

THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange
Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

CHAPTER IX.

There were two great ships abreast of each other, and they were steaming with so great a pressure of steam that the dark green water was cleaved into two huge waves of foam before their bows; and the spray fell in tons upon their decks.

The more distant of the two ships was long in shape and dark in color; she had two funnels painted white, but marked with the anchor which clearly set her down to be one of the famous Black Anchor fleet. Her decks were dark with the figures of passengers and crew all crowding to the port side, wherefrom the other ship was approaching her.

It was this other ship which drew our gaze. Almost of the same length as the passenger steamer, which she now approached obliquely, she rode the long swell with perfect grace, and many of her deck houses and part of her prow shone with the brightness of pure gold. Full the sun fell upon her in a sheen of shimmering splendor, throwing great reflected lights which dazzled the eye. Every ornament on her seemed to be made of the purest metal, now glowing in exceeding brilliancy in the full power of the sunlight.

She was a very big ship, and she had all the shape of a ship of war, while the funnels fore and aft of her capacious funnel showed the muzzles of two big guns. I could see by my glass a whole wealth of armament in the forecastle, and the short mast forward. There was a great deck erection, with a gallery and a bridge for navigation; but no men showed upon the platform, and, for the matter of that, no soul trod her decks, so far as our observation went. Yet her speed was such as I do not believe any ship achieved before. Now rising majestically on the long roll of the swell, now falling into the concave of the sea, she rushed onward towards the steamer she was evidently pursuing as though driven by all the furies of the deep.

As we watched her the gun in her foremost turret belched out flame and smoke, and we observed the rise and fall of a shell, which cut the water a cable's length ahead of the straining steamer. At that moment she ran up a flag upon her signal mast, and, as I read it with my glass, I saw that it was the flag of the Chilean Republic.

It was a matter of satisfaction to me that Mary still slept, and I looked for the appearance of Paolo with some question. But he remained below through it all. The skipper was the first to speak. "That ship yonder," said he, jerking his thumb to starboard, "is it any business of ours?"

"None that I know of," I replied; "but it's a mighty fine sight, skipper, don't you think, a Chilean warship running after a liner in broad daylight? What's your opinion?"

"It's a fine sight enough, but I would give half I'm worth to be a hundred miles away from it; do you want me to get this boat into port again?"

"Of course."

"Then I'm going to put up the helm and sheer off. I'm not a man that loves fighting myself, and, with a ship and crew to look after, I've no business in any affair of this sort."

"Hold on a bit, skipper," said Roderick, "as we are, if you please; why, man, it's a sight I wouldn't miss for a fortune."

I had my glass to my eye in a moment, and the light was full upon the vessel, which must have then been a mile and a half away from us. There was now some one moving upon the bridge, and could recognize the shape of a man.

Throughout the strange scene, this vessel of mystery never gave a sign that men worked at the furnaces, belched out evidence of that terrible power which was then driving her through the seas at such fearful speed.

But of the activity of her human crew we had speedily further sign; for, there was some belching of flame from a turret, and this, at the moment, belched out the forepart of the great liner, and we heard the shout of terror which rose from those on the decks. Then men appeared at the signal-mast of the pursuer, and rapidly made signals in the common code.

Then there was activity on the deck of the smaller ship, and men were exchanging off a launch, which dropped promptly into the sea and with a crew of some half dozen men. Again I got glass full upon the man who walked the bridge; and I knew him. He was the Captain Black met at Paris. The one styled Captain Black by my friend Hall.

The last link in the long chain was welded then. The whole truth of that weird document, so fantastical, so seemingly wild, so fearful, was made manifest; the dead man's words were vindicated. There on the great Atlantic vessel, I had lived to see one of those terrible plots which he had conceived in the midst of his long dreaming.

"Mark," said Roderick, "it's time to go; we'll be the next when that ship's at the bottom. Remember we have Mary on board."

"Don't you think you're better below, Mary?" asked Roderick.

"Not until you go; and why should I make any difference? I overheard what you said. Am I to stand between you and those men's lives?"

"I am for standing by to the end," said I. "If we can save one soul, let's save it."

The fellow known as "Roaring John" stood in the bows of the launch, and appeared to be gesticulating wildly to the skipper of the Ocean King, the nameless ship set up of a sudden shrieking with her deck whistles, which she blew three times with terrible power; and at the third sound of it the launch, which had been holding to the side of the steamer, let go, running rapidly back to the armed vessel, where it was taken aboard again.

