ALMANIAN

CHRISTMAS NUMBER, '03

VOL. 5 **NO. 3**

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

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Volume 5 Number 3

ALMANIAN

December, 1903

"The Captain"--Christmas 1893.

A Christmas Story.— **—By Percy Selous.**

"SAMPLE this whiskey, Captain, and take a cigar, try and cheer up a bit; for it is Christmas eve," I said to one of my companions, who together with myself and another were hunting bear and trapping generally, last winter. Our shanty was situated on the Yellow Dog River in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, near the southern shore of Lake Superior. We were all three, men of experience in that class of life. Myself, I pass over. One of my mates was a very active business man in the south part of the state, whose means allowed him to give himself a holiday every season, at his favorite pastime.

The other was a man whom I had first met nearly twenty years before, and with whom I had kept a desultory correspondence ever since. Also coming across him on one occasion prior to the present one. A most extraordinary character: mixture of refinement and savagery, taciturn and reserved to a degree. I know however, that I am right when I say that no one had more influence over him than I, and though to all and everyone, unbending and haughty, I could and did sometimes draw him out. He had been rusticated at Oxford for something more than money or influence could hush up, and he had plenty of both, too.

Neither was it for want of brains,for he took his degree M. A. in London, shortly after. Doubtless he sowed some of his wild oats still, for after purchasing a commission in one of our crack regiments of cavalry corps, he speedily sold out for reasons he did not divulge even to me, but I would be ready to stake my right hand, not for cowardice. Then he went to France when the Franco–German war broke out, was offered and accepted a commission in a cavalry regiment.

There he served with distinction and was mentioned in the despatches. Eventually having to give up his sword at Sedan, he was granted parole and kept it. This much I gathered from him after I had made his acquaintance on her R. M. S. S. "Neva," on which vessel we were passengers from South Hampton to British America, soon after the siege of Paris was raised. Now, concerning his past career he would not divulge anything except that he was an orphan. Still I knew very well that he was keeping his main sorrow back and of course on so short an acquaintance, I could not pry into his concerns. After a

fortnight in British America we parted, he to continue his trip up the coast of British America whilst I proceeded on to Uruguay. When I next met him, it was at Toronto, for we had checked one another's whereabouts from time to time and he came all the way from Manitoba to see me. Our meeting was cordial to a degree, and I found him a typical backwoodsman on the surface beneath which the blue blood could not be hidden. We adjourned to the "Terapin," where we did justice to a collation such as no rival establishment knew how to serve. And here after a glass of wine, his tongue was loosened and after keeping me almost spell-bound with his conversation, he wound up with the last lines of the Aeneid, "*Utere sorte tua,*" with an eloquence which would have shamed some of the Dons and Proctors in Old Oxford, to the no small amazement of the colored waiter who just then appeared on the scene for orders. My poor friend then lapsed into silence and brooding like a watch run-down and though we spent several days together before we parted, he never really cheered up again. And as he is the central figure in this short story I have deemed it better to more than casually introduce him.

And so it happens that after the lapse of many years he and I are once more companions, this time in the little shanty in the backwoods. The snow lay thick everywhere and all was drear and desolate without, but it was Christmas time, in fact as I have before stated, it was Christmas eve, and as I had calculated on passing the festive season in the woods, I had stowed away sundry little delicacies to supplement the ordinary rough fare. Priding myself a bit on my cookery I had taken it on myself to see to the menu, and really, considering that all had to be cooked on a camp stove without a superabundance of utensils, it did not turn out amiss. Boar's head, roast venison and pork, sundry sauces and sweets with the inevitable whiskey for those who chose to take it.

When I addressed the captain as in the commencement of the story, he looked up with a scowl which however immediately gave way to a half-deprecatory smile on catching my eye. Plainly asking my pardon he sipped the spirit and put it down saying "he felt low-spirited. He always did on Christmas eve." I wondered when he felt anything else, except on the rarest occasions, on this day in particular or any other. But he had committed himself and given me a clue, so to speak, and I resolved to find out if possible why Christmas should make him more than ordinarily despondent. Certain things had begun to resolve themselves in my mind and I found myself asking whether I had not been a blockhead in some particulars, after all. Now I am not superstitious: perhaps more than ordinarily prone to immagination by nature of my calling, that is all.

I was looking at the sea captain, and as I did so, an unusually violent blast from without blowing as it only can when the wind comes from the northwest, with practically no opposition, sent the smoke down out of the stove pipe and out into the cabin. As the wreaths of smoke formed around his head, his years seemed to fade away and I saw or thought I saw a young man of 18 or 20, yet it was my

friend still. Close to him the face of a girl also strangely familiar in feature though not the same. In a few seconds all had faded away and I saw only my weather-beaten companion again. But in those few moments the cobwebs had been brushed from my brain and I had made up my mind.

As I am a man known to have led a rough life here, there, and almost everywhere it is not surprising that, when at intervals I find myself back in England again in the society to which my birth and education give me the entreè, I should sometimes be asked, "Did you ever meet so and so?" Twelve months before I had been at a ball in one of the midland counties and before I left had made certain promises. I had been taken into confidence and now for the first time I felt that I had been selected by Providence to soothe and brighten one poor fellow's Christmas.

But I am too hasty. After dinner I thought the good cheer might have its influence and I had laid down a little plan of action of my own, knowing my friend's temperament so well. "Now Boys," I said, dinner is ready, alas no pudding, doubly alas no ladies!" I glanced at him but he got off the box on which he had been sitting and came forward. "Grace," I said, laying particular emphasis on the word "Grace," I count on your assistance." As I had expected he started violently but I pretended not to observe him and I commenced "Non Nobis," in which he immediately joined. I question whether before or since, the fine old chant was ever heard under similar circumstances.

"Caput Apri" followed. The head was there minus the cloves and rosemary. No matter, it was eatable and I had succeeded in getting the company into a good humor. Our repast passed over "Good" as our drygoods friend persisted in saying. (I could forgive our American friends a good deal of their mutilation of English if they could master the difference between adjective and adverb which they apparently can never succeed in doing.) I had a couple of bottles of champagne stowed away in my box. These I brougat out and the Queen, the President, and the Ladies (absent) followed with the customary musical ring. Then once more we subsided upon our respective boxes. "Who'll volunteer to entertain a little," I said, "Toss up." The lot fell on the captain. "Let's have some of your adventures," then we both said. "My adventures have been very commonplace," he replied, "but you have asked me why I am low spirited at Christmas eve. On Christmas eve my guardian received the final decree from Oxford that my escapades could not be overlooked. The same day I was ruthlessly informed thet the girl I adored and who loved me was henceforth to be an utter stranger and spirited away I knew not whither and I have never heard from her since.

