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St. Nicholas

ILLUSTRATED

1897

Part One.

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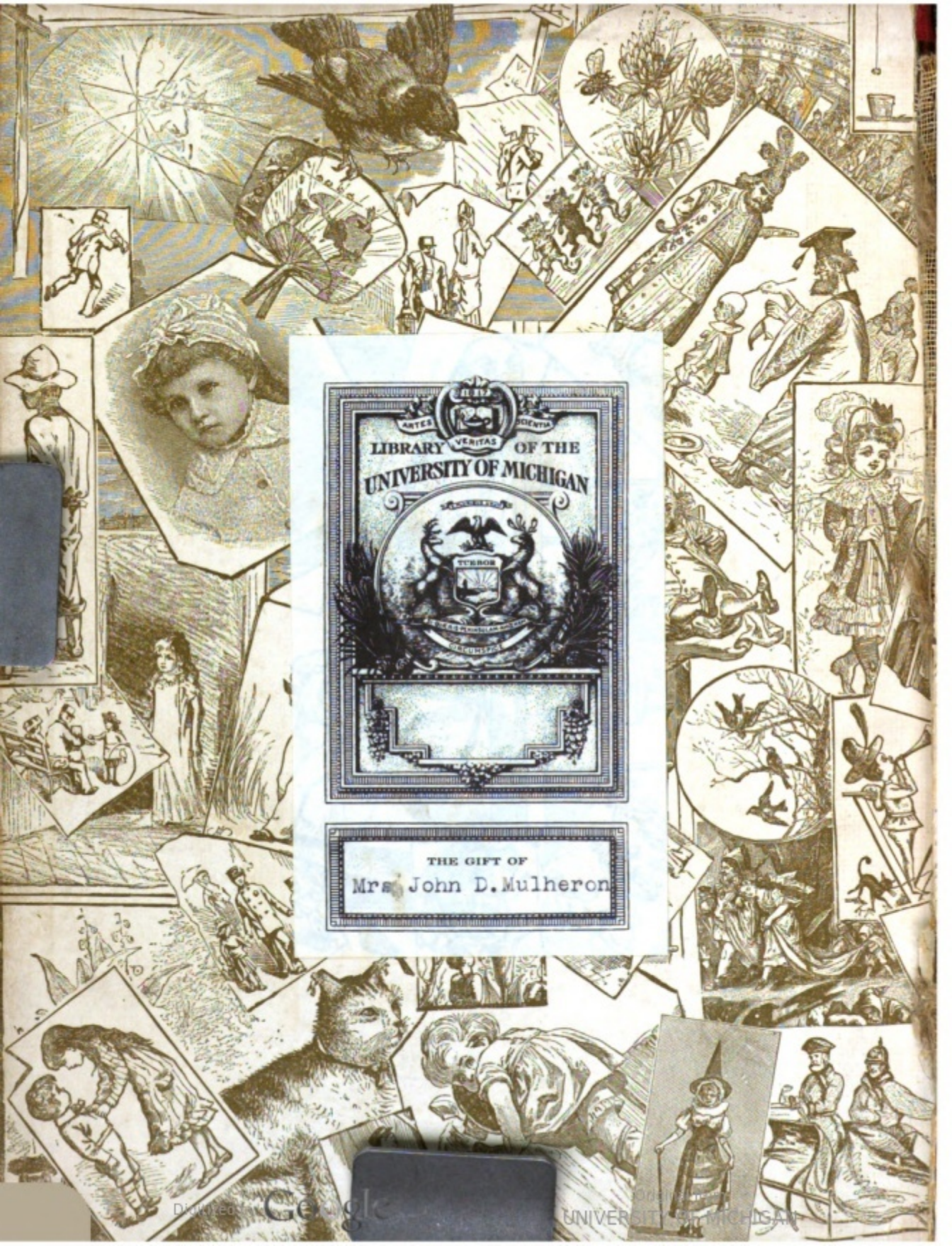

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PAINTED BY JOHN S. SARGENT. OWNED BY ROBERT GOELET. ENGRAVED BY H. WOLF.

PORTRAIT OF MISS BEATRICE GOELET.

(SEE PAGE 84.)