The whole thing was done in so short a space of time that our men scarce had opportunity to express surprise when the launch was hanging at the davits again. The great activity that we had observed on the decks of the war vessel ceased as mysteriously as it had begun. She bounded past us at a speed the like to which I had never seen upon the deep.

So remarkable a face-about seemed to dumbfound our men. But the key to the riddle was given, not by one of them, but by Paolo, whom I now found at my elbow.

"Ha!" he cried, "she's American!" I saw what troubled him. There was a gleam of mischief coming up at a high speed, and I knew the form of her at once, and of two others that followed her. She was one of the American navy. The secret of the flight was no longer inexplicable; the yellow ship had fled from the trap into which she was so nearly falling.

"You have sharp eyes, Paolo," said I; "I imagine it's lucky for the pair of us."

The nameless ship, of a sudden, ceased her flight, and came about to a stand some half a mile away on our port bow. As she swung round to head the sea, I saw at once that another cruiser, long and white, and seemingly well armed, had come up upon that side, and now barred her passage.

The nameless ship had now hundreds of men about her decks, and these were at the machine guns and other active in preparation. The great hull swung round slowly and passed at a moderate speed past the bow of the other. When she was nearly clear, her two great guns were fired almost simultaneously, and, as the shells swept along the deck of the cruiser, they caused men and masts and deck houses with them, in one awful confusion of wreckage and of death. The cruiser was utterly unprepared for the treachery, and lay reeling on the sea as her opponent treated her to the hall of her machine guns.

The battle could have ended but in one way, had not the other American warships stood ready to use their guns. She opened fire with their great guns, and all about us. The captain of the nameless ship fired twice from his turrets, and then heeded off at prodigious speed. In five minutes he was out of gunshot; in ten, the American cruiser was taking men from her crippled cruiser, whose antagonists had almost disappeared on the horizon.

Upon our own decks the noise and hubbub were almost deafening. We put out a boat with ease upon the still sea and hailed the passenger steamer after twenty minutes' stout rowing. She was yet a pitiful spectacle. When we got up on her main deck, Captain Rosa, her commander, greeted us with great thanks. He took us to his chart room, for he would have all particulars about us.

"Twenty years," he said, with tears of anger in his eyes, "if I've crossed the Atlantic, but this is the first time that I ever heard the like! It's piracy on the high seas; and they shall answer, if there's only one rope in Europe. What does it mean? Are we at war? You saw the Chilean flag. Is there no treaty of Paris?"

The first of the American ships came up with us, and the commander of her put out a boat, and having gone aboard the maimed cruiser, he came afterwards to the Black Anchor ship, and joined us in the chart room.

"It's an international question, I guess," he said; "and if I come on deck with his neck for the twenty men dead on my cruiser, to say nothing of the twenty thousand pounds or more of damage to her, I will—why, we'll run him down in four or twenty hours."

I heard it agreed between them that the second cruiser of the American fleet should start at once in pursuit, while the ironclads should accompany us to New York, so making a little convoy for safety's sake.

With this arrangement we left the ship and regained the Celtic. Paolo stood at the top of the ladder as I came on deck, and listened, I thought, to our protestations that the danger was over with something of a sneer on his face. Indeed, I thought that I heard him mutter, but I did not know then how much the laugh was in the wind now, Dan. And what should have convinced us, and that we should leave the convoy long before we reached New York.

CHAPTER X.

For full five days we steamed with the other vessels, under no stress to keep the sea with them, since they made no more of the knot for the sake of the maimed cruiser which had been so fearfully maimed in the short action with the nameless ship. On the early morning of the fifth day I found myself unable to sleep and went aboard at daylight, to see the white hulls of the American war vessels a mile away and the Black Anchor boat a few cable-lengths ahead of them. Paolo was on the bridge. I heard Dan the other side of the skylight, and he was holding forth with much fine phrase to Roderick's dog, Belle. I called him to me, and had it out with him then and there.

"What's the wind now, Dan?" I asked. "That you're preaching to the dog? Is there any more nonsense amongst the men forward?"

"There's a good deal of talk—maybe more than there should be."

"And what's they talk about? Tell me straight, Dan."

"Well, I've got nothing for my part, to hide away, and I don't know as they should have; but you know this ship is a dead man's."

afraid to go there, and the Old One amongst 'em, so that half of the crew 'We was too late' and the other half 'Why not 'boat ship and home again? No, and you ain't done with it, not by a long day, and you won't have done with it until you drop anchor in Yankee-land. If ever you do drop anchor there, which I take leave to give no word upon."

