

# The Christmas Quest.

## OUR HOLIDAY SUPPLEMENT.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year—God Bless us, every one.—Tiny Tim.

### RING OUT, WILD BELLS.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
The flying clouds, the frosty light;  
The year is dying in the night;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out, my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,  
Ring out the narrowing years of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kinder hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

TENNISON.

### AN UNEASY CHRISTMAS.

BY FANNY FOSTER CLARK.

My name is Gerard Van Boosen. I am tall, slender, not ill-looking, decently educated, and as yet out of jail; but in the eye of the law I am a thief. I've not been arrested, tried and sentenced, simply because the only person who can prosecute me is— Well, never mind, I'm coming to that.

Christmas, a season of joy to all honest people, has been to me for years only the dreaded anniversary that reminds me of a shameful and long-continued crime.

I came to New York at the age of twenty, and was placed by Mr. Black, my guardian, in a commercial house on a salary of eight hundred dollars a year. Left without parents, and having no relations who cared to claim me except an old great-uncle, Mr. Black kept me at an inexpensive college (so called) in a rural place to satisfy his conscience. Suddenly he seemed to change his mind about the professional career, and ordered me into business, although there was still three thousand dollars of my small patrimony in his hands. This amount would be due, of course, on my majority early in the next January.

I lived very modestly, but being a talkative sort of boy, able to tell a story, and generally of rather mannish pretensions, some older and richer fellows quite took me up. They showed me the city, and, what was more memorable, took me to Long Branch, where, having borrowed some money of Joe Cliff, one of our set, I made up my mind to spend a whole week. The temptation to this extravagance was a bright, black-eyed, high-spirited girl of eighteen—Bessie Clapp. I felt that Bessie was up to my standard, and that she was lucky in my satisfying such a fastidious taste as mine. Though marriage was something of a sacrifice for a fellow, I meant in a year or so (having, of course, meanwhile put that small fortune into Wall street and realized enormously) to take Bessie for my wife. It was Sunday, I remember, and before breakfast. I was to leave the next day, but there was the shady afternoon before me, and the beach, and an umbrella, and Bessie, too—all favorable to a formal declaration of my love. As we walked the piazza I said, "Take my arm." She blushed but obeyed. She was a dear, frank girl, was Bessie. Then I said, with much emotion, though in bad taste rhetorically, "Bessie, I think you're just splendid."

"Nonsense!" she answered, but clung to me the closer. And then Bessie's mother called her to breakfast, and I went to eat my eggs in bachelor solitude in the big dining-room. The meal was nearly over when, chancing to look up, I saw, floating down the length of polished floor, a vision. She (the vision of young men are always "she") was dressed in pale heliotrope, she had a mass of golden hair; she was not very tall, but slender and stately. The head waiter, an ebony statue of dignity, forgot his high position, and came down the room after her with the alacrity of a menial. There was an unused space at my table. Would he pronounce upon it? He did. He first seated a stout old lady, with a flabby face, and very short of breath, who had come ambling in alongside the vision, and then, opposite to me, there looked up out of a pair of eyes, blue, like Alpine gentians—there looked at me, I say, my fate.

"Mamma," she said to the stout old person, "what shall we order?"

Her voice was delicious, and by the time she had put the last lump of sugar in her coffee I was madly in love.

Before long a man—an old man I considered him (about forty, and getting bald)—came and spoke to her. I knew the fellow by sight—one Reynolds, a heavy importer, and very rich. I was jealous, and left the table in disgust; but slipping two dollars into the head waiter's hand, I asked, quite casually:

"Who is the lady that just came in?"

"That, sah? Oh, that's Miss Darcy—Miss Constance Darcy and her mah. She come here 'most every season—yer, sah."

Constance Darcy! The name was chivalry. Constance Darcy! I ran to look up some of my set of fellows on the chance that they might know her.

"Joe," said I, finding Joe and Ted and Smith and all the boys together, "do you know Miss Darcy?"

"Miss Darcy? Constance Darcy?" was the grand chorus. "Of course. Where is she? Come along and be introduced."

We waited a good while on the piazza, but at last somebody pronounced, "Miss Darcy—Mr. Van Boosen."

She smiled on me divinely, and Joe punched me in the back and whispered, "Lucky dog!" I stood by for an hour, and then came my chance; and I talked with her, actually talked with her! When she rose to leave me, I cried out in a pitiful way that I'm afraid was boyish:

"Oh, don't go!"

"Never mind. I'll see you again," she said. "I'm to be here several weeks. Are you?"

"Yes, oh yes," I answered, eagerly, and at once borrowed more money from Joe, and engaged my room for a fortnight.

I would sum up my experience during that fortnight, in the one word, Bliss, with a very large capital. There was Constance in morning sunshine and midday, Constance in afternoon breezes and short, courtly costumes, Constance in moonlight and queenly draperies, Constance in air, earth and water. No, not in the water, except metaphorically, for she didn't like the sea-bathing. It was Bessie who romped in the breakers and blustered her nice nose. Oh, speaking of Bessie, when we chanced to meet, I treated her in a pleasant old-fashioned fashion. She gave me some reproachful glances, some scornful ones, and when she went away I forgot the train time, and was sitting on the beach with Constance, under her rose-lined parasol.

Of course there were other men about Constance; or, to be more correct, every man was about her. She used to say, with a little grimace:

"I know everybody, for I've been coming to Long Branch every year for ages and ages."

"If you've been here many years, you must have come as a very small child," said I.

"A woman is just as old as she looks," the wise French people have it," Constance answered.

"Then you are about twenty-one?" I ventured, interrogatively.

"Oh, you had boy!" cried Constance, laughing; "I never allow anybody to put me at more than twenty."

My hardest trial was to see my adored Constance driving out with Reynolds, or some other opulent rascal, in his own trap. To be sure, I had sent to Joe for money, and he had showered her with rose-buds and bouquets, but for driving I had to use a team of hired horses.

Once I told her, with the most delicate circumlocution, that I was quite poor, but she treated me with just the same confiding sweetness, and immediately after accepted a basket of flowers with the goodness and grace of an angel.

At last, of course, there came an end to Joe's money, and I had to go. But at parting Mrs. Darcy said, "Come and see us in the city," and Constance had given me a long, sorrowful, tender look.

When, in a savage humor, I reached my boarding-house, there was awaiting me a small parcel and a letter. It was one of those absurd letters I was quite used to receiving from my great-aunt Annette Van Boosen, who lived down on Long Island in an ancient tumble-down homestead. As a boy, I had seen her, and remembered her as a hard-featured, snuffy, high-tempered old woman, given to long rambles about deceased Van Boosens of remote periods, of whom one Jan Van Boosen was the chief ornament and glory. From time to time Aunt Annette would send me musty papers, old Dutch books, decaying scraps of lace, once an old shoe, and other queer relics, all as she declared, of immense value, and to be kept until she called for them. "I am afraid," she would write, "of being robbed in this lonely place, but some time I shall come up to the city and arrange for the proper bestowal of these valuables."

This last letter ran:

"I send you six military buttons and a ring for safe-keeping. See that they are locked away in vaults at once. They are relics of Jan Van Boosen. I shall come to the city soon and see them properly put away."

I threw the buttons in a drawer, and thrust the clumsy old silver ring, set with what seemed a small diamond, into my pocket, and said to myself, "Bah! the old woman is crazy."

The rooms on Fifth avenue occupied by Mrs. Darcy and her daughter were spacious and luxurious, and the parlor was besieged every evening by admirers and admirers. Of course I was in the very forefront of the forlorn hope. Sometimes I was allowed to drop in out of calling hours, and by an especial grace to sit on the same sofa with Constance while she lazily embroidered, and the mother came in and out of the room. It was on such a happy occasion, one day in late December, when I spoke of an exquisite bracelet that Constance wore.

"It was a Christmas gift last year," she said, handing it to me to examine.

"From your mother?" I asked.

"Oh, no! From Mr. Smith."

Smith was one of our set of fellows.

"Why," I stammered, "I didn't know you cared for Smith."

"Care for Smith! Why should I? Mr. Smith sent me a present at Christmas, that's all. So good of him! Do you see the beautiful silver casket on the table? Mr. White sent me that."

"Oh," exclaimed Mrs. Darcy, coming in at the moment, "all my daughter's friends are so kind to her at Christmas! Mr. Herman sent her a great pile of gloves in such a pretty box, and Mr. Frost a necklace, and Mr. Carter a dressing-case; and there were a dozen fans, of course, and jewel-boxes and satchels and vases, and a perfect shower of fruit and flowers. Then the butterfly! Constance, did you never show Mr. Van Boosen the jeweled butterfly from Mr. Reynolds? It was very elegant, Mr. Van Boosen, very elegant—diamonds and rubies."

By this time Mrs. Darcy was puffing out of the room again.

I had been feeling uneasy, for Reynolds was at the house a great deal, and I fancied he treated Mrs. Darcy with a resigned patience, as if he intended to get used to her. He was old, to be sure—forty seemed to me well on toward the grave—and he was plain, and he was bald. In fact, I had grown morbidly jealous and anxious. Love had mastered discretion, and I felt I must speak; so, with all my worshiping soul in my eyes, I began, passionately: "Dear Miss Darcy—darling Constance!"

"Oh, hush!" said she, laying her finger on her lip. "Mamma's coming." Then she gave me such a shy, sweet glance, as if she understood everything, and the mamma came, for good this time, and sat down with her knitting. The chance had disappeared for that day, and I rose to go. Constance took one step into the hall with me, familiarly yet discreetly. I felt so warmly toward her, and so happy—I was so young, and I had been so sleepless thinking of her, that I was near to crying like a woman.

There were tears in my eyes when I pressed her hand. Mrs. Darcy was close by, yet I starved for still more assurance of favor; so I said:

"You don't admire bald heads, do you?"

Constance laughed. "Why, what an absurd idea! I hate bald heads."

That was all. I was content. A last look from those gentian blue eyes, one more hand pressure, and I went home happy.

Two days before Christmas (that Christmas!) I went into Tiffany's to buy a suitable present for Constance. At school and at college in country places I had known nothing of the peculiar customs that obtain in some circles of fashionable society, but I was learning them willingly and unquestioningly, and I felt the most expensive article I could find would be only a proper offering. Of course if such gifts

did not represent the very highest propriety and delicacy, my Constance wouldn't receive them.

A dapper gentlemanly clerk came forward. "I want a present, a rich and handsome present, for a lady," I said.

"Yes, sir. A fan, sir?"

"No, not a fan." I remembered Mrs. Darcy had said "a dozen fans."

"A toilet case, a satchel, an ivory comb, glove box, napkin ring?"

"No; something better."

"Pardon; is it for a young lady?"

I felt my ears tingle, but answered, boldly, "Yes, for a young lady."

"I would recommend, say, a brooch."

"Let me see some brooches."

"With jewels or plain, sir?"