There was a bare possibility that we might meet again when I should be of age and rich, but I could never find any trace of her. Nevertheless I finished my education and took my degree. Then I joined the army and left in consequence of blows with a brother officer who had cast a slight on the name of the girl I loved. You know the rest until I met you at South Hampton. Ever since I have wandered listlessly hither and thither,

have been in the mines, cowboy, Indian fighter, trapper, hunter and have given lessons in painting and drawing and modern languages in San Francisco and Vallejo, also interpreter, and before the mast between Frisco, Japan and return."

Then he pulled out some discharges from the little pouch in his belt and said "I think I shall go to sea again. I like it and there I have so much to do that I cannot find time for serious thought."

I resolved that he should do no such thing, at all events not in the capacity he meant. "See here," he said, passing me over a little packet, "what do you think of that for a charm?" I opened the paper and found some locks of hair together with what appeared to be a dirty dried up bit of an old glove. I smoothed out the crumpled stuff and then saw what it really was: the skin cf a human hand carefully cured and tanned, but only the skin with the nails attached; and then I perceived that the lock of hair also had skin to it and was in fact a scalp. Whilst I was examining these ghastly relics he had pulled off what I had never before known that he wore—a wig, or portion of a wig, and exposed the scarred disk on the crown of his head where the knife had circled.

"And the hand?" I asked. "Is the hand of the brave who would have worn it only that I chose to wear his instead," he replied. "He struck me down from the back, unawares and during the momentary shock I received, he took my lock away but the burning of the steel revived me and I struck back and into his heart and he fell across me dead whilst his clenched fist still showed how I had been mutilated. Mad with rage and pain I tore his scalp lock from him. Here it is," and he handed over the other one. "I then chopped off his hand and having skinned and prepared it I dragged myself to my cabin, sick and weak from the loss of blood. I must have lain there some days in delerium but I recovered at last. I had almost made up my mind to return to England and seek out my lost love, but with such a disfigurement I had not the heart to do so and lapsed back again into my nomad life."

Before he replaced his false hair, I saw that the scar extending across the back of his head (which I had always taken for that caused by a saber cut) reached high up and was doubtless that of the tomahawk with which his Indian assailant struck him down. He said he had been skirmishing around the redskins for months before and after Custer's death and had laid out many to revenge purely individual outrages on the settlers but he had only received a few scratches as he was pleased to call them, that as long as he carried his "medicine" he was confident that he was proof against all harm from the savages but that he felt half-inclined to destroy the relics for he was sick and tired of life.

"Perhaps," said I, "the other lock of hair you carry, added to the prayers of the girl may take precedence over your fetish in affording some apparent immunity from peril." He started up wildly. "What do you mean," he cried. "Look here Captain," I replied, "I need not tell you that I am your friend, we have both worn Her Majesty's uniform and on my honor I am not trifling with your feelings. I should

have come to the point long before this but wanted to be sure that I was right. Now I am. Do you know Grace, Grace Manning, for I have a message for you from that lady."

"Is she still Grace Manning?" he asked, half uncertain what to think of the turn things had taken. "Why yes! Man!" I replied, "and the same Grace Manning as of old so far as you are concerned and furthermore will be Grace Manning to her dying day unless a certain captain will ask her to change names and stop the silver hairs from showing on her head quite so soon. I met her at the Hunt Ball in Bedford in ''91.' She did not look happy and her thoughts were evidently far away. We had been introduced to each other by Lady Linwood when after the usual civilities she said she hoped I would excuse her apparent boldness but she had been anxiously looking forward to being able to converse with me and had come to the ball for that express purpose and not for any of the gaiety. I bowed wonderingly but my sympathies were already aroused by her evident distress and by the time she had unburthened her troubles to me I had given her my word that I would find you, Captain, if I could and I have found you. Are you always going to keep Christmas eve as a time for brooding despondency?"

He came and grasped my hand, murmured his gratitude and then strong man as he was he completely broke down.

Outside the blizzard raged and the snow beat against our shanty whilst the time showed five minutes to midnight and the bells we could not hear, but which we knew were pealing merrily from myriads of spires bidding millions rejoice, did not ring more happiness to mortal man than that was brought to the poor wanderer in the little shanty on Yellow Dog River.

In a few days the Captain was in New York enroute for England and I was one of the first to hear of the happiest of reunions.

A Sailor's Love Song.

In the twilight o'er the water
My ship is pointing out to sea;
The life bouy's bell so far behind,
Thy voice re-echoes back to me.

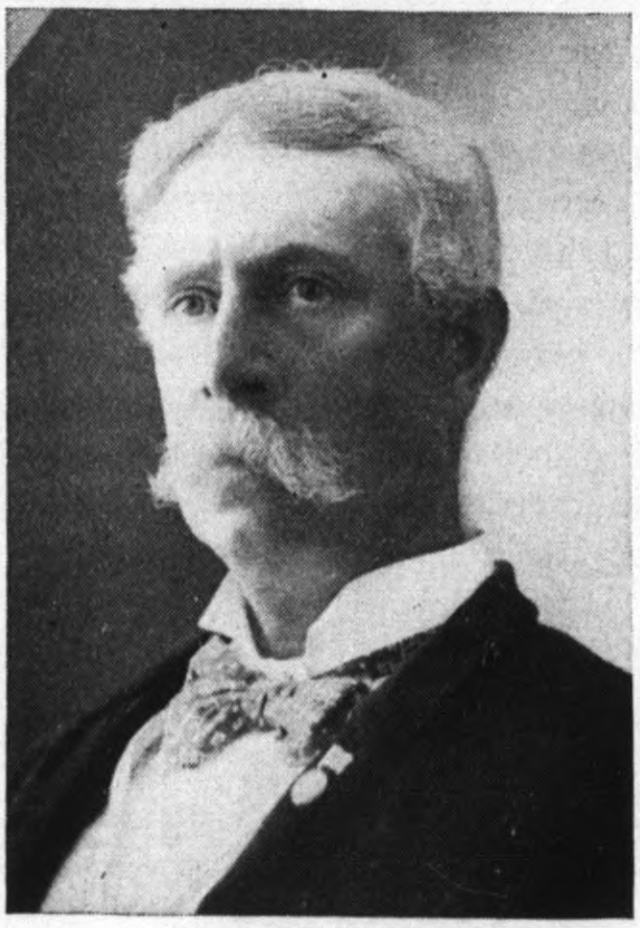
The burning sun beats on the deck
A tropic isle stands of to sea,
My voyage is but half way done
But love my heart beats warm for thee.

