

THEY SAY.

They say—ah! well, suppose they do. But can they prove the story true? Suspensions may arise from thought...

A Christmas Tale.

Christmas Eve, Aunt Ellen. Our first Christmas at home for ten long years. Ten long, lonely years. Only you and I to wish each other a Merry Christmas...

But we are at home home now, dear. True, there is some comfort in that. I have longed so for home thinking that we might find in New York some trace of our lost one...

Remember, darling, she said, "that it is less than a year ago, here. It is too early to be discouraged." "I am not discouraged, but it is so hard to wait. Think of the happy family that gather round after year in this room of our father, Uncle Harry and Mabel All gone. Nothing left me but your precious love, and the good I can do the poor."

True, Mr. Morrison's call drove it from my mind. There were more toys needed. I can go now. It is not seven o'clock. I will order the carriage, and be back before nine.

She rang the bell as she spoke, ordered the carriage, and sent for her maid and woman. The old lady waited until they were once more alone, and then said, wistfully: "You would have told me if Mr. Morrison brought any news?"

"Indeed I would!" was the earnest reply, and the old lady felt a caressing hand upon her own. "There was only the old story of failure. Oh, Aunt Ellen, I would spend every dollar I own if it would bring her once more into my arms, bring her face against my own again! Where is she this old Christmas Eve? How do you know she is not cold or hungry, while we have luxury? How do we know what sorrow she may endure? Oh, Mabel, Mabel! where are you?"



A MERRY CHRISTMAS

NEWS IN BRIEF.

James Knox of Knoxville, Ill. has given \$10,000 for a Swedish college in that city. The aggregate shrinkage of mining stocks on the Pacific coast is estimated at \$70,000,000. Gen. E. E. Spinner—be of the meandering autograph—ran ahead of his flock in New York. Alexander H. Stephens now weighs two more pounds than he did. He weighs only about 100 lb. told. A Kentuckian thinks he has attained the height of human happiness in possession of a wife 3 feet 3 inches tall. The Titusville Courier thinks the daily production of petroleum this year will fall at least 9,000 barrels below that of last year. Political success is not without its penalties. A Pennsylvania Senator elect had to kiss 1,633 babies during the recent canvass. The wife of a Des Moines editor has run away with a beautiful Chicago hatter. So much for the vaunted influence of the press. The Gazette, a Kansas paper, has been sued for libel by the afflicted deity, who says that \$30,000 won't make his character shine as it did before. A Cincinnati merchant has a pair of shoes made in 1775, during the times that tried men's souls, and he proposes to exhibit them at the Centennial. It is estimated that the Government will recover \$1,500,000 of the amount of loss involved in the St. Louis Whisky fraud. This is about one-half of the total loss. There is a bullfrog farm in South-eastern Wisconsin, 30 acres of swamp fenced in, and the proprietor sends thousands of these featherless birds to New York. At the annual hunt of the Nebraska City Sportsmen club, held recently, there were 1,135 animals slaughtered, consisting of ducks, hares, quail, snipe, plover, etc. Maggie Davis, daughter of the ex-President of the confederate states, is reported, about to marry A. J. Hayes, Jr., cashier of the National Bank of Memphis. A sea turtle captured on the Maryland coast recently, measured 10 feet in length and 8 feet from tip to tip of fins. It took 12 men with 3 seas of halyards to haul him home. Auburn, N. Y., claims more bachelors and old maids than any other place of its size in the country. But then, you know Auburn has a well-populated state's prison. General Meredith, who died lately in Indiana, was six feet seven inches high, and President Lincoln used to say that the general was one of the few men he looked up to. The Palmetto Guard, of Charleston South Carolina, has determined to celebrate the centennial of the battle of Fort Mifflin, fought on June 28, 1776, by erecting a \$12,000 monument. The bones of over 1,000 Chinamen have been gathered together at Sacramento, Cal., from all parts of the state, preparatory to their being forwarded to China, in a few days, by a clipper ship. Sixteen bolts of camel wool, aggregating 400 feet in thickness, the largest being seventy feet thick, and fully equal to the English article, have just been discovered in Uintah, Wyoming. A black duck flew against the lighthouse at Sankaty, Nantucket, the other day, with such force as to break in a large plate glass window almost half an inch thick, killing itself instantly. A new base-ball organization for this season of 1875 has been perfected in St. Paul under the name of the Gopher club. They expect to gather everything in the state and visitors from outside regions. The old bell which called together the Virginia Convention of 1775, in Richmond, when Patrick Henry uttered his stirring sentence, "Give me liberty or give me death," is still in use in Martinsville, in that State. The annual production of leather goods in France is estimated at about 2,500,000 dozens of pairs of first second and third sorts, the average price being thirty-five francs per dozen. There are 90,000 persons employed in this industry. A colored woman of Lairtonville, Ga., lately died at the advanced age of 112 years. She was supposed to be the oldest person in that State. She was born on Roanoke Island, and was twenty years old when the war of 1775 commenced. Deserves success. A new steamship company is organizing in New York which will not ask Congress for any aid whatever. The steamers are to ply between New York, St. Thomas and Venezuela, and are to depend wholly upon the legitimate profits of commerce for support. A Wyoming paper prints a statement to the effect that a Mexican musk-rat was killed on a shaft a distance of eighty feet, and was rescued without a bruise. The succeeding paragraph very properly consists of a denunciation of liars, especially those of the newspaper fraternity. The California Pacific railroad people are pushing their end of the Southern Pacific with great vigor, and promise to have rails to the coast when between San Francisco and Los Angeles, next summer. This will open the delightful climate and tropical fruits of southern California to the people of the north. St. Louis has just figured up its hog packing for this year, and finds that between March 1 and October 31, the number packed was 102,124 averaging 220 lbs. each, against 129,962,280 lbs. last year. The product of these hogs, together with 45,000 head slaughtered by butchers, was 16,490,550 pounds of cut meats and 3,919, 862 pounds of lard. One of the bronze medals presented by Congress to the hero of the battle of Lake Erie is in possession of a gentleman of Toledo, Ohio. On one side is a likeness of Commodore Perry in naval uniform, and on the reverse is a representation of the flag in the line of battle, engaging the enemy. The owner intends to send the medal to the Centennial Exposition. A farmer in Seymour, Ind., while crossing a bridge on the other day, came across a small jug whose mouth was stopped by the body of a rat which had tried to get in but had stuck fast. On breaking the jug he found four other rats inside, all alive. The latter had evidently crawled in, eaten till their sides were stuffed out, and then found it impossible to crawl out again. Duncan Campbell who has undertaken to walk from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, at the end of four months has reached Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory. He intends leaving San Francisco on the 1st of February with a wheelbarrow to carry his blankets and cooking apparatus, and will accomplish the return journey in 190 days. What else will be accomplished would puzzle even Sergeant Bates to tell.

