

The Three Copecks.

Crouched low in a sordid chamber,
With a cupboard of empty shelves—
Half starved, and alas! unable
To comfort or help themselves—
Two children were left forsaken,
All orphaned of mortal care;
But with spirits too close to Heaven
To be tainted by Earth's despair—
Alone in that crowded city
Which shines like an Arctic Star,
By the banks of the frozen Neva,
In the realms of the mighty Czar.
Now, Max was an urchin of seven;
But his delicate sister, Leeze,
With a crown of her rippling ringlets,
Could scarcely have reached his knees!
As he looked on his sister weeping,
And tortured by hunger's smart,
A thought like an Angel entered
At the door of his opened heart.
He wrote on a fragment of paper—
With quivering hand and soul—
"Please send to me, Christ, three copecks,
To purchase for Leeze a roll!"
Then rushed to a church, his missive
To drop—ere the vesper psalm—
As the surest mail bound Christward,
In the unlocked Box of Alms!
While he stood upon tiptoe to reach it;
One passed from the priestly band,
And with smile like a benediction
Took the note from his eager hand.
Having read it, the good man's bosom
Grew warm with holy joy;
"Ah! Christ may have heard you already
Will you come to my house, my boy?"
"But not without Leeze!" "No surely;
We'll have a rare party of three;
Go tell her that somebody's wanting
To welcome her home to tea."
That night, in the cozyest cottage,
The orphans were safe at rest,
Each snug as a callow birdling
In the depths of its downy nest.
And the next Lord's day, in his pulpit,
The preacher so spake of these
Stray lambs from the fold, which Jesus
Had blessed by the sacred seas;
So recounted their guileless story,
As he held each child by the hand,
That the hardest there could feel it,
And the dullest could understand.
O'er the eyes of the listening fathers
There floated a gracious mist;
And oh, how the tender mothers
Those desolate darlings kissed!
"You have given your tears," said the
preacher;
"Heart-arms we should none despise;
But the open palm, my children,
Is more than the weeping eyes!"
Then followed a swift collection.
From the altar-steps to the door,
Till the sum of two thousand rubles
The vergers had counted o'er.
So you see the unmailed letter
Had somehow gone to its goal,
And more than three copecks gathered
To purchase for Leeze a roll!
—St. Nicholas.

Helen of Tyre.

What phantom is this that appears
Through the purple mists of the years,
Itself but a mist like these?
A woman of cloud and of fire;
It is she; it is Helen of Tyre,
The town in the midst of the seas!
O Tyre! in thy crowded streets
The phantom appears and retreats,
And the Israelites, that sell
Thy lilies and lions of brass,
Look up as they see her pass,
And murmur "Jezebel!"
Then another phantom is seen
At her side, in a gray gabardine,
With beard that floats to his waist;
It is Simon Magnus, the Seer;
He speaks, and she pauses to hear
The words he utters in haste.
He says: "From this evil fame,
From this life of sorrow and shame,
I will lift thee and make thee mine!
Thou hast been Queen Candace,
And Helen of Troy, and shalt be
The Intelligence Divine!"
Oh, sweet as the breath of the morn,
To the fallen and forlorn
Are whispered words of praise—
For the famished heart believes
The falsehood that tempts and deceives,
And the promise that betrays.
So she follows from land to land
The wizard's beckoning hand,
As a leaf is blown by the gust,
Till she vanishes into night!
O reader, stoop down and write
With thy finger in the dust.
O town in the midst of the seas,
With thy rafts of cedar trees,
Thy merchandise and thy ships,
Thou, too, art become as naught,
A phantom, a shadow, a thought,
A name upon men's lips.
—H. W. Longfellow.

Think First.

BY MARGARET SIDNEY.