"Jewels, of course."

"Here's a neat thing," said the clerk, "in sapphires."

It was a small pin, but the sapphires were the color of her eyes, and she might forgive the meanness of the present for the richness of my affection.

"How much?" I asked.

"That, sir, is three fifty."

"Three fifty," I repeated, deciding on it at once—"three dollars and fifty—"

The gentlemanly clerk saved me from the blunder. "Three hundred and fifty dollars, sir."

"Oh," said I, with a sickly smile, "I thought so." But I hadn't thought so. The cost of the trifle was a great deal more than I had dreamed. There was just twenty dollars in my pocket, and to have that I bore my tailor's insolence and my landlord's duns. Then I owed Joe the money for the Long Branch visit, and more borrowed since. Besides, I was at an age when it seems so degrading to be poor—an age when one likes to say, "Keep the change."

I remarked, critically, to the clerk: "Humph! on the whole, I don't fancy sapphires. Show me pearls."

"Certainly. Here's a pretty thing; only two hundred."

After going through the whole stock of pearls, I asked for bracelets.

"Five hundred, eight, one thousand," said the man, looking impatient, as other customers were waiting.

"Could you show me rings?" I asked. I thought of rings because, being small objects, it seemed likely they might come within my small means.

"Diamond?" inquired the clerk.

"Diamond, of course."

He took out a case of rings, and ran over the prices—"Two hundred, one seventy-five, four hundred, one hundred, and so on. Lost in troubled thought, I stood rattling the keys in my pocket in an under-bred fashion I had, and doing so, felt my great-aunt's silver ring, which I drew forth with a happy thought.

"I want," said I, "to keep the silver setting; reset the stone, and tell me at what price you can furnish me its exact counterpart, say two weeks from now."

"Yes, sir," said he, and he went to some upper region. In a little while, coming down and giving me the bare circle from which the stone had been taken, he said: "I can't tell you at the moment for how much we can make the diamond; but our expert has weighed and examined it, and we will write to you."

"Very well."

"Address, please?"

I gave my number.

"And address for the new ring?"

"Miss Constance Darcy, Fifth avenue. Without fail, to-morrow."

I drew a long sigh as I stepped into the street. The gift seemed so insignificant for my beautiful Constance. As to the diamond, why, in two weeks I would be twenty-one, and have the three thousand dollars from my guardian. Before quadrupling that sum in Wall street, I would take out enough to pay Joe, and, above all things, I'd put a stone in Jan Van Boosen's ring as good or better than the old one.

The next evening, Christmas-eve, I was made happy. Constance wrote to me:

"I have received your magnificent present. How good you are! I shall wear the ring all ways. Look in to-morrow about three. I've a particular reason for wishing to see you."

Oh, what was the "particular reason" for wishing to see me? I believed I could guess.

Of course, sharp on the hour, I was with Constance.

"Oh!" she exclaimed: "Merry Christmas! The ring is lovely," and she showed it on her finger, sparkling wonderfully.

Mrs. Darcy came putting up like a respectable locomotive, and ejaculated: "Oh, the ring is superb!"

"Now," said Constance, "come and have luncheon *en famille*, and she drew me into the dining-room. "There's nobody here but Mr. Reynolds."

There was old Reynolds, sure enough, at the head of the table, smiling and beaming. But Constance gave me comfort by talking all lunch-time about my present. And, in fact, I was astonished at the size and brilliancy of the diamond, and almost feared that Tiffany had deceived the wrong one.

When we had pushed back from the table, Constance began, brightly: "I sent for you, dear Mr. Van Boosen, because you're such a good friend." I felt my heart standing still, as before a coming calamity, yet never guessed what that calamity might be. "I sent for you," she went on, "because from the first we have all liked you so much, and this beautiful ring shows how sincere is your regard for me—she hesitated, then made the pronoun 'us.' "So I'm going to tell you a secret."

She glanced at Reynolds inquiringly. He nodded. "A great secret," she repeated. I felt as if I were turning to stone. Then she said, deliberately: "I'm engaged to Mr. Reynolds."

I couldn't move, couldn't think. I hoped she was dying. But Mrs. Darcy quickly poured out some wine, and I lifted it to my lips. Then I saw Constance standing up behind Reynolds's chair. I thought she looked a little scared, for I could feel my face was white as marble; but in her own graceful, cordial way she said: "Yes, my dear Gerard—for we shall call you Gerard, you're so very young—we are to be married at once. You see, I'm thirty years old, and I can be—she laughed pleasantly at the notion—"quite a mother to you. And Mr. Reynolds can be your father. How nice!" She clapped her hands playfully. "So you must come and see us often. Do, now, like a good boy."

"Come and see us," Reynolds added grimly. "I rose, and stammered out some words; I don't know what they were."

Then Constance affectionately put her hand on Reynolds's shoulder, and exclaimed, with a pretty pout: "Yes, I am going to marry this baldhead. And I hate baldness. Never mind, dear; you must get some horrid stuff that'll make the hair grow." Reynolds clasped the hand on his shoulder, and laughing, kissed it.

I said something more, without any idea what I was talking about, smiled, bowed, and got out of the house as a man wounded to death may drag himself out of a battle.

I was staggering in the street, when somebody slapped me on the shoulder, and bawled: "Hello! old fel. Too much Christmas, eh?"

"It's Smith," I replied, with a ghastly lightness. "Oh, no," I replied, with a ghastly lightness. "I'm only dizzy—subject to such attacks."

"Too bad," said Smith. "Hold on to me. So. Feel better now? You've been to the Darcys; saw you coming out. What a stunning ring you sent Constance!"

"You sent her a nice present last year," I rattled out of a dry throat.

"Oh, yes; so I did this year. They're not well off, but they keep up appearances, the Darcys do, and they take full advantage of a very bad and indecorous fashion in accepting expensive presents. Bless you, Constance is a charming woman, and not of my family (thank Heaven!), and I don't begrudge the presents. If she can afford to take 'em, why, I can afford to give 'em."

"How old is Miss Darcy?" I asked.

"She's a beauty, and understands toilette. There's so much in toilette. By-the-way, Reynolds is going to marry her. Imagine a man marrying Constance Darcy!"

"Why not?" I stammered.

"Mercenary," answered Smith, shortly—"mercenary and heartless."

"Oh, indeed?" I said, in such an unnatural tone that Smith exclaimed: "I say, you're feeling ill again; and he kindly took me home."

A few days later, while I was trying in vain to conquer an unreasoning love that wouldn't be subdued even by some ugly facts, a shock that I received helped to cure me. This moral counter-irritant was in the shape of a note from Tiffany's:

"DEAR SIR:—We find it impossible to procure a diamond as fine as the one we reset, but we can furnish a stone nearly as good for about five thousand dollars. Yours was of extraordinary brilliancy, large (though the old setting nearly covered it), white, and without flaw."

Five thousand dollars! Why, the utmost I expected from my guardian was only three thousand. I thought the stone was a trifle small; I could borrow, so to speak, and easily replace; but, good heavens! I was a thief! My first impulse was to confess to Aunt Annette; then I argued why give the poor old woman needless pain? In two weeks I can put money into stocks, and soon have the finest diamond in America.

I tried, by sifting my feelings and motives, to ease the pangs of conscience, yet the bald facts were unpleasant. After having been told distinctly, and in writing, that the stone was of great value, I had nefariously disposed of it. The legal points were plain.

Well, two weeks passed, and instead of the three thousand dollars from my guardian, there came a lawyer's letter with the information that Mr. Black was completely ruined, and the trust money had gone past hope in the general wreck. This second shock completely stunned me.

I was penniless, and in debt to Joe for five hundred dollars. Constance had cost me that, beside the family diamond and untold heart-ache. Perhaps it was well I was so overwhelmed and helpless, or when the boarding-house servant-girl came with another piece of fearful news, I might have done some desperate deed.

"Sor," said Biddy, "there's an auld woman below, and it's your aunt she says she is."

While I greeted Aunt Annette my knees smote together, yet I managed to jerk out remarks about Long Island crops, until she stopped me by saying, tartly:

"Bring me as once all the Van Boosen relics, particularly the buttons and the ring."

"Well, auntie," said I, trying to be light and airy, "and what are you going to do with those precious antiquities?"

"Going to look 'em up at my house," she answered. "I've bought a safe at last."

"Now," and I facetiously tickled her under her massive chin—"now what would you do if anything had been stolen?"

"Stolen!" cried my aunt, starting up and glaring at me (she had a violent and vindictive temper)—"stolen! Why, I'd prosecute the thief to the utmost extent of the law; I'd imprison him, blast his name, torture him if I could! I'd be a very wolf on his track as long as I lived."

"Come, now," and I was most horribly sparkling and jaunty—"come, now, not if the thief was a Van Boosen, not if he were in the direct line from Jan—eh?"

"Yes," the old vixen answered, glaring at me and clenching her mitted fists—"yes, even if he was my own flesh and blood—even if he was you—I'd pursue him to the death! The Van Boosens relics! Great goodness! why—" "Don't excite yourself, auntie dear," I broke in; "I was merely jesting. The things are here, all except the ring, and I'll get that in a few minutes."

"Is it locked up in safety vaults?" she asked. I made a gesture to avoid answering, and rushed out of the house with the ring in my pocket.

One hesitates to write down facts that are absolutely blasting to his own character, but I was in a dreadful complication. The ring would probably one day be mine, and— Well, I brought it back to Aunt Annette set with a false gem—a piece of white glass.

The next time I heard from my dragon of a relative she wrote from the rickety homestead: "I keep the family treasures in a safe in my bedroom. I don't promise to leave them to you, although you represent the straight line of descent, because I don't think you appreciate the character and virtues of the great Jan."

This, considering my only hope of settling matters with my conscience, was very far from cheering.

I found that a broken heart can be healed more easily than a guilty mind can be set at rest. In less than a year I had ceased to care for Constance. I used the sternest economies, earned a better salary, and was paying Joe by small installments, and still there was the awful secret of the ring. Of course a confession would bring me into the public courts. Sometimes I felt impelled to make it, sometimes to wait until, in the course of events, I would be found out by my great-aunt's heir, or worse, by herself. There were plenty of witnesses against me at Tiffany's and the gentlemanly clerk could give excellent testimony.

One day I met Bessie Clapp in the street. It would be effrontery to speak to her, I thought, but it would be a great comfort, and speak I did.

She seemed very lovely, girlish, and frank, though she did say, sarcastically: "So Miss Darcy is married?"

"Of course," was my careless reply. "You know Reynolds was devoted to her at Long Branch."

"So were other people," said Bessie.

"I understand you," I answered, meekly; "but that affair was only the glamour of a moment."

We soon fell into our old ways, and her father coming to the rescue pecuniarily, we were married.

Though Bessie's disposition was fond, it was also jealous. I was an approved moral coward,

and feared to open up that Darcy episode. Of course the groveling meanness of my nature is plain by this time.