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a mutter now, defined and positive, and, as the two friends listened, grew into a drumming roll, and all at once above it came a shrill, high sound like the buzzing of a gnat close by the ear

Little Tom Davenant dropped from the finger-post, and came running

"PUNTS WERE POLING SLOWLY UP THE AVON TO THE BRIDGE."

up from the fork of the Banbury road, his feet making little white puffs in the dust as he flew. "They are coming—they are coming!" he shrieked as he ran.

Then up to his feet sprang Robin Getley, upon the saddle-backed coping-stones, his hand upon Nick Attwood's head to steady himself, and looked away where the rippling Stour ran like a thread of silver beside the dust-buff London road, and the little church of Atherstone stood blue against the rolling Cotswold hills.

"They are coming—they are coming!" shrilled little Tom, and scrambled up the coping like a squirrel up a rail.

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"LITTLE TOM DAVENANT DROPPED FROM THE FINGER-POST, AND CAME RUNNING UP FROM THE FORK OF THE BANBURY ROAD."

A stir ran out along the guard-wall; some crying out, some starting up. "Sit down, sit down!" cried others, peering askance at the water gurgling green down below. "Sit down, or we shall all be off!"

Robin held his hand above his eyes. A cloud of dust was rising from the London road and drifting off across the fields like smoke when the old ricks burn in damp weather — a long, broad-sheeted mist; and in it were bits of moving gold, shreds of bright colors vaguely seen, and silvery gleams like the glitter of polished metal in the sun. And as he looked the shifty wind came down out of the west again and whirled the cloud of dust away; and there he saw a long line of men upon horses coming at an easy canter up the highway. Just as he had made this out the line came rattling to a stop, the distant drumming of hoofs was still, and as the long file knotted itself into a rosette of ruddy color amid the April green, a clear, shrill trumpet blew and blew again.

"They are coming!" shouted Robin,—"they are coming!" and, turning, waved his cap.

A shout went up along the bridge. Those down below came clambering up, the punts came poling with a rush of foam, and a ripple ran along the edge of Stratford town like the wind through a field of wheat. Windows creaked and doors swung wide, and the workmen stopped in the garden-plots to lean upon their mattocks and to look.

"They are coming!" bellowed Rafe Hickathrift, the butcher's boy, standing far out in the street with his red hands to his mouth for a trumpet—"they are coming!" and at that the doors of Bridge street grew alive with eager eyes.

At early dawn the Oxford carrier had brought the news that the players of the Lord High Admiral were coming up to Stratford out of

"'THEY ARE COMING!' BELLOWED THE BUTCHER'S BOY."

