

GINNY LISCOMB'S CHRISTMAS JOURNEY.

She Was a Fourteen-Year-Old Factory Girl of Lynn, Mass., and Made a Perilous Trip Over Ice and Snow to See Her Mother.

By J. C. FLEMMING.

Virginia Liscomb, or Ginny, as she was called for shortness, a girl of 14, performed one of those achievements last year, which had been of higher station, would have filled pages in the newspapers. Ginny belonged to Lynn, Mass., and her parents lived in that city, but for reasons of domestic economy she had been sent early in the summer to reside for a season with her aunt in Charlestown, Prince Edward Island. She was quite comfortable with her aunt, but as Christmas drew near she pined for home and a sight of her mother and father, her brother and sister.

On December 19 Ginny received a letter from her mother, of which this is an extract: "Of course, darling, we would like to have you with us for Christmas, but that is impossible. Papa is out of work, Eddie is only doing odd jobs and Carrie is sick, and—oh God bless you, my love, and all I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year."



GINNY IN THE MIDST OF THE LOLY.

Carrie is sick and I'm going to help them in the factory. "But how on earth are you to get there," asked the aunt in astonishment, "can you fly across the straits?" "I'll sail on the Stanley to Pictou."

"Yes, but the Stanley is frozen up outside of Georgetown."

"Well, then, I'll go by the iceboats from Cape Tormentine."

"You're crazy, child, you could never make the trip, and, besides, they wouldn't take you."

"I'm going, aunt," persisted Ginny, "and they'll have to take me."

In order to realize the nature of Ginny Liscomb's achievement, it is necessary to know that Prince Edward Island lies across the Gulf of S. Lawrence, near its mouth, and the ice coming down from Labrador surrounds it completely during the winter and frequently prevents navigation. A Dominion government steamer built for the purpose sometimes succeeds in breaking a way through this ice, but is often unsuccessful and is frozen up with its passengers for many days, if not for weeks, at a time.

This recourse is had to the iceboats, which run from Cape Tormentine, P. E. I., to Cape Traverse in Nova Scotia, a distance of fifteen miles. These boats are made either to sail through the stretches of water or slide over the stretches of ice alternately and the journey is difficult, if not dangerous.

With rare exceptions men only, and strong men at that, make the trip. When, therefore, Ginny Liscomb's aunt declared the girl crazy she was not so far wrong.

Nevertheless, Ginny, after overcoming minor obstacles, found herself at Cape Tormentine the day after the short dialogue recorded, well wrapped up and with two frozen turkeys in a parcel.

"Where are you going, little one?" inquired the captain commanding the small fleet of three boats as Ginny stepped into the one of them most convenient, as nonchalantly as if she were a Cape Breton seaman.

"To Cape Traverse, sir!" replied Ginny. "O, come," said the captain, "you're crazy, my good child; that is nonsense."

"Here's my fare," said Ginny, flashing a \$5 bill before the captain's eyes.

The girl's apparel (she was small for her age) and the subsequent altercation attracted the attention of the passengers.

"But," said the captain, "I've never heard the like."

"That's because no one's sister is sick at home and she can't see her and her mother," said poor Ginny, rather incoherently, and she burst into tears.

"Read that," said Ginny, putting her mother's letter in the hand of her nearest neighbor, a big grizzled man. "You see, I must cross."

"Let her come, captain," said the neighbor, who happened to be a Dominion senator; "I'll take care of her."

"Faith," said Captain O'Brien, "it's my opinion she can take care of herself. All aboard, gentlemen. Come, boys, take hold of your oars."

And pulled the boat swiftly along, singing as they ran, for the exercise is peculiarly exhilarating. "Look out, boys!" cried the captain, suddenly. "Loly."

Loly, it may be stated, is neither solid ice nor flowing water; it is a combination of both and is as dangerous as it is deceptive. After a fall of snow or when the atmosphere is not clear it may be mistaken for board ice, as it was just then, the consequence being that the first boat with its occupants went right down, but was rescued without delay by the two others, which had kept back.

To a hard-hearted, disinterested spectator the spectacle presented by the saturated ones got into a comical one and when affairs were righted and the boatmen began a difficult sailing spell through the loly the passengers shook themselves and laughed.

Many of them had been "there before." Ginny, who was in the third boat, was really scared and clung to the senator, but they soon got into clear water and the trip ended without further incident.

When Ginny was put on board the cars at Traverse she received a cheer from her fellow voyagers as the train moved out. When her mother's letter was read to her she said: "Aunt," she said, "I'm going home."

When Ginny had finished reading her mother's letter she cried a little and then went straight to her aunt with the fire of resolution in her eye.

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course, they cannot be satisfactorily illustrated in public print. As in any similar game, care should be exercised in not becoming dangerously personal.

At first glance the second example of letters as given above (the first thirteen in our alphabet) might seem to be without of excitement. But such is not the case in the wide latitude of sense (and nonsense) allowable in the game. For instance, here is only one way out of the thousands in which it can be quickly written:

"Any bright colored dress excellent for Granville's hop. Ikey joins kisses. Loving mother."