Yesterday it was Christmas again—the second since our wedding. Bessie came running to me with a letter and a great box in her hands.

"Oh, Gerard," she cried, "see what your great-aunt has sent me for a present—a lot of books and papers and lace and old buttons! She writes: 'The Van Boosen relics are not for your husband, who has, I suspect, no proper respect for his ancestors. They are for his child. The ring is of great value. I give it to you to hand to posterity.' See, Gerard, what a great silver ring! Why, what makes you look so strange?"

"Bessie," I answered, taking advantage of a moment's strength and heroism, "I have a confession to make."

It took half an hour to rehearse the whole matter minutely—my blind love, my crime, and sufferings, without extenuation or reserve. "Can you forgive me, Bessie?" I said, at last.

"She moved away from me, and answering, 'Let me go and think,' left the room."

As I waited there with my head sunk in my hands, I groaned: "Perhaps she despises me; perhaps she will never love me again. This is retribution."

But presently Bessie came back, carrying our plump little crowing baby boy.

"Can you forgive me for stealing your diamond?" I asked, humbly.

"Oh," answers my wife, "you don't suppose I went away to think about the miserable diamond? You were young and rash. You meant to make it all right. That's nothing. I was trying to forgive you for loving that Constance Darcy."

What strange creatures women are! "Well," I asked, anxiously.

"Baby forgives you," said Bessie, putting the youngster in my arms with the lovely pride of motherhood, and becoming herself curiously entangled in the embrace. Then, as I clasped my sweet, true-hearted, guileless wife, she whispered:

"Are you happy now, dear? Is it 'Merry Christmas,' with no more wretched fears or fancies?"

"Yes, my love," I answer, "Merry Christmas" at last.

We hear to-day the news of poor old Aunt Annette's death. She was eternally writing, and after she sent off the box to Bessie she jotted on a scrap of paper, "I feel very near death, but I have placed the relics in the direct line of descent."

Bessie declares baby shall be taught to respect the euphonious name of Jan Van Boosen.

### The Merry Christmas Day.

Christmas irradiates home with the holy light of Heaven. It is the good angel of the year. It comes near the closing of his life to give the venerable man one farewell glimpse of joys he has tasted, and to light his path to eternity. It is a sacred day to all mankind. The citizen as he pictures the bountiful feast prepared by willing hands; the happiness that beams upon the faces of his children; the gathering together beneath his roof of all that are near and dear to him—the mother whose failing footsteps totter like the fading year upon the threshold of eternity; the dear old mother whose Christmases long ago were the joys of boys now old and grizzled; the father who leans now upon his arm; the sisters, the brothers, the friends of auld lang syne. The sailor loves it as he puts the last reef in his topsail and settles down to a glorious feast of pea soup, salt junk and plum-duff, with a tear perhaps in his homestead eye to the dear loved ones at home. The soldier loves it as he warms his hands by the bivouac fire, and scents the odor of a savory feast of unusual grandeur. Our brave boys far away in other lands love it because it brings them back to home and mother. The children love it—bless them. It is to them a long looked for dream of joy; and now it is at hand. Years and years hence, when the merciless hand of time and care shall have wrinkled these cheeks and



# The Christmas Guest

FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON  
OF  
1883-4.

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR—  
GOD BLESS US, EVERY ONE."—Tiny Tim.

## What the New Year Brings.

Everybody buys a new diary, and turns over a new leaf.

The sanguine man believes fully that he shall be able to keep all his good resolutions. He thinks that somehow, in some mysterious way hidden in the glowing future, he shall do big things, accomplish magnificent purposes, quit chewing tobacco, and refrain from bickering with his wife. He has heard the name of the place mentioned which is popularly supposed to be paved with good intentions; but he has not the slightest idea of contributing anything toward material for its sidewalk, or its road-bed. He means to be good and true; he expects to keep sober, to work, to save money.

He takes that new diary, and sharpens out a new pencil, and braces himself, and writes down his resolves. He is not going to let his wife see that book until the end of the year. If he lost his temper when she wanted him to fit stove-pipe or beat carpets, she might be apt to tell him with his recorded good resolves. Women will do such things, you know, when they are very much tried.

The New Year brings a change of calendars; and the farmer's wife must have a new almanac. No well-organized farmer's wife could keep house without an almanac. It is an institution of her forefathers. When her mother—yes, when her grandmother—was an infant, the almanac hung on the wall beside the looking-glass and the japanned comb-case; and when her grandfather's father wanted to cut the rye-fields, he looked into the almanac to see if it was going to rain; and when grandmother's mother wanted to set a hen, she looked into the almanac "to see where the sign was," so as to regulate biddy's incubation, and insure healthy chickens.

The New Year brings bills. There is a great deal of sorrow comprehended in that sentence; there is no man living who likes—who really enjoys—the arrival of bills. It isn't in human nature. We all like to keep what we have got.

Bills are always larger than a man expects they will be. He will look at them with dismay. Surely he has never run up all that long list of items! There must be some mistake. Somebody else's bill has got mixed with his. All that sugar, and all those beans, and that array of sundries consumed by his family! And nobody to feed but his wife, and his wife's mother, and the four children, and the servant girl and himself. But then, it is hardly worth while to mention himself, he thinks; he is such a small eater. Every man thinks he doesn't do much toward swelling the grocery bill.

The man complains to his wife, and points out the items, and says there must have been things wasted—yes, wasted! And if there is anything will try the patience of a good housekeeper, it is to be told that things are wasted.

And likely as not, before they settle the question to their mutual satisfaction, the good man has broken one of the resolves written down in the new diary, and the woman has got all stirred up, and told him she wished she had never seen him.

Thank fortune this all blows over without any great storm, and the New Year is entered upon, and will close with the same scene over again.

## Visions of Christmas-Tide.

Christmas paints many pictures on the canvas of the mind, some of them bright, joyous, full of sheen and dazzle and glitter, while others, alas! are sombre and sad and luridly tinted with that unutterable despair begotten of the "night have been." Christmas is a season whereon, to those who have passed many of the milestones on the great highway, it becomes a necessity to pause and gaze back and count the halts by the wayside. "What a glorious Christmas that was when we were all with father and mother at the old home!" "What a ghastly Christmas that was when poor, darling Mary's chair was for the first time and forever vacant!" "What a strange Christmas that was when Rosie appeared so cold and I was so miserable." Thus ring the bells of memory, now joyously, now sadly, and thus will it be at Christmas-tide till the crack of doom.

Christmas is a season of bounty. The very birds are cared for, and their carol is all the blither in this gracious and hallowed time. It is a season of coquetting, too, and flirtations that commence in the once-a-year kiss beneath the mistletoe, ripen as the year grows older. See that charming girl, how deftly she arranges a sprig of holly in her raven tresses, the red berries showing warmly in the folds of her dark hair! Christmas is a golden time; and if, as we gaze back, there are some halting places on the roadside where we suffered and were not refreshed, are there not others as radiant with happiness, and are there not many yet to come?

## Looking Forward.

How eagerly do the different members of the family look forward to Christmas! Even when the belief in a "real, live Santa Claus" is banished, half regretfully, among the childish dreams of the past, the mystic charm which lingers about the day makes old and young eagerly long for its appearance. None should esteem it above them to rovere and celebrate the day, no matter how exalted their station. Parents who do not make it a practice to bestow some little gifts upon their children, will ever regret that they did not give them this opportunity to look back upon these Christmas days as bright spots in their childhood. Do not destroy the beautiful illusions of holiday-time; do not become so fixed and hard in your opinion of the importance of practical reality as to lose sight of those things about which life's recollections will cluster in after years.

YE OLDEN TIME.—In 1659 the General Court of Massachusetts enacted that "anybody who is found observing, by abstinence from labor, feasting, or any other way, any such day as Christmas Day, shall pay for every such offense five shillings."

## What Johnny Got for Christmas.

A BOY'S TROUBLES AT THIS SEASON OF THE YEAR.

What to give Johnny has been bothering Aunt Sophia for a month. Pa generally says that what Johnny wants most is a good old-fashioned trouncing with a lath, such as Grandpa used to give him, but Aunt Sophia always contradicts Pa on such occasions, except when Romeo is concerned, who is Aunt Sophia's cat. Well—Aunt Sophia went down-town bright and early to get Johnny off her mind. But what to give Johnny bothered Aunt Sophia.

Johnny has a velocipede and three skates, a bag of marbles, four jack-knives which Aunt is keeping for him until he grows up, and a fiddle with one string broken, which Pa says will be the death of him yet. Besides these he has a silver watch which Aunt Sophia gave him last Christmas, and which he broke the crystal of cracking nuts, and then swapped with the butcher's boy on the next street for a pea-shooter until Pa found it out and trounced him, and got the watch back by paying the butcher \$8, and threw the pea-shooter in the fire. Then that same evening, when Johnny put a spring clothes-pin on Romeo's tail, and Romeo ran all over the house like mad, and broke two of Helen's plaques and Ma's cologne bottle skimming for fresh air on the bureau, and scratched Aunt Sophia's hand till it looked like a sausage while she was trying to take the thing off—why, then, before Pa came home and trounced him, Aunt Sophia sat down and had a good cry, and said she knew Johnny was going to grow up and be a murderer some day and be hanged, which made us all feel very sad. Last week, however, when Johnny brought home three blue tickets and a white one for recent punctuality at Sunday-school, where they are going to have a Christmas tree and give away nice tracts and chromos, why Aunt Sophia brightened up and said she always did believe Johnny would be President one of these fine days before Pa knew it, and that Pa was wrong to discourage Johnny by saying "pooh!" and that Johnny could run up stairs now and find a nice apple on her table.

Well, Aunt Sophia went down town bright and early, and spent five hours looking around for something for Johnny. She gave him a pictorial hymn-book last Christmas, but he penciled mustaches on all the angels and had the Apostles smoking pipes before the evening was half through, which, of course, was very wicked, though it made Pa laugh when Ma showed it to him. So Aunt Sophia determined not to give Johnny anything pious this year, and, of course, had trouble. She went to a toy store first and spent ten minutes in choosing between a cast-iron bank made so that a fat man would flip a nickel in his mouth and roll his eyes, and a magnetic fish-hook which would catch tin fish in a glass of water without trouble. She compromised, however, by buying Johnny a green and red monkey who would throw surprising somersaults over a blue stick when gently pushed at the heels, and a little wooden man who would dance a jig when wound up.

## It is Christmas To-day.

To-day, in every language under the sun, man will meet man with one universal greeting, "A Merry Christmas!"

Millions will throw aside the toil of the year, families will unite who have not met for many, many a day; sons will return from afar off to sit once more at the home table; animosities will be softened, estrangements bridged; for it is Christmas Day.

The celebration of this day, incomplete, human, as it will be—must be at best—its true, earnest evidence of an innate longing for something better than the span of earthly life, an aspiration toward something that is purer, nobler, higher.