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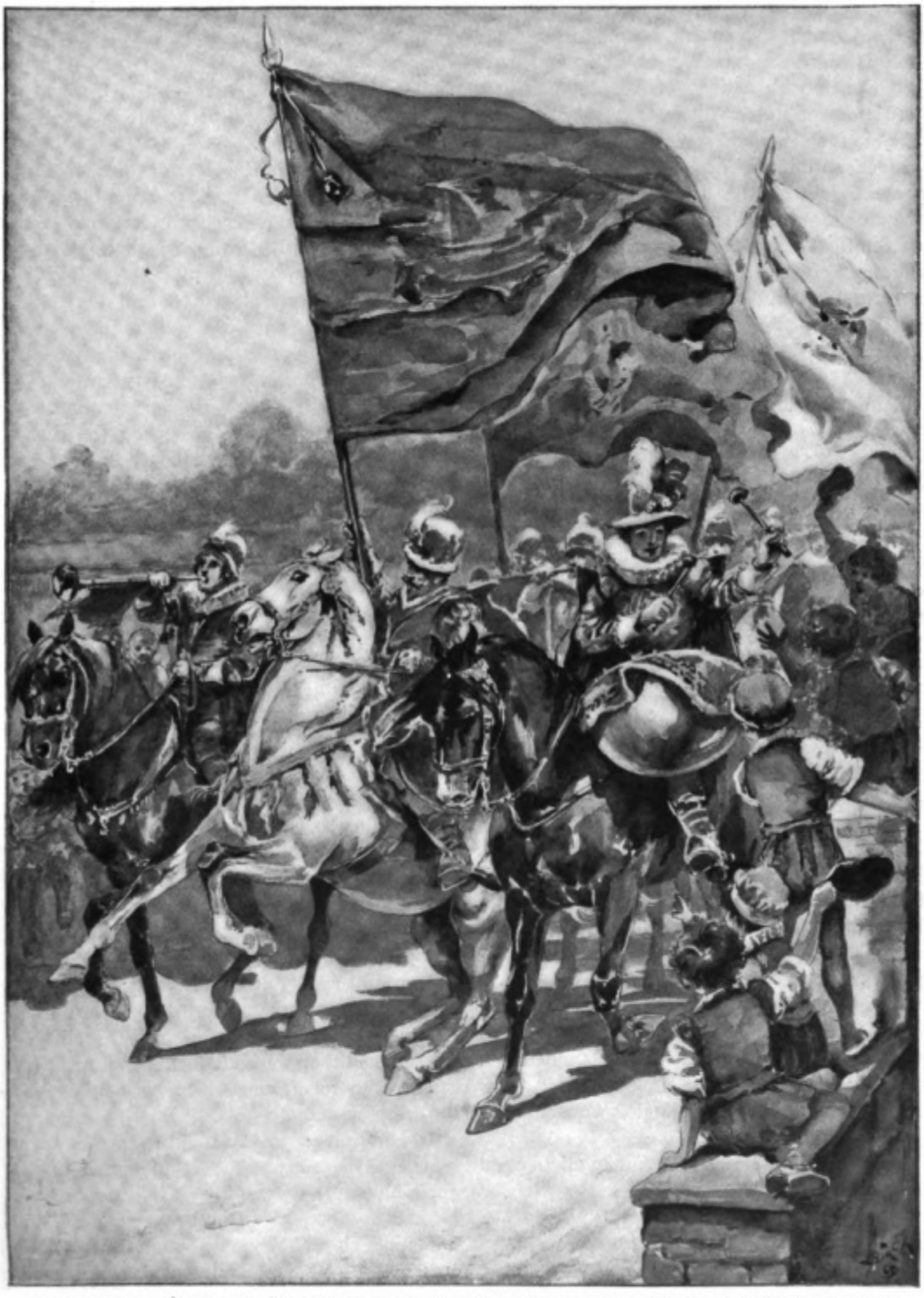

THE LORD ADMIRAL'S PLAYERS. "THE TRUMPETERS AND THE DRUMMERS LED, THEIR HORSES PRANCING, WHITE PLUMES WAVING IN THE BREEZE."

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that he will walk the whole way to Coventry sooner than straddle the horse that the burgesses have sent him to ride."

"What! Is he at the inn? Why, let 's go down and see him."

"Master Brunswood says that he will birch whoever cometh late," objected Hal Saddler.

"Birch?" groaned Nick. "Why, he does nothing but birch! A fellow can na say his '*sum, es, est*' without catching it. And as for getting through the 'genitivo' and 'vocativo' without a downright threshing—" he shrugged his shoulders ruefully as he remembered his unlearned lesson. Everything had gone wrong with him that morning, and the thought of the birching that he was sure to get was more than he could bear. "I will na stand it any longer—I 'll run away!"

Kit Sedgewick laughed ironically. "And when the skies fall we 'll catch sparrows, Nick Attwood," said he. "Whither wilt thou run?"

Stung by his tone of ridicule, Nick out with the first thing that came into his head: "To Coventry, after the stage-players," said he defiantly.

The whole crowd gave an incredulous hoot.

Nick's face flushed. To be crossed at home, to be birched at school, to work all May-day in the tannery vats, and to be laughed at—it was too much.

"Ye think that I will na? Well, I 'll show ye! 'T is only eight miles to Warwick, and hardly more than that beyond—no walk at all—and Diccon Haggard, my mother's cousin, lives in Coventry. So out upon your musty Latin—English is good enough for me this day! There 's blue-bells blowing in the dingles, and cuckoo-buds no end. And while ye are all grinding at your old Æsop, I shall be roaming over the hills wherever I please."

As he spoke he thought of the dark, wainscoted walls of the school-room with their narrow little windows overhead, of the foul-smelling floors of the tannery in Southam's lane, and his heart gave a great, rebellious leap. "Ay," said he, exultantly, "I shall be out where the birds can sing and the grass is green; and I shall see the stage-play; while ye will be mewed up all day long in school, and have nothing but a beggarly morris and a farthing May-pole on the morrow."