Again I see the harbor lights
From spar I watch their twinkling flame
The life bouy's bell again I hear
The darkness echoes back alone
Thy name!

Something About Percy Selous and His Christmas Story.

WM. WINTON, "'04."

AS the larger part of the biographical material of Selous' life is not yet at hand, I will confine this article principally, to what ever will contribute to a further interest in the story published in this issue.



PERCY SELOUS.

The reference in the story to Selous' trip to Uruguay after leaving the Captain, is dealt with in a very interesting manner by Selous himself, in the first chapter of his book, "Travel and Big Game." It was in Uruguay that Selous paddled his canvas canoe up her principal river. Perhaps no one of our generation was more familiar with South America than was Selous. In this same book we find the excuse for the Captain's meeting Selous at Toronto. All during that winter he had hunted the lynx, bear and deer of Upper Canada. The Stories of African Lion Hunting made famous by F. Selous, have their sequels in Selous' travels in Africa where he killed many lions and giraffes. Our own "Rockies," which have seen so many bears go over the mountains, were also well known to this hunter. Selous had travelled over the greater

part of Europe before he was twenty years old.

As a soldier in the British army he showed wonderful endurance and skill. Queen Victoria presented him with a medal as an appreciation of his bravery. Selous went through all the campaigns of the first Boer war. The cross-swords, cross-guns and the three different crowns worn upon his sleeve testified to his being the best swordsman, rifleman and horseman in his regiment.

The thought which Grace Manning had, that perhaps because of Selous' extensive travels, he might find the Captain, is a very well conceived part of the plot. One thing in the story is particularly interesting to me. The Captain has been relating his life, he speaks of being a teacher, interpreter and traveler, it is at that point that Selous tells much of his own life.

But I promised to tell you why Selous came to Greenville, Michigan. In his various travels and campaign marches, through the rough life of the hunter and naturalist, this man so true and noble in character, had lost something of the social poise and culture belonging to his education and high family. He sought as most men do, before they die, the quiet of a home, in a quiet place. To those who have looked on "Komo," "Baldwin" and "Manoka" lakes nestled away among the beautiful hills and valleys surrounding Greenville and have seen the natural paradise of Middleton's park, there is no surprise that Selous should have chosen it as his home.

The tall, well-built man that stopped at Greenville and immediately began work on the farms about there was unknown for sometime, but soon, after many a country school had heard the voice of a thousand hills and caught the fervor of Natue beat, through him who lived so close to her, the surmise broke forth and Selous became known to the entire country side.

The position he held in the high school at Greenville still holds hallowed memories and associations. The master of eleven languages, he knew how to make the sound of letters and alphabets chime with the knowledge of a country's rivers and forests, her flora and fauna, while in art he brought to his pupils what words and inspiration can only bring from one who has seen the greater part of the world's teeming life.

His religious life at Greenville when he was a member of the Methodist church was one of marked fidelity and one which still has its influence in the community. His great love for music led him to train the church choir and to look after all their music. His presence in the weekly prayer meeting was never wanting. He seldom took part by personal testimony, for he was a very quiet man but the constant, everyday force of his influence and example counted much.

The little Bible which he gave his pastor at his death was marked through and through and showed evidences of a close companionship in all his wanderings. Whatever of roughness had crept into Selous' life, as already explained, was lost in Greenville and the man whom so many admired there, found his scholarship, his geniality and his religion a source of noble inspiration and blessing.

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A Locket And A Letter.

J. L. MC BRIDE, '04.

THREE of us were sitting on the piazza in the cool Northern twilight. The day had been warm and the dreamy quiet of the August evening had turned our thoughts to peaceful reveries. For five minutes—it seemed an hour—no one had spoken, but just when I thought of going home, Mrs. Dunham looked at our hostess in a tenderly curious way.

"Won't you tell us something about those old days in Virginia, Aunt Isabel? Tell us about that locket on your dresser, please."

"Please do, Auntie," I echoed.

Aunt Isabel opened her eyes—she had been dreaming; perhaps of the distant days of her young girlhood—and looked about her at the stars that were now one by one twinkling into view. Her silvery hair gave back in soft reflections the softer light of the moon.

"His name was Evans, Richard Stanley Evans," she began, "I hardly remember when I first met him. He was only a boy then, but somehow or other he always seemed a man in spite of his curls and laughing eyes. He was a ways riding about his father's place, playing with little niggers or bothering the old ones.

"The Evans plantation was large and possessed about a hundred slaves. Father bought the place just south of it, and there we lived, content with life and our neighbors. Probably father could have bought out the Evans' many times over, but he never made such a display."

"I don't know just how long we had been there before Dick and I became friends. Of course he was all action and I was quiet, due I suppose to my Northern blood. For a time everything went well with us; during almost four years we were together. I can't tell you how much that boy was to me."

The gentle voice quivered and almost broke and we sat there waiting while her tremulous features regained theis calmness.

"I know he loved me too, but never a word was said until his mother began to interfere. She was proud of herself; of her family; of their position in Visginia. She disliked me or perhaps didn't conside me worth noticing, on account of our seeming circumstances. I don't know what brought matters to a crisis. One evening, Dick appeared restless and uneasy. I knew something was coming but I won't tell you what he said, for thas is a secret every true woman keeps to herself." She smiled in sweet recollection of what he had said.

"But when we parted that night we had plighted our troth. I think there must have keen a stormy time when he told his mother of our love, but he never said a word to me about it. And then the fever came."

Aunt Elizabeth shuddered and I pulled the little white shawl more closely about her shoulders.

"I was in Boston at the time and had received several letters from Dick. Then came a time when I received no

letters. I can't tell you how I suffered, God alone knows.,'

Again she shuddered, but I did not touch the shawl this time for I knew now that it was not the evening's chill that caused those involuntary quiverings of her shoulders.

