

The hands of the old fashioned clock continued their journey around their figured dial and only a short time remained until the bells in the church towers would begin to augur the passing of the old, the opening of the new. What a vast difference in the environments of Mrs. Allen to those of two years before, when the husband was a prosperous town merchant and in sufficiently good circumstances to surround his charges with everything that tended to mark the beginning of a new year with joy and gladness! These were conditions for reflection. These grated upon the poor woman's memory and drove her to that state of mind wherein many are led to pronounce this life not worth the living. But such a sentiment, however, found not lodgment in Mrs. Allen's heart. She was too broad-minded for that—too charitable, too mindful of her little ones, and too hopeful that perhaps, after all, John would some day return, and surround her and the babies with all the happiness and joy that his heart was prone to bestow upon them.

The hour of twelve arrived. There was a solemn stillness pervading the neighborhood of the Allen household. The mother wept in her deep reflection, but she had not given up hope, despite the thoughts that in two hours had flitted through her memory with lightning-like rapidity. She retired just as the church bells began to toll, and in their jingle, a solemn prayer went up, in which the Father was petitioned to grant unto that family, the knowledge whether or not their mainstay, John Allen, had met with an untimely ending, had forsaken those whom he once loved, or had been placed in such circumstances as to make it impossible for him to communicate with them. That petition was a fervent one and escaped from the lips of Mrs. Allen with a quivering earnestness that betokened sincerity of the deepest type. "O gracious and most merciful Father," said she, "grant unto us this night Thy Holy Spirit. We are desirous of knowing what has become of one who once loved us so dearly—John Allen—but who left his family circle just a year ago, to seek for them a livelihood in the mining sections of the Great West. Has he perished, Father? Has it been Thy will to thus deprive us of our mainstay—our earthly provider? If so, grant O Lord that Thou wilt make known unto us that such is the case, at the same time giving us the power and endurance to withstand the trying ordeal. If he has not been thus removed, grant us, O Father, the knowledge of his whereabouts, that in our sorrowing hours, we may find consolation in knowing that he still lives, that he is still true to us, albeit that we have not heard from him since his departure."

The conclusion of this prayer brought resignation to that faithful woman. Her countenance beamed with happiness, as she uttered the word, "Amen," and although she spoke not another word, it was clearly evident that her humble petition had fallen on attentive ears and that a response, though, perhaps, inaudible, had come as an answer even before the prayer was finished. That night Mrs. Allen slept well, and in the morning the same beaming countenance that held sway when her eyes had closed in sleep, was still in evidence, and as Mary, Johnnie and Katie were lifted out of bed each received a loving kiss from a happy mother, as she assured them that papa would soon return.

The first of January ninety-seven brought happiness to a fireside where sorrow and the tears of bitter parting marked a contrary state a year before. John Allen, the lost, the unheard-of, the prayed-for, returned, and as he clasped a loving and devoted wife, and

took in his arms the young ones he was so loth to leave, he recited to Mary Allen, a tale of extreme hardship, greater, perhaps, than that which the mother at home had had to bear, telling her how he had drifted into the frozen Alaskan regions; how he had been isolated and cut off from the rest of the civilized world for nearly ten months, all the while living on scanty rations, yea so scant, that the very shoe leather cast from the feet was a sweet morsel at times.

John Allen, after leaving home had joined an expedition bound for Klondike. They reached the headwaters of the Yukon in the early spring-time and from there drifted along its tributaries to a place so remote that humankind, outside of their own ranks, was scarcely ever seen. The gold sought for was obtained, but while digging for it, the party had dwindled from a dozen to half that number, six having perished in the cold. Their provisions began to run out and they were put on rations. This condition, coupled with the extremity of the weather, reduced their ranks to two—John Allen and Joe Brown. These men proceeded homeward with \$85,000 apiece in gold dust. At Dawson they succeeded in getting purchasers for their claims. This gave each an additional \$15,000 and with the \$100,000 so secured, and an experience which nothing would prompt them to go through again, they schemed and planned, foot by foot and mile by mile, to reach their happy inland homes, which both made it a point to arrive at by New Year's day.

It is needless to say that a transformation was brought about in the circumstances of John Allen's family. Now they are living in peace and happiness, with everything that their hearts desire, and as the father looks back upon his position of a year ago, he utters a prayer to God, that his life was spared, while his dear wife Mary, still continues to petition that same source from which came such a ready response to her prayer, and which gave to her and the family that which was really and truly, a very, Happy New Year.

