

**WINTER DREAMS.**  
The ruddy sunset floods the orchard hill  
Till one old apple-tree in blissful drowse  
Feels once again the spring-time's gladdening thrill  
And clustering blossoms hide his stiffened boughs.

Beyond the orchard's pathless stretch of white,  
Beside the frozen road, a snow-haired man  
Cheers on the coasters in their merry flight,  
And for a space he is a boy again.  
Emma C. Dowd, in Judge.

**"Little Pete's" Courtship.**  
A Romance of Life With the City Workers.

Nearly a year Dan Murphy had been trying to prevent his sister Mary from marrying beneath her, and had so far succeeded, but Mrs. Ritchie said it began to look as if he would have to give in and make the best of it, or else be at odds with the girl for the rest of his days.

Mrs. Ritchie came to this conclusion when she saw Mary walking down the street on Sunday morning accompanied by the ineligible reter Rutter, known in the foundry as "Little Pete."

Mary was looking tenderly down at him and he was looking up at her as tenderly. Moreover, there was triumph in his walk and a carnation in his buttonhole. There are circumstances under which a man may walk on Arbor street with a carnation in his buttonhole and yet not be classed with the duds that perish.

Murphy was foreman of the foundry. "Little Pete" was not even a molder, but "dubbed around," carrying castings and flasks, baking cores, stacking for his superiors—a mere helper. Not only that, but he was weak-eyed, meek and somewhat bandy-legged. Murphy could not but be life of him see what there was about the little rat to take the fancy of a girl, but that is something that has been puzzling brothers, fathers and rivals since the world began.

Perhaps Mary fancied "Little Pete" because he was so distinctly different from Brother Daniel. Brother Daniel was masterful and subject to fits of hot anger that found solace in crockery-smashing at home and lurid talk in the foundry. Mary had been dominated by him all her life, and although she had never been anything but outwardly submissive there were times when rebellion was strong in her bosom. If Peter was bandy-legged and small he was at least amiable. Mary was a large girl with washed-out eyes, complexion and hair, slow of speech and deliberate of movement.

It was at a picnic at Sharpshooters' park that Little Pete first met Mary. All the boys from the foundry were there and Dan introduced the "helper" to his sister with a good-natured condescension of manner that Peter took as perfectly natural and proper. Mary smiled kindly and blushed a little when Peter took heart of grace to propose walking over to where the foot-races were to take place. She went, however, and as Brother Dan went away with Myra Hanson it came to pass that Peter was with her most of the day. Myra being the kind of girl that demanded a man's entire attention, Dan did not notice the unmistakable way Peter was buying red pop and ice cream for his sister, but Fritz Schuler did, and so did Charley Stokes and Nels Engstrom, and they all mentioned it the next day as they sat in the narrow strip of shade against the foundry wall with their dinner buckets open before them. Not all the coating of foundry grime on Peter's face could conceal his blushes when they did so.

As for Mary, it is quite likely that she thought this was the most delightful picnic that ever was. It is certain that when she returned home she was glad to get to her room, where she sat for a very long time smiling at the wall-paper garlands when she ought to have been in bed.

Peter had given her his badge—a red ribbon with the emblem of the Amalgamated Gravel Roofers blazoned thereon in letters of gold. Before she did go to bed she opened a locked drawer and took from it a box which contained a little gold baby chain, a coral necklace, a tiny turquoise ring, a china doll with a fractured nose and a cheerful expression and a tiny portrait of Mrs. Murphy, deceased. Among these treasures she deposited the flamboyant badge and then locked the box up again.

When Murphy came home from work the next day he noticed that his sister wore more ribbons than usual and that her color became heightened when he looked as if he noticed it.

"Expectin' company?" he asked.

"There was no question about her color or now."

"Mr. Rutter said he might call this evening," she admitted.

"Mister who? You don't mean 'Little Pete'?"

"Is that what you call him? Yes; that's who I mean."