"I was too proud, but at last I could stand it no longer and wrote to father. Poor father had not been told of our secret. He wrote that Dick had been sick nigh unto death and that I must stay in Boston until the plague should pass away. Then I joyfully wrote Dick for I knew he had not written, simply because of his illness. But I only received a note from his mother informing me that he was doing very well. Again I wrote and this time she replied that I might just as well understand that Dick should never marry anyone but a rich girl. Think of saying that to me whose father could have bought all Evans county.

For a while I waited, hoping that. Dick would write, but he never did until—but wait for that. I never went back to Virginia, I was too proud to show my weakness, too afraid of meeting Richard Stanley Evans. I fonnd some pleasures wherever I went. I tried to find peace by keeping busy, and succeeded in a small way. The war was just beginning and so father sold out and came North. He was an old man then or he would have enlisted at Lincoln's first call for troops.

"We kept close together in those days and together we went to Chambersburg in '63 to visit my mother's sister. We were there when the troops under Lee marched through on their way North.

"It was an exceedingly hot day in June when the first troops reached the town. They were fine-looking men, browned and hardened by their long march North. It was on the second day I was sitting at an upstairs window watching the gray column march past, that a group of officers came into the yard and upon the porch before I had a chance to look at them. And when I heard voices below asking for water and Aunt Kate's voice in turn requesting them to step into the parlor. This they did.

"I was about to go down when I heard a voice that set my heart beating in a way that almost stifled me. There was not a break in that voice; I fancied that even his eyes must have their same old laugh as he asked Aunt Kate if she would tell him whose picture stood on the mantlepiece.

"It is Isabel White, my niece," she answered, and then the officers filed ont.

"Only one remained at the door, talking with Aunt Kate for a moment.

"I heard him say' 'Give this to Miss White, please; she used to know me once upon a time.' And then he was gone.

"Five days later we heard the guns of Gettysburg. You who have never had a loved one facing the gaping mouths of cannon, cannot understand how my heart ached, while for three days that thunderous rolling boom of the guns reached my ears. On the fourth day some of Lee's army came marching back, but not the same jaunty, careless men who had marched north two weeks before. Now they returned, dirty, bandaged, footsore, cursing.

"The evening of that fourth day one of that same group of officers stop-

ped at our gates. He— — ." But aunt could speak no more. "Come to my rooms," she said.

We followed her through the great halls and rooms that showed every evidence of riches and cultured refinement. We saw her bend over a small case, and from it take a little package. She unwrapped it with reverent fingers and handed it to us. There in her hand lay a beautiful medallion of a girl scarce sixteen. Just at the base of it aragged hole took the place of the girl's breast. There was also a little note.

"Read it. He brought that back too."

This is what we read:

"DEAREST ISABEL:—

I might write more, but this is all I can say. Tomorrow I am to lead my regiment in Pickett's first line, and perhaps I may never see another sunset. If so, remember this: I know not why you have doubted me, nor why things could not have been different. Until death,

Lovingly yours,

Ricnard Stanley Evans.

Both women were softly weeping now, the younger woman's arms about the others neck. I left the room; for thoughts of that suffering boy who had *not* seen "another sunset" had unmanned me.

PUPILS' RECITAL.

The first recital of the year by the pupils of the School of Music was given in the College chapel last Tuesday evening. The event proved to be one of the best of its kind that has been given in years, and was a great credit to the school and to the instructors, Mrs. St. John, Miss Bushnell and Miss Kulls. Most of those who appeared were experienced performers and their numbers were listened to by a large crowd.

The work being done in Alma's musical school is a great credit to the college and ranks with that of any conservatory in the colleges of Michigan.

The program was as follows:

Andante and Scherzettino, Misses Sergent, Wallace; "Nita Gitana," Mr. McBride; Simple Aveu, Willie Ewing; Valse Noble, Miss Messinger; "Hark, Hark My Soul," Misses Wallace, Watson; a. To the Spring, b. Autum, Miss Mary Butler; a. "Once There Was a Little Voice," b. "The Proposal," Miss DeLong; "Grillen," Miss Lou Olp; Serenade Badine, Miss Minnie Udelle; "Awake, Dear Maid," Miss Wallace; Valse Op, no 34 No. 1, Miss Chatters; "If Laws Severe," Mr. Timby; Air de Bailet, John Marchmont, Mr. Davis, Willie Ewing, Dudley Tinker and Miss Linnie Udelle.

IT MAY BE.

D. A. J., '05.

Brightly shone the stars of heaven,
  Hushed all nature was, and still;
Far and near, night's lingering shadows,
  Spread o'er every vale and hill.

From the earth our eyes looked skyward
  To the realms where dwell the blest;
Where the sorrowing heart finds comfort,
  Where the weary soul finds rest.

Then like sweetest strains celestial
  Came the music of her voice,
And the memory of that evening
  Bids e'en now my heart rejoice.

"Thousand years the light must travel
  E'er it reaches yonder star,
Which you see above us twinkling
  In the firmanent so far.

"When I think of this I wonder
  If, when life on earth is done,
And we've donned our robe immortal
  In the land that needs no sun,

"We shall sit 'midst flowers ne'er fading,
  By some peaceful silver stream
In that star's celestial region
  Shedding o'er our heads its gleam,

"And when thousand years are ended,
  Dating from this quiet hour,
We shall see ourselves here seated
  'Neath this kindly sheltering bower."

"Who can tell?" I thought in silence,
  For my tongue no word could frame.
When the heart is filled with heaven,
  Words for thought are far too lame.

If so, be that all our actions,
  Good or bad, in love or hate,
Shall sometime in the hereafter,—
  Be it soon or be it late—

Stand revealed before our visions,
  From all earthly midst made free,
May our lives while here we tarry
  Pure, unspotted, sinless be;

That the heart may feel no sorrow,
  And no tear may fill the eye,
When we view our earthly sojourn
  From our home beyond the sky.

Strenuosity and Fiction.

ALUMINUS, '96.

"THE marriage business was well attended to, the embassy being gay with flowers and bunting, and Girvan was married to Erma, not for thirty days but for life. And now the bride from the mountains of northern Persia is the happiest as well as the most beautiful woman wherever she and her husband happen to be."

The above paragraph taken from one of the many magazine stories which appeared last month, is a fair sample of the character of much of the fiction that is presented to the reader today. This paragraph is the closing of what purports, according to the publisher's advance notice, to be one of the "leading masterpieces of the story teller's art, destined to meet the approval of thousands of readers." However much one may discredit the former statement of the publisher, the latter is undeniably correct. The accredited sale of that magazine last month was 368,476 copies.

