

PUZZLED.

BY ANNIE TRUMBULL SLOSSON.

You ask me whether I'm High Church,
You ask me whether I'm Low,
I wish you'd tell the difference,
For I'm sure that I don't know.

I'm trying to be a Christian
In the plain, old-fashioned way
Laid down in my mother's Bible,
And I read it every day;

Then I pray, why I'm generally praying,
Tho' I don't always kneel or speak out,
But I ask the dear Lord, and keep asking
Till I fear He is all tired out.

But now my poor memory's failing,
And often and often I find
That never a prayer from the prayer-book
Will seem to come into my mind.

My blessed old husband has left me,
'Tis years since God took him away.
I know he is safe, well and happy,
And yet when I kneel down to pray,

Of course He can do it much better;
But He knows, and He surely won't mind
The worry about her old husband
Of the old woman left here behind.

My old father was never a Churchman,
But a Scotch Presbyterian saint;
Still, his white head is shining in Heaven,
I don't care who says that it ain't;

I tell you it's all just a muddle,
Too much for a body like me,
I'll wait till I join my old husband,
And then we shall see what we'll see.

Managing a Mule.

[Irwin Russell in Scribner's Magazine.]
You, Nebuchadnezzar, whoa, sah,
Whar is you tryin' to go, sah?

Look heah, mule! Better min' out,
Fus' t'ing you know you'll fin' out
How quick I'll wear dis line out
On your ugly stubborn back.

Dar, dat's de way to do it!
He's comin' right down to it!
Jes' watch him ploughin' t'roo it;
Dis nigger ain't no fool.

He minds me like a nigger;
If he was only bigger
He'd fetch a mighty figger;
He would, I tell you! Yes, sah!

Is dis heah me, or not me?
Or is de debbil got me?
Hab I laid heah more'n a week?
Dat mule do kick amazin'!

INTRIA, MINTRA, CUTRA, CORN.

Ten small hands upon the spread,
Five forms kneeling beside the bed,
Blue-eyes, Black-eyes, Curly-head;

Blonde, brunette—in a glee and a glow,
Waiting the magic word. Such a row!
Seven years, six years, five, four, two!

Fifty fingers, all in a line
(Yours are thirty, and twenty are mine),
Ten sweet eyes that sparkle and shine.

Motherly Mary, age of ten,
Evens the finger-tips again,
Glances along the line—and then—

"Intra, mintra, cutra, corn,
Apple-seed and apple-thorn,
Wire, orier, limber lock,

Sentence falls on Curly-head;
One wee digit is "gone and dead,"
Nine-and-forty left on the spread.

"Intra, mintra," the fat goes,
Who'll be taken, nobody knows,
Only God may the lot dispose.

Is it more than a childish play?
Still you sigh and turn away.
Why? What pain in the sight, I pray?

Ah, too true: "As the fingers fall,
One by one, at the magic call,
Till, at the last, chance reaches all;

"So in the fateful days to come
The lot shall fall in many a home
That breaks a heart and fills a tomb;

"Shall fall, and fall, and fall again,
Like a Law that counts our love but vain,
Like a Fate, unheeding our woe and pain.

"One by one—and who shall say
Whether the lot may fall this day
That calleth of these dear babes away?"

"True, too true. Yet hold, dear friend;
Evermore doth the lot depend
On Him who loved, and loves, to the end;

"Blind, to our eyes, the fat goes;
Who'll be taken, no mortal knows,
But only Love will the lot dispose—

"Only Love, with His wiser sight;
Love alone, in His infinite might;
Love, who dwells in eternal light."

Now are the fifty fingers gone
To play some new play under the sun—
The childish fancy is past and gone.

So let our boding prophecies go,
As childish, for do we not surely know
The dear God holdeth our lot below?

—Boston Congregationalist.

UNDER THE DAISIES.

[Unidentified.]

It is strange what a deal of trouble we take,
What a sacrifice most of us willingly make,
How the lips may smile though the heart may ache,
And we bend to the ways of the world for the sake.