"Oh, no doubt, no doubt," said Hal Saddler mockingly. "We shall have but bread and milk, and thou shalt have—a most glorious threshing from thy father when thou comest home again!"

That was the last straw to Nick's unhappy heart.

"'T is a threshing either way," said he,

NICK ATTWOOD'S FATHER.

squaring his shoulders doggedly. "Father will thresh me if I run away; and Master Brunswood will thresh me if I don't. I 'll not be birched four times a week for merely tripping on a word, and have nothing to show for it but stripes. If I must take a threshing, I 'll have my good day's game out first."

"But wilt thou truly go to Coventry, Nick?" asked Robin Getley earnestly, for he liked Nick more than all the rest.

"Ay, truly, Robin,—that I will;" and, turning, Nick walked swiftly away toward the market-place, never looking back.

(To be continued.)

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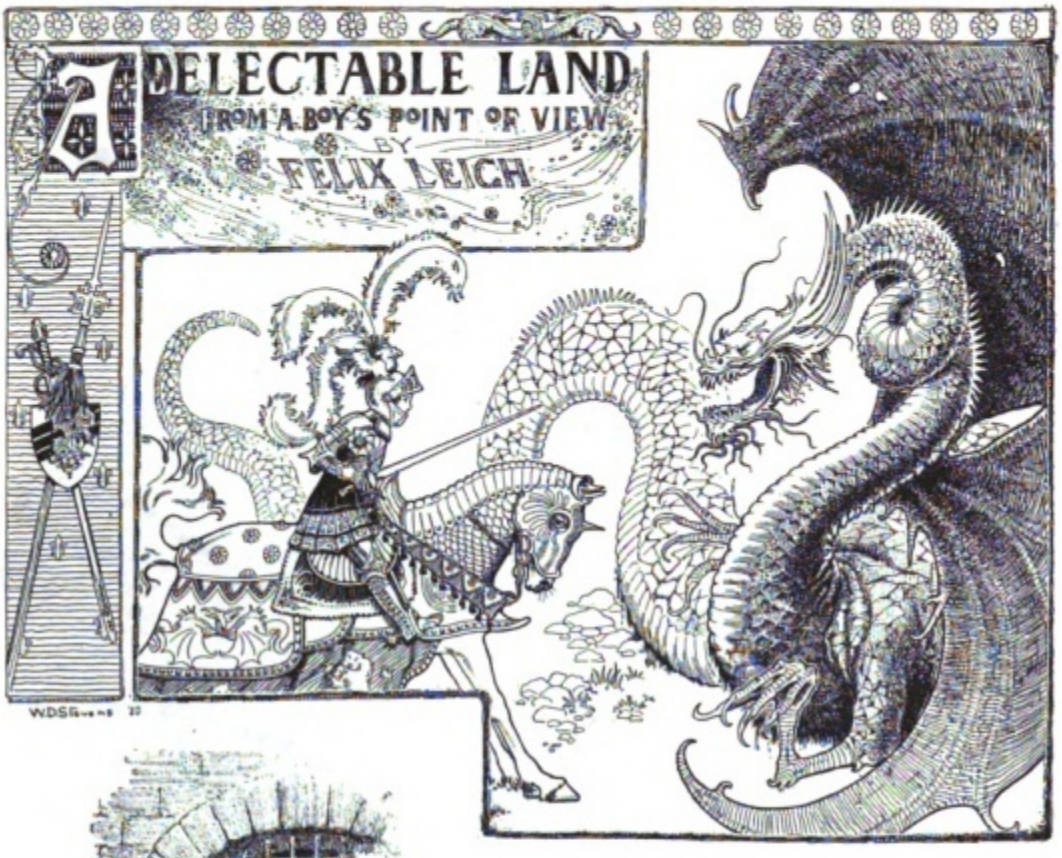
A DELECTABLE LAND
FROM A BOY'S POINT OF VIEW

BY

FELIX LEICH



Over the hills and far away
There are dreadful dragons that knights may slay—
Great snorting dragons with brazen scales,
And wings of leather, and coiling tails.
But if you 're the proper kind of knight,
With a suit of mail and a sword that 's bright,
You may whip those dragons and win the day,
Over the hills and far away!