"It's a curious state of things. You mean to say, I suppose, that there's terror amongst them—plain terror, and nothing else?"

"Ay, sure!"

"Then it remains for us to face them." I went to bed at 10 o'clock, and for an hour or two I slept with deep forgetfulness. At what hour Dan awoke me I cannot tell. He shook me twice in the effort, he said, and when I would have turned up the electric light, he seized me hard roughly, muttering in a great whisper, "Hold steady." I knew then that mischief was afoot, and I asked him what to do.

"Crawl above," he said, "and lie low 'draw' and be went up the companion ladder when I got my fannels and rubber shoes upon me. But at the topmost step he stood awhile, and then he fell flat on his hands, and backed again down the stairs, so that he came almost on top of me; but I saw what prompted his action, for, as he moved, there was a shadow thrown from the deck light down to where we lay; and then a man stepped upon the stair and his hand on his feet, and he hid in his hand an iron bar; for he had no other weapon. At the sight of him we had backed to the foot of the stair way; and, as the man crept down, we lay still. Swiftly and silently he entered the place; and, going to my cabin door, he slipped a wedge under it, serving the door around the big cabin in the stair way. The success seemed to please him; he chuckled softly, and came again to the ladder, where with a quick motion, Dan brought his pistol butt full upon the fellow's forehead, and he went down like a dead thing at the foot of the swinging table.

There we left him, after we had bound his hands with my scarf; and with a hurried knock got Roderick from his berth. He, in turn, aroused his sister, and in five minutes we all stood in the big saloon and discussed our plan.

Dan's whispered tale was this. The watch was Paolo's, who had persuaded the four stokers and six of the forward hands to his opinion. These men, the dupes of the second officer, had determined on this much—that the voyage to New York should be stopped abruptly. We, being locked in our cabins, were to have no voice in the affair; or, if we did, we should be knocked on the head, and so quieted to reason.

It was a desperate endeavor, wrought of fear; but at that moment the true hands of the fo'castle were batted down, and Dan, who had seen the thing coming, escaped only by his foresight. The night he had felt danger, but we were wrapped in a tarpaulin, and he hid himself on a deck.

As it was, Paolo stood at the door of the skipper's room; there were three men guarding the fo'castle, and five at the foot of the hurricane deck. One man was he settled with; but we were three, and eight men stood between us and the true hands.

(To be continued.)

WORKINGMAN IN GERMANY.

Gets Lower Wages, but Receives Much Care from Employers.

The wages of German workmen are low, compared with those which prevail in the United States, but the method of handling the men is one which is calculated to improve their efficiency and add to their content, and to this fact is attributed very largely the great advances which have been made in German trade throughout the world, says the New York Tribune. Many German corporations own dwelling houses and rent them to their workmen at the actual cost. Others provide restaurants and serve meals at cost price, furnish fuel at wholesale cost, give transportation, in whole or in part, to employes living a distance from the factories, pay pensions in certain cases, and working people's reading rooms, baths, hospitals, savings banks and cooking schools for girls are maintained.

The annual report of the Imperial Insurance department for 1905, just made public, shows the amounts paid to beneficiaries under the compulsory insurance laws in force for protection to workmen. For accidents injuries, \$22,415,000 was paid to 1,434,473 persons injured, or their dependents, which is an average of one out of every sixty of the total population of the empire. Sick and indigent persons received last year \$38,080,000.

Annuities were granted to 152,412 persons, and to these sums is to be added \$40,460,000 paid yearly from the local sick funds throughout the empire as sick benefits and burial charges, making a total of \$111,860,000 annually paid as benefits under the workingmen's insurance laws. During the same year 200 companies employing labor paid in gifts to workmen and permanent funds and other provisions for their welfare, apart from wages, \$27,608,000.

Special provision is made for the miners of Germany, with a view to relieving their burdens as far as possible. In Prussia 8,626 miners' houses have been erected, with room for 18,062 families, either wholly or partly at state expense. Thirty-two buildings with 5,051 beds have been provided for unmarried miners, and are rented at low prices.

It cannot, of course, be predicted how these forms of state and private benevolence may finally come to be viewed by the workmen. Some of the large manufacturing firms which have been foremost in the work of improving the system of handling labor have not wholly escaped labor troubles during the last year. It can be said, however, that the state has with much ingenuity and skill sought to lessen the distress due to accident, disease and old age among wage earners, and that in all parts of the empire private enterprise has done much toward the same end.

