

VARIOUS

HARPER'S YOUNG
PEOPLE, DECEMBER 30,
1879

Various
Harper's Young People,
December 30, 1879

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A COASTING SONG



COASTING NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

Drawn by C. Graham.

From the quaint old farm-house, nestling warmly
'Neath its overhanging thatch of snow,
Out into the moonlight troop the children,
Filling all the air with music as they go,
Gliding, sliding,
Down the hill,
Never minding
Cold nor chill,
O'er the silvered
Moon-lit snow,
Swift as arrow
From the bow,
With a rush
Of mad delight
Through the crisp air
Of the night,
Speeding far out
O'er the plain,
Trudging gayly
Up again
To where the firelight's
Ruddy glow
Turns to gold
The silver snow.
Finer sport who can conceive

Than that of coasting New-Year's Eve?
Half the fun lies in the fire
That seems to brighter blaze and higher
Than any other of the year,
As though his dying hour to cheer,
And at the same time greeting give
To him who has a year to live.
'Tis built of logs of oak and pine,
Filled in with branches broken fine;
It roars and crackles merrily;
The children round it dance with glee;
They sing and shout and welcome in
The new year with a joyous din
That rings far out o'er hill and dale,
And warns the watchers in the vale
'Tis time the church bells to employ
To spread the universal joy.

Then the hill is left in silence
As the coasters homeward go,
And the crimson of the fire-light
Fades from off the trodden snow.

So the years glide by as swiftly
As the sleds rush down the hill,
And each new one as it cometh
Bringeth more of good than ill.

THE FAIRY'S TOKEN

Ethelreda, the Fairy of Northland,
Was singing a song to herself,
As she swung from a wreath of soft snow-flakes,
And smiled to another bright elf.

What token shall we send to our darling,
Our name-child, fair Ethel, below
In the house which is down in the valley
All covered and calm in the snow?

Shall we gather our glorious jewels,
And wind them about her lithe form?
They would glitter and glance in the sunshine,
And merrily gleam in the storm.

Shall we clothe her in whitest of ermine,
And robe her as grand as a queen;
Weave her laces of ice and of frost-work,
A mantle of glistening sheen?

She would shudder and cry at the clasping,
She would moan aloud in her woe,
And think the gay robes had been fashioned
By cruelest, bitterest foe.

I will none of these gifts for my darling,
Neither jewels nor laces rare,
Neither diamonds nor pearls of cold anguish—
My gift shall be tender and fair.

Early Ethel awoke Christmas morning,
And found on her pillow that day
A bunch of bright little snow-drops,
From kind Ethelreda, the Fay!

THE BRAVE SWISS BOY

**[Begun in No. 1 of Harper's
Young People, November 4.]**

VIII.—THE REWARD OF FIDELITY

Walter met with a friendly reception from General De Bougy—a brave old warrior who had served under Napoleon, and fought at Waterloo, where he had been severely wounded, and had lost his right foot by a cannon-ball. His hair was gray, and his countenance weather-beaten; but in spite of his age and infirmities he enjoyed tolerably good health, and was always in good humor. Having from long experience become a keen observer of those around him, it was not long before he recognized the merits of his new servant, to whom he soon became as much attached as his nephew had been.

Walter had been about three months in the general's service, and it seemed to all appearance as if he was likely to become a permanency there, when a letter arrived from Paris, the reading of which suddenly changed the customary gayety of the old man into the deepest gloom.

"This is a sad affair," said he to Walter, who happened to be in the room at the time. "My poor nephew!"

"Mr. Lafond? What is the matter with him?" inquired Walter, earnestly.

"He is ill, dangerously ill, poor fellow, so the doctor informs me," replied the general. "You can read the letter yourself. He seems to complain of being surrounded by strangers, with no one in the house that he can rely on. If I were not such an old cripple,

I would go and help him to the best of my ability; for although he has led a thoughtless, reckless life, a more thorough-hearted gentleman does not live. Poor Adolphe!"

"I must go to him, sir," said Walter, suddenly, after hastily reading the letter, the perusal of which had driven all the color from his cheeks.

"You! Why, it is not long since you left him; and what do you want to go back for?" inquired the general, in surprise.

"Can you not guess, sir? I must go and nurse him. He must at least have one person near him to pay him some attention."

"If you care for him so," exclaimed the general, "why did you leave his service?"

