THE COLUMBIAN, BLOOMSBURG, PA.

THE RETURN.

A CHRISTMAS STORY BY G. T. FERRIS.

[Copyright, 1897, by the Author.] Frustrated hope threw its blight on the cheery old face as Mrs. Martin road the letter from her son Paul. He had been a wanderer for eight years and now wrote from South Africa. The same feeling haunted Knte Lockwood's fine eyes, though be bit her lip at the conscious revelation. But Mrs. Martin did not see. Her eyes were blurred. And murmuring, "What sould have happened to change his mind?" as if it were the presage of some greater blow, she went on with the reading:

"I'd give a few 'sparklers' to be with you on Christmas, as I had planned. But a fellow can't always fulfill his own wishes. It's better to have everything wound up before leaving. South Africa has treatal me pretty well up here in its diamond leids, so I shouldn't kick if it keeps me in its clutch a little longer. I shan't be sorry to leave this furnace behind. When my with you in Vermont, clad in ice and snow, but here a man will be baking at 16 in the shade. I'm burned as black as any Kafilr in the mines, so that you and Kate would scarcely know my swarthy phiz. By the way, you may tell that young woman from me that I don't half like her coings on with the Swinton man. Didn't she promise to wait for me? I shall have a word to say to her about her faithlesscess." And so Paul's letter rambled on in a semichaffing tone. Kate's face had darkened to angry scarlet when Mrs. Martin looked up and said: "Why, my dear, son mustn't take Paul's jokes so hard. You know what a 'tense' he was from a

"That was precisely the trouble. Paul had always been joking, Kate feared. distant cousin and reared in the family, over since she had emerged into womanhood a more tumultuous sweetness had mingled with the calm affection she had once felt for Paul even as she had for his elder brother Will. When he had gone away, she was only 17, and keenly she had quivered with the pang of parting. Year after year had slid by, and the rolling stone found no rest and the girl's sore heart had certainly found no balm in the absent Paul's jocose phrases. Yct she had sometimes fancied a thrill of sentiment and tenderness quickening his sportive al**iusions.** At all events suitors had lacked fuel for their fire, a her friends ralled the young schoolteacher that the only men folk she liked were the lads, with whom she could be "jolly good i ow" in a most faseinating way. Her latest admirer, the head of a programmer fastor and much head of a prosperous factory and much tiked by the Martins, had no better luck than predecessors. "There was a time," the old lady con

tinued in reminiscent mood as she hald down the letter, "when I hoped you and Paul would come together some day; but, lackaday, that's all done with. I can't understand the girls nowadays. I s'pose you ain't afeared of bein left an old maid, fer, you know, you're good lookin''-and Mrs. Martin peered quizzically at Kate over her glasses-"but still you might never have such a good offer as Mr. Swinton-plenty of money, not too old, and as good as gold. As for Paul's stayin away mother year"

"What's that about Paul's not comin bome?" Mr. Martin's jolly red face, now beginning to pucker with years and care, was filled with dismay as he suddenly enwas lifted with disknay as he statistically the tered the room. "That scapegrace of ourn oughter be thrashed of he's agoin to dis-appoint us ag'in." So Mrs. Martin again read the letter aloud, while Kate, amid the varied comment of the old couple, escaped lor a hearty ery.

Farmer Martin's gloom had a deeper root than ordinary miscarriage of hope. "I'd ruther looked to Paul's help of the

mistictoe, unless Swinton gets ahead of me." And he chuckled heartily to himself as he drove on. The Martins had attended the early

service in the church and were now gathered in the big parlor where the Christmas tree was set loaded with presents and the children were all agog with cagerness. Mr. Swinton was a guest of the occasion, though not much to Kate's pleasure. The tree had been almost stripped of its burden amid the jubilation of the youngsters, and even Paul's absence couldn't quite quench

the heartsome glow of the old folk. "Ow I 'ood like to see Santy Caus his-sef 'en he comes down the chimley tonight!" said little May Martin, her mouth gorged with dripping sweets.

Just then a tremendous clashing of bells rang out as if a whole caravan of sleighs were coming up the road. Louder and louder chimed the silvery neusle till it stopped before the door amid the pawing of horses' hoofs.