Upon completion the "telegram" are gathered up in a basket and read aloud, either by a disinterested party or somebody selected from among the players themselves. The only way to appreciate the game of "telegrams" is to try it.

HOW TO FALL. A Trainer of Circus Gymnasts Tells How It May Be Done.

"About the first thing that I teach my pupils," said a trainer of circus gymnasts, "is how to fall; that, you know, is the secret of the great 'head dive' from the roof, which remains up-to-date the greatest sensation in the way of gymnastic tricks that the world has seen."

"It looks almost too perilous to be interesting," I ventured.

"But it is not in the least dangerous, if one only knows how to fall," he continued.

"Now, if the untrained performer should attempt to fall in a net from any height whatever, he would be almost sure to break some bones. Should he stretch out his arm to save himself he would be very likely to break it in two places. Should he light on his heels, he might break his leg, or more likely, pitch forward and break his jaw.

But just fall your lungs with air and hold them full, double yourself up into a knot, leaving no limb free, and fall on the back of your shoulders. Just above the shoulder blades, and you can fall from what height you like and come to no hurt. This explains the cannon and catapult tricks. Why, once you attempted the catapult trick in a hall when I was a child, I should be light on my feet. I picked him up for dead. You may hardly believe me, but it had only knocked the wind out of him and shaken him up a bit. The next night he was performing as usual. That just shows what the muscles of the shoulders, together with an elastic cushion of air in the lungs, will resist. Then, of course, in the case of gymnasts, the muscles become as hard as iron and furnish a great protection for the bones."

WHEN DADDY LIGHTS THE TREE. Woman's Home Companion.

We have our show and down, our care like other folk. The pocketbook is sometimes full. We're sometimes poor. But once a year, at Christmas time, our hearts is bright to see.

The baby's hand just touches heaven When Daddy lights the tree.

For weeks and weeks the little ones have lotted on this hour: And mother, she has planned for it. Since summer's sun and shower. With here a nickel, there a dime, Put by when none should see.

A loving hoard against the tree. When Daddy lights the tree.

The tiny tapers glow like stars; They mind us of the flame. That rited once in the blue sky. The morn the Christ-child came.

The blessed angels came to earth Above that far countree. We think they sing above our hearts When Daddy lights the tree.

The weest kid in mother's arms Laughs out and claps his hands. The rest of us on tiptoe stand; Where he can reach the topmost branch.

Our grands says 'twas just as fine In days when he was young; For every Christmas ages through. And Daddy's head is growing gray.

But yet a boy is he, As merry as the rest of us. When Daddy lights the tree.

'Tis Love that makes the world go round. 'Tis Love that lightens toil. 'Tis Love that lays up treasure for the child. Nor moth nor rust can spoil.

And Love is in our humble home, In largeness full and free. We all are very close to heaven When Daddy lights the tree.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS IN SALOON AND FORECASTLE. the sailors on board the American line ships. When the Paris sails on her next trip it will carry a consignment of warm mufflers which this woman has provided as her yearly gift to the crew of the doughty vessel that has done such good work in war and peace during the last year.

"The man who spends his life on board a big passenger ship sees about as many different kinds of Christmases as anybody, I guess," said Captain Richard Nierich of the North German Lloyd steamship Adler, as he sat in his cabin the other day preparing for a holiday voyage to the Mediterranean.

"Some Christmas days I have spent on the North Atlantic, others while in the China trade, still others in the South Pacific and the Mediterranean. The fact is that I have spent only one Christmas day at home since I was married—and I haven't been a bachelor for a good many years. Now we sail from New York very soon, and will touch at Gibraltar, Genoa and other ports; and before we reach here again Christmas will have been passed."

On the Mediterranean. "When your ship is running on a voyage to the Mediterranean, with a crowd of jolly passengers aboard who are off for a trip to enjoy themselves, Christmas is a day to be remembered. Friends and relatives send gifts on ahead, so that they may be handed passengers at the right time, and of course this personal remembrance from home makes more enjoyable the celebration which is always prepared on board the ship itself. The 24th of December passes about as do

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CHRISTMAS ON THE LINERS

How the Holiday is Observed on Board the Big Ocean Steamers.

CHRISTMAS TREES AND CHRISTMAS DINNERS

Mysterious Packages "Not to Be Opened Until December 25"—Revelation of a Christmas Ball on the Mediterranean.

The big passenger ships leaving port during the next few days will carry lots of mysterious bundles and packages marked "not to be opened until December 25."

Some of these are smuggled on board unknown to those who are to receive them; others are delivered into the hands of departing travelers with solemn injunctions "not to look beforehand."

Even the great vessels themselves as they lie at the docks take on the festive air of the holiday season while preparations go busily on for the entertainment of those who, from necessity or choice, are likely to spend Christmas day at sea.