This led Walter to explain to the old gentleman the reasons which had compelled him to give up his situation, and again to beg permission to act the part of nurse to his former master. A tear sparkled in the old man's eye as the youth declared the attachment he had always cherished for Mr. Lafond. "Go to him, then," said he. "I can not trust him to a more faithful attendant; and as soon as I can I will follow you, and take my place with you by his bedside. Poor Adolphe! Had he only possessed firmness of character, and avoided bad company, he might have been well and strong to-day. But his unhappy weakness has brought him to the grave before his time, in spite of all my warnings, and entreaties. As he has sowed, so must he reap. Ah, Walter, his fate is a terrible proof of the consequences of evil habits. But all regrets are useless now. Let us lose no time in giving what little

help we can."

Making all the necessary preparations for the journey without a moment's delay, Walter soon reached Paris. When he entered the chamber of Mr. Lafond he was shocked at the change which a few short months had made in his appearance. It was evident that the doctor had rather disguised than exaggerated the danger he was in. The sunken eyes and withered face showed only too plainly that the space of time allotted to him on earth was but short. Walter sank on his knees by the bedside and taking the pale and wasted hand in his, breathed a prayer that God might see fit to deal mercifully with a life yet so young; while the invalid smiled faintly, and stroked the cheek of his faithful attendant.

"Dear Walter, how good of you to come back!" murmured the invalid. "I thought you would not leave me to die alone. I feared that your prediction would prove true, and therefore I did not wish you to go home. I wanted to have a true friend with me at the last moment which I feel can not be far off now."

The faithful Switzer saw that Mr. Lafond too well knew the critical condition he was in to be deceived by any false hopes, and he therefore did everything in his power to make the last days of the dying man as free from pain and discomfort as possible. Who could tell what might be the effect, even at so late a period, of careful nursing and devoted attention? But all his thoughtful and loving care seemed in vain.

"The end is coming," said the invalid one evening, as the glowing rays of the evening sun streamed into his apartment.

"I shall never more look upon yonder glorious sun, or hear the gay singing of the birds. I have something to say to you, Walter, before I go. Do you see that black cabinet in the corner? I bequeath it to you, with everything it contains, and hope with all my heart that it will help you on in the world as you deserve. Here is the key of my desk, in which you will find my will, which confirms you in the possession of the cabinet and all its contents. And now give me your hand, dear boy. Let me look once more upon your honest face. May Heaven bless you for all your kindness and devotion! Farewell!"

Walter bent over the face of the dying man, and looked at him with deep emotion. He smiled and closed his eyes; but after lying in a quiet slumber for about an hour, he awoke with a spasm; his head fell back, and the hapless victim died in the arms of his faithful servant.

The long hours of the night were passed by Walter in weeping and prayer beside the corpse of the master to whose kindness he had owed so much; but when morning dawned he roused himself from his grief, and gave the directions that were necessary under the melancholy circumstances. It was a great relief to him that General De Bougy arrived toward evening to pay the last honors to his deceased nephew. Two days afterward the funeral took place; and as the mortal remains were deposited in the family grave, Walter's tears flowed afresh as he thought of the many proofs of friendship he had received from his departed master.

A day or two afterward he was awakened from his sorrow by

news from home. The letter was from Neighbor Frieshardt, who again thanked him for the money he had received for the sale of the cattle, praised him for the faithfulness and ability with which he had managed the business, and then went on to speak of Walter's father. "The old man," he wrote, "is in good health, but he feels lonely, and longs for you to come back. 'If Watty only were here, I should feel quite young again,' he has said to me a hundred times. He sends you his love; and Seppi, who is still with me, and is now a faithful servant, does the same. So good-by, Walter. I think you now know what you had better do."

Without any delay Walter hastened to the general, showed him the letter, and told him he had decided to leave Paris and return home.

The general used all his powers of persuasion, promised to regard the young mountaineer as his own son; but it was all of no use. Walter spoke so earnestly of his father's solitary home, and the desire he felt to see his native mountains once more, that the old gentleman had to reconcile himself to parting with him. "Go home, then," said he. "When the voice of Duty calls, it is sinful to resist. But before you go, we must open my nephew's will. It will surprise me very much if there is nothing in it of importance to you." Unlocking the desk, the will was found sealed up as it had been left by Mr. Lafond. After opening it, the general read the document carefully through, and laid it down on the table with an expression of disappointment. "Poor fellow!" he exclaimed. "Death must have surprised him too suddenly, Walter, or he

would certainly have left you a larger legacy. This is all he says about you: 'To Walter Hirzel, my faithful and devoted servant, I bequeath the black cabinet in my bedroom, with all its contents, and thank him sincerely for all his attention to me.' That is the whole of it. But never mind, my young friend; the old general is still alive, and he will make good all that his nephew has forgotten."