Over the hills and far away
There are ogres living in castles gray,
With a horn to blow and the drawbridge down,
And the ogres bellow, and stamp, and frown.
But it does n't do to be frightened — no!
You must face them boldly and strike a blow,
And *then* you marry the Princess May,
Over the hills and far away!

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Over the hills and far away
You may have an excellent time, I say.
There are golden islands and magic springs
And jabberwockies — and heaps of things!
You can't be dull in a land like that,
With enchanted boots and a talking cat,
So *is* it a wonder you long to stray
Over the hills and far away?

Over the hills and far away
There are fairy monarchs in grand array,
With gnomes, and pixies, and brownies, too;
And my! the marvelous things they do!
But though they startle you just a bit,
They will help a lad who is sharp of wit,
And it 's fun to watch when they dance and play —
Over the hills and far away!

THE TIMOROUS TRIMBLE.

By Felix Leigh.

The Trimble saw the Gillybut
Careering through the sky:
"Come down," she called; "there is a Wunth
Which snaps at those who fly!"

The Trimble watched the Gillybut
Sail forth upon the sea.
"Put back," she wailed; "the east is red—
'T will blow a Shimmerkee!'

The Trimble found the Gillybut
Asleep beneath a wall.
"Get up," she cried; "now just suppose
The Tangskip were to fall!"

The Trimble spied the Gillybut
At supper on a bough.
"Jump off," she screamed; "you 're sure to catch
Odilopasis now!"

The Trimble plagued the Gillybut
In this wise day by day;
But *who* they were and *what* she feared
It 's difficult to say.

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How Plants Spread.

By Thos. H. Kearney Jr.

WE have all noticed how a weed appears in a field or lawn,—perhaps only one or two plants the first year,—and in a season or two has spread everywhere.

The dandelion is an Old World flower, not native in America, save far to the North and on some of the highest of our western mountains. But somehow it was brought here, perhaps from England in old colonial times. Now we see its golden heads and feathery balls at every grassy roadside, the "clocks" the boys and girls blow to tell the hour. A few years ago farmers in the Northwest found a new weed, a vile prickly weed, in their wheat-fields. In a very short time this weed, the Russian thistle, has spread over wide acres of the best farm-land in that part of the country, and has done great injury to the crops.

How do these plants spread so fast and so far? They are not carried about and planted. No one would be so foolish as to sow Russian thistles. The mother-plant must have ways of her own for sending her offspring abroad into the world. Plants propagate themselves in two ways, from seed or from buds. Sometimes these buds are borne on slender runners. A strawberry plant, after it has blossomed, begins to send out such runners, with buds, unfolding tufts of leaves, along them. These tufts are at first connected with the parent plant, but later the runners between break away, and each tuft becomes a new plant. Many grasses, like Bermuda grass and the troublesome quick- or couch-grass, have creeping stems, each joint sending out a bunch of roots below and a bud on the upper side. If you try to hoe up such grasses, you only make matters worse, for each joint when cut off is ready to form an independent plant. Such grasses spread very fast, and soon take possession of the land they get into.

Many plants, like lilies and crocuses, have thick bulbs or corms underground, on which grow the buds that are to make new plants. Every year new bulbs grow out of the old one. The little round, dark bulblets between the leaves and stems of our showy garden friend the tiger-lily are buds that fall to the ground and make new plants.

But most plants grow from seed, and we are going to see just now how the seed is scattered.

It is good for plants to keep as much apart as possible. If the seed fell straight to the ground, and the young plants all grew up together around the parent one, they would starve each other out. For plants are like people, and when crowded too closely together, fall to fighting among themselves. Their struggles are very bitter ones, though we do not see or hear them. The plants that are strongest in these silent battles end by getting the light and air and water and food they need from the soil, while the poor weaklings are left to starve

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and die. To prevent too much of this wasteful crowding and struggling, old Dame Nature has invented many a clever little scheme.

When trees or smaller plants grow on river banks, their fruits often fall into the water, and are carried down stream by the current, sometimes finding landing-places on the banks, and so growing up into new plants. Who has not seen sycamore-balls and buckeyes traveling along in this easy fashion? These are the *fruits* of the trees they grow on.

THE THISTLE'S ARGOSY.