"Who can it be?" they all said to each other. "Perhaps it is Santa Claus," whis-pered Kate to little May. The child caught



HOW THE OLD MOTHER CRIED AND HUGGED HIM.

at the entrancing thought and rushed to the front door. They heard a scream of terror, and May darted back, gasping and white, to hide her face in her father's lap. Santa Claus indeed had come to the child's invocation. Framed in the doorway and seeming almost to fill it stood a great, fur clad figure, looking like a gl-gantic bear on its hind legs. A fur helmet covered the whole face, with goggles in the cyclet holes, and on the furry arm hung a big basket with bulging contents. Amid the breathless silence and wonder the uncouth figure stalked to the Christmas tree and crowded its empty boughs with such a largess of parcels as to bend them low. As the pantomime went on Mr. Martin nodded to his wife and Kate and then toward their guest as if to say, "This little comedy is the pleasant sur-prise of a rich man's wooing." But Swinton's eyes were bent on Santa Claus with a queer look of dread and expectancy, could they have gauged his thought

Not a word was uttered till the fur clad image had closed his task, when a hearse, rumbling voice, as if it had been made raucous by shouting against polar blasts, issued from under the fur hood, calling them by name and summoning them to receive their gifts. The children's turn came first. The trembling youngsters were loaded with such gorgeous and won-derful toys as they had never dreamed could exist. Will Martin got a box containing a sealskin cap and gloves. The wonderful fur cloak which Santa Claus threw around Mrs. Martin was fit for the shoulders of a queen, as she stood there quivering with cyriosity and a dumb pre-sage that feared to name itself and stammoring thanks that choked in the throat. In the farmer's hands was placed a large sealed envelope, and he blinked and pecred as if he would unravel some clew to the impassive mystery which faced him. He itched to tear open the envelope, but waited.

Kate Lockwood's name was called, and

METHODS OF THE JAPANESE. You Are Never Sure of Getting What You Pay for.

An American manufacturer, writing from Japan, says that those alarmists who would make the world believe that the Japanese can do everything don't know what they are talking about, and that the people of the Flowery Land, unless they change their entire nature, or at all events their methods can never become formidable commercial rivals with any civilized Power. The real fact is that the Japs do nothing; they only half do it, and therein lies the cause of their failure.

The Japs think of nothing but the present; of what he can make now, and how, by making his commodities a little inferior, he can add a few more cents to his profit. There is no such a thing as standard quality. You are never sure of getting the quality you are asked to pay for. So much is this so in Japan that a man seldom and examining it on the spot. The correspondent continues:

The Japanese mind is so small that it is difficult to weigh it with American scales; in fact, it may be said that it is made up of trifles, and it is the attention-the labored attention-the Jap gives to these trifles which makes him incapable of ever becoming anything more than a unit in whatever he may be concerned in. As an illustration of what I mean, I will give examples which are of daily occurrence. You want to buy an article, and you ask how much it is. The answer is, say, 1 cent. Then you ask how much the articles are by the dozen, fully expecting that you will get them for 10 cents. You are not a little amazed when the merchant tells you thirteen cents the dozen. You get mad, call the man a fool, and insist that you ought to get a reduction by taking a quantity. Not so with the Jap; that is not his way of doing business. It is the same with the manufacturer. You give him an order for a hundred of a kind, and then wish to make it a thousand. Immediately he demands an advance in the price. Should he, however, reluctantly agree to take the increased order at the original price, you will probably get the first hundred articles fairly up to sample but as the delivery goes on the quality is sure to fall off. And this smallness is not confined to small people. It permeates the whole country .- Boston Transcript.

A TREE THAT SLEEPS.

The Transformation Takes Place in About Twenty Minutes,

Near the western border of Dupont Circle, in Washington, D. C., stands a tree that goes to sleep promptly every night at 7 o'clock. The tree is known as the Albizzia Julibrissan, having been christened so by an Italian botanist in honor of the Albizzi family In Florence. The tree, however, is an original of Japan and is known there as the Japanese silk tree, probably on account of the silky appearance of its blossoms. Soon after 7 o'clock in the evening a general motion is noticed In the foliage, a quiver or trembling of relief. Finally I began taking Hood's the bipinnate leaves. Each leaflet begins to stand up on edge and pairs the one oposite They class each other tightly and then close un with the other on the petiole, so that each becomes a coverlet over half of the preceding one. The entire transformation takes place in about twenty minutes, and usually at about 7.30 the respiratory organism of this trea hangs limp or droopy on the branches. Small branches kept in a dark room promptly close at 7 P. M .- New York World.

A Klondike Steamer Lost.

The Cleveland Lost and Hundreds May Starve as a Result.

The Merchants' Exchange at San Francisco, has received a telegram from Nanaimo, in which the captain of the missing steamer Cleveland says that his vessel has been wrecked on the coast of Vancouver Island. No other details are given.

The Cleveland left San Francisco for Seattle about fifteen days ago, and it is known that she encountered fierce gales. She carried a crew of 30 men and about 12 passengers. The Cleveland was a large iron steamer, and had a series of misfortunes.

She was owned by Charles Nelson, and was commanded by Captain C. F. Hall. It is supposed the steamer's machinery became disabled, and that buys an article without unwrapping she was blown out of her course while under sail.