To those whose heads are bowed before the shrine of Him who brought the glad tidings, will come a holy calm, a peace to the troubled soul—a solace to the weary and a comfort to the sorely-miled, that nothing on earth—that nothing which is of the world can bring.

There are hearts to-day, awaiting patiently, broken down in a sorrow that time cannot heal, for the summons to rejoice some so loved that the light of life is already extinguished, and the motive for existence is taken away. To them, to all who are weary and heavy-laden, let us hope the Spirit of Christmastide will come in truth and bring that peace which passeth all understanding.

To others, the day is one of glad rejoicing; to parents in the enjoyment of their children's life and love; to children, in the consummation of delights long looked forward to from the hands of fond father and doting mother; to friends, grasping hands after long separation; to men and to women who, halting for a moment by the wayside of life, exchange a friendly greeting or revive in social warmth the Yuletide scenes of long, long ago.

Men, hardened by life's vicissitudes, roughened by a round of toil, soiled by contact with selfishness and rapacity, will feel their hearts beat more softly and their voices sound more gentle. And it may be, a slight flush of shame will tingle their cheeks at the unwonted impulse. Let them not seek to stifle the promptings of a better nature; a generous deed will give fresh life-blood, a kind act will clear away the sordid cobwebs that stifle the heart's affections.

It is such a short spell, after all; so few Christmas Days fall to the lot of the most long-lived in the centuries and centuries of reckoned time, that it is pity, indeed, to lose one chance of doing good that a little selfish advantage may be gained.

If, in some far off time, we may be permitted to look back through the vista of our years, how infinitesimal will seem our gain, how mean our motives, what shame will be ours when we see how many we might have so easily helped, how much suffering we might have averted, yet did not raise our eyes to see them, or lift our hands toward it.

## A Priceless Legacy.

It does not require a mint of money to observe Christmas. Suitable gifts are so cheap and numerous as to be within the reach of most people. Presents for young and old abound everywhere. There are two kinds, the useful and the useless. "You pay your money and you take your choice." The small children, the boys and the girls, the young folks, as well as their elders, can and do enjoy the recurrence of this beautiful day. The past year has been

one of peace and plenty, and has given us many things for which we should be thankful. Our nation has prospered throughout the year, and is making giant strides in civilization. Then let us hold this priceless legacy of Christmas day, which has come down to us with the dust of centuries clinging to it, in no light esteem, and observe it not carelessly, but with greater joy, if possible, than ever before.

## The Christmas Toys.

Where toys are purchased for Christmas presents to the children, care should be observed that a selection be made of articles which not only amuse but instruct. The books now published for children afford a never-failing source of instructive entertainment. Boxes of paints, games, dolls and doll's patterns, carving tools, printing presses, magnetic and mechanical toys and embroidery patterns, with worsted and silks for working them, are a few of the many gifts which it pays to buy for the young. The children in their treatment of presents teach a lesson under this head. They immediately divide their presents in two classes—those sufficiently valuable to be stored away in their repository for precious things and those tacitly condemned to be destroyed in the least possible space of time.

## The Most Kindly of Seasons.

When Irving was reproached for describing an English Christmas which he had never seen, Geo. Wm. Curtis tells us, he replied that, although everything that he had described might not be seen at any single house, yet all of it could be seen somewhere in England at Christmas. He might have answered, also, that the spirit of what he had described was visible everywhere in Christendom on Christmas Day. "Some say that over 'gainst that season comes Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated, The bird of dawn singeth at night long; And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad; The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike, No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm, So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

This is the Christmas sentiment of to-day, as it was of Shakespeare's time. It is the most human and kindly of seasons, as fully penetrated and irradiated with the feeling of human brotherhood, which is the essential spirit of Christianity, as the month of June with sunshine and the balmy breath of roses. Santa Claus coming down the chimney loaded with gifts is but the symbol of the gracious influence which at this time descends from heaven into every heart. The day dawns with a benediction; it passes in holiday happiness; and ends in soft and pensive regret.

## They Would Celebrate.

The difficulty of repressing the joyous frolic of Christmas Day even in the farthest winter outpost of extreme Christianity is shown by Gov. Bradford's record of Christmas time in the Massachusetts colony. In November, 1621, about a year after the arrival of the Mayflower, came the little ship Fortune, of fifty-five tons, bringing a welcome addition to the settlement of thirty-five persons. Bradford sentimentally remarks, "Most of them were lusty young men, and many of them wild enough," and then proceeds: "And herewith I shall end this year, only I shall remember one passage more, rather of mirth than of weight. One ye day called Christmas-day, ye Gov'r called them out to work (as was used), but ye most of this new-company excused themselves and said it went against their consciences to work on ye day. So ye Gov'r told them that if they made it matter of conscience, he would spare them till they were better informed. So he led-away ye rest, and left them; but when they came home at noon from their work, he found them in ye streets at play, openly; some pitching ye barry, and some at steele-ball and such like sports. So he went to them and took away their implements, and told them that was against his conscience that they should play and others work. If they made ye keeping of it matter of devotion, let them keep their houses, but their should be no gaming or reveling in ye streets. Since which time nothing hath been attempted that way, at least openly."

## Hints for Christmas Gifts.

"What shall I make for Christmas?" is the question that is now heard on all sides, and a few hints for simple and easily-made fancy articles may prove of use to our readers. For a young lady, a chachaine bag will be an acceptable gift. The shape is usually a square, with three gathers at the corners, and edge with lace. These bags match the costume with which they are worn, or for evening wear are made in the shape of a triangle or heart, of satin, or black velvet, and painted or embroidered with bright red strawberries with butterflies hovering over them. A spray of holly with its brilliant scarlet berries, would also be pretty. They are suspended from the arm by a colored ribbon, tied in a bow at the top.

Grandma will appreciate an embroidered velvet case for her spectacles, and a tasty autumn-leaf pen-wiper may be made of four shades of cloth—red, brown, old gold, and olive. Out of each color, but of different sizes, into the form of a maple leaf—for which natural leaves will serve as patterns—and join with silk the red with green, olive with scarlet, gold with brown, and brown with yellow. Arrange them in a spray, overlapping each other, with two medium-sized ones in the center, and a small one at the top. Back with a piece of the olive cloth, and put in two bits of chamois skin for the wiper, fastening all together with a bow of cardinal and old gold-colored ribbon.

A pretty design for a wall-pocket, is a pair of bellows. The shape of the bellows should be cut out of thin wood or paste-board, and covered with cretonne satin, or plush, as may be desired. Three-cornered pieces of silk are fitted in the sides, and the nozzle is formed of a graduated roll of paste-board, covered with gilt paper. The front may be decorated in any way that fancy dictates.

## A Song in the Air.

There's a song in the air, there's a star in the sky,  
There's a mother's deep prayer, and a baby's low cry;  
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing  
And the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king.

DR. HOLLAND.

## All Gladness.

Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!  
What a joyful, ringing cheer,  
Memory brings us, from our childhood,  
While again these words we hear.  
Much of gladness,  
Naught of sadness,  
Comes to greet the listening ear.

HOSPITALITY.—Says Washington Irving: Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall—the general flame of charity in the heart.

## HIS CHRISTMAS KISS.

Close to the hearth hung two little socks  
Of two chubby boys, with curly brown locks.

Who had just crept into their beds,  
They rolled and tossed, and prattled like boys,  
Of toys and sleds, and childish toys,  
And then they covered their heads.

One hastened on to the City of God,  
Where Father Time, with his magical rod,  
Sits on his kingly throne.  
The other one waited, with wide-open eyes,  
Then slipped out of bed, in glad surprise,  
To find he was all alone.

Two little hero feet marched over the floor,  
And their owner glanced at the open door,  
Then a tiny sock pinned to the wall:  
"This one's for mamma!"—the clock struck eleven—

And give her this kiss; you'll find her in Heaven,  
No matter how late you call."

If old St. Peter would tell all he knew,  
He would say that an angel his gates passed through,

And left a heaven of bliss,  
To go to that room, to that chubby-faced child,

And look in his eyes, so tender and mild,  
As she took for herself that kiss!

JAMES FOSTER COATES.

## BUDD OF NOWHERE'S CHRISTMAS.

BY G. M. S. HORTON.

It was up-hill work with the clock. From half-past 3 until 4, the minute hand didn't seem to have life enough left to pull itself up to the figure XII, which was half-hidden by the gorgeous painting of the setting sun, whose rays struck out in every direction over the gorgeous face of the old timepiece. It was a dismal afternoon, and even the master looked at his watch to see if the long pendulum weren't napping.

No, for even while he looked, the minute hand on the clock passed two of the sunset rays, and eclipsed a third; and the little boys in the lowest row saw it and rejoiced.

I will not pretend to say that something which happened just then was right. I will leave that for you to decide at the end of my story.

Barton passed the note under his desk, and Moore read it behind his book, and here is the note that Moore read:

"JERRY:  
"Shall we try it to-night?"

Then it was that the master looked at his watch, and Moore scribbled with his left hand, while his right hand was apparently finding references in his book, with due anxiety. The scribbling was inelegant but effective, and the note went back. Barton nodded and Moore winked—a decorous retiring wink—and the minute hand slowly passed up over the face of the clock, vanquishing the gorgeous rays in slow succession.

At last the clock struck. Whether it had been recently wound, or whether the striking part was not on friendly terms with the pendulum and wanted to challenge it to a burst of speed, I can't say; but the way the clock struck four was enough to make a locomotive black in the face to equal it.

Out on the playground the notes were passed from boy to boy.

"You all know what it is to be, fellows," said Barton, with that hearty voice of his; "how many will join?"

Not a boy short of the whole of them!

"We'll give Budd of Nowhere such a—"  
"Hush, perhaps he's round."

"No, he went home at recess," said Moore, "and a poor little shivering chap he was too."

"Half-past 7 to-night sharp," cried Barton to the boys as they scattered in groups of two and three through the streets of the village; and a cheery "all right" was echoed from each.

There was so much mystery at that meeting—so much of things going on which those in attendance alone were to know, that I feel it would be a sad breach of confidence if I tell a syllable of the proceedings.

It is hard to keep myself from it—hard not to tell of the boyish sacrifices made that night and of the unselfish, tender words that sprang straight from the boyish hearts. I don't like to lecture, and I promise that I will not, but I tell you that was the time and place for those who don't altogether believe in boys.

A month before the meeting at Frank Barton's house, the village of Ocean Point had a genuine sensation. Jerry Scattergood wasn't the cause of it, but he had a very generous hand in making it known.

"You might have knocked me over with a feather—after when I see the little chap peeping into my cabin-window down there on the beach," the old fisherman had said, as he stood at the counter of the store waiting for his change. "Make that half a pound of crackers a whole pound, storekeeper, and bless me if I don't go in for a few nuts and a bit o' candy."