Wisdom in Brief.

An exchange gives the following sensible hints for 1875, which we commend to the consideration of all concerned: "It is better to live in a little, clean, two-story frame house, than in a large, airy, but unwholesome one. It is a good thing, when you are talking of another man's defalcation, to make sure that you could have handled as much money with the same opportunities for dishonesty, and not fallen before temptation. It doesn't pay to worry over what will happen to your wife if you were taken away; she may get a better husband; if you are wondering what makes your former schoolmate's hair so gray, or make such a one so wrinkled, or why such another one is growing so stout, just take a look in the glass. Do not imagine, because you have resolved to practice charity and to speak well of everybody, that everybody has the same resolution regarding you. If you are heart sick with regret that you were not more tender and thoughtful towards the dear ones you have lost, just try to avoid further repentance in the future by being good to those still left to you. Don't put off enjoyment. If you are not ready to enjoy things as they come, when you are ready they won't come. Planning to enjoy friends and fortune in the future is a most insecure investment. The chances are very few that you will be together in the future. If you have any good deeds to do, or happiness to enjoy, do them now. Don't put off enjoying every object with warm golden light, and from every bough were suspended rare Christmas treasures, such as children love. Dolls, dressed in the latest fashions, were there, and for the use of their ladyships, furniture, carriages, and complete wardrobes. Tea-sets, in dainty boxes, were there; games in velvet, books, filled with the most wonderful fairy romances; sets of exquisite pictures, in pretty envelopes; every kind. And over all hung the brilliancy of the rising sun touching every object with warm golden light. Suddenly, as children often waken from deepest sleep, one curly, brown head was lifted from the pillow, and a pair of great blue eyes opened wide, in delighted surprise. "That is Mira, your namesake," Mabel whispered low, in the closet. To wit your namesake, to put the wonderful room, the furniture, the mirrors, the little bed, and ever back again to the marvelous display of toys and treasures. Little garments of daintiest make, treasures of books, games, and toys tempting packages of fruit and sweetmeats, and wonderful machinery of all sorts for Mira's surprise. It was past midnight when the sisters stole from the room where the children lay sleeping, to share once more the room they had occupied in girlhood. Day was just breaking when they crept in softly again for final preparations, and then hid themselves in a large closet to watch the waking. Christmas morning broke bright and clear, and the sun, peeping through lace curtains, lighted one room, that was in strong contrast with the attic room where Mabel's children had dropped into childhood's deep sleep.