The tale itself is of the most fanciful character, impossible in its detail; lurid in its setting; pyrotechnic in its language; with absolutely no plot; whose characters are mere puppets of circumstance, exhibiting impossible loves and equally impossible hates; and the entire tale having not one single thread of interest save that of thrilling adventure. It is the extreme of the *picaresque*, and possessing all of the faults of the romantic Don Quixote with none of its virtues.

When one considers the vast amount of excellent reading that is to be had today, it is inconceivable that such a tale should receive the stamp of approval from 350,000 readers. And yet it is true.

If one were to scan the pages of last month's so-called 'popular' publications he will at once become convinced of their ephemeral character. Last year thousands of novels appeared, to be read, gossiped over for a few days, and then to be cast without regret on the ever-increasing rubbish heap of fiction.

Yet never before were writers of fiction so well paid nor their works so widely read. The public pays its money and takes its choice. It buys the sensational tales of Mary J. Holmes, while Scott, Hawthorne, Dickens and Stevenson are sold only at "shelf worn" discount sales and are then purchased to complete one's "set", on the library shelves, to be dusted at "house cleaning time" and laid away for another twelvemonth. But where the fault?

It is a safe maxim of political economy that "the demand regulates the supply of any community." Must we look to the public then, in placing the blame for present degenerate standards of popular fiction? Obviously we must. There is plenty of high-grade fiction written today but it never reaches the masses. The masses prefer the poorer.

In his excellent booklet "I Go A Fishing," W. C. Prime says:"The discussion is quite vain, into which so many fishermen have gone on the question as to whether the artificial fly is best. Trout take some flies because they resemble the real fly on

which they wish to feed. They take others for no such reason. In this they are like men." Just at present the public is taking the imitation fly and the fault is with the public itself, if that fly conceals a hook.

The only reason for this depraved taste is found in the very nature of our civilization. We are too commercial, too strenuous.

Nine-tenths of the readers of fiction read for pleasure,for recreation. They desire to escape from themselves and flee to another world. Romance is a "literature of evasion," and as the public becomes more and more absorbed in the "dollar chase', it has less time for recreation. It therefore demands something that requires less effort to read, a more thrilling and less complex plot; it cares less and less for characterstudy, artistic technique and beautiful setting. It wants to be amused and is willing to pay for its amusement. Hence the fiction writer becomes a "dollar chaser" himself and in the great whirl of the present rushing pace of Americanism, he forgets the dignity of his position and measures the value of his work by the sheckels in his publisher's till; while the public measures his work by the number of dark deeds disclosed in the first chapter, by the number of villians slain at the middle, and the number of "Girvans" and "fair Ermas" happily wedded at the close.

It is this commercially degraded taste that accounts for the so-called "yellow journal", the frayed edged paper novel, and the vast number of "Argosys," "Black Cats" and other sensational publications that number their readers by thousands.

To change this taste we must change our methods of life. At present we have no time for the good and true and noble. We pursue the dollar mark six days in the week, and spend Sunday over the "colored supplement" of the Sunday paper. The present has no time for the contemplation of the beautiful and the artistic; healthful romance is a thing of the past; our ambitions, our successes, our failures, our hates, our loves, are bounded by the narrow limits of the strenuous race for the dollar. Is it strange that fiction should take on tue spirit of the age and become a strenuous fiction? Strenuosity is a good thing but when it takes from our natures, the romantic, the poetical, and the artistic, it is time that it, together with its unhealthful concomitants be relegated to the past.

When the hammock days are over Jessie
dear
When the winter settles oe'r us cold and
drear
Do not let this love abate,
Camp before the fireside grate,
When the hammock days are over Jessie
dear.

—Ex.

She Seoteh fiper.

(A Story From Real Life.)

M. J. STORMZAND, '04.

D1NNA drink muckle."

These were the words that recently greeted the ears of a police court judge in one of the large cities of the state, when a man, answering to the name of William McDonald was arraigned on a plain drunk charge.

The prisoner was a typical Scotchman and although he was thousands of miles from his native heath he had

with him and he found solace in his separation by playing to himself the tunes that had stirred his sweetheart across the seas.

The little fortune which he had come to gather had been started when a letter from his old mother came like a black cloud into his life. His Annie had turned traitor to the memory of their love. The little savings were squandered in a week's debauch and William became a wanderer in a strange land.

All he kept to remind him of the old days were the bag-pipe and the torn and frayed letter of his mother. In those rude scrawls were hidden the bitter inspiration of his defiance for the world and it furnished him with the impetus to keep on wandering and to seek solace in the oblivion of drunkenness.

* * * *

The reporter's pity was awakened but it showed itself only in a small fee for the tale he had heard, and he parted company with the sad piper in a neighboring saloon where he had

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FISHING ON SHAD CREEK.

. JACOB CHAMBERUN FOOTE, ('oo)

Run, quick, Frank, 'n get a spear;
There's more 'n a hundred fishes here
'N under this jam pile!
Bring the ol' five tilled one down fer me,
'N if you want one, bring the little three,
'N we'll give 'em fits awhile.

Land o' sakes but I tell you
The water's warm! 'n if the folks just knew
I bet they wouldn't care,
So off my shoes are goin' to come,
'N in I'll wade, 'n I tell you some
O* them fish won't stay there!

Now 'poke in under t'other side,
'N if one conies out I'll let 'er slide
When it gets somewhere near;
'N if one o' them starts goin' down,
You jest ydl out 'n I'll come roun'
With this ol' five-tined spear.

Now don't poke hard, like a little dunce
'N make 'em all come out at once.
O, golly, here's a whale!
It's a w'hopper! I got sight o' him .
'N blazed away, 'n I struck a limb
'N jest grazed past his tail.

Now poke again; get 'im out o' there;
If we get *him* the folks'll stare
Their eyes most blind I bet.
Whoop! here 'e comes, I've got 'im fast,
I knew he'd be my meat at last;
Who cares fer the wet?

This ain't the one I saw before—
'T ain't half as big. Now poke some more,
But go a little slow,
If we get half o' what we see,
The folks won't care if you 'n me
Are late fer meal, I know!

In December "Outlnjj."

©rowlh in fTcisan.

R. H. SIDEBOTHAM, '96.

N the village called Tweysan, seventy miles from here, a new group has sprung up, one which gives great prowise for the future. Last New Year's season two men from this village became interested through reading a tract or two, and were so struck with the doctrine that while in Haiku on other business they went to call on a missionary there.