JENSON'S TRAVELS.

Thursday, July 9, 1896, at 2 o'clock in the night, my Beduin guard called me; we made ready in a few minutes and started for the Dead Sea. Our object in starting so early was to avoid as much of the heat of the midday as possible. The distance from Jericho to the north shore of the sea is only about six and a half miles by the direct road; but my guide lost his reckoning on the desert and took the wrong track with the result that we spent some two hours riding and walking up and down the steep gulches and ravines. At last I lost patience with the poor fellow, who was almost crying in despair, and assumed the role of conductor myself. Knowing through common sense that all the ravines which we had been endeavoring to cross in the darkness of the night, must necessarily lead either to the Jordan or the Dead Sea, I led down the first one we came to, and naturally enough it brought us out upon the lower plain which borders the sea and the river; and just as the sun appeared from behind the mountains of Moab, we stood upon the shore of the historic sea. Riding eastward along the beach, we soon reached a place called by the Arabs Rejum Lut, where stands a lonely hut, and off which, perhaps one hundred yards from the shore, a little vessel used during the tourist season for sailing on the briny waters of the sea, lay at anchor. I had a fine swim and bath in the sea, venturing out as far as the anchored vessel, where my Arab companion, though able to swim, dared not follow. I found the

buoyancy of the water very similar to that of the Great Salt Lake, in Utah, though the water of the latter is said to contain about ten per cent less solid matter than that of the Dead Sea. It must be observed, however, that the sea was quite high when I visited it, and that later in the year, when it reaches its lowest water mark, the water is necessarily more salty.

It is asserted by some that no one was ever drowned in the Dead Sea, such being the buoyancy of the water that a human being cannot sink. The historian Josephus states that Vespasian had men thrown into it with their hands tied to their backs, and that none of them were drowned.

The Dead Sea is 40 miles long and from 6 to 10 miles wide. A broad peninsula projects from the eastern shore on the south and contracts the breadth of the sea to within two miles. South of this the water is very shallow so that in midsummer, when, in consequence of evaporation, the body of the lake falls from twelve to fifteen feet, this end is left a marsh. The shores of this mysterious and gloomy lake are formed on the east by perpendicular cliffs, rising into ragged, splintered points, forming an irregular breastwork, sometimes receding a little from the water's edge, and then again jutting out into the sea, and varying in height from 1,600 to 2,800 feet. The western shore presents much the same stern and forbidding aspect, but preserves a general outline about four hundred feet lower.

Embedded deep in this awful chasm, under a burning sun reflected from beetling heights on either side, this sea becomes a vast caldron, from which the evaporation is so great in summer as to render the waters intensely saline. There is also an infusion of other ingredients which renders the water bitter and nauseous to the taste. No living thing inhabits these waters, and it is very rarely navigated by man. No deadly miasma, however, arises from it, as was once supposed. The water is of a dull green color, highly transparent. Modern science has solved all the mystery about this water. It has been satisfactorily analyzed, and its specific gravity ascertained to be 1.211, a degree of density unknown in any other, the specific gravity of fresh water being 1.000. The water of the Dead Sea has been found to hold in solution the following proportions of salt to one hundred grains of water:

Muriate of lime.....	3.920 grains
Muriate of magnesia.....	10.246 grains
Muriate of soda.....	10.360 grains
Sulphate of lime.....	0.054 grains

24.580 grains

The level of the Dead Sea is 1,293 feet below the level of the Mediterranean; its greatest depth is 1,310 feet; Jerusalem is 3,687 feet above the Dead Sea.

After lingering for a short time about the shore of the Dead Sea we struck out across the desert in a northeasterly direction for the ford of the Jordan, which we reached after traveling about four miles. I found the Jordan a much larger stream than I had expected, and when the ford of the Jordan is spoken of, it must only convey the idea that it is merely possible for camels to ford the stream in the latter part of the summer, when it is at its very lowest. Otherwise it can only be crossed by swimming or in boats. I had a refreshing bath in the stream, but being alone, my Arab friend seemingly being afraid of the water, I deemed it imprudent to swim across the river. Hence I did not enjoy the privilege of placing my feet upon the land beyond the Jordan.

The Jordan rises from three principal sources, of which the most remote springs forth in the valley between the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-