"Don't be stingy with your tongue, Jerry, tell us all about it," and the men crowded around to hear what or who it was for whom candy and nuts were going to the old hut on Ocean Point Beach.

"There's mighty little as I know myself," said Jerry, pulling up a long vest to make way for his change into a pocket whose locality would be a difficult one to determine. "It was nigh on to 9 o'clock last night, just as I was slanting up, when I heard a sort o' pattering like on the window, and if there wasn't a chap as who I'd never set eyes on before, then I ain't what I ought to be, that's all."

Having told what he considered the whole story, Jerry picked up his purchase and started for the door.

"Hold on, tell us the rest; don't open on us in that way and then close up for the night," said the storekeeper; "give us the rest."

"Rest, there ain't no rest about it. I took him in and there he is, and there he'll stay, too, for awhile, for if I'm a judge there's squally weather ahead for that chap. He's just buckered out. Said he come from nowhere so far as he could remember, and that they called him Budd to home, which was a long time ago and a long way back in the country; and say, boys, if you see Dr. Bliven round tell him to drop in, and that's good of you," and the old fisherman opened the door and went down the frozen road and around the point of the bluff, and so passed out of sight.

One evening, two weeks after Jerry Scattergood bought the candy and nuts for Budd, the little fellow came and stood by the old fisherman as he sat mending some nets by the light of the flickering fire.

"If you please, sir, I s'pose I must be going now."

Jerry dropped his net and taking Budd by the shoulder, turned him so that the light fell full upon the boy. He was very small—that could be told at a glance—but just how old he was would have puzzled a better judge than the old fisherman; and as for his clothes they might well have been on since his first birthday, so ragged and worn were they. But the eager little face above the tatters, though pinched and worn with cold and trouble, was frank and bright, almost merry, through it all.

"Must be a-going? Where?" said Jerry, still keeping his hand on Budd's shoulder.

"I don't know, indeed I don't, Mr. Jerry, but I s'pose I can tramp on right along without going nowhere in particular," and the boy cast a wistful look at the bright fire as though to remember its warmth in the cold days to come.

"See here, little chap," and the fisherman drew Budd close beside him, "you say as how

you've lost your mother, and as how there don't seem to be no home left for you somehow, and you came tramping miles and miles till you came here with your little fists as cold as yesterday's potatoes, and with your toes awful good friends with the holes in your shoes; and you tell me all about it, straightforward like, and I takes you in and we eat bickering together, and you never once kidded o' nights. Then you read out o' the books yonder as was left when the misus was here—spelling for the hard words, but astonishing smart on the every-day ones; and I sat and listened, and says I to myself as how it's my old Jim again, as if he wasn't gone with his mother where there's no winds a-blowin'—no squalls, nor danger from rocks on an unbeknown coast, where everything is smooth sailin', so the preacher says—and I know it myself every day in the week."

By this time Jerry couldn't see the fire very well. "There's the only place as how I can't stand salt water," said he, drawing his sleeve across his eyes and winking hard at the crackling logs. "I don't think as how I've cried since the day of it."

Budd crept to the old fisherman's knee and felt a strong pair of arms about him.

"I don't know just where I was, lad, in my talking, but if you say the word we'll just keep together, you and me, and pull on without mindin' what nobody says. Is it a bargain, little chap?"

Aye! That it was!

The village at Ocean Point is fast asleep. No light from any of the cottages lining the streets near the shore nor from those scattered back toward the country. Well might the place be sleeping, for the old clock in the school-house is just striking 8 o'clock. But stop a bit, there is a light; it is coming down the street. Now it is joined by another and still another. The streets seem suddenly to have become alive with dancing lights. Nearer they come. Now we can see gigantic legs reflected on the snow.

The lights are lanterns, and the legs—ah, there is no mistaking them, they are school-boy legs, and without the bobbing lanterns, very small some of them are, too; yet legs that you might almost expect would break out into a whistle at any moment. Here they come; I can't count the lanterns because they don't keep in one place long enough. The legs and lights come toward the school-house. They crowd through the gate and up to the door. Here one pair of legs fumbles around a good deal and at last a pocket opens and a hand goes in and brings out a key, and the next moment finds our old friends, Barton, Moore and all the other school fellows whom we saw the other day, gathered about the school door.

"Here's luck for us," cried Moore; "the fire's kept over first-rate. No let's get to work."

Bright is the room with the lantern light. A dozen boys are here, and under a dozen arms are as many—

"That was pretty near a tell, wasn't it? It's the hardest thing in the world for me to keep a secret!"

How they hammered and sawed while some of the little fellows held their caps so that no sawdust or shavings should drop on the floor! And how the hands on the old clock seemed to spin around as the boys worked on!

Four o'clock already and the hands still galloping. Barton was carpenter-in-chief, and even with the twelve pairs of willing arms it did seem, at one time, as though they wouldn't be through in season.

Five o'clock, as sure as you live! "Lights out, fellows, moon's up," called Moore, as locking the door behind them the boys fled down the yard once more, out through the gates and toward the beach. If they worked in the schoolroom they double-worked down by the old fisherman's cabin, and the moon shone bright and clear—almost too bright the boys thought, as they toiled.

"Lucky it's a warm night, or the snow wouldn't stick worth a cent," said Barton, stopping a moment to rest. "Now, fellows, just one turn more."

The "one turn more" was made, and they stood looking at the result of their work.

"Isn't she a bouncer?" cried a little fellow, who had been very busy all the time trying to find something to do.

"Finish it they'll hear," said Barton, cautiously.

"Who's got the placard?"

It was found and placed in position, and with many an admiring backward look, the boys went home again, leaving the old cabin with the mysterious something guarding in the moonlight the black wooden door.

"Moore," said Barton, as they separated, "I don't think Budd of Nowhere will feel bad again of coming to school because he hasn't anything to wear, do you?"

"I rather think not, old fellow," rejoined Moore.

And it was Christmas morning.

Old Jerry rubbed his eyes. "Come here, Budd, and let me know what you think of it. Did you ever see the like in your life?"

Budd came to the door. There, just in front of the step, was a huge ball of snow, rolled from the covered field near by. A perfect mountain of snow it was, and no wonder that the school-boys had puffed and rested, and rested and puffed over it for an hour that morning. Over the whole waved a flag, on which was printed in large letters with much more ink than skill:

"LOOK SHARP,  
BUDD OF NOWHERE,  
FOR A  
MERRY CHRISTMAS."

"And bless my heart if it ain't Christmas, too," said Jerry. "And I'm wishing you a merry one, lad. What do them chaps mean? If it's any trick they're playing they have to count me in, too, and stand the consequence."

A cry from Budd interrupted the old fisherman's threat.

"Look! Look!"

Budd darted into the cabin and was out again in a twinkling with the shovel.

"It's a box, don't you see?" he cried, "there is the edge."

A few cuts with the shovel and the box was displayed only to reveal other corners of other boxes. And out they came, one after another, and were carried wonderingly into the cabin. At last, through the mountain of snow, the ground was reached, and the last box safe inside by the fire.

"I don't want to say nothing till this thing's through," said the old fisherman, as with hammer in hand he broke the covers from their fastenings.

Jackets, trousers, boots and mittens, new and warm. School books and slates, story books and books again. Have I said jackets? Then I say so once more, for there were two of them, and trousers to match, and if I haven't said skates, I say so now with a will.

With sparkling eyes Budd watched the fisherman or helped when he could.

With wonder he looked upon each gift as it was drawn from its stout wooden box.

"Not for me," he said, "they can't be for me."

"Then help me on with these 23 trousers, and I'll use the jackets for mittens," cried Jerry, dancing about the room. "Old Chris ain't been round my chimney for a good ten years before. Hunt sharp for some writin', boy. Ain't there none round?"

Pinned to the jacket they found it—only a line:

"From the school-boys at Ocean Point."

"Read that again, lad, and read it slow like."

"From the school-boys at Ocean Point."

"Then God bless 'em forever, we both say," said the old man fervently.

WORRIED.—Heard on the street—"Why, my dear fellow, what is the matter? Anybody dead?" "No." "Lost any money?" "No."



## THE MYSTIC CHRISTMAS.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

"All hail!" the bells of Christmas rang,  
"All hail!" the monks at Christmas sang;  
The merry monks who kept with cheer  
The gladdest day of all their year.

But still apart, unmoved thereat,  
A pious elder brother sat  
Silent in his accustomed place,  
With God's sweet peace upon his face.

"Why sitst thou thus?" his brethren cried.  
"It is the blessed Christmas-tide;  
The Christmas lights are all aglow,  
The sacred lilies bud and blow.

"Above our heads the joy-bells ring,  
Without the happy children sing,  
And all God's creatures hail the morn  
On which the holy Christ was born.

"Rejoice with us, no more rebuke  
Our gladness with thy quiet look."  
The gray monk answered: "Keep, I pray,  
Even as ye list the Lord's birthday.

"Let heathen Yule fires flicker red  
Where thronged refectory feasts are  
spread;  
With mystery-play and masque and mime  
And wait-song speed the holy time!

"The blindest faith may haply save;  
The Lord accept the things we have,  
And reverence, however it is strayed,  
May find at last the shining ways.

"They needs must grope who cannot see,  
The blade before the ear must be;  
As ye are feeling I have felt,  
And where ye dwell I too have dwelt.

"But now, beyond the things of sense,  
Beyond occasions and events,  
I know, through God's exceeding grace,  
Release from form and time and place.

"I listen, from no mortal tongue,  
To hear the song the angels sung;  
And wait within myself to know  
The Christmas lilies bud and blow.

"The outward symbols disappear  
From him whose inward sight is clear;  
And small must be the choice of days  
To him who fills them all with praise!

"Keep while you need it, brothers mine,  
With honest zeal your Christmas sign,  
But judge not him who every morn  
Feels in his heart the Lord Christ born!"  
—The Youth's Companion.

## A TRUE CHRISTMAS STORY.

A MOTHER'S HOPE AND A DAUGHTER'S CRIME—  
THE ROMANCE OF REALITY—COLD  
AND HUNGER, WARMTH AND PLINY.

Saturday night! Thousands of people filled the streets and avenues. The shop windows were brilliant with gas and electricity; light and warmth everywhere on the inside; cold and discomfort everywhere on the outside. Express wagons dash here and there with their freight of holiday goods; the street cars crackle, the elevated trains roar and everything is astir. Private carriages are driven carefully through the press. The coachmen are warm in fur and the horses are covered with comfortable blankets. Stand on the corner of Sixth avenue and Fourteenth street, where the crowd is densest, and watch a while. Women in warm fur-lined cloaks, women in costly skins of animals, women in satin, women in cloth, some shivering with the scantiness of their clothing. Men with bundles in their arms and bundles hanging out of their pockets; men without bundles and with very few pockets to put anything in. A rushing pushing, good natured throng going up and down and across with unceasing clatter. It is practically Christmas Eve and everybody is happy. Even the tramp rejoices at the expected liberality of the saloon keeper. Everybody is smiling.