Shortly after, one of the group called on me and asked me to come and see them, which I agreed to do. I found it a rather tedious journey of 70 miles from here and 20 miles from my nearest group of Christians, but as 1 walked into the village they met me and my helper with such enthusiasm that we were at once friends. 1was glad to find them young and intelligent. It is not becoming to rejoice much more over one sinner saved than another, but in my heart I always feel a peculiar gladness when the Lord saaes young people who have time before them in which to serve the Master, who are not so thoroughly saturated with Korean customs and Korean devil worship that they can never get rid of their superstitions in full.

Another trip in June found the Christians faithful and three or four new ones coming into the fold. Our catecumens were inceased to eight; and I left with a faith that their band of Christians will multiply and will deepen their influence rapidly. It is the furthest group under my charge, one which may be hard to visit, but I hope to be able to shepherd them as well as the other congregations.

I received news that in a place still farther away two men are deciding for Christ, almost 80 miles from here. One of them is the brotner of our colporteur and he is working hard to bring them safely along the early steps of the way. 1 shall not be able to visit the place before November.

at all is bad for the work; then the summer weather is hot, which I don't mind so much, as the great danger lies in the heavy rains which often block traffic for days. Besides I have several other places I must visit before the other two spoken of.

One of these is Masampo, the port forty miles from here where we have a group of fifteen catechumens.

I spent Easter Sunday with the group in the Milyang churches. In some respects the most happy and fullest day of my life. From six in the morning we began, with no rest until 21 catechumens had been admitted, six adults and seven infants baptized, the believers, some sixty in number, instructed and helped, the big crowds of sightseers preached to, and four new men told us of their intention to trust in Jesus. The outlook in Fusan was never brighter.

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COLLEGE FLAG.

Tuesday morning, December 1, proved a delightful occasion for all students and others present at the chapel services. At the close of the regular morning exercises Dr. Butler of the Sanitarium, P. N. Piand of the Alma Record and Messrs. A. O. Davis and L. Stevens of the G. A. R. post appeared on the platform, and in behalf of The Record and citizens of Alma, presented the college with a beautiful American flag. Dr. Butler made the presentation speech and spoke very eloquently of the flag and its meaning to the present generation. Prexd not risk fittingly responded in behalf of the students and college, recalling many reminiscences of the times of the civil war when the flag was the symbol of so much. A committee of three, Mr. Davis for the citizens, Mr. McBride for the students and Prof. Cook for the faculty, then raised the flag on the roof of the college building, while "The Star Spangled Banner" was being sung.

The event will long be remembered by those present as one of the delightful links in the chain which binds the town and college together. A number of the citizens of the town were present, and among them Mr. W. Wright, "the Father of the College."

f ALMANIAN.?

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY
THE STUDENTS OF ALMA COLLEGE
ALMA, MICHIGAN

Subscription Price

One Year .... $i oo
Single Copy..... 15

JOHN WIRT DUNNING. 1904 - Editor-In-Chief
WM WINTON. JR. - - Business Manager

Class Editors

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Contributions and Items of Interest are earnestly solicited from students, alumni and friends.
All Communications for publication should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief.
All Subscriptions should be paid and all checks made payable to the BUSINESS MANAGER.
Subscribers not receiving their papers on time will confer a favor by notifying the Business Manager.
All Subscriptions are due In six months after first Issue.

Entered as second class matter at the Post Office, at Alma. Michigan.

DECEMBER, 1903.

yHE ALMANIAN is glad to announce that the difficulty between the athletic association and the college in regard to the disposal of athletic funds has been satisfactorily adjusted and the old arrangement reestablished. The difficulty was corrected after The Almanian had gone to press last month and before its distribution.

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WHAT "MERRY XMAS" MEANS.

QNCE again it is almost time to say "Merry Christmas." How few of us as we greet our friends with this salutation, realize its true meaning. How few of us realize what its first announcement meant to the Judean shepherds nineteen hundred and three years ago; how much it meant to a waiting world. Does "Merry Christmas," to us mean: "Iam happy today because this is the natal day of a lowly peasant whose life has made mine better; whose death has made ***me*** free." This is what "Merry Christmas" should mean to every student's heart.

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OUR MUSICAL ADVANTAGES.

QNE of the institutions that is a decided credit to Alma is the Musical School. From a department, for a long time neglected, with few students and still less accomodations, it has grown, in the past six years to be perhaps the strongest department outside the college proper, with excellent accomodations, and a student enrollment of over one hundred.

The one thing that is needed to make the department complete is a building for its exclusive home. When this is forthcoming Alma will be able to offer musical inducements not excelled in the state. Great credit is due the head of the department for the high standard of excellence the school has attained.

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DORMITORY LIFE.

QBERL1N COLLEGE is crying for more dormitory life, and it is probable that new dormitories for men will soon be built. Incidentally, we are again reminded of the great advantages our own college possesses in this. Wright and Pioneer Halls, in point of convenience, neatness, and equipment are far the best of any of

the colleges of Michigan. The writer has visited all the colleges of the state and has seen considerable of their dormitory life, and there is nothing in the state that can compare to Wright Hall, and no men's dormitory that is so well cared for and so convenient and healthful a place to live as Pioneer. Outside Alma there is but one college that has the three modern necessities: sewerage, electric light and steam heat.

The opinion of the American Health Bulletin, it would seem, is not based on speculation when it says:—"We know nothing of the course of study in this school, but if the same care is taken of its students' mental welfare as is taken of the physical we have no hesitation in placing Alma College, Alma, Michigan, among the first schools of the country.

COLLEGE MEN IN POLITICS.

MUCH is made of the fact that so many of the candidates voted for at the late election in New York were college graduates. The more educated men who are willing to enter political life, the better. It has been too true at times that many of them were earnest in their desire to see politics elevated, provided some one else would do the elevating.

SCIENCE CLUB.

The Science Club held its first meeting of the year on Saturday evening, December 12. In spite of the bad weather a good attendance was present. The following papers were presented: Radium, Mr. Cooley; Louis Agassiz, Miss Cuvrell; Albino Deer, Prof Harper; Beet Sugar, Prof. West. The next meeting will be held on the second Saturday of January. All who are interested are invited to attend this meeting, and to join the society. Membership is open to all students.

Alumni Notes.