> The steamer went ashore at Cape Beals, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Among the passengers were W. I. Detrick, Frank Garthan and ten others.

The purser of the ship has arrived at Nanaimo, having gone across the island. He reports twenty two of the crew missing. It is supposed that they took to the boats and were blown out to sea.

MEANS STARVATION FOR HUNDREDS. The *loss of the Cleveland means starvation to hundreds, of whom many

cannot survive. The Cleveland was laden with hundreds of tons of provisions for the Klondike miners. The supplies were destined for Taiya and Skaguay. They were imperatively needed to keep alive the array of miners there.

The loss means that they will be forced to go to short rations early in the winter. As the gravest fears of starvation have been expressed, even counting with the Cleveland's supplies, it is certain that the suffering will be greatly increased.

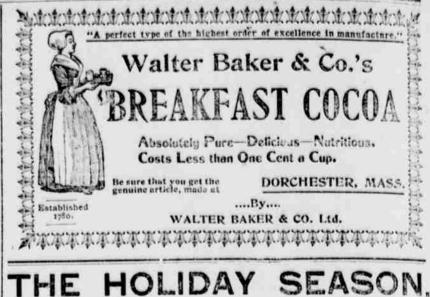
Klondike merchants have given up the Cleveland. They have telegraphed urgent messages for another shipload of provisions to be rushed through regardless of danger or expense, as it means life or death to hundreds.

PERIL OF OTHER VESSELS. Eighteen other ships and schooners bound for this port from Gars Harbor are overdue from eleven to fourteen

davs There is no question that many, if not all, of them have been lost in the December gales that have swept their

They Disappear.

"I was afflicted with scrofula for a number of years and tried several different kinds of medicine without Sarsaparilla to cleanse my blood and in a short time after I began taking it the scrofula sores disappeared and I am now entirely well." JOHN M. BOYD Box 22, West Greene, Pa.



For Christmas, 1867, we have a large line of goods suitable for gifts to gentlemen. It includes

Meerchaum Pipes,

Beautiful designs in great variety.

Meerchaum Cigar Holders, Briarwood Pipes, Cigars, fine grades, in boxes of 25, 50 and 100.

We also have a large assortment of CONFECTIONERY in nice boxes and in bulk. Sunday Schools preparing for Christmas festivals should get our prices.

ALEXANDER BROTHERS & CO.

Bloomsburg Pa.



wust comes," said he to his wife, "fer Will's got all he can shoulder. The mortgage on the place has never been easy to meet-what with poor crops and low prices. I met Squire Barber jes' now, and I told him we expected Paul. 'Fer sure.' said he, and laughed with his 'Ho, ho!' ike some danged ole hyeny, and then he said he hoped there wouldn't be any delay this year 'bout the mortgage money or somethin might turn up, and then he outs with another snicker. Confound his hide, t's as heartless as his sheepskin books, fer I had allus reckoned him a friend afore."

Though Christmas did not promise any appetizing sauce for its turkey and mince



"WHAT A TEASE!"

ple, active preparation went on as usual, for Will and his children would be there, and their hearts must be gladdened with Christmas sunshine. Arlingford had indeed always kept the day with more fervor than is the wont with most New England country towns. It was the day before Christmas and the farmer was returning from the woods, whither he had gone to select the Christmas tree. The crisp, sweet air was musical with sleighbells, for the carth was sheathed in dazzling white. As be turned into the main street, his bobsled almost collided with a fast cutter spinning homeward from Chester. It was Squire Barber returning from the county seat, same eight niles distant, where his law office was located.

"Merry Christmas, if it isn't too early ! shouted the lawyer, pulling up "What have you got there? Holly, and as I live mistletoe too. I haven't seen any before for an age." "Yes," said Mr. Martin, "it comes and

goes in a curious way. I hain't found it growin fer ten years till I got this from a half rotten apple tree in the upper or-chard." And he held up a sprig of it with its yellow leaves and whitish berries shining like crusted silver in the winter sparkle of the sun

"The old legend says it brings good inck," answered the lawyer "111 lrop in this evening and see it hanging, for the chance of kissing pretty Ente under the

her forward. A little box was snapped open and a superb diamond ring blazed like a star. She grew dizzy, for a blinding flash of intelligence came even before that furry mask was torn off with a swift gesture and the bronzed face of Paul, twitching with emotions of joy and tenderness, appeared to them. How the old mother cried and hugged him till her arms were weary; how the men folk wrung his hand and overwhelmed him with broken, enger questioning, and how the children made shy acquaintance with the unknown uncle Santa Claus need not be recounted.