Walter shook his head. "Thanks, a thousand times, dear sir, but indeed I wish for nothing. My feet will carry me to my native valley; and once I am there, I can easily earn my living. I dare say there will be some little keepsake in the cabinet that I can take in memory of my poor master, and I want nothing more."

"Then search the cabinet at once. Where is the key?"

"Here," said Walter, taking it from his pocket. "Mr. Lafond gave me the cabinet shortly before his death, and handed me the key at the same time."

"And have you never thought of opening it to see what it contained?"

"No," replied Walter. "It did not occur to me to do so. But I will go and see now." With these words he left the room, and went up to the apartment where the piece of furniture stood. In the various drawers were found the watch, rings, and jewelry his master had been accustomed to wear. As he viewed these tokens of regard, his eyes were bedewed with melancholy gratitude. Carefully placing the jewelry in a little box, he was about to close the cabinet again, when his eye fell upon a drawer which

he had omitted to open. Here, to his infinite surprise, he found a packet with the inscription, in his late master's handwriting, "The Reward of Fidelity," which, on opening, he found to contain bank-notes for one hundred thousand francs.

"Well, what have you found?" inquired the general, eagerly, when the half-bewildered youth returned.

"This watch and jewelry, and a packet of bank-notes," replied Walter, laying them on the table.

"One hundred thousand francs!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "That is something worth having. Why, that will be a fortune to you; and I am now sorry that I did my nephew the injustice to think he had forgotten you. I wish you joy with all my heart!"

"For what do you wish me joy, sir?"

"For what? For the money," said the general, in surprise.

"But that is not for me," said the Switzer, shaking his head. "This watch and the jewelry I will keep as long as I live, in memory of my good master; but the money must have been left there by mistake, and I should feel like a thief if I were to take any of it."

The old general opened his eyes as wide as he could, and stared in astonishment at the simplicity of the youth. "I'm afraid you are out of your mind," said he. "The will says, 'The black cabinet, with all its contents.' The bank-notes were in it, and of course they are yours."

"And yet it must be a mistake."

"But I tell you it is no mistake," exclaimed the general,

impatently. "Look at the inscription, 'The Reward of Fidelity!' To whom should that apply but to you? Put the money in your pocket, Walter, and let us have no more absurd doubts about it."

But the young man persisted in his refusal, and pushed the packet away from him. "It is too much," said he; "I can not think of robbing you of such a large sum."

"Well, then," said the general, greatly touched by such singular unselfishness, "*I* must settle the business. If you won't take the money, I will take *you*. From this day, Walter, you are my son. Come to my heart. Old as it is, it beats warmly for fidelity and honesty. Thanks to God that He has given me such a son in my lonely old age!"

Walter stood as if rooted to the spot. But the old man drew him to his breast and embraced him warmly, till both found relief for their feelings in tears.

"But my father," stammered the young man at last. "My father is all alone at home."



"HE WRAPPED HIMSELF IN HIS DRESSING-GOWN,
AND WALKED HASTILY TO AND FRO."

"Oh, we will start off to him at once, bag and baggage,"

exclaimed the general. "I know your fatherland well, and shall very soon feel myself more at home there than I am in France, where there is not a creature left to care for me. Yes, Walter, we will go to the glorious Bernese Oberland, and buy ground, and build a house, within view of your noble mountains, and live there with your father. He shall have cattle and goats to cheer his heart in his old age, and we will lead a happy life together as long as God spares us."

Walter in his happiness could scarcely believe his ears, and thought the whole a splendid dream. But he soon found the reality. The general sold his property in France, and departed with his adopted son to Switzerland, where he carried out the intention he had so suddenly formed. Old Toni Hirzel renewed his youth when he had his son once more beside him, and he and the general soon became fast friends. A year had scarcely passed ere a beautiful house was built near Meyringen, and furnished with every comfort; while an ample garden, surrounded by meadows, in which cows and oxen fed, added to the beauty of the scene. Walter's dream had become a reality; and everything around him was so much better than he had ever dared to hope, that his heart overflowed with gratitude to God, and to the benefactor who had done so much for him.