Frink's feet slipped right out from under her, and down she sat, new skates and all, right in a little frozen pond of slushy snow.
"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the boys, flashing past, with graceful sweep of glittering steel. And "He, he, he!" piped in Peggy Munson's disagreeable little treble, that always struck in whenever anything unpleasant occurred, "I knew you'd fall. You don't know how to skate!"
"Let me alone!" cried Frink, sitting still to recover her breath after the astonishing upset, and looking around to see how many boys saw. And her face was very red as she added, "And go away can't you? I can skate as good as you can, anyway!"
"No you can't!" declared Peggy, vehemently, and striking out in the most approved attitude. "You know that's an awful story, Frink Badger!"
"Go on then, and try," said Frink, wickedly; "there, there's a good place." She pointed over a little distance off, where, under treacherous thin coating the ice lay in humps all ready to give unwary ones a fall. "Now, just see if you feel so smart!"
Peggy's fat little body gyrated unsteadily over the bright skates that were a trifle too far apart for grace, as she moved ambitiously off for the scene of conquest, while Frink composedly picked herself out of her clammy resting-place, ready to laugh when the time came.
"There—he, he!" With a sharp cry of pain and horror she started forward, with each plunging step staring wildly to see if the fat little figure lying so still, wouldn't stir or cry out. Anything, rather than that motionless silence.
"O Peg!" she cried, reaching her by one long stride, and leaning over the prostrate little heap. "Do get up; only scream—something. Oh, dear, dear!" she moaned, seeing all her efforts vain; and she began to wring her hands, and exclaim distractedly, "I've killed her! I've killed her!"
"What's the matter?" said one of the boys, wheeling around a sudden curve. "What?"
"She's dead," cried Frink, perfectly wild with fear and remorse; "and I've killed her!"
Bascom knelt down by Peggy's side and pushed back the little red hood. "Oh no!" he said, looking up into the white face above him; she's stunned, that's all. Whew!"
With a whistle, clear and loud as a bugle, there appeared, as if by magic, a small troop of boys, ready for adventure of any sort whatever.
"Now then!" With many willing hands at work, Peggy was soon lifted up, and borne off in the direction of her home.
"Where's Frink?" asked Bascom, looking around in pity; "poor thing, where's she gone?"
"She ain't a poor thing, either," said a spiteful voice, a short distance ahead. "She sent me out there a purpose; she's dreadful mean!" And Peggy bebbled up the red hood over the shoulders of the boys.
As quick as lightning she found herself, with more speed than politeness, landed from her elevated position down upon the ice, while one and all stood and stared at her.
"You can walk home," cried a small boy edging up to her vindictively, who having a private grievance of long standing, had so far buried the hatchet that, when he saw her suffering, from very pity, had insisted on puffing along bearing the heaviest of the burden. "Yes sir!" he exclaimed in great dudgeon, his feelings, by the sudden rebound, carrying himself as much beyond his former state of ill-nature as was possible, "I wish you had a cracked your skull, I do!"
"Did you put all this on?" demanded a big boy, sternly facing Peggy. "If you did, you're meaner'n I thought you were, and that's bad enough" and

he turned on his heel contemptuously.

"You've scared Frink," said Bascom excitedly, "so that I expect she's run home to cry her eyes out."

"I don't care," cried Peggy sharply with an ugly ring to her voice; "she sent me there. She's awful mean,—Frink is!"

"Frink's the nicest girl there is in town!" cried all the boys staunchly. "And she's just as good as she can be; she won't hurt a fly."

"You're always praisin' her," began Peggy, with a grumble.

"An' if she did send you there," cried another boy, with a will, "why, it's no more'n I'd a done myself. I'll venture to say you's served her some mean trick first. Come on, boys. And he struck out grandly for a race.

"Oh, don't go!" whimpered Peggy, who was a coward; and struggling to her feet, she dashed wildly after them slipping miserably at every step. But they were deaf to her calls, and sped on the wings of the wind far in advance.

Meanwhile Frink was pouring out her whole tide of woe, her head in her mother's lap, while the kind hands soothed the little flushed face, and wiped away the tears.

"It was all my dreadful temper, mamma," she mourned, with a sigh. "Oh! how can I cure it?"