Bobby's Joke.

"Pa," said Bobby, as he leaned over the deck rail, "what kind of a boat is that out on the lake?"

"That," replied Pa, as he raised his glass, "is a sister ship to the one we are on."

Bobby watched the big funnels for a while and then said:

"Pa, I think that must be a brother ship."

"Why so, my son?"

"Because they smoke so much."

EDITORIALS

Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

THE DOWN-AND-OUT CLUB.

THE Down-and-Out Club has its members in every city, town, village and hamlet of the country; you brush against them in the congested, market places; you find them lurking from the haunts of men, dreading their lives in idleness, eating the bread of self approach, and drinking the leaves that are always found in the bottom of the chalice of pleasure.

Men come into membership in the club in a particular way; some very few, however, come to the avenue of sickness and pain; some trudge along "Weariness street," others through "Business alley" and still others over the rough and rugged path of "Don't Care."

You have no difficulty in recognizing a Down-and-Outer wherever he may be. He has a hang-dog, dejected, Outer wherever he may be. He shows in his face beaten and buffeted appearance. He shows in his face that he has lost all hope and doesn't care whether his hope or not. His hands are weak and shaky, and his eyes are a white in his voice that declare in unmisgivable language that he has taken his past master's degree in the club. His clothing is unkempt, soiled and tattered. He is ill-dressed, weary, sad and, above all, exhausted. He is tired of it all. Rarely is it that a man who comes into membership in the Down-and-Out Club ever takes his papers of resignation from it. He knows he has been a fool to identify himself with it, yet he lacks the courage to say to his fellow clubmen, "I am going to get out."

It does not require much energy to get into the club. On the contrary, it is the lack of energy that lands the member within the precinct of the Down-and-Outers. He does take courage, tremendous pluck and determined stick-to-itiveness for a man when once a member or on the verge of membership to get up and away from the noxious influence that, while stupefying, still attracts the men to membership in the club.—*Utica Globe.*

MAINTAINING GOOD ROADS.

THE amount of ignorance, or indifference, displayed in the neglect of new macadamized roads would scarcely be credited to a European. The watchful care with which the famous roads of Europe are maintained and the very first signs of wear corrected. Instead of keeping a part of men employed in the constant, day-by-day, repair of deep spots, hollows and ruts, our authorities in many cases seem to think that it is sufficient to spread a few loads of top dressing over the whole surface of the road annually or biennially, as the case may be, and let it go at that. Under this method the solid portions of the road receive just as much care as those which have developed soft spots and shown the need of more extended repair. The top dressing serves no better purpose than temporarily cover up the damage of the last season's road, and in a few weeks' time the surface is about as badly, if not more broken up than before. Matters grow worse to worse until there is a call for drastic remedies. In nine cases out of ten the drastic remedy consists in breaking up the entire surface, and practically rebuilding the road.

Now, it has improved to a demonstration, not merely in Europe, but certain sections of this country where

strength no four of them could have held his other, but as it was, the Turkoman found little difficulty with him, and held him, snarling, while a camera was snapped."

SWIMMING APPARATUS.

Attached to the Shoulders and Operated by Propellers.

Because a person cannot swim in deep water—if he uses the electric-propelling machine shown in the illustration. This machine does the work for him and can be used as a life-saving apparatus or an automatic swimming

Some 200 young persons of all these nations by these means come into friendly relations with each other, and by the exchange of thought learned something of each other's ways of life and thought. And if, adds the committee, larger number of these preliminary exercises, the mere interchange of compliments and platitudes and then let the matter drop there has been an encouraging percentage who have persevered and wanted a real friendship with their correspondents, thus mutually interesting and aiding each other, and doing a great deal to combat international prejudices. If such an end has been achieved by 1,000 of the 20,000 the result may be regarded as highly satisfactory.

A set of "rules for the general guidance of the correspondents has been drawn up by Mr. Dr. R. Hartmann of Leipzig, president of the committee, one of which is the strong discouragement of any gratuitous expression of drinking habits.

Heading a Tiger.

"In a cage in the room in which I lived while in Khiva," says Langdon Warner in the *Century Magazine*, "was a tiger from the Oxus swamps. He had taken a dislike to me, and every time I passed his cage he got up and paced angrily toward me, snarling."

"Into the cage of this beast, at the command of the prince, a Turkoman stepped, armed with a short stick he struck the tiger's nose as he made for him, and then, with palms out and eyes fixed, he walked slowly up to the drinking beast and stroked his face and flank."