"Well," said Murphy, with fine scorn, "I like his gait. How'd that come? Why didn't you tell him you was going to jump the town this mornin' an' wouldn't be back for eleven years?"

"Because I wanted him to come," said Mary, truthfully.

Brother Dan laughed. He thought it impossible that she could be in earnest.

The next day Dan heard something

at the foundry that made him change his mind about Mary's not being in earnest. Still he had the good judgment to say nothing to Mary until a few days later, when the ribbons appeared again—cherry-colored forecasts of Peter in a black diagonal cutaway coat too long in the sleeves and too high in the collar, but sufficiently impressive and declaratory.

Then Dan lost temper and judgment together and told Mary he was ashamed of her.

"Why should you be, Danny, dear?" asked Mary.

"Don't 'Danny dear' me," said her brother, angrily. "Take up with a skate like that and then ask me why you ought to be ashamed of yourself! It's enough just to look at him. But that's neither here nor there. I ain't going to stand for it and that's all about it. You understand that now, Mary, don't you? He don't come here no more."

"I suppose that means you'll fire him?" said Mary, meeting his look.

"That ain't my style an' you ought to know it," said Murphy, with some indignation. "I think I can keep any man from coming into my house without making a club of his job. Ain't I father and mother both to you?"

"I don't think father or mother would have objected," said Mary. But the end of it was that she went sadly upstairs to her room and Dan sat out on the steps and smoked while he waited for "Little Pete" Rutter.

Presently the little man came along, whistling, and opened the gate. He looked rather abashed as he saw Dan's stony face, but he gave him a cheerful "Good evening."

Murphy made no pretense of civility. "Pete," he said, curtly; "I might just as well tell you ain't wanted around here. It'll save me trouble and you trouble if you keep away. I ain't got anythin' against you, understand, but I don't want you around."

Peter grew white, but he stood his ground boldly. "I didn't come to see you, Mr. Murphy," he said.

"I know you didn't," returned Murphy. "That's the trouble. I ain't got in' to beat about the bush. I know you come to see Mary, but you can save yourself the trouble from this on."

"She didn't say so," said "Little Pete," stoutly.

"I say so," shouted Murphy. "It goes, too—doesn't it?"

"It's your house an' you've got the right to say who comes in it," said Peter. "That's as far as your right goes, though."

"It's far enough," said Murphy.

"All right," said "Little Pete," walking to the gate with his chin in the air.

It was nearly a week after that that "Little Pete" Rutter passing Murphy's house saw Mary at the gate. He raised his stiff hat awkwardly and was about to pass on, for he had quite a lot of pride for a small man, when Mary called to him to stop.

"She was as direct as her brother. 'Did Danny tell you not to come here any more?' she asked."

"Yes," answered Peter, mournfully. He did not look at her, but at the hem of her white apron, which she was twisting nervously in her fingers. She looked at the apron, too.

"I was real sorry," she said, after a pause; "I hadn't nothin' to do with it. I—I wanted you to know that."

"I knew it a'ready. I told him so, too."

She blushed at that. "Danny's all I got an' I'm all he's got," she said. "He's father an' mother both to me an' has been since they died. I feel I ought to do what Danny says—in most things." She looked at the little man half appealingly as she spoke, but he had no comfort for her.

"Maybe you had; maybe you had," he said.

"I think I had better go in," said Mary, with a little shake in her voice.

"Good-by,"

"Good-by," said Peter. "But I'm going to see you again."

He kept his promise and walked down Arbor street twice or three times a week for that especial purpose, but he never stopped to speak. Mary went about with red rims around her eyes for awhile on this account, but she reasoned that Peter would not come at all if he cared nothing for her, and so she found consolation in the thought.