Fruit is the part of the plant that incloses the seed, with the seed itself. So the dry pods that hold the black morning-glory seeds are as truly fruits as are apples or strawberries, though we commonly use the word only for those that are good to eat. It often happens that, on small islands in rivers, trees and flowers are found that do not grow on the neighboring banks. These have come down the river, sometimes from the mountains where it rises, in the shape of fruits, and have found lodging on the island, during high water. Sometimes fruits are thus borne quite out to sea, and then they may be caught up by ocean currents and carried long distances. It has been said that Columbus first formed the notion that there might be land beyond the western ocean on seeing some strange nuts that had been washed to the shores of the Azores from far away America.

OFF ON A FAVORING BREEZE. THE SEEDS OF THE MILKWEED.

The usual way for seeds to be carried is by the wind. Sometimes they are so small and light as to be easily wafted by the breezes. This is the case with the seed of the moccasin-flowers and meadow-pinks, and the other beautiful plants of our woods and bogs called orchids. And the tiny bodies, like atoms of dust, termed "spores," that answer to seed in ferns and mosses and toadstools, are borne away by the lightest breath of air. But most seeds are themselves too heavy for this. So they are ofttimes provided with thin, broad wings that carry them before the wind as a sail carries a boat. The pairs of "keys" that hang in clusters from the maple-trees in spring are such

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winged fruits. When ripe they float slowly to the ground, or if a high wind is blowing, they are carried farther from the tree. The ash has thick bunches of winged fruits much like these, but single. The elm has a thin, papery border all around its small seeds, which makes them quite conspicuous as they hang on the branchlets before the leaves have come out.

THE WINGED SEEDS OF THE MAPLE.

Numbers of plants have about the seeds delicate hairs or bristles that take the place of wings. A dandelion "clock," or a head of thistle-down, is a bunch of seeds, each with a circle of fine bristles on the summit. When the seeds are ripe, along comes a breeze, and puff! away go the seeds, hanging from their tufts of bristles, as the basket hangs from a balloon. The bunches of long silky hairs that come from a bursting pod of milkweed, and fill the air around, have each their precious cargo in the shape of a small, brown seed. The seeds that ripen in heads on the clematis, after the handsome purple flower-leaves have fallen, have long feathered tails, like slender bird-plumes, that do the same work that is given to the silk of milkweed. The "cotton" around the seeds of the willows at the riverside and of the poplars along city streets serves the same useful purpose. Cotton itself is only a bunch of fine white hair around the seed. Ages before men thought of spinning it, and weaving it into cloth, it was making itself useful to the cotton-plant by helping to scatter its seeds.

Tumble-weeds spread themselves in a wholesale fashion. Instead of sending the separate seeds out into the world with wings or hairs to carry them, the whole plant breaks off near the root, when these are ripe, and goes rolling along the ground before the wind. The bare sun-scorched deserts of the Great West produce several tumble-weeds, and there are some in the prairie region. It is natural that they should be most abundant where there are no hills nor trees to stop them in their course. But we have one tumble-weed in the East — the old-witch grass, so-called, maybe, because it rides the wind like an old beldame. In September this grass spreads its head, or panicle, with hair-like, purple branches, in every sandy field. When the seeds are ripe the plants are blown across the field, often piling up in masses along fences and hedgerows. As might be expected, the hair-grass, which has so effective a

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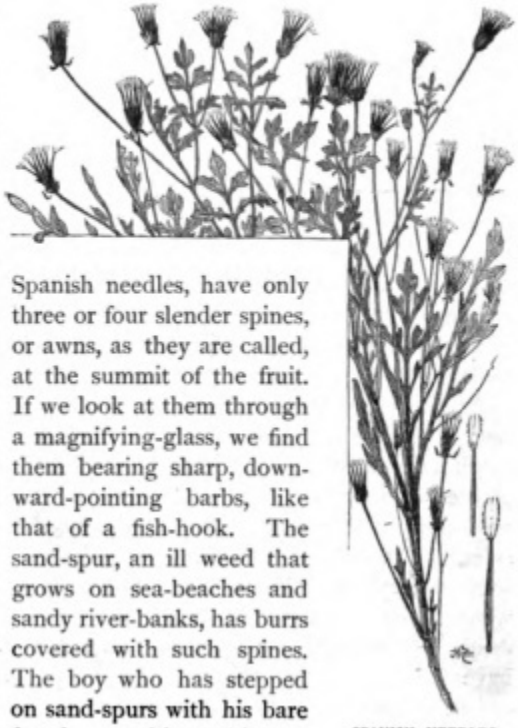
way of spreading itself, is found throughout the United States, from ocean to ocean.