"The tiger started and took the man's hand in his open mouth. I held my breath and looked for the bleeding stump to fall away. But keeping that hand perfectly still, with the other he tickled the tiger's jaw and scratched his ear, till with a yawn and a pleased snarl the big cat rolled over on his back to the man's belly scratched."

"The man then sank to his knees, always keeping his hands in motion over the tiger's head, and with his foot drew toward him, until attached to a chain. This was snapped round the tiger's neck and, rising to his feet, laid hold of the chain and dragged the tiger out."

"This was only the second time that the cage had been entered. As soon as the tiger was outside he apied the watching party and started for them, but came up short on the collar. If he had chosen to use his weight and

REBUILDING SAN FRANCISCO.

THE largest American city of the Pacific coast, so nearly obliterated in its physical features, has sufficiently restored itself to be a habitable place, and to carry on the business that is the chief asset. It is remarked that two San Franciscans are rising, one a city of bricks for temporary needs, and the other built of brick, stone and reinforced concrete for permanent uses. Since May building permits to the value of \$22,000,000 have been issued. All the busy streets have been cleared and three-fourths of the street car service is again in operation. Most of the noted business places have reopened at the old stands, and the San Franciscans hope to get back even the "local atmosphere" found alone in life at the Golden Gate.

No city whose trade is sound can be destroyed. In Chicago the great fire it but an item in local history, not a perceptible fact in the town as it exists to-day. Galveston, overwhelmed by a flood, is a stranger and safer city than before. San Francisco is struggling out of its ruins without the slightest doubt that its destiny will be practically the same as if it had not been doubly ravaged. Yet calamity is too grim a visitor to be incurred if it can possibly be avoided. Fire has been called a beautifier, but it is frightfully costly. The year's conflagrations in the United States have caused a loss of over \$300,000,000. It is an item that can be immensely cut down, as the experience of European cities proves. A good resolution for 1907 is to work in the direction of buildings that will not burn.—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

THE BOMB IN ST. PETER'S.

NARCHISM is always stupid, but when it gives vent to itself by stabbing a professor of zoology because he disapproves of murder, or by exploding a bomb in St. Peter's at Rome, it descends to depths of stupidity which should bring shame even into the ranks of anarchy itself.

Meaningless malice can make no progress, bombs and daggers or no bombs and daggers. Any fool can carry a tin box of gunpowder into a cathedral when no one is paying any attention to such a possibility and cause it to explode. But will that make the world start and shiver in terror? On the contrary, it will simply cause it to live in a new supply of rat poison.

That no lives were lost through the present outrage is one great cause of congratulation. And that St. Peter's itself and its art treasures are unharmed is another. A third cause of congratulation it is to be hoped the world will have later—the prompt arrest and punishment of the would-be homicide.—*Chicago Herald.*

clever game of cup and ball with me. I did not once fall out, but got more shaking in a two-mile drive than most folk got in a railway accident.

My conversation with the landlady, whose countenance suggested sorrow, was fragmentary and unsatisfactory. Delight, therefore, was consequent on the bouncing appearance of a fair and florid little man who excitedly exclaimed:

"Me speak English!"

"Capital!" said I. "And where did you learn it?"

"Yes, I know, but where did you learn? In London?"

"No—small boy, very small boy, two year, Australia; me Englishman; me speak eight languages. Me speak English good, eh?"

"Then will you kindly tell the landlady that I should like my room swapped?"

"Swep? Me no 'stand swep, me speak ver' good English."

He beamed and glowed and puffed and basked within the admiring gaze of the loungers as the one man in all Timrovo who could speak English. Later, through my interpreter, I brought him to tears by regretting that his knowledge of English was so limited.

Later he came to my room. He knew I was a great and powerful man. He also was an Englishman. He wanted to leave his house and go to London, but he had no money. Would I tell the British government to send him £250?

I mourned the callous-heartedness of the government, and besought him not to base too much expectation on the fatherly sentiment of the British government toward a German born in Australia, who was removed when only 2 years old.

For Personal Use.

When President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation it excited at once a great deal of discussion in the army. On one occasion Henry Clay Trumbull, says his biographer, was going through the camp of the regiment of which he was chaplain, when he was hailed by a sergeant and some men who were arguing the subject.

"Chaplain," asked the sergeant, "do you think President Lincoln had any right to issue that proclamation?"

"I suppose he thought he had," replied Mr. Trumbull.

"Well, I suppose a soldier's got a right to hold his own opinions, hasn't he?"