In the meantime "Little Pete" was having a bad time at the foundry. It was not that Murphy bothered him at all. Since the evening at the gate the foreman had hardly spoken to him, and while on casting days, when the crane was swinging around with its molten loads, every other man in the shop was overwhelmed with blasphemous adjurations and sulphurous epithets, "Little Pete" went free from curses. The bad time proceeded from his fellow-workers, who, having discovered that Peter was sensitive on the subject, joked him without mercy concerning Mary. Nels, the big Scandinavian, took particular pleasure in this form of amusement until one morning at the cleaning bench Peter paused in his task of chipping the rough shell edges from the castings and flung his hammer and cold chisel at his tormentor's head. Fortunately Nels ducked in time, and the next moment he was dodging a murderous shower of long files and chisels on his way to the door. It was the general opinion of the foundry that if Nels had not reached that door when he did there would have been a general assessment in the mutual benefit society to which he belonged. From that time "Little Pete" was not annoyed, but he was avoided to some extent, and that was even worse.

A night or two after this event Peter walked down Arbor street and stopped at the gate where Mary was faithfully awaiting him.

"I thought you wasn't never goin' to speak to me again," said Mary, smiling at him happily.

Her hand was resting on the gate and Peter placed his over it and patted it as he beamed back at her. "Don't you never think that," he said. "I'm just waiting; that's all. It's coming out all right. Say, if I came to see you you still wouldn't want me to quit coming, would you?"

She evidently understood what he meant, for she shook her head smilingly.

"That's all right, then. I have a hundred and fifty dollars saved up—that's all. I'm going to get fifty more and then I'm going to quit the foundry. But I ain't got no business to stop and talk to you—yet."

He made a motion to withdraw his hand, but she caught it quickly and clasped it tightly. "Yes you have," she said. "Why haven't you, I'd like to know?"

He made no answer, but looked fondly into her eyes. Mrs. Ritchie, who could see the attitude of the lovers and their looks, had to leave her post of capital at her window and go into the back room in order to laugh unrestrainedly.

After a little Peter said: "That's right; I ain't got no business. I ain't good enough for you yet. But I'll see you once in a while an' maybe before long I can talk to you." Then he went away.

The weeks went by and became months, but Peter only stopped once in that time, as often as he passed Murphy's house and smiled at Mary, who was always at the gate in expectation of his coming. That once he only stayed long enough to hand her a little slip of paper, which she found an advertisement, and read:

**\$200—GOOD-PAYING BUSINESS; CIGARS, NOODLES, STATIONERY, CANDLES; FULL STOCK; ROOMS.**

One night Murphy came home and said: "Little Pete" asked for his time-to-day, Mary."

"Is that so?" asked Mary, smiling brightly. She did not seem particularly interested and Dan, after looking at her keenly for a moment or two, drew up his chair to the table and began to eat his supper with an easy mind. Later, as he read his evening paper, he heard Mary singing as she washed the dishes.

And the next day was the Sunday that Mrs. Ritchie saw "Little Pete" and Mary walking together.

Peter had said as she came out in her best hat and the prettiest frock she owned: "I may never bring you back."

And Mary answered as she slipped her hand in his arm: "I don't ever want to go back, Peter."—Chicago Record.

**TEACHING A BOY TO PLAY.**

**Graphic Description of the Trials of a Music Teacher.**

"Did you ever try to teach a boy to play the piano?" says a well-known teacher of Indianapolis. "I do not mean a golden-haired mamma's darling, but one of the kind I have seen described as a 'dear, whistling, fragrant, nerve-shattering boy—a receptacle for edibles, a bottomless pit for pie, a buttonless young savage, a render of garments, a lover of goats and dogs and a dispenser of their fragrance, a scoffer of propriety, an incorrigible boy. One such bit of restless humanity it has fallen to my lot to teach, and I can never tell the endless surprises that came to me during one season's work with this boy. His talent as a musical critic showed itself, in calling Mme. Zeisler 'a kind of a cyclone,' and again, in describing to me a singer with a pronounced tremolo in her voice, he said: 'She snuckled so I couldn't tell what she was trying to sing.'"

"Is there a cultured musical critic in this country that could express so much in so few words?"