"And has my Kate no greeting?" Paul said. She came forward with checks of flame from where she had stood aloof, be wildered with a rush of feelings. He gazed at her shining eyes, and her heart leaped at the lover's deep look. Then he happened to notice the twisted vine of leaf berry that swayed over her head, the and time honored symbol of a thousand sweet mysteries.

"Under the mistletoe, too," he laughed. He was the same old teasing Paul. "That is as it should be." And he took his privilege then and there, drawing her sweet face to his and kissing her on the lips before them all. "Look," he whispered, "at the inner

circle of the ring," and there Kate saw en-graved, "From Paul to the woman he loves," and that was Paul's proposal, answered to his satisfaction by one flashing glance, veiled as quickly by the modest eyelashes.

"I've been ringing and hammering at the outer door for five miacovs, and no one came, so I walked in," sold a new voice as Squire Barber entered. "I suppose you've got everything fixed to your wishes now, and that the mistletoe brought good luck

"You old fox, you knew all about it," burst forth the farmer, and with a sudden thought he opened the envelope and saw it was a "mortgage satisfaction" paper. "So it was Paul and you that put up this

it was Paul and you that put up this Christmas joke." "Yes, dad," said Paul without a bit of remorse. "I think we did it in pretty good style too. I started from South Africa at the same time I posted that letter as a blind and landed more than a fortnight since. The rest was easily fixed, and I determined to shake you all up with a big surprise. And I have proved such a successful Santa Claus that a certain young voman has concluded to let me play Santa Claus to her for life."

"Where's Mr. Swinton?" said the farmer, with a keen recollection of incivility, for in the agitation of the scene all had forgotten him. Love is sometimes very Their guest of the early evening selfish. had unobtrusively slipped away. He knew he was one too many.

Christmastide.

Some say that ever 'gainst that sensen comes Wherein our Enviour's birth is celebrated, The bird of dawning singeth all night long. And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad; The nights are wholesome; then no planets

strike; No fairy takes or witch bath power to charm. Eo hallowed and so gracious is the time. -Shakespeare

WIT AND HUMOR.

"I admire the machine very much," she said, as the agent trotted out a new 97 model for her inspection. matches my riding costume splendid 1y."

"Yes," responded the dealer, "our concern rather prides itself upon the enameling of its machines."

"Well, I'll take it, if you will guar antee me one thing." "What is that?"

"That the color won't fade."

After some thought he gave the guarantee, and she gave up \$100.

The Parson-Why, Willie, don't you know that good little boys never fish on Sunday?

Willie-Yes, sir; that's just the reason I'm a-fishing. I stand more show of gettin' a bite when the good felows are to Sunday-school .- St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Mr. Pneumony-I'll have two pounds of that sage cheese, and I'll have a pound of impunity, too. Grocer-Marm?

Mrs. Pneumony-One pound will be mough, I guess. Dr. Koddle says that sage cheese can be eaten with impunty .- Boston Transcript.

"Here, young fellow, I want you to teep your horse off my lawn." "Say, you're a hard-hearted old bloke.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, dat poor oid horse is just apracticin' de Kneipp cure, dat's what." -Cleveland Plain Dealer.

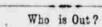
Casey .-- I called wan av thim doods Har and he says to me, says he, "tu juque." Now fwat might that mean? Walade-It means "you are another." "Fwat! An I let um get away without hittin' um. Ab, that is fwat a nan gits for havin' no education."-Cincinnati Enquirer.

"There is one queer thing noticeable at all picnics." "What's that?"

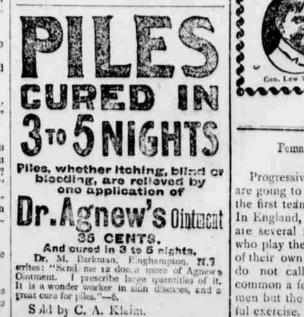
"The man who makes the most funs thout carrying the basket always cats nore than anyone eise."

Hood's Pills are the best family cathartic and liver lonic. Gentle, reli able, sure.

Listen to this song of the editor, ye slow-paying subscribers and patron of his job printing establishment. Listen to it, and then go forth to seek him and pay up. How dear to our heart is the old silver dollar, when some kind subscriber presents it to view; the Liberty head without necktie or collar, and all the strange things which to us seem so new; the wide-spreading eagle, the arrows below it, the stars and the words with the strange things they tell ; the coin of our fathers, we're glad that we knew it. for some time or other 'twill come in right well; the star-spangled dollar, the old silver doliar we all love so well."-Ex.



Here is something to think about. A man owed \$1 and had but 75 cents. He went to a pawn broker and pawned the 75 cents for 50 cents. He met a friend and sold him the pawn ticket calling for 75 cents for 50 cents. He thus had two 50-cent pieces, \$1 in fact, with which he paid his debt. Was anyone out and how much ?



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