"Oh, yes, certainly he has," answered the chaplain; "that is, if he'll take care and hold 'em, and not always be slingin' them round carelessly before others."

Spotted in the Making.

"Nature designed me as a poet," remarked the visitor, handing over a manuscript.

"Ah! May I ask what seemed to interfere with nature's plan?" replied the editor, returning the paper.—*Philadelphia Press.*

To pay a person is unconventional in a polite way of saying he is a polite.

GOOD ROADS

Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

Fall Road Work.

Road work done in the fall, if well done, is worth more than that done in the summer time. For the ditches will be open and clean, the grade well rounded, and everything be made favorable for taking care of spring rains and freshets.

Any kind of road work may be done in the late fall, but any piece of work begun should be well finished. There is nothing more annoying than to travel all winter over frozen lumps of earth on a half finished road.

Grass and weeds should be mowed or burned, so that snow will drift around them on the road, nor weed seeds be scattered over the surrounding fields; and culverts should be put in place that the ditches may drain better in the spring.

Roads can be advantageously worked in the fall, particularly those through low places, as they are usually dry at that time. Everything is in favor of fall road work if it is done right. Horses and men work more easily and the road machinery is used to better advantage. Besides, the work is done at a time when it does the most good, for the roads are thus prepared for the succeeding spring, when good roads are badly needed.

Fall road work has its disadvantages, though, to the farmer, for at that time of the year his labor is needed at home, preparing the land for the next year's crop, or saving the crop which has just been harvested.—*Farm, Stock and Home.*

Trees Along Highways.

In an interesting address before a meeting of the grange at Greenville, N. Y., County Engineer J. Y. McClintock spoke on the many advantages of country life and the importance of having good roads. He advocated building wide roads so that all vehicles could safely pass. On the desirability of having trees along the road he had the following to say:

We know that hedges, small trees and bushes are not suitable along our roads because of drifting snows, but there are great trees which will grow up high and be a source of enjoyment and attractiveness. I know that some will object to trees because they will to some extent reduce the productivity of a strip of land within their range, but as far as I can learn a good row of trees along a road will make the farm more salable. Many of your farms will be bought by people from the city, and to them surely the trees will be an advantage. There should not be dense rows of trees, but they should be placed far enough apart to permit of full development of each tree. There are certain trees in your town which many people look upon as personal friends, and many drives and walks are taken to visit them and come under their influence.

The pride of New England as well as old England is the noble old trees which connect in one life the times of our sturdy forefathers and the present. It requires time and care to secure good trees, but they are worth the cost in creating the beautiful vistas which are so effective in architecture, in making cooling shade and intricate forms so refreshing to the body and delightful to the eye. In making wind breaks which are beneficial to many crops and in transforming a bleak, flat country into an enjoyable living and looking place. With united effort you can secure all the most attractive features which rich men and cities secure by lavish expenditure of money in the formation of parks and it will all add to the value of your property.

The Child and the Fire.

I wonder what the fire says—
It's always talkin' so;
Mother says it's singin'
The songs of long ago;
But what the fire says to me
Is what I'd love to know!

One time there was a fire
Heard the col' wind sing and shout,
An' told what it was a-bout,
To the people 'round about,
An' the wind came down the chimney
An' blew the fire out!

I wonder what it's sayin'?
An' yet, I think I know!
"Christmas comin'—comin'!"
In a gallop 'cross the snow!
It's going to bring you lots o' things,
Because it loves you so!"
—*Atlanta Constitution.*

An Offhand Diagnosis.

A humorous variation of the formidable parent who figures in popular fiction comes from the Philadelphia Public Ledger. It was evening, and while the young man was waiting for the girl of his choice he made desperate attempts at conversation with the girl's father.

"What do you think of the outdoor treatment of disease?" he asked, rather wildly.

"Well," the old gentleman blandly responded, "for the sort you have, the outdoor treatment might be all right in summer, but at this season a quiet parlor is better."

Not Straight Enough.

"He's the ruler of that ward, isn't he?"

"Oh, no, he's the machine boss of the ward."

"Well, 'machine' boss or 'ruler'—what's the difference?"

"My friend, the word 'ruler' suggests something straight."—*Philadelphia Press.*

Not True.

"Honest fisher folk," you call them, remarked the publisher. "You'll have to change that."

"What for?" demanded the author.

"Simply because it sounds ridiculous. I never knew a man who went fishing to be quite honest."—*Philadelphia Press.*