"But I intended to tell you of the endless number of things that happened to this boy's hands—which in each instance gave him a good excuse for not having practiced. He caught a ball on the tip of the finger, which knocked the nail off. He got a fish hook in his finger, and had to have it cut out. He burned his hand with hot molasses candy—and again with a fire-tracker. The cat scratched him, the log bit him. His knuckles were well worn off in playing marbles on the frozen ground, and so on, endlessly. Soon after the appearance here of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show he came to me with a savage looking sore, fully one-half an inch wide and extending entirely around his head, just below his ears and mouth. I exclaimed in horror, 'Why, J—; what's the matter now?'"

"'Huh—that's nothin'; I just got lassoed.'"

"Inquiring later of his mother, she told me that a little girl of the neighborhood, whose parents make frequent visits to Mexico had searched the attic and found a horsehair lasso, which she succeeded in throwing about his head as he was passing on a bicycle. Needless to say he had a fall, the horsehair lasso removing a complete circle of cuticle from around his head. Think of chaining such a boy down to the torment of a piano forte technique. As well try to chain the winds!"

**Dangerous Competition.**

Warwick—The doctrine of manifest destiny in international affairs often seems to lead to rather serious complications.

Wickwire—Indeed! How so?

Warwick—Well, in those cases where we find two nations with the same manifest destiny.—Puck.

**NOTES AND COMMENTS.**

The difference between a wit and a humorist is that a wit says things and a humorist writes them.

Sharkey has a new blow which he calls his "Dewey destroyer," but Jeffries may be nursing an "Oom Paul hook."

Marconi's system of wireless telegraphy will possibly succeed in time. But the old-fashioned wires are still employed in announcing the results of his experiments.

Some of the messages exchanged in South Africa show that the Boer has no hesitation in considering his sense of humor quite equal to that of the Englishman.

Two New York youngsters, inspired with a liking for pie, started to run away to Philadelphia, where some one had told them it was cheap and plenty.

The laws of Mexico provide that a Mormon who wishes to take a second wife must present a certificate signed by his first helpmeet to the effect that she is willing; and he must also have the express consent of the second wife and her parents.

Out of an equal number of bachelors and widowers between twenty-five and thirty years of age thirty widowers remarry for every thirteen bachelors who enter the bonds of Hymen for the first time. For every spinstress married between thirty and sixty-five two widows are remarried. Both facts are eloquent in favor of the comparative advantages of matrimony.

The number of new railway cars built last year, exclusive of cars constructed by the railroad companies themselves, was 123,893. Of these 117,982 were freight cars; and yet there was hardly a line of railroad in the country which had cars enough for the freights offered for transportation.

The United States could well afford to take pattern after Germany in the matter of forestry. In that country trees are never ruthlessly destroyed, and replanting keeps pace with necessary destruction.

San Francisco girls have a new fad. They think boxing makes them beautiful and all the fashionable maidens out there are learning how to use "the mitts." Slender young men who are looking for life partners should keep away from San Francisco.

When the nineteenth century ends, it will close without a peer among those that have passed before it. It has paved the way for more wondrous developments to follow and no man can now divine what the near future has in store for the benefit of humanity.

In no other country have rich men given so much money to the cause of education, religion and charity during recent years as they have in the United States. The habit of giving to these noble causes seems to be growing upon wealthy citizens of the United States, and during the year 1899 they made a record which has never been equalled in this or any other country.

An approved sea maxim teaches that the landsman who is to become a neat, two-handed sailor must be caught early and be given such special training as will fit him for the duties and inure him to the hardships of an arduous trade. Realizing the importance of this discipline, the Navy Department has asked Congress to authorize the construction of two additional auxiliary steamers, and to emphasize its belief in the system has detailed two vessels—the Hartford and the Dixie—for the specific training of landsmen. The appropriation has the approval of our best officers, and, as it makes for efficiency, should be authorized with encouraging diligence.

A fellow who has been slashing and cutting the dresses of women on the streets and elsewhere says that his vicious practice is the result of a disease beyond his control. Yes, there is a story of a dog that had a disease beyond his control; but it was cured by clipping off his tail—right behind his ears. This dress slasher probably doesn't need quite so heroic treatment, but there is little doubt that something could be devised that would cure him.