And too often we fall in a useless fight,
For wrong is so much in the place of right,
And the end is so far beyond our sight:
'Tis as when one starts on a chase by night,
An unknown shade pursuing.

So most of us travel with very poor speed,
Failing in thought where we conquer in deed;
Least brave in the hour of greatest need,
And making a riddle that few may read,
Of our life's intricate mazes.

But if one poor troubled heart can say,
"His kindness softened my life's rough way,"
And the tears fall over the lifeless clay,
We shall stand up in heaven in brighter array,
Than if all earth rang with our praises.

Two shall be born the whole wide world apart,
And speak in different tongues, and have no thought
Each of the other's being, and no heed;
Yet these o'er unknown seas to unknown lands
Shall cross; escaping wreck, defying death,

So closely side by side, they should one turn
Ever so little space to left or right,
They needs must stand acknowledged face to face;
Yet these with groping hands that never clasp,

With wistful eyes that never meet, and lips
Calling in vain on ears that never hear,
Shall wander all their weary days unknown
And die unsatisfied. And this is Fate!

BANNERMAN RODE THE GRAY.

(A. Werner.)

I rode through the bush in the burning noon,
Over the hills to my bride;
The track was rough and the way was long,
And Banne-man, of Dandenong,

A day's march off my beautiful dwelt,
By the Murray streams in the west;
Lightly lifting a gay love song,
Rode Bannerman of the Dandenong,

"Red, red rose of the western streams,"
Was the song he sang that day—
Truest comrade in hour of need—
Bay Mathinna, his peerless steed—

There fell a spark on the upland grass,
The dry bush leapt into flame;
And I felt my heart grow cold as death,
And Bannerman smiled and caught his breath,

Down the hills to the fire-flood rushed,
On the roaring eastern wind;
Neck and neck was the red-ss race—
Ever the bay mare kept her pace—

He turned in the saddle—"Let's change, I say,"
And his bridle-rein he drew.
He sprang to the ground—"Look sharp," he said,

With a backward toss of his curly head,
"I ride lighter than you."
Down and up—it was quickly done—

The hot air scorched like a furnace blast
From the very mouth of hell—
The blue gums caught and blazed on high
Like flaming pillars into the sky;

"For your life!" he cried—"For her dear sake, ride!"
Into the gulf of flame
Were swept, in less than a-breathing space,

She bore me bravely, the good bay mare—
Stunned and dizzy and blind;
I heard the sound of a mingling roar,
'Twas the Lachlan river that rushed before,

Safe, safe, at Warranga gate,
I fell, and lay like a stone.
O love! thine arms were around me then,
Thy warm tears called me to life again,

We dwell in peace, my beautiful one
And I, by the streams in the west,
But oft through the mist of my dreams along
Rides Bannerman of the Dandenong,

With the blood-red rose on his breast.



THE OLD NEGRO'S JANUARY. *

[Written for the St. Jacobs Oil Family Calendar, 1886, by OPIE P. READ, Editor of the "Arkansas Traveler," Little Rock, Ark.]

De Jannywery win' is er blowin' mighty col',
Oh, lissen ter de cryin' o' de lam';
Peers ter be tryin' fur ter freeze er man's soul,
Oh, lissen ter de cryin' o' de lam'.

De hogs squeal loud in de middle o' de night
An' make de ha'r fly in er warmen' up fight;
De ole rooster crows wid de snow on his back,
But de man smack his mouf o'er de drink o' apple jack.

Oh, fling er nudder log, son, on ter de fyer,
Oh, lissen ter de squealin' o' de shoat;
Put on de bresh-wood, pile it up higher,
Oh, lissen ter de squealin' o' de shoat.

Set er roun' er box now we're gwine ter hab a feast,
While de win' brings de snow in er hurry frum de east—
Ah, Lawd, we got it down jest ez fine's any silk—
Oh, tilt de pitcher, Nervy, fur I wants some butter milk.