"Never, dear," said mamma quietly putting back the bright brown hair.

"What, mamma?" Frink started up into a sitting posture, and whisked away the tears to gaze in perfect astonishment into the smiling face above her.

"You will never cure it, darling," said mamma. "Don't try; it is too great a task for a little girl unaided to do."

The bright brown head dropped a little, and down went Frink's head again into the dear old resting-place.

"I understand, mamma dear," she said softly, dropping a kiss on the kind hand, "and I'll ask Him."

"And now we'll go and see about Peggy," said Mrs. Badger. "Come dear."

But the door burst in uncerimoniously, and, before anybody could think twice, a small troop of boys tumbled in a bunch into the middle of the room.

"She ain't dead!" cried the small boy in a tone of disappointment; "she is just as mean as ever!"

"She was cheating," exclaimed Bascom, hurriedly, "So cheer up, Frink." He couldn't for the life of him get the little white face with the frightened eyes, out of his mind.

"Oh!" Frink drew a long breath, then turned and threw her arms around her mother's neck for an ecstatic hug.

"Now I tell you, we'll give her a scare," cried another boy, with a determined voice, "and I know how to do it splendidly."

"Capital!" they all began.

"You mustn't!" Frink flew around again, and drew herself up to her tallest height, "not one single one of you boys—" She looked steadily at the whole group for one moment, then finished slowly, "And I was to blame, for—" Here she stopped a little, then went on: "I did tell her to go on that horrid old humpy ice, for she'd laughed at me, and I was mad; and oh, I'm so sorry!"

"What for?" said the small boy, in wonderment, "She ain't hurt none."

"It was just as wrong," said mamma gently, "and she might have been injured."

"And so I shall go and beg her pardon," cried Frink, with heightened color; and though her voice shook a little, there was decision in her eyes. Oh, how it hurt her pride to stand there and say all this to those boys whom Peggy's unpleasant ways had prejudiced sorely. And before any one could guess what she would do next, she sprang out of the door leaving a solemn array of children behind her.

"Well," said Bascom at length, drawing a long breath and looking at the others, "If she's gone for forgiveness, I guess it's about time for me to start; for I said as near as I can remember, some pretty sharp things."

The small boy was twisting his thumbs uneasily. I'm so glad her skull wasn't cracked," was all he said.

"All right," said Bascom, whirling around to smile on him approvingly. "Now then, you and I'll start and tell her so."

"The whole of us will have to go then," announced a big boy decidedly, "for we're all just as bad," and with one plunge he headed the repentant procession. "This is worstest han carrying her home," he observed grimly.

"Cause it's cross words we've got to remember now," said Bascom, "and that's always a pretty heavy tug. But we shall be lighter coming back."—S. S. Times.

Three Public Men.

During Gen. Grant's recent visit to Philadelphia, a singular incident occurred, which would be possibly in no country but our own, and from which our boys and girls can draw a significant lesson.

Gen. Grant received a grand public ovation: Over sixty thousand men formed in line to pay the honor which they thought due to an ex-President, a great soldier, and a man who had received welcome from the sovereigns of the world as the representative American. Forty years ago, as the son of a poor tanner, the man for whom this great ovation was made, was earning "fips" and "levys" by carting wood in a western village.

In the same carriage with Gen. Grant, under the escort of the procession, was seated the Mayor of Philadelphia, and Mr. George W. Childs. Mr. Childs is a man whose shrewdness and honesty in business have made him, probably, the most successful newspaper publisher in the country, and whose public spirit and generosity have found him friends among the best men in England and America. Forty years ago, Mr. Childs was a friendless boy, peddling peanuts from a street stand.

The Mayor of Philadelphia, Samuel Stokley, is a man whom all political parties respect. Since his appointment to office he has brought his whole authority and influence to bear on the prevention of crime, especially by abolishing low variety theaters and indecent and flash publications for the young. Probably thousands of boys and girls owe their rescue from ruin to the honest efforts of this man. Mr. Stokley, thirty years ago, was a lad in a little cake-shop, making walnut taffy for his livelihood.