Everybody? No; not everybody. Standing back near the corner and in the shadow of the house is a woman. Her clothes, Heaven help her, would be scanty in September. Around her body and head is wrapped a plaid shawl, the like of which the coachman sitting on his box within twenty feet of her would not use to wipe the dust from his carriage; her hands are bare and pale and thin; her hair is stringy and gray; her face—despair.

Oh yes, but she's a tramp, a professional beggar hundreds say to themselves as they hurry by scarcely deigning to look at her. But is she? For an hour she has been standing where she is and not once has she asked alms of any one. Presently, pushing through the crowd, comes a tall man with a peculiar face. No man in New York is better known. His pictures are to be found on every side, his name is a household word where English is spoken. His face is strong and hard; his eye has a cold glitter; he walks slowly, seemingly engrossed in his own thoughts. But the great arch of his forehead means benevolence, if the conformation of a man's head means anything. People stare at him, policemen touch their caps to him as he passes. Slowly he comes along, a marked man among thousands. He hears the woman. Suddenly the eye that seems to see nothing sees her. The grave face looks graver. He turns out of the tide and hands something to her. She is not quick enough, and the coin rolls on the pavement at her feet. The grave man stoops and picks it up, despite her protest, and puts it in her hand. The long, thin fingers close over it. It is the largest they have held for many a day. The pale, watery eyes fill with tears. The man with a sterner face and a colder eye, passes on. The woman remains. She looks at the coin and seems to hesitate; then starts slowly toward the west side of the city with the money in her hand. Despite her rage there is something graceful in her walk; something peculiar in the poise of her head.

A pawnbroker's shop! The narrow door swings on its hinges with much creaking, for pawnbroker's hinges are nearly always rusty. Within a long counter and at one end a number of box stalls. Behind the counter several men with bushy beards and sharp, questioning eyes. Before the counter a motley throng, for it is Christmas Eve to the pawnbroker, too. The requests for advances are tremblingly made; the answers are short, sharp and decisive. There is no appeal from the dread judgments of these worth-creats of the poor.

"Sure, then two feather pillows is worth more than seventy-five cents," says a little woman scarcely five feet high. "I giv four dollars a piece for them when my husband was my husband."

"Seventy-five cents or I don't want them," was the clonching reply. "This ring cost eighty dollars," says a woman of better appearance than her neighbors. "Fifteen dollars," was the laconic answer. "Please, sir, I will take this out," said the woman from Fourteenth street, laying down her bright silver dollar and a ticket.

"Oh, you are here again after that picture, are you? Let me see, you had twenty-five cents on it—four months' interest and storage, sixty cents," says the man, giving back the change and a little miniature of a child and its father. "That's the fourth time that woman has had that thing in," continued the pawnbroker to one of the others. "I suppose you would rather get that out than eat, eh?" "Oh, sir, I prize it very highly. It is all I have left of happy days."

"No doubt, no doubt! you have been a grand lady in your time, I dare say—ha! ha!—a grand lady!" and those who had not yet been waited on joined in the sneering laugh. The woman's thin fingers closed over the little picture and her furrowed cheeks were moistened with bitter memories, though the tear facets were almost dry.

Out of the door still creaking, through the crowd of streets to the spot where we first saw her, went the unfortunate, wrapping her scanty drapery more closely about her and shivering with the cold.

"A concert garden!" A very little "concert," a great deal of light and noise and strong drink. Jaunty little clerks, with tight trousers and pointed shoes, smoking cigarettes, drinking beer and loitering at a lot of women who sat around. Tobacco smoke everywhere, and the sound of the "concert" almost unheeded amid the clink of glasses and the echo of ribald laughter. Surely a pleasant place for young men to spend the evening before going home to their mothers and sisters.

At a table sat a young woman evidently not altogether of the same class as her neighbors. She wore warm and rich clothing, and in her ears sparkled the price of beauty. For she was beautiful in form and face, notwithstanding the tollable lines on her forehead and the heavy sensual contour of her mouth. The happiness of all others seemed to be with her too, for she laughed and talked gaily with her companions.

"Nine o'clock, let us go," said the man with a yawn. "I do not like it, anyhow; it is too noisy." Slowly the girl drew on her gloves and wrapped herself about with her furs. Slowly they approached the entrance. The doors opened, and with a flood of light and warmth accompanying them they passed into the street. The shop girls hurrying home looked at the silks and jewels and sighed, the policeman looked and shrugged his great shoulders. A brave sight was this handsome, gallant pair.

The woman with the miniature approached and scanned the girl's face, as she had done to hundreds for hours. Her knees bent under her, her eyes stared and her hand went out to clutch the heavy cloak. The girl shrank back with apprehension, and her escort tossed a ten-cent piece toward the woman. It rolled into the gutter unheeded.

"Julie! Julie! at last I have found you!" said the weak voice; "at last! at last!" but the couple moved on. The woman pursued, and this time succeeded in catching the cloak. The girl gave a little scream and the man turned fiercely. "What more do you want, woman? I have already given you money."

"What do I want? Merciful God! can my child stand by and hear that question? Oh, Julie! Julie! it is so long since I have seen you; but I am happy now, my darling, I am not cold now."

"Is the woman a crank?" asked the man, turning to his companion. But the girl said nothing. Her eyes were half closed, her hands clinched, her face pale. Impatiently the man stood looking from one to the other. Suddenly the girl leans over and fiercely whispers:

"Mother, I was told you were dead. You will ruin me if you persist now. Meet me here to-morrow night, at nine o'clock, and I will make everything straight." Then, turning to her companion—"She seems a harmless old thing. Let us go." The two passed on. Crouching on the sidewalk the woman remained. A policeman saw her. "Come, old woman," he cries, "get out of this! Why, hallo! you have dropped your money! Come, get along, or I will have to run you in, and I don't want to go to court to-morrow morning with anybody." The woman rose and tottered feebly away.

A garret in Minetta lane! No fire, no stove to make it in, and nothing to burn if there was. A lodging house of the cheap "furnished room" sort, with a very small, very fussy and very shrewd mistress, to whom every woman who paid her board was a "lady" and every one who did not was a "lousy." Want of the most pinching character was everywhere discernible—the very walls had an odor of poverty. Wearily the woman with the miniature dragged herself up the stairs to the room that had been hers. The door was locked. The landlady stood in the hall.

"Well, have you your rent?"

"Alas! No; but I will have plenty to-morrow night."

"To-morrow night you will have plenty, will you? You dirty lousy, do you suppose I keep this house for fun? Get out, and don't show up here again."

There was no use of remonstrating. There was nothing in the room of hers; everything had been pawned. Wearily she went out the way she had come—out into the cold and darkness. And as she walked she smiled, for was it not a glad Christmas to her? Had she not seen and spoken to her child? Had the lights flickered brightly on the great avenues as they had while she waited, the crowds jostled and pushed here and there, though thousands had gone home. Away from these sights down the side streets the poor soul wandered. Her steps were more and more unsteady as she progressed. From time to time she would look at the picture and smile, for she thought her darlings were with her. It is true one was dead and the other had turned from her, but she would see them soon she thought. Away down the silent streets toward the North River she went, growing weaker as she walked. The light of pleasant homes beamed on her, and she saw through the uncurtained windows the figures of men and women and children clad in warm apparel and not hungry. On the great docks there was nothing to stop her advance, but a policeman saw her and followed. Away to the end she went, where the dark waters of the river gurgled against the bulkheads. There she sat down, and being over weary and weak, fell into the water. There was loud hallooing and the rush of men with lights followed, for a ship was hard by and the men were celebrating the Christmas season in their own way.

"This is a terrible night, woman, to take a man into the water," said the policeman as, all dripping, he laid his senseless burden on the boards.

A ward in the hospital!

A great room, with scores of beds; plain, white walls, with now and again a Scripture text on them. Patients coughing and patients moaning with pain. On one cot was the woman with the portrait. Her eyes were half open and she breathed but faintly; but she was conscious. Then she roused a little and talked, and the sweetness of her voice, though but feeble, attracted the attention of the orderlies and they listened. Presently the doctor came and stood by the bedside and looked at her.

"She cannot live, Jeffrey," he said to the orderly. "She will die of shock and starvation."

"But, sir, she had forty cents in her pocket when she came in and could have bought something to eat."

"That may be, but she has been slowly starving for days and improperly clad, and the want of food and exposure to the weather has brought her down. The forty cents would have done her but little good, though if taken in hand forty-eight hours ago she might have been saved."

"She has talked very queer, sir, since she came in; not at all like most of our patients."

"Did she?"

"That she did, indeed. She has something on her mind about a daughter. She talked a good deal of nonsense, it seemed to me, about horses and carriages and servants, but from what I can understand she must have at one time been pretty well off—according to her own story. She called 'Julie' a number of times and told somebody to tuck the robes carefully about her, as she was not used to this cold climate, and then she said, 'Oh, he is dead, he is dead,' and began to cry."

"Are you talking about me? You are the doctor, are you not, and I am in a hospital, am I not?" asked a low voice from the bed.

"Yes, madam, you are in the hospital," re-

plied the physician, with a start, "and you must keep very quiet indeed in order to get well."

"Yes, doctor; but I am not going to get well, and I want to tell you something about myself before I die, and I want you to send for my Julie, my daughter; she—God in heaven! I don't know where to find her." And the low tones died away in a wail that almost frightened the watchman in the hall into a fit, albeit he is accustomed to such things. Then they gave her a soothing draught, and she became easier and told the doctor her story, asking him the while to keep the appointment her daughter had made. She was a Southern woman, she said, and before the war her people were all powerful in their section. At its close her husband had gathered what little fortune he could and they went abroad. Business matters did not prosper, and after a while they came back to Philadelphia. Her husband went to gambling and from that to drinking. One day he was brought home dead. An accident had occurred on the river and he had been mortally wounded, dying before he reached home. Brain fever seized her and she was ill for many months she thought (the doctor and the nurse looked at each other significantly). While she was ill her little daughter disappeared. She was seventeen years of age, and that was two years ago. She hunted for the girl without success, though she was told that she had plunged headlong into a life of dissipation. The mother came to New York. Her money was gone, and she lived on the proceeds of what she could pawn. Then she heard that dissipated women frequented concert saloons of a certain character, and night after night she watched at the doors, being too poorly clad to be allowed admittance. She grew thinner and paler and weaker, but the hope of finding her "Julie" buoyed her up. She did not expect to be repulsed, she said, for her daughter, though a wayward child, had never been unkind to her, and she had faith now that there was some good reason for it. She did not believe that her child had gone all wrong. All that could be explained the next day when the doctors saw her.

Midnight! The woman with the miniature lay silent on her cot. A smile was on her countenance and the thin lips were parted slightly as if receiving the impress of the baby face in the picture. The cold and hunger were forgotten, the misery of her life was over. She was dead.