Misses Mary and Marjorie Dearing, with '04 and '05, are living at 327 E. Liberty street, Ann Arbor, and are taking work in the University.

Eugene B. Tinker, with '03, has nearly completed his course in the Michigan college of mines and is at present employed in the mechanical department of that institution.

Messrs. George Kinney and Audley Wilson, ex-'03, are employed as chemists with Parke Davis Drug Co., in Detroit.

Miss Velma Sharp, music '02, is again taking piano instruction under Professor Jonas of Detroit. Miss Sharp is receiving many complements for her work from the famous instructor.

George F. McEwen, with '01, is now engaged in journalistic work at Escanaba, Michigan.

Cameron Hartness has entered the Michigan college of mines at Houghton, his parent having removed from Marquette to that city. Leslie Williams, of Saginaw, with '06, is also attending the college in the mechanical and electrical department.

Hildegarde Grawn, ex-'04, has recently returned from an extensive trip in Europe and the Orient. In January she will become assistant professor of Latin in the Mt. Pleasant Normal school, taking her father's place, who has a leave of absence.

Alms's two representatives in the Phillippines, Harry E. Reed and A. Ralph Eastman of the class of '01, will this year complete their three years' enlistment as government teachers. Letters from them report that they are so well pleased with the work that they both are planning to return after a short visit to America.

Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Martin, both students here in '99 and '00, are located at Charleston, West Virginia, where "Jimmie" is assistant pastor of the First Presbyterian church. Martin completed his course at Lane Seminary last spring.

Rev. and Mrs. John McKee, the latter being Clara Booth of '96, are located at East Jordan where Mr. Mc Kee is pastor of the Presbyterian church.

Roy Beechler, ex-'05, Alma's star football man whom Coach Yost secured for the university football squad, is becoming one of the most popular men in the university. His class recently presented him with a sweater and honored him with the office of class president. Beechler was barred from playing his year by the one year residence rule but will probably be seen on the university regulars next year.

Miss Mabelle Howard, music '03, is teaching in Munising and is also choir leader of the Presbyterian church of that place.

Alma now has a large representation in the state of New Mexico. At Jose Kalph C. Ely, '92, W. E. Brock, '01, Bert Leonard, ex-'05, and Raymond Bangs are engaged in the mining business, and Misses Soule and Hope are teaching, the former at Albuquerque and the latter at Columbus.

Carl Whitney, '07, has entered the employ of his father at Merrill, Mich.

Wm. G. S. Miller is studying law in the University of Chicags law school.

Wm. L. Steele, ex–'01, is employed as a surveyor in Gratiot county.

Daisy L. Hard, '01, returns this year to Colville, Washington, where she is teaching English and Latin in the high school.

Invitations were out last week for the wedding of Mr. Paul Hale Bruske '98 and Mary Wheeler Plum, '00, to take place in Minneapolis, December 23 at Mrs. Plum's home. An account of the wedding will be given next month.

Born, to Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Clarke, Harbor Springs, on December 6, a daughter. Mrs. Clarke is Maude Hartness Bishop '99.

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BASKET BALL SCORE.

FRESHMAN:		JUNIOR:	
Jennings, forward.		Wecker, forward.	
Allured, "		Chapman, forward.	
VS.	Fletcher, center.	VS.	Johnson, center.
	Conklin, guard,		Brown, guard.
	Nelson, "		Gaunt, "
ACADEMY:		SOPHOMORE:	
Rogers, forward.		Allured, K., forward.	
Kratzenberg, forward.		Ronald, "	
Marshall, center.		Schenck, center.	
McCollum, guard.		Therry, guard.	
Moon, "		Anderson, guard.	
Academy, 12.	Freshman, 4.	Juniors, 7.	Sophomores, 2.

WILSON TO COACH IN 1904.

It was announced in chapel Friday morning that "Tug" Wilson would be Alma's football coach and athletic director next year. Wilson was for three years one of the most reliable men at the University of Michigan, and has had coaching under "Biffy" Lea and Yost. He was a member of the famous 1901 team at the university where his positions were guard and tackle. This fall he coached Wabash college and turned out a team that defeated the University of Indiana.

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Athletic Notes.

IT has long been a debated question with trainers whether it was really a physical benefit or an injury generally, to gain such perfect physical condition as a football player gains; as some break training suddenly at the end of the season and give the system a shock from which, in some cases, never recovers.

It is necessary to rest for a while after a season of football. The strain under which the true football player is placed during the season makes him feel the need of a little relaxation in diet and physical activity. If he is a conservative fellow he will eat moderately of sweetmeats and take a little exercise each day, but if he be the average fellow, too much pie, cake and sweetmeats of all kinds cannot be set before him, and naturally, like the ant-eating toads, he is too full and sluggish to exercise. It has been truthfully said that more men are killed by over-eating than by over-working.

For many years past there has been a demand for something in the line of a winter sport to take place of football which ends on Thanksgiving day.

This need of a gradual relaxation has been felt more and more as the game of football has gained greater prominence and proficiency- Many kinds of exercise have been devised with this end in view and today we have as a result the now populr game of basket ball.

Basket ball demands interest through hot competition and chance to develop skill, and uses the agility and endurance which has been gained through football work. It adds something new to be achieved and as the aim at personal contact is directly opposite from that in football, it sets the mind to forming new habits.

Although variety and diversity of training does not develop the specialty-wonder, it is, I believe, the best for the college man and the man of the world.

Symmetrical bodies cannot be developed in footba l, baseball, or any one branch of athletics alone. A person must indulge in various kinds of sports in their respective seasons. Each branch develops and each fits you better for the rest.

Some of the best football men I have known have been the best wrestlers, the best baseball and basketball players. Seldom do we find a man who stars in football who does not seek after the all-around development.

Many who wish to make good on the track and baseball teams lapse into idleness during the winter months and when spring sports begin they find they have neither endurance nor form and are disappointed by some one who in previous years was his inferior.

I have studied wiih interest the developement of some of Alma's present athletes, and invariably the best are the ones who have taken active part in athletic work throughout the entire year.

Some have come green from the farm, others from high schools with more or less of a pedigree, and those who are now earning glory on our teams are the all-around athletes.

One cannot divide his time and play basket ball an hour, wrestle an hour, etc, and expect to become a star, but the one who plays basket ball when it is time and football and baseball in season will surely profit. "Keep at it" should be the motto.

Basket ball should be encouraged among the colleges. In its present state it is crude and rough but it is fast becoming a more scientific game.