After a stroll afield, in the fall, one is apt to wonder, as he works away at the burrs that cover his clothes, what use they can possibly be. Burrs are a great nuisance to men and animals; but the plants they grow on find them very serviceable, for they are simply fruits covered with spines or prickles; and this is only another way plants have to distribute their seeds. That it is a scheme that works well any one can see who has a hunting-dog, and keeps it in his yard. In the spring fine crops of Spanish needles and clot-burrs come up as if by magic, where there were none before. They have grown from the burrs the dog brought home in his coat the autumn before. Around woolen mills in New England plants from the West spring up in a mysterious way, and nearly always these have burr-fruits. They have grown from the burrs taken from the fleece of sheep, in cleaning, and thrown out as waste. Some troublesome weeds have been introduced in this manner. On the prairies there are many plants with this kind of fruit. In former days, when great herds of buffalo roamed the plains, their hair caught up these burrs, which thus stole long rides, like the tramps they are. Even now, in old buffalo-wallows plants are found that do not grow elsewhere in the country round.

THE BURDOCK.

THE CLOT-BURR.

Some burrs, like Spanish needles, have only three or four slender spines, or awns, as they are called, at the summit of the fruit. If we look at them through a magnifying-glass, we find them bearing sharp, downward-pointing barbs, like that of a fish-hook. The sand-spur, an ill weed that grows on sea-beaches and sandy river-banks, has burrs covered with such spines. The boy who has stepped on sand-spurs with his bare feet knows this to his sorrow. The tiny barbs go in easily, but every attempt to draw them out makes them tear into the flesh.



SPANISH NEEDLES.

Often the spines or bristles are hooked instead of being barbed. The clot-burr, or cocklebur that grows abundantly in waste ground, and the agrimony of our woods, are examples. Burdock has such hooked prickles on its fruits, and they stick so fast together, that children make of them neat little baskets, handles and all. The tick-trefoil has jointed pods, covered thickly with small hooked hairs that can hardly be seen without a magnifying-glass. These are the small, flat, brown burrs that cover the clothing after a walk through the woods in September. They are most annoying burrs, worse than clot-burrs, they are so small and stick so fast.

The most curious of all the ways of spreading the seeds is that adopted by the jewel-weed. This is a handsome plant, often seen in shady places along brooks. It owes its name to the dew that in early morning hangs in glistening drops, like small round diamonds, along the scalloped edges of the leaves. Late in summer,—

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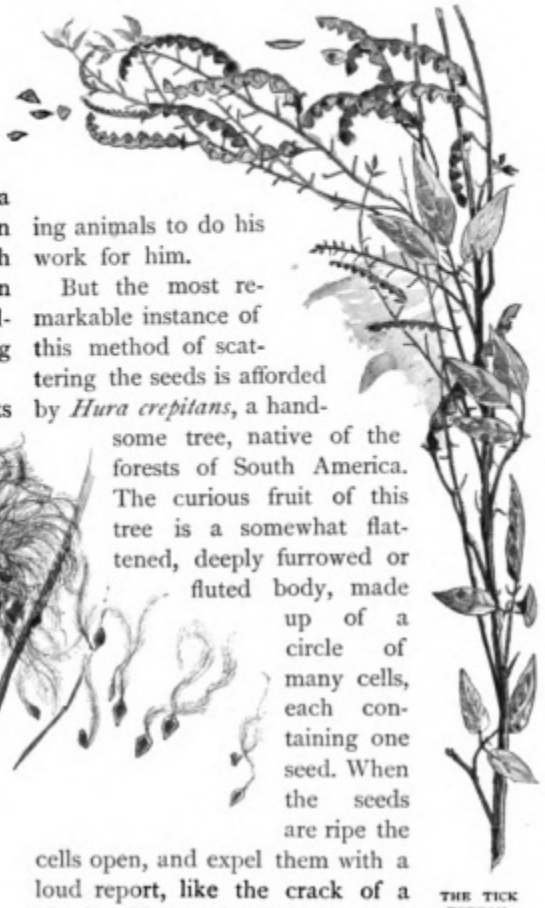
in August and September,—the jewel-weed is covered with pretty flowers, something like snapdragon blossoms, orange-red spotted with brown. Later on, when the seeds are ripe, the lightest touch will make the pods that hold them burst open suddenly, and scatter them far and wide, like shot from a tiny cannon. For this reason the European jewel-weed is known as *Noli-me-tangere*, which is Latin for "Touch me not." The garden balsam, or lady's-slipper, a relative of the jewel-weed, has the same sort of elastically-opening pods.