"Will you keep the appointment, doctor?" asked the nurse.

"How can I distinguish the girl from hundreds like her?" he answered.—*New York Herald.*

### Christmas Presents.

"Who would think it!" said Mrs. Breedy, taking up a piece of fancy work and sitting comfortably in her rocking chair. "It is only a few weeks to Christmas."

"Is that all?" asked Mr. Breedy, deep in an editorial on the recent action of the young republicans.

"Yes, only a few weeks," said Mrs. Breedy. "The time will fly away before we know it, and I have hardly thought of presents. I have so many to make, too. Now you are elected I suppose you won't grumble, as you usually do at this season of the year. There isn't any excuse for your saying that you can't afford to give me a few dollars for presents this year. It's high time I had a little money to commence with, too. Suppose you let me have a check for a hundred in the morning, and—"

"A check for what?" asked Mr. Breedy, looking up suddenly from his paper.

"Only a hundred to start with," said Mrs. Breedy, putting her thread a little nervously through her work.

"A hundred dollars to start with!" ejaculated Mr. Breedy. "Start what?"

"That's all the attention you ever pay to anything I say," said Mrs. Breedy. "I suppose you haven't heard a word I've been saying. Do put that everlasting newspaper down and pay a little attention to your wife for once in your life. I say you may give me a check for a hundred—a hundred and fifty dollars in the morning for Christmas."

"You just said a hundred," said Mr. Breedy. "I know you'd notice that," said Mrs. Breedy. "I know I said a hundred a moment ago, but I've changed my mind. The fact is, I should really have two hundred dollars."

"My dear, if you keep raising the limit at this rate I shall have to draw out of this game."

"I don't understand your horrid gambling terms, and I wish you would confine yourself to respectable language," said Mrs. Breedy, fumbling around in her work basket for a particular shade of silk. "Two hundred and fifty dollars wouldn't be any too much for—"

"I call," cried Mr. Breedy.

"There you go again," said Mrs. Breedy. "For heaven's sake drop on—stop that slang. You know you can well afford to give me a few hundred dollars for Christmas presents, and the man who has met with the luck you have this year in politics should not kick—object to giving his wife a little Christmas money. You wouldn't think anything of spending three or four hundred dollars on vile liquors and cigars for your—your constituents, as you call them, but when your wife asks you for half that sum—"

"Suppose we return to the original estimates and call it an even hundred?" said Mr. Breedy, pulling out his check book.

"Do you suppose I can get along with a miserable hundred dollars?" cried Mrs. Breedy. "Why your present alone will cost nearly that. Yes, I expected to give you a real handsome present this year, but if you are going to be stingy, of course you will have to take what I can afford to give you. Then think of the children, and of dear mother, and of grand-mamma, and my dear new-law, and say nothing of brother Jack and cousin Harry and your own mother—"

"You hold over me," said Mr. Breedy, and he threw down a blank check. "Fill her out to suit yourself."

"Do you really mean it?" asked Mrs. Breedy. "Yes."

"Well, you shall have just the sweetest, nicest present in the world," and Mrs. Breedy gave her husband a tremendous kiss square upon the lips and flitted out of the room with the check.

"The first time this year," gasped Mr. Breedy, as he slowly recovered from astonishment.

### Santa Claus.

Santa Claus was one of the oldest ideas of the Celtic west in Pagan times, as he was of the Pagan east before. In Christian times he was still regarded with religious reverence, sitting, as he had sat for ages in Egypt and elsewhere, in the arms of his mother. Santa Claus was, in fact, the child Jesus in the middle ages; and throughout that period the festive creed of Germany and all Celtic Europe was that he visited all family dwellings of good Christians on the eve of his anniversary, and brought with him gifts and blessings for the children. The beautiful tradition is still to be found lingering in Germany, though Santa Claus does not seem to be specially connected with it by name. The truth of this original belief is plainly enough indicated by the word "Claus," which, in the Gothic or ancient German, means "child" and "son." Santa Claus formerly meant the Holy Child.

"With gentle deeds and kindly thoughts  
And loving words, withal,  
Welcome the merry Christmas in,  
And hear a brother's call." P. LAWRENCE.

"The poor will many a care forget,  
The debtor think not of his debts,  
But as they each enjoy their cheer,  
Wish it were Christmas all the year."

THOMAS MILLER.

## ONE CHRISTMAS EVENING.

A Little Girl Tells Us How it Was at Her House Last Christmas.

Well, evening came at last, and we all had a happy time. Pa got a pair of slippers from Helen and a slipper case from Aunt Sophia, a box of cigars from William, a smoking-jacket from Ma, a smoking-cap and two kisses from sister Gwen, and a silver match-box from Johnny, who got Ma to buy it for him. Ma got a new coupe from Pa and a bracelet from the girls, and handkerchiefs from Aunt Sophia, and William gave her a pug dog, which had a fight with Romeo, Aunt Sophia's cat, the first thing, and came off second best, and Johnny gave her a fan Aunt Sophia bought for him. Then Helen got her presents, and William his, and Aunt Sophia hers, which made her so happy that she cried; and then Johnny got his lot of toys, Pa gave him \$5, gold—and broke three of them right off; and then Gwen got twice as many presents and kisses as any one, and we all went in to dinner.

On Gwen's plate there was a little package in white paper, and Gwen whisked it away quickly and tried to hide it; and Ma smiled and asked her what was in it, and Gwen blushed. Then Pa winked at William and remarked that he had seen Mr. Forsyth down town to-day, and Gwen blushed some more and Jane, the house-girl, giggled, and then Johnny said that Gwen's face looked like a house afire, and Ma said, "You, Johnny!" and Aunt Sophia said, "Never mind, Gwen," and Jane giggled again, and Gwen said that everybody was real mean, there now, and then she laughed and said she didn't care.

By and by, when dinner was over and Pa and William were sampling Pa's new cigars, and Gwen was tying a pink satin bow on the pug, and Aunt Sophia was trying to calm Romeo, and Helen was petting Ma's neuralgia, and Johnny was trying to see if his new music-box would wind up the wrong way, the bell rang, and Jane brought in Mr. Forsyth's card, and Gwen blushed and Ma said she wouldn't receive, but Helen could, and Pa winked again at William, and Johnny said he'd go in, too, and tackle Mr. Forsyth awhile, and Pa said he'd tackle him if he did, and then Jane giggled again, and Gwen told Helen to tell Mr. Forsyth she'd be down in a minute, and Ma whispered to Ma, and Ma nodded, and then Gwen went out very quietly, and Aunt Sophia rubbed Romeo's back down, and chirped his ears and beamed sweetly on everybody.

Then about nine o'clock Johnny jammed the cat's head into the milk jug while that pampered animal was stealing a drink, and the jug had to be broken to save the cat's life, and Johnny just escaped a trouncing because it was Christmas Eve. Then Helen came in from the parlor, pretending she had lost something and said she didn't think either Gwen or Mr. Forsyth would be lonely. Then Aunt Sophia poured out the lemonade and Jane packed Johnny off to bed. Meanwhile Romeo tackled the pug again and made his Christmas right lively. Then Helen and Ma went into the parlor to see Mr. Forsyth a minute, and Mr. Forsyth came into the library to see Pa, and he and Pa talked very gravely awhile, after William and Aunt Sophia had left the room. Then Pa and he drank each other's healths, and Mr. Forsyth blushed and said he was the happiest man living, and went back into the parlor and kissed Gwen right before Ma and Helen and Aunt Sophia, and put a big diamond on her finger, and then Ma and Helen slipped out again, and Aunt Sophia went up-stairs and cried because she was so happy, and Pa asked where was the little William, and Ma said she guessed he had just dropped out to call on Adele, and Pa said that if he was William he'd have married that girl a year ago.

### The Christmas Bells.

"The time draws near the birth of Christ:  
The moon is hid; the night is chill.  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill,  
Answer each other in the mist!"

TENNISON.

A Merry Christmas! A Merry Christmas! Hang up the stockings, for Santa Claus is coming with presents for the children; light the wax candles, and let them shine amid the branches of that glorious tree which bears such wondrous fruit; deck the village church with evergreens, and swell the glad, sweet chorus, while the joyful bells repeat the anthem of the angels of the hill of Galilee.

Dearest of all feasts; the world has grown old, and thou art ever young, although eighteen centuries have passed since the star shone o'er the manger, and strange barbarian kings brought gifts from the far-off East to the newborn King at Bethlehem!

And during those years, at the ringing of the Christmas bells, old enmities were forgotten, and foes clasped hands in friendship; the rich stooped to pour the golden treasures into the lap of Poverty; the sorrowful were comforted; the children were made glad; the world forgot its sin, and misery, and care, and the stars looked down from heaven upon a heaven-bright world below.

"Rich and poor feel love and blessing  
From that gracious season fall;  
Joy and plenty in the cottage,  
Peace and feasting in the hall;  
And the voices of the children  
Ring clear above it all."

And to-day they hold their Christmas cheer as merrily as in days gone by. In old, ancestral halls, the light-haired daughters of Norman barons twine flowers about the armor of dead, forgotten knights; the wine-bowl passes still from lip to lip among the tenants feasting with their lord, and lads and lassies lightly dance and kiss beneath the mistletoe and holly.

The Christmas of to-day is almost the Christmas of long ago, when, in the words of Scotland's bard:

"The fire with well-dried logs supplied  
Went roaring up the chimney wide;  
The huge hall-table's oaken face  
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,  
Bore then upon its massive board  
No mark to part the squire and lord;  
Then the grim bear's head frowned on high,  
Crested with boys and rosemary."

To one and all a merry, merry Christmas; and may the song which overflowed the Eastern hills so many years ago echo with wondrous sweetness in your hearts to-day!

FILLED IT.—A Chicago young man, in a rash moment, told his girl that if she would hang up her stocking on Christmas Eve he would fill it to the brim with something nice. He has since seen her stocking, and is undecided whether to get into it himself or buy her a sewing machine.

THE CHRISTMAS DRESSING GOWN.—"Are you going to present your husband with a Christmas dressing gown?" asks the *Detroit Free Press* of the ladies. Perhaps it is not pertinent, but there are a great many wives who will present their husbands with a Christmas dressing gown if they don't get what they want.

WEAT SUE FOUND.—It is not true that Santa Claus will not put anything into a stocking in which there is a hole. Last Christmas a society belle found a darned needle and a ball of yarn in hers.

COMMUNION.—That great lover of the Christmas season, Charles Dickens, wrote: "Christmas is the only holiday of the year that brings the whole human family into common communion."

A CHRISTMAS COMBINATION.—Of course, a person who receives no Christmas presents does not enjoy the presence of Christmas.

## CHRISTMAS STOCKINGS.

BY H. C. DODGE.

