the Hooghly. This he learnt from an Indian newspaper somewhere in China, and saw that the captain was supposed to be himself, though how they had got his name he had never known till now. He had instantly written home to allay the fears of his family; but by a strange fatality the mail steamer which bore his letter proved to be that very one which struck in the Red Sea, and whose bags were lost. Contrary winds had made his voyage home a long one, and he had arrived in London only the day before. Then when he called on their old friend, Mr. Franklin, he had, to his utter sorrow, learnt that he was still counted amongst the dead, and that these other troubles had fallen on them besides. Mr. Franklin had advised him not to come home that first night, but to write first, enclosing under his own envelope, the handwriting on which would help to save them from the shock of so sudden a joy. And this was the letter which Miss Lucy had so dexterously buried, and which, by the aid of a lantern and that young lady to point out the

grave, they now exhumed.

'Mine,' said Mr. Franklin, 'you need not read; for, as I said, it is only to tell you the mortgage business is all settled in a way beyond all our hopes. The old sinner, as soon as he knew that the money was ready for bim, of course turned round and was particularly anxious not to have it.'

'But as he has given notice,' exclaimed Jamie, 'he shall have it, whether he wants it or not. And, let me have one more voyage like this, then we will offer to lend him a little money ourselves, on equally as good security as he has had.'

For Jamie had disposed of his cargo in the China seas to unhoped-for advantage, and had come back freighted, he hoped, with wares which he could at once dispose of as profitably in England.

Compared with this resurrection of the dead, and this recovery of lost wealth, other pleasures and surprises of that night were trivial.

But nevertheless whan the huge load of luggage arrived which had been brought in a cart from the Junction, the unpacking of the

Jamie had forgotten nobody. Not to men-tion the quaint monsters in bronze and ivory, and the pictures from Japan and China which were for no one in particular, there were the beautiful inlaid and carved work-boxes for each of the girls (both at home and at the mill), there was the set of wonderfully-carved chess-men, and the extraordinary pipe for father; there was a cage of brilliant birds, and a dog so small you might almost have called it microscopic, for the Mite; there were endless shawls and silks to adorn the girls, and drive the townsfolk wild with envy—in short, there were so many things rich and rare that the house before half of them were unpacked wore the look of an oriental bazsar.

'Was it,' he almost asked himself, 'was it the solid ground he stood upon, or was it the air ?' as he ran with Minnie to her home, baving wrapped her well in some of this new finery and loaded her and himself with presents for the widow and the children at the

He could not stay there, nor anywhere. He hardly gave them all time to kiss him before he was off again, declaring he had fifty things to do that night and could not spare a minute apiece for doing them in. But he did not leave before he had made them all understand they had to go to dinner at his father's on the

Then to the church, first fluding Mr. Stonemason, who took down the lying monument, as he declared, with much greater pleasure than he had put it up. When down, the vicar, who had heard the news (as indeed all the town had), begged the stone to keep as a curiosity, and almost dislocated Jamie's arm by way of expressing his own gladness. The singers were gathering at the church as

they came out, for in half an hour they would begin the peal of Christmas Eve. Said the vicar-'Now, my men, cannot you give us one special peal first for the lost one who is found, and the dead who is alive again?' Said the sexton, who was also chief ringer-

We are two men short.' Said Mr. Botley, the grocer, and Mr. Skinner, the draper, who were standing by-We'll take a rope apiece;' for they were amatenr bellringers, and could pull with a will, and had forgotten all their fears of half a crown in the pound from Andrew Walter.

Whereupon he for whom the peal was meant, like the coward he was not, took to his heels and ran home, seeing reason to fear that If he did not do so he might be carried shoulder-high.

The clear voices of the bells overtook him nevertheless before he was half-way home, and made him turn to look back upon the darkling town, blessing it and them. For never since the bells were cast had they sent forth a heartier peal than that they flung upon the air that night; Botley and Skinner having dofled their coats and warmed to their work with mutual emulation.

Mr. Franklin did not make it quite clear to Lucy either that night or next day what had made him be so wicked as to write those vexatious letters to papa. But after dinner next day—that is, Christmas Day—when that young lady had almost danced him off his legs—although, for an old gentleman, he did dance quite wonderfully—she so far repented of her past severity towards him as to promise that if he would write often she would neither whip him in person nor whip his proxy, and that under no circumstances would she ever again bury another of his letters, prematurely.

-The organ in the Mormon Temple at Salt Lake City is said to be "8000 voice power." -Engenie is just the least bit bald, and covers the "damned spot" with a frizzle and

-Queen Isabella says that if she had known how nice Paris was she would have ablicated

A Frenchman has composed another opera of "Romeo and Juliet."