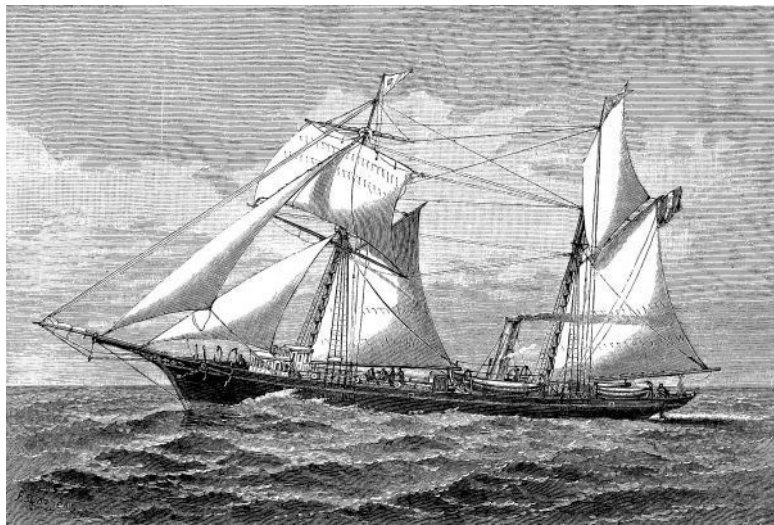
Nor was this prosperity undeserved. Walter had not spent his time in idleness and sloth. He knew that the diligent hand maketh its owner rich, and he managed the land with so much energy and skill that he soon became renowned as one of the best farmers

in the Oberland. The general and Toni assisted him with their counsel and help as far as they were able; and the old soldier soon experienced the beneficial influence of an active out-door life and the change of air and scene. His pale cheeks grew once more ruddy with health, and he soon grew so active that he even forgot that his right foot lay buried on the field of Waterloo.

Thus the little family lived in happiness, enjoying the good wishes of all their neighbors, and the gratitude of all who were in want; for they were always ready to relieve out of their abundance any who needed it. Mr. Seymour increased their happiness by visiting his friend Walter nearly every year, and rejoiced in the prosperity which God had bestowed upon him as a reward for his honesty and uprightness.

the end

AROUND THE WORLD IN A STEAM-YACHT



STEAM-YACHT "HENRIETTE."—Drawn by F. S. Cozzens.

The beautiful steam-yacht *Henriette*, of which a picture is given on this page, has just left New York, bound on a pleasure voyage around the world. Her passengers are her owner, M. Henri Say, and his wife and child, and they will doubtless have a most pleasant voyage, and see many strange sights and countries

before it is ended.

The general outline of the route to be pursued is from New York down the coast, touching at Baltimore and Washington, and possibly at some of the Southern ports, then to the West Indies, where several weeks will be spent in cruising among the beautiful islands. Some of the principal South American cities will be visited before stormy Cape Horn is doubled, and the *Henriette* enters the quieter waters of the Pacific. Then the plan of the voyage includes the Sandwich Islands, San Francisco, Japan, China, Australia, the East Indian islands, India, Arabia, the Red Sea, Egypt, the Suez Canal, Turkey, the many interesting countries bordering on the Mediterranean, and at last France, where M. Say's home is, and where the long voyage will end in the harbor of Nantes.

The *Henriette* was built at Newburgh, on the Hudson, last summer, at a cost of \$50,000, and was originally named the *Shaughraun*; but she was sold, and her name changed, before she went on her first cruise. She is rigged as a top-sail schooner, and under steam can make seventeen knots an hour, which is very fast travelling. She is 205 feet long over all, and is the largest steam-yacht but one ever built in this country. She is to be accompanied in her trip around the world by a smaller steam-yacht, or tender, named the *Follet*, in which will be carried quantities of choice provisions and extra supplies of all kinds. The crew of the *Henriette* numbers thirty men, all of whom are French, excepting her engineers, who are Americans, and the

discipline maintained on board is that of a French man-of-war.

THE NEW YEAR'S ERRAND

"What are those children doing?" asked the clergyman of his wife a few days after Christmas.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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