These three men feel an honest pride in recurring to the poverty and hardship from which they have made their way to wealth, high positions and influence. Every boy in the United States, with ability, industry and good principles, has the same open road to honor and usefulness which they had.

In the Sunday school of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, in Clinton street, Cincinnati, there are about twenty-five Chinamen, each of whom is provided with a teacher. At a recent Christmas festival of the school they gave their teachers the Lord's prayer printed in Chinese tongue and neatly framed, and in every Chinese laundry in the city the prayer may now be found on the wall. The Chinamen say they repeat it every night. The owner of one of the laundries has been trying to induce the customers to call for their clothes on Saturday night instead of Sunday morning, but he has had some difficulty in doing so. Nearly all the laundries have adopted the plan of closing on Sunday noon in order to attend afternoon service.

The Railway up Vesuvius.

The most extraordinary railway in the world, perhaps, has now been completed. It is a line up the slopes of Mount Vesuvius, from the level of the Neapolitan Bay to the very edge of the crater. Not so many years ago such a project would have been ridiculed as the very last outcome of fanaticism—as who should suggest a terminus at Pompeii or a goods station among the marble ruins of Olympia? Yet it has been done, and Vesuvius has been scaled, from foot to summit, by the iron legion. The construction of the line, of course, has been peculiar; it is laid upon a solid pavement of masonry, believed to be perfectly secure from the overflows, on either side, of lava; there is no locomotive, but a powerful traction engine at either end and the methods of draught are by steel ropes working on grooved wheels; and should these break, there is scarcely a possibility of the train receding downwards at a dangerous pace or to any considerable distance. For these details we are indebted to the *Diritto* of Turin. That journal states its belief that comparatively inexpensive as the construction of this miniature railway is, it may prove an exceedingly profitable speculation, considering the perpetually increasing numbers of tourists from the New World and all parts of the old, who flock to that scene and center of historical marvels. If however, for the very fact of its conception and construction alone, the Vesuvian Railway would be entitled to rank among the wonderful ideas and achievements of the nineteenth century, it is not to be compared with the gigantic Alpine works. They were called for; this, in many senses, was not; it has supplied a convenience while they met great international necessities. But it is a characteristic of the age that we can answer both demands, root up an oak or pick up a needle; and the small line that crawls up Vesuvius is, perhaps, not less an emblem of the epoch than the monster span which bridges the Niagara.

—London Echo.

Plant Some Portulacas.

For exquisite beauty during the very hottest and most trying of our summer seasons, the many varieties of portulacas have very decided claims. They are amongst the few plants that absolutely revel in dry hot weather. There is a freshness in their appearance; the flowers are quaint; many of them are brilliant and strikingly beautiful; and they stand exposure for a long time. But, like all other plants, and indeed like everything in nature, portulacas do best and appear best under certain conditions. They do not thrive in clay soil, but flourish exceedingly on limestone rocks. Where stone of that kind is procurable, a few loads set up as a rockery, amongst which the portulacas can be planted, will well repay the outlay and trouble. They require a little loamy soil amongst the rocks, but when once fairly under way, they need very little attention. They have the merit even of being able to choke out weeds and other enemies to plant growth during our warm season. The mesembryanthemums are another family that deserve attention for summer dry weather flowering. They are brightest and best during the hottest and most trying weather for ordinary flowering plants. Like the portulacas, they have but little to recommend them in the way of odor—our summer flowers as a rule are defective in that respect, but those named excel for freshness of appearance during the most trying time of the year.—Queenslander.

—Miss Christine Ladd, a young graduate of Vassar College, has been recently invited by the trustees of Johns Hopkins University, in recognition of her mathematical powers, to continue her studies there, with an annual stipend equal to that of a regular fellowship. She has just been asked also to pursue a special course at Harvard under Professor Pierce.