In one of the historical volumes of John F. Maginness is recounted a most remarkable coincidence. On the very day that the Declaration of Independence was promulgated and Old Liberty Bell proclaimed the joyful news in Philadelphia, a little band of Scotch-Irish settlers, without any knowledge, of course, of what was occurring elsewhere, assembled at a certain place on the banks of Pine Creek, about fourteen miles above where now stands the city of Williamsport, and declared themselves free from the yoke of British rule.

The object of sending a person who has been found guilty of crime to State prison is primarily to satisfy the demands of justice. He has broken the law and by so doing has revealed himself as a more or less dangerous member of society. Let law-breakers go unrehabilitated and savagery would take the place of civilization. But it behooves society to take care that in punishing malefactors it does not demoralize them so

**THE CITY OF SIEGES.**

Some English travelers through central Asia have written home that Russia is mobilizing troops along the frontier contiguous with Persia and Afghanistan. This looks serious. It means a revival of those ugly rumors about the bear of Europe. It means that the czar is looking with covetousness on India, famishing with starvation as it is.

For Herat, "the key to India," lays but a few hundred miles to the southwest of Ashkabad, where the mobilization is reported as taking place.

Englishmen at home, in the security of their cheerful newspapers, do not consider the danger imminent. They read of the physical character of central Asia; they have heard of boundless steppes, so arid that the frugal Tartars have to move their camps weekly for fresh forage ground; of the deserts and marches into which large rivers disappear; of the towering, almost impassable mountains, and they feel secure.

But Englishmen who have gone through that country do not smile so contentedly. They see how Russia has surmounted obstacle after obstacle. They know of the modern railway that connects Batum, the best harbor on the east coast of the Black Sea, with Baku, on the Caspian, passing through Tiflis, the capital of Transcaucasia.

They know of the large squadron of Russian men-of-war on the Caspian, centered at Baku, where a powerful station is fully equipped in every way: of the fleet of steamers, built to be used as transports, that belong to the Transcaucasian Railway. With these facilities for transportation they see how quickly Russia can and does land infantry, cavalry and artillery on the eastern shore of the Caspian at Krasnovodsk.

They know, too, of the other railway that leads from there to Ashkabad, "the key to Herat," and goes over the steppes and desert to Koushik Khan Kaleh, which is near the ruins of the ancient Merv, so often a bone of contention on account of the immense oasis it controls.

When an army has two good roads by which to attack it may be assumed that it will divide and attack by both. This the Russians can easily do. They can leave Ashkabad, in Russian Turkestan, march south to Sherwan, in Persia, where they would be on the highway that runs almost southeast through Meshed, crosses the Afghanistan border in open country and makes straight for Herat. The shah would not cause trouble, as it is well known that he is at the beck and call of the czar.

Herat is the fifty times besieged city. If the sieges are accurately counted, the result is fifty-two. It was the capital of Timur; it was fought for by the Mohammedans, by the Persians, by the ameer of Herat anxious to regain his patrimony. The years when Herat has not seen fighting have been rare, and Herat is a very old town.

During the present century it has been unsuccessfully besieged in 1837 and 1838 by the Persians, and taken by them in 1856; regained by Dost Mohammed, Ameer of Kabul, in 1863; lost by him to an Ameer of Herat, and regained by Kabul in 1881 under the present ameer, Aburrahman Khan.

And why is Herat "the key to India," when it is situated in the extreme northwest of Afghanistan, nearly 600 miles, as the crow flies, from the Indian frontier? Because Herat is the controlling point of the approaches to the only two passes into India that are traversed by railroads.

One highway, that goes eastward from Herat, keeps south of the Hindoo Kush and reaches Kabul, whence there is a short route through Kabul Pass to Peshawar. Here (at Peshawar) commences one of the important railways of India, a great trunk line, as it connects at Lahore for all points in the India peninsula.