It is not at all a desolate experience, that of spending December 25 on board ship, for Christmas day aboard a liner. Even a Spaniard and a Yankee can fraternize under such circumstances. Nor are the crew forgotten in the general good feeling. One New York woman well known for her charitable work makes a habit every year of remembering

other days until dinner time arrives and then the chefs and stewards outdo themselves in providing an elaborate menu and in table decorations. If the weather is fine, as it is likely to be, the passengers are in high spirits, for the Christmas feast is infectious, no matter where you go. Toward the end of the dinner speeches are made, songs are rendered, stories are told, and toasts are given; and when this is completed all go to the main saloon, and the Christmas tree is revealed, standing there in the middle, under the big skylight. It is a big tree, too; just as big as can be obtained and put in place, and on it are hung gifts from the ship for every passenger; not costly, at all, but remembrances that are likely to be long preserved as souvenirs of a pleasant occasion. Then if the sea is not high, the candles are lighted, and the tree bursts into beautiful illumination.

"This suggestion of a tree covered with hundreds of lighted candles, on a big steamship, may sound rather dangerous to a landsman, but it is safe enough in reality. Men are stationed close at hand, throughout of sight, with buckets of water, fire extinguishers, axes and so on; and if it were necessary other men above, on deck stand ready to snatch tree, candles, gift and all right through the skylight at a instant's warning; and three seconds later a blazing tree would be over the side in salt water. But while such extraordinary precautions are taken, they are not needed for ordinary foresight would determine whether it were safe to light the candles.

A Christmas Ball on Deck. "After the distribution of gifts from the tree a concert is given if the weather is bad, but whenever Christmas eve is pleasant and the latitude is suitable the passengers go on deck, which they find to be shielded from the wind by canvas, brilliantly lighted, and decorated with flags



CHRISTMAS GIFTS IN SALOON AND FORECASTLE.

FRATTLE OF THE YOUNGSTERS. Mrs. Newcomb (who is anxious for supper) "What can your grandfather be doing, Willie? (visiting at the farm)—I left him pumping the cow, grandma, when I came in."

"Little Dick cried when he wore his new shoes. "Don't they fit?" "Yes, but they don't saueak."

The Minister—Little boy, do you know where little boys go who skate on the Sabbath? The Little Boy—Yesir. They go where there ain't never no ice.

"You are late this morning, Tommy," said the teacher. "Yes'm," responded Tommy. "They was a lot of bad boys chasin' me along a fence an' I was runnin' along with 'em, an'—"

"Tell a straight story, Tommy!" "I-I can't, ma'am. It was a rail fence."

They had gone through the fire drill for weeks the other day when visitors were present the teacher thought it well to show the result of their training. "What is your first duty in case of fire?" she inquired of the school. "See the insurance company," shouted a youngster whose father's place of business had been burned out several times.

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which they sent forward in care of some acquaintance in the crew, so that their particular sailor man might have his surprise at the right time. Of course, these gifts are inexpensive, for the sailor's family has little money to spare, but a pipe, a warm stocking, or some such article received aboard the vessel and carefully kept until the proper time, when all are hung on the tree. The company gives the sailors a little wine or beer and Christmas cakes. This applies also to the firemen, who have a tree of their own in their room. So, as you will see, there are usually as many as three trees aboard the ship.

"The 25th of December we observe as a holy day on our ships, and all work is suspended aboard ship excepting that which it is absolutely necessary to perform. If there is a clergyman among the passengers he is requested to hold religious services for the tourists and also for the crew; and these are fully attended. On German vessels the captain does not officiate, as do English captains, at such ceremonies."

Everich has reason to remember two Christmas seasons, although he cannot recall any untoward happening on a Christmas day. Eight years ago he was running a ship from Sydney, Australia, to Samoa, and had as a passenger Robert Louis Stevenson.

Christmas With Stevenson. "This was by no means the only time Mr. Stevenson was aboard my ship," the captain said; "but it was the only time I had him along when anything happened. He cheered everybody up by telling funny stories that were better, coming off-hand from his lips, than most literary men could write if they worked over them for weeks. He knew, too, that it was only a question of a short time before he would die of consumption and that he could never again go home for more than a brief visit. It was simply wonderful what a difference that one man made among the passengers; and I guess almost all of us would gladly spend the time to make port under sail, with machinery disabled, if we could have a Stevenson aboard."

Stevenson described the disabling of the

the messenger has spoken, and our doubts have fled and gone. As the dark and spectral shadows of the night before the light of dawn. And in the kindly shelter of the light we would nestle down forever in the breast we lean upon.

You have given us a shepherd—you have given us a guide. And the light of heaven grew dimmer when you sent him from your side. To welcome him, to children whose the gates will open wide. To welcome him returning when his works are glorified.

By the splendor in the heavens and the hush upon the sea. And the majesty of silence reigning over Galilee. We felt your kindly presence and we humbly bow the knee. And lift our hearts and voices in gratefulness to thee.

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Who brings the world good tidings—"It is Christmas—all is well!"

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