Gordon Blanchard was so far pardonable, that he lost his paragon at an early age, and had the control of ample means, and been free from all restraint since boyhood. Mr. Crosswell, alarmed for the happiness of his child, opposed her choice as soon as he became aware of her attachment, forbidding all intercourse between the lovers, and using his paternal authority with rather injudicious strictness. The daughter, who had lived in an atmosphere of love and blessing to childhood, resented the unusual severity, and, yielding to the solicitation of her lover, eloped from her father's house. Before Mira had recovered from the bitter grief of this first violation of sisterly love and confidence, she was called upon to mourn the death of George Sewell, after a short sudden illness. The girls health broke under the accumulation of sorrow, and by the advice of her physician, her father determined to retire from business, and travel in Europe. His brother and sister, with Mira, composed the party, and they sailed from New York the Fall following Mabel's elopement. For six years the father forbade the name of his erring child being spoken in his presence, but he became ill in Florence, and upon his deathbed he forgave her, giving Mira his dying words of blessing to cherish in her memory until she met her sister. Yet, his will, drawn up in New York before he sailed, left his fortune entirely to Mira. It was the girl's earnest desire to return to her own home after her father's death, but her uncle Harry, who was also her guardian, was ailing, and funds were scarce, and Italy or France was necessary to his life. So, for three more weary years, the travelers lingered abroad, till Harry Crosswell, too, died in Italy, and was buried beside his brother. But by his will, Mabel, could she be found, was left equal heiress with her sister of his handsome property, his own sister Ellen being already independent. The first grief being over, the two women felt return the weary homelick-ness they had conquered for the sake of those who were gone, and returned to New York. As soon as they were settled in their old home, Mira instructed her lawyer to spare no money or time to find her sister; but her efforts were unavailing for the sake of his old family name and position.

I am so hungry for news of you, Mabel. "No more so than I have been for tidings of you, Mira. My own story is soon told. I am widowed and very poor, with two little girls at home, half fed, and half clothed." "Where is your home?" asked Mira, whose loss she mourned more than that of uncle, father, or lover. Again the coachman received directions, and as he drove, Mira told her sister of her father's forgiveness, and her uncle's legacy, receiving in return the story of a wretched marriage, of children born only to die, excepting the two little girls of eight and six still living, of the gradual descent into poverty, of illness and unkindness, till death left her free from actual abuse, to fight the widow's battle against the world. "We were in Cincinnati from the time of our marriage, Mira, and Gordon died there, two years ago. I tried to make money to come home, wearing for you, hoping for some words of pardon; but it was not until last June I came here, I went to the house, and found a family there who said the house had been rented to various parties for ten years, and was then about to be taken by Mr. Morrison." "My lawyer—you know papa's old lawyer is dead, and Mr. Morrison acts for me. He was preparing for our return, when he gave the family you saw notice to vacate the premises." "I never returned there. Indeed, I have had my hands full, to earn bread. This is the reason I have not seen the advertisements you have had published. But, here we are at the only home I have known since my return." But for the brightness the future promised, Mira felt as if her heart must have broken, as, after ascending three long flights of rickety stairs, the sisters stood in the dismal attic of the wretched tenement house. In a small open grate were the embers of a scant fire, and the miserable furniture seemed as if actually falling to pieces. Upon the low bed, where their poor garments slowly crossed the store, never seeing anything of the wondering group, and found herself in a carriage, with Mira sobbing and caressing her. "Mabel, Mabel, Mabel!" "That was all Mira could say, feeling her sister's kisses on her lips, her sister's tears on her face. But after a moment of deep, intense happiness, she was recalled to this world again by the coachman demanding the next destination. "Drive slowly forward till I pull the check-string." Bang went the door, and the horses took up a walk. "Darling," said Mira, can it be true? Are you really here—here in my arms?" "But, Mira, I thought you were in Europe." "We were until June. We came home here, to find you. Tell me of yourself. I have just two dollars in the world,