In order to get the most out of it the men must first understand that the game calls for the best in man. The nature of the game is such as to require them to play fast and hard running here and there, hindering and assisting, playing individually and collectively, without bumping or touching their opponents. Much depends on the referee but more depends on the character of the men whether the game be clean or not.

A season of such a game following one of football with its rougher, but not less manly requirements, proves an interesting and profitable diversion. It is hard at first to make the sudden change, but the result is worth the effort. As soon as the colleges discover the great benefit which basket ball is to both fall and spring athletics, its popular acceptance is assured.—*Fuller.*

Basket Ball.

Members of the basket ball team this winter will enjoy one of the best trips that has ever fallen to the lot of Alma's athletic teams. During the Christmas holidays the team will make a trip to the northern peninsula for a series of games wifh teams from the American and Canadian Soos and possibly with Marquette and Ishpeming.

Four games have already been arranged, two with the team of Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, and one each with the two teams representing the American city.

Alma's trip north will be the first attempted for so great a distance by any of her teams, and tne men are looking forward to it with great expectations. The team will start Monday after the close of school and one game will probably be played on Christmas night.

There are quite a number of candidates for the team this year and Alma should make a good showing, both on this trip and in the college games to follow,

Carl E. Anderson '06, of Ishpeming, has been elected captain. Coach Fuller will undoubtedly choose the team from the following men, Anderson, McCollum, Kratzenberg, Jennings, Schenck, Marshall, Steep, Rogers and Moon.

The team may take a trip south later in the season, visiting the southern colleges and teams in Detroit and Kalamazoo.

The first inter-class games in basket ball were played just afer the Thanksgiving vacation and resulted in victories for the Juuiors and Academy.

Wrestling.

The wrestlers will shortly begin work in the gymnasium preparatory to the annual try-outs at the indoor meet to be held next term. This year we will have practically the same team that defeated the M. A. C. team last spring and came so near to winning the indoor meet at tne Intercollegiate at Albion. Beechler in the

heavy-weight, will be greatly missed, but Angell should be able to take his place, and with experience hold his own with the best of them. Hurst will be able to enter in the heavy-weight, and is equal to anything in the middle-weight class. Johson, Swigart and Jennings in the lesser weights, are a strong trio, and Jennings should throw anyone in the special class 125 pound weight. And there are a number of new men wno have signified their intention of trying out. It is planned to hold the first indoor meet early next term.

Cinder Track.

Last week Dr. Bruske announced in chapel that Mr. A. C. Davis, donor of Davis Athletic Field. had promised to foot the bills for a cinder track on the field.

When the field was laid out it was planned to place a track upon it immediately but the cinders could not be secured, and the matter has been neglected.

It was planned to build a quarter-mile track with 120 yards straightaway. It is probable that this plan will now be carried ont and work will be begun at once, in order to have it in shape for spring athletics.

This latest gift of Mr. Davis will add much to Alma's fine athletic field and the gridiron will need only a carpet of sod to make it the best in the state outside of Ferry field at Ann Arbor.

Base Ball Schedule.

Alma's base ball schedule for next spring is about complete. The series of games thus far arranged shows that there will have to be some hustling, as it is one of the hardest schedules Alma has ever had.

Just at present ahe prospects are not the brightest. The college will in all probability be unable to hire a coach, and unless one is secured in some manner; we can scarcely look for a better season than last year.

An opportunity was given to secure Ganzel, the old league star, who offered to come for six weeks, and his services may yet be secured by popular subscription.

The schedule which Manager Chapman has arranged thus far is as follows:

April 9—Open.
April 16—Alma at Big Rapids.
April 23—Olivet at Alma.
April 30—Alma at Kalamazoo. (In doubt).
May 7—M. A. C. at Alma
May 13—Alma at Olivet.
May 14—Alma at Albion.
May 21—Hillsdale at Alma.
May 28—Alma at M. A. C.
June 6—Open.

This gives three college games at home and five away. Mt. Pleasant and other nearby towns will appear at Alma for mid-week games.

A Frique

There was a young lawyer named Pique
Who sported a prominent bique
An angry old client
Grew very defiant
And gave his proboscis a twique.

News Items.

Miss Higbee, Miss Hunt and Mr. Gleason entertained friends during the Thanksgiving vacation.

Raymond H. Bangs, of the class of '04, has accepted a position with the Faywood Mining Co., in New Mexico. A number of his friends were entertained at his home on the evening before his departure.

At the last regular meeting of the classical club the "House of the Greeks" was discussed. Mr. Dunning read a paper on the subject and and there were interesting comments by the members. Drawings of the Greek Chariot recently established in the Metropolitan museum, New York, were exhibited.

Thanksgiving week served an interesting vacation for those who remained in Alma. Skating on the river was excellent, and numerous parties helped to make the time pass swiftly.

A number of the foot-ball men have been receiving packages of one of the well known breakfast foods, during the past few weeks, for allowing their names to be used in advertising. Too bad the food didn't come at the opening of the football season instead of its close.

Mr. and Miss Schenck entertained their mother and brother recently. Miss Schenck has returned home and will not be back until after the holidays.

Through the kindness of Mr. A. W. Wright, the college chapel and the kindergarten rooms are supplied with electric lights. The old gas plant has for a long time been inadequate for the chapel, and all public exhibitions and meetings have been seriously handicapped by the lack of light. The first test at the recital last week revealed the change.

Miss Lillian Hunt entertained Miss Johnson of Caro, during the Thanksgiving recess.

Miss Hunt, Miss Robin and Miss Nelson attended the Y. W. C. A. convention at Grand Rapids.

The evenings of the Thanksgiving recess were taken up by the senior class with spreads. Thursday evening Misses Strange and Sehmidt entertained the class at Wright Hall, and Friday evening Miss Bair entertained the class in her home.

The girls of the college, headed by Miss Salisbury, have been taking numerous cross-country walks for the past two weeks in place of the gymnasium work.

The society committees on the oratorical contest have decided to hold the local contest on the last Monday in January, when Alma's representative to the state contest at Adrian will be chosen.

The senior class appeared after the Thanksgiving recess in their caps and gowns. The class now numbers twelve.

The football men were given padded jerseys this year instead of the regulation "A" sweaters.

The football pictures appear this year in a new form. Individual photographs of the men were taken and mounted seperately on a large card.

The news of the gift of the new cinder track was received with much applause by the students when announced in chapel.