

turkeys revolving on the spits. After which ceremony Andrea as a reward for virtue, was permitted to wash and polish the Spoon, and watch it safely under lock and key.

The fine flavour of home-fed beast and bird, which all the widowers and widows in the village were invited to demolish, was credited entirely to the magic of the Splendid Spoon. Andrea was well aware that the man of genius who had made it, years and years ago, inspired it with mysterious powers—indeed, she believed he had beaten his soul into the Spoon, and that it behoved her to treat it with the utmost reverence. Anyway, years after, when many of the rare old things which made her home, passed to strangers in exchange for mean little golden coins of modern date, the Splendid Spoon was not amongst them. It had disappeared!

Hey! diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle,

The cow jumped over the moon,  
The little dog laughed to see such sport,

And the dish ran away with the Spoon.

ETHEL G. FENWICK.

(To be continued.)

## THE CHIMES.

This week we leave for once the book of the week, the mere week, and turn our attention to a book of the century, a book of the ages, an old book, but one that is ever new, for how could the pen of Charles Dickens ever wax stale? An old friend in a new dress is this edition of "The Chimes," published by Messrs. Putnam's Sons. Such a pretty dress, its dainty covers inside and out garlanded with holly leaves. Every page decorated, too, on the wide margin, with sprigs of mistletoe, ivy and holly. Full page illustrations, some in colour, and marginal pictures from the designs of Frederick Simpson Coburn, go to complete the charming whole of this edition, produced in anticipation of the Dickens Centenary in 1912.

Our old friend Toby Beck greets us from the title page, listening to the chimes that were very often in his ears and very often in his thoughts. I take my stand by Toby Beck, although he *did* stand all day long (and weary work it was) just outside the church door. In fact, he was a ticket porter, Toby Beck, and waited there for jobs. And a breezy, goose-skinned, blue-nosed, red-eyed, stoney-toed, tooth-chattering place it was to wait in in winter time, as Toby well knew. Toby's nose was very red, and his eyelids were very red, and he winked very much, and his shoulders were very near his ears, and his legs were very stiff, and altogether he was evidently a long way upon the frosty side of cool.

"There's nothing," said Toby, "more regular in its coming round than dinner time, and nothing

less regular in its coming round than dinner. That's the great difference between them. It's took me a long time to find it out. I wonder whether it would be worth any gentleman's while, now, to buy that observation for the Papers, or the Parliament."

Then along comes Meg with her basket, and another charming picture illustrates her holding it for old Toby to sniff at.

"Why, it's hot," he cried out in rapture.

"It's burning hot," cried Meg. "Ha, ha, ha! It's scalding hot."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Toby, with a sort of kick, "it's scalding hot."

"But what is it, father," cried Meg. "You haven't guessed what it is. I can't think of taking it out till you guess what it is."

Toby, putting a hand on each knee, bent his nose down to the basket, and took a long inspiration at the lid.

"Ah! It's very nice. It can't—I suppose it can't be Polonies?"

"No, no, no!" cried Meg, delighted. "Nothing like Polonies."

"It's too decided for Trotters, ain't it?"

Meg was in an ecstasy. He couldn't have gone wider of the mark than Trotters—except Polonies.

"Liver?" said Toby, communing with himself.

"No, there's a mildness about it that don't answer to liver."

But every one knows that it was neither Pettitoes, nor Cock's heads, nor Sausages, but Tripe. "The best Tripe that was ever stewed." And as he was stooping to sit down the Chimes rang.

"Amen," said Toby, pulling off his hat and looking up at them. "They broke in like a grace, my dear," he said, taking his seat.

And of course everyone knows that Toby fell asleep and dreamed of all sorts of sad and pathetic dreams, but, thank goodness, they were only dreams, and Meg and Richard are to be happily married on New Year's Day.

"To the music of the band, the bells, the marrow-bones, all at once, and while the Chimes were yet in lusty operation out of doors, Toby, making Meg and Richard second couple, led off Mrs. Chickenstalker down the dance, and danced it in a step unknown before, or since."

We cannot do better than quote the concluding words of this evergreen work.

"May each New Year be happier than the last, and not the meanest of our brethren or sisterhood debarred their rightful share in what our Great Creator formed them to enjoy." H. H.

The National Insurance Act, which has now become law, may be purchased in England through Messrs. Wyman & Sons, Ltd., Fetter Lane, E.C.; in Scotland from Messrs. Oliver & Boyd, Tweeddale Court, Edinburgh; and in Ireland from Messrs. E. Ponsonby, Ltd., 116, Grafton Street, Dublin, or through any bookseller. The present price of the Bill is 1s. 1d. Postage extra.

\* "The Chimes," by Charles Dickens. G. P. Putnam's Sons, London and New York.

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