**History of Herat, Which the Russians are Coveting.**

The mind is bewildered by the contemplation of its marvelous achievements in the nineteenth century. If time and space signified now what they did in 1860, the United States could not exist under our government. It would not be possible to maintain unity of purpose or identity of interest between communities separated by such inseparable barriers as Oregon and Florida. But time and distance are arbitrary terms, and depending on the transmission of thought, the other on the transit of ourselves and our commodities, our manufactures and our harvest. The continent has shrunk to a span. The oceans are obliterated. London and Paris and Pekin and New York are next-door neighbors. These vast accomplishments of our race have rendered democracy possible. Steam, electricity and machinery have emancipated millions and left them free to pursue higher ranges of effort. Labor has become more remunerative. The flood of wealth has raised myriads to comfort and many to affluence.

The fire statistics of the Journal of Commerce for 1899 make a startling showing both of the extent of fire destruction and of its alarming growth. In the United States and Canada last year fire destroyed property to the extent of \$136,713,200, an increase of more than \$17,000,000 over the losses of 1898 and more than \$26,000,000 over those of 1897. Why this phenomenal increase of loss from year to year? In the cities, where nearly all the fires occur, we are supposed to be building more and more in fire-proof ways, and at the same time improving our means of preventing and extinguishing fires by the lavish expenditure of money, public and private, says the New York World. Is it all to no purpose? Why is it that, instead of decreasing, our fire losses increase so enormously every year? Are the insurance companies in any way responsible? In their mad competition for "business" have they unwittingly or recklessly put a premium upon incendiarianism?

**A Theory About Women.**

The curtain had just gone down. "Those people in front of us must be married," said the young woman to the chaperon. "She does not talk to him but just sits and looks over the house, and only speaks once in a great while."

"Quite different from the pair back of us," said the chaperon. "That woman has discussed the play, the cast and gowns over and before the footlights. She has touched upon literature, music and art. She has discussed golf. She has pointed out persons in the audience and bored the man by trying to direct his attention to the right person, and if she thinks she is entertaining him she is mistaken. No doubt he likes her, and would enjoy the music and be content with merely her presence, but, like most foolish girls, she longs for a reputation for being entertaining."

"She is floundering terribly now, and is reduced to a joke on the programme. If she only realized it the poor man is tired out, and she insists on droning to the dregs what little vitality his day's work has left him."

"Only a business woman has enough sense of justice and of proportion to understand these things. I heard a very busy woman say the other day that for the first time she could understand what had puzzled her before she went out into the world, and that is why very noted and brilliant men marry women who are nothing more than mechanical dolls. One can forget to wind them, and they never remember more than to be pretty, winsome and restful to the eye."—Philadelphia Press.

There are now 350 public libraries in Great Britain. These libraries contain over 5,000,000 volumes, and issue about 27,000,000 books each year.

**Wasted Questions.**

Scientific inquiry is sometimes curiously balked. A professor of one of our colleges who is a summer resident of a little New England village, on his first rounds this year met a native townsman who told him, among other items of local interest, of the illness of his wife.

"I am sorry to hear it," said the professor, all sympathy at once. "What is the cause of her illness?"

"This her husband was not prepared to say, but at length admitted that some called it one thing and some another. By judicious questions, however, the professor learned enough to satisfy himself that the sick woman was suffering from epilepsy, and began to inquire for familiar symptoms. The answers he received were, in general, convincing. Finally, he asked:

"Does your wife grind her teeth while asleep?"

"Well, no, I've never noticed that she did," was the reply; "but I don't know as I ever remember of her wearing her teeth to bed."—Youth's Companion.

In the sixteen years between 1883 and 1898 inclusive 8,236 wolves have been destroyed and bounties paid equaling \$118,815. In 1883 and 1884 the number of wolves killed was 1,316 and 1,035, but under the influence of the new law raising the bounty per head to \$30 for a wolf with young, \$20 for an ordinary wolf, and \$5 for a cub, there has been a rapid reduction in their numbers, and it is believed that in a very few years they will become extinct.