Another American plant that shoots out its seed in the same fashion is the witch-hazel, a shrub sometimes planted on lawns, and growing wild along brooks and on hillsides. The witch-hazel blossoms in October or November, when most other plants are dead. Often its own leaves have fallen when it begins to unfold its strap-shaped, crinkled yellow petals. Its shining black seeds do not ripen till the next midsummer. Then they are discharged violently from the pods, and are sometimes thrown ten or twelve feet. The witch-hazel is a sturdy, independent fellow, and he does not wait for wind or water, or for chance wandering animals to do his work for him.

THE CLEMATIS. SEEDS WITH PLUMES.

But the most remarkable instance of this method of scattering the seeds is afforded by *Hura crepitans*, a handsome tree, native of the forests of South America. The curious fruit of this tree is a somewhat flattened, deeply furrowed or fluted body, made up of a circle of many cells, each containing one seed. When the seeds are ripe the cells open, and expel them with a loud report, like the crack of a pistol. Hence the fruit is sometimes called the "monkeys' dinner-bell."



THE TICK TREFOIL.

Stories have been told of Hura fruits being placed in desks and subsequently opening and discharging their seeds with such violence as to break ink-wells, and even to crack the wood of the desk.

Many other means employed by plants to disperse themselves could be described were there space for them. Those of us who live in the country, or visit it in summer, can discover some of these for ourselves. They are of never-failing interest, for they show how ready plants are to seek out new homes, and fit themselves for more important places in the world. Those that can do this are always spreading and waxing strong among their fellows, while the weaker ones gradually become rarer, and finally, if completely overcome, may disappear from certain localities.

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BOB'S WAY.

By Tudor Jenks.

St. Nicholas belongs to Bob,
  Because our Uncle Jim
When he subscribed, last Christmas Day,
  Had it addressed to him.

But when it comes, why, I can't wait—
  To read it—till Bob 's through;
And Bob, who 's always good to me,
  Found out a way to do.

So, while he 's reading on one page,
  I 'm reading on another.
It 's just like Bob.—Whatever 's his
  He shares it with his brother.

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than being 'up' early in the morning, and 'doing' in a sweet-smelling garden? Answer, 'little Christian.'"

"So you have made up your mind?"

"Yes; and made my preparations, too."

"In what way?"

"First, I asked mother if I might."

"What does she think?"

"She deplores the necessity, but commends the courage of my undertaking," said June, reveling in her romantic wording.

"Good; but you 're not businesslike."

perching upon the arm of Leila's chair, kissed her sister with a gay penitence.

"When are you going to begin your new business?" asked Leila, faintly cheered.

"As the sages tell us, there is no time like — to-morrow," quoth June, triumphantly.

Chapter II.

"Miss Arctic."

June and Leila and a small white kitten sat on the steps of the porch, and surveyed the

JUNE BEGINS HER GARDEN.

"Well, maybe not. But people have their different ways, I suppose. As a worthy woman once remarked, 'It takes all sorts of folks to make the world, and, thank fortun', I 'm not one of them.'"

"June, *dear!*"

"What 's the matter now?"

"Can't you be serious for a moment?"

"Well, when things come into a person's head, what is that person to do?" and June, long neglected garden. The kitten was quite as interested as anybody, turning her coquettish little head from side to side with the thoughtfulness of a professor.

"Why did we call this kitty 'Misfit'?" asked Leila, after a silent reminiscence.

"Because her thick fur is a decided misfit for her thin bones, and because her largely active spirit is a misfit for her small body. Moreover, if she should be addicted to fits, the name

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