"The stockings were hung by the chimney  
with care,  
That's grandmamma's black one all wrinkled  
and spare,  
And Aunt Anna's blue one, from Boston, as  
lean

As if 'twere a pole for her favorite bean;  
That long one of cotton so white, is mamma's;  
That short, clumsy, darned one, of course,  
is papa's;

That one all embroidered of silk is Miss  
Kate's.  
How graceful and fragile it looks by its  
mates;

Its foot is so tiny, its ankle so neat,  
The print of its garter yet clings to it sweet;  
The little red, plump one is Willie's, we know,  
Because it has one little hole in its toe;  
That woolen one, shapeless and big as a bag,  
Is Ellen's, the cook; of its size she may  
brag;

And there are the baby's wee socks on a chair,  
So cozy and soft, Santa Claus may despair  
To all them with anything nearly so sweet  
As the dear little fellow's own pink, dimpled  
feet.

Oh! are not these stockings a poem divine  
In being, like poetry, "feet" on a "line?"

### THE OLD GREETING.

Ah, friend, the good old customs are waning  
fast away,  
Who wears a sprig of oak-bow now to honor  
Charlie's day?  
Neglected all the mad-cap rites of jolly Hallow-  
con,  
And scarce a loyal courtier left to greet the fair  
May Queen.

Well, let them wane, my brother, as wane they  
must and will,  
At least, there's the old festival that has its  
honor still;

At least, there's one old greeting whose music  
still is dear—  
"A merry, merry Christmas, and a happy,  
bright New-year."

### LOVE AND CHRISTMAS.

O maiden fair! the Christmas comes,  
And Christmas snow is flocking,  
Thou hast my heart, sweet one, or else  
I'd put it in thy stocking.

Close by the chimney it should hang,  
And warmer grow, and warmer,  
Till in the morn its captor came,  
The darling little sterner.

O maiden fair! the Christmas comes,  
And Christmas snow is flocking,  
Behold a lover at thy feet,  
If not at thy dear stocking!

—*Louisville Courier-Journal.*

### A Christmas Dream.

Christmas almost turns December into May in these latitudes. It illuminates the shortest days and the darkest month of the year. The Pilgrim Fathers tried to give November a life with Thanksgiving. But November got such a bad name in literature in England that little could be done with it. We threw in our Indian summer, but that makes only a faint impression in our apprehension over against the London fog. This fog has spread all over the English-speaking world, as all slavishly submit to it, and through the English literature and tradition, let it color our views of life. We are mainly unconscious of the subtle influence upon ourselves and upon national character of what we read, and we never know how our imagination and fancy in daily life are controlled by the poet and story-teller. November in many parts of this country is not a month to be ashamed of, and I am convinced that our feeling toward it would be very different if we were the lineal inheritors of Italian instead of English literature.

We have been more fortunate about December. The Yule-log and the merry-making in cottage and hall cast a glow over it, Germany deck it with evergreens, and so much stronger is our imagination than our senses, we can almost hear in it the rustle of Oriental palms. Perhaps the reality to the Scotch peasant when he goes to dig his sheep out of a snow-drift on Christmas Eve is that other scene:

While shepherds watch'd their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground.

Somewhat it has come about that this is the most cheerful time of the year, notwithstanding the sun has gone away on a journey, and left nature stark and laid out in white. Just at the time by the calendar when the sympathies ought to be all frozen up, is human nature in disregard of the bitter season, blown out in the sweetest flowering time of all the year. It is a bad season for the pessimists and the utilitarian philosophers who maintain that it is the first duty of every man and woman to take care of his or her own self. Christmas comes in, not only to make December a tolerable month, but to teach that he who does most for others does most for himself, and that a man's only sure possession is that which he gives away. The moth hunts around in vain for the free-hearted gift. Perhaps Christmas does more than any other one institution to keep that old-fashioned virtue, loving-kindness, alive in the world.—*Harper's "Drawer."*

### And She Rose Up.

It was coolly planned and deliberately executed in cold blood. They sat by the fire, and as he perused his paper she was busy with thoughts of Christmas. By and by he waked up and asked:

"Did any parcels for me come up to-day?"

"No, dear," she replied, as her face grew white as snow. "Have you been buying anything?"

"No, nothing much. I happened in at Blank's this afternoon, and as he was selling out his slippers at cost,

# CHRISTMAS GREETING.

HAGER & BROTHER Invite Attention to a very Large Collection of Goods in their Line, selected with Special Reference to the demands of the

## HOLIDAY TRADE.

WE OFFER THE LATEST NOVELTIES IN

SILK DRESS GOODS,  
BROCADE AND PLAIN VELVETS,  
SHAWLS, CLOAKS,  
HANDKERCHIEFS, GLOVES,  
FICHUS, LACES,  
GENTS' HANDKERCHIEFS,  
NECKWEAR AND GLOVES.

Embroidered Table and Piano Covers. Table Linens in Sets of Table Cloths, with Napkins to match. Doilies and Towels. Turcoman and Lace Curtains. Marsailles Quilts and Blankets.

CARPETS AND RUGS.

HAGER & BROTHER,

No. 25 WEST KING STREET,

LANCASTER, PA.

## MOTHERS,

Who have the cares of the house in their charge, should look at our cheap line of

## HOLIDAY GOODS!

Brown Sugar, 5½c  
Best Light Brown Sugar 6½c.  
White Sugar 7c.  
Granulated 9c.  
For Fine Raisins come and see ours at 3 pounds for 25c.  
Come and get some Syrup at 3 quarts for 25c.  
Best New Orleans Molasses at 20c. a qt.  
Honey at 20 cts. a lb.  
Clear Toys 22 cts. a lb.  
Mixed Candies 2 lbs. for 25c.  
3 lbs. best Crackers 25c.  
Patent Smoke, 12½c. a qt.  
Very best Saltpetre 12½c. a lb.  
Cinnamon 10½c. a ¼ lb.  
Cloves 10c. a ¼ lb.  
Cream of Tartar 10c. ¼ lb.  
Ginger 10c. a 1-4 lb.  
Strictly Pure Pepper, 22c. per lb.

ELEGANTLY ORNAMENTED

## CUPS AND SAUCERS

FOR 25 CENTS.

## SILK HANDKERCHIEFS

From 10 cents to \$1.25;

CALL AND SEE THEM.

All kinds of

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Can be had at lowest prices.

Highest prices paid for Hides and Produce.

F. P. BARD,

OREGON, PA.

## TO THE OLD AND YOUNG.

We wish to remind you that with the approach of the Holiday Season you should not forget that for the largest stock of

FINE AND PURE

## CONFECTIONERY

YOU SHOULD GO TO

## T. H. KELLER'S STORE,

The old reliable place in Lititz. He has now on hand an immense stock of all kinds of

FINE MIXTURES, FRUITS,

NUTS, &c.

THOMAS H. KELLER,  
Main Street, Lititz.

## GIFT-GIVERS!

You are looking about for appropriate gifts for your friends. Come and see my Superb Stock, after which I know you can decide on what to buy. I have

CLOCKS OF ALL STYLES,  
GOLD AND SILVER WATCHES  
SILVER-PLATED WARE,  
LADIES' BRACELETS,  
EARRINGS, BRESTPINS,  
CUFF AND COLLAR BUTTONS  
SHIRT STUDS,  
GOLD PENS &c. &c.,

Prices down to the lowest figures.

T. A. Milchsack,

LITITZ, PA.

We are are showing the choicest stock of

## Fancy Groceries,

FRUITS AND CONFECTIONERY  
ever offered to the public of Lititz and vicinity, selected with an especial view to their fine eating qualities. Prices especially low this year.

TSHUDY'S STORE,

LITITZ.

CHEER UP DYSPEPTICS!

A LUXURY AND A MEDICINE IN ONE.  
Tried and Not Found Wanting!

Not a Patent Medicine,

But the old reliable

LITITZ BRETZELS,

Which the stomach of dyspeptics and other invalids will retain when all other food fails.

Try them when in health or sickness. Fresh at all times, wholesale and retail, by

STURGIS & KISSINGER,  
Broad Street, Lititz.

N.B.—We have also constantly on hand fresh GINGER SNAPS at 16 cents a pound, and cheaper in large quantities.

## Stump's Store

Is the place to go for your

## GROCERIES

For the Holidays.

Sugars, Syrups,  
New Orleans Molasses,  
Valencia Raisins in quarter boxes,  
very fine Muscatel, Layer, Seedless  
and Valencia Raisins, Currants,  
figs, Dates, Prunellas,  
Dried Peaches, Evaporated Peaches,  
French and Turkey Prunes,  
CANNED GOODS, SUCH AS  
Corn, Peas, Beans, Tomatoes, French  
and Soused Mackerel, Lobster, Salmon, &c.,  
Cranberries,  
Almonds, Filberts, Cream Nuts,  
Brazil Nuts, Shellbarks,  
Florida and Valencia Oranges, &c.  
Also a nice line of Candies, Mixtures,  
&c. &c.  
Also a nice line of  
GLASS AND FANCY WARE, TOYS,  
SILK and LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS,  
Purses, Satchels, &c.

STUMP'S STORE,

COR. BROAD AND ORANGE STS., LITITZ.

## Christmas Presents

AT THE

## Lititz Drug Store.

Very Handsome  
Music Boxes  
that play six  
tunes from \$10  
to \$20. Come  
and hear them

Fine Toilet Sets  
for the Dressing  
Bureau,

The handsomest  
Comb and Brush  
Cases,

Children's Dia-  
tete Sets,

Ladies' Satchels,  
Ladies' Fancy  
Work Boxes,

Perfume Stands,  
Perfume Boxes,  
Perfumed Pow-  
der Boxes,

Fancy Soaps,  
Tooth Brushes,  
Flower Vases,

Silver Thimbles  
in gold cases,  
Gum Dolls, Rat-  
tles, Balls and  
Singing Birds,

Walking Canes,  
Fishing Rods,  
Hanging Lamps,

1 German Nickel  
plated Student  
Lamp for \$4.50  
the cheapest in

town.

California Wine,  
Brandy and old  
Bourbon Whis-  
key by the bot-  
tle.

REMEMBER THE PLACE.

Lititz Drug

STORE,

J. C. BROBST, Prop'r.

## LOOK HERE!

The Christmas holidays are fast approaching. You may be at a loss what to present your father, mother, sister, brother, or beau. As the variety in ever line of goods is large, yet in a few words, I would call your attention to some articles which I know would be very acceptable to either.

I can and will say there never has been a more beautiful line of silk handkerchiefs than I can show you, all colors and in prices ranging from 25 cents up, even some in the plain hem stitched Chinese silk, which will make a most beautiful present. It may be you have already made up your mind to give him a pair of gloves, a fine white shirt, a tie, a pair of suspenders, an umbrella, a knit jacket, an overcoat or a suit of clothes. These are articles which we know from experience will be preferable, besides many other articles which we have in stock. All we ask is come and see. My motto shall be, "courteous to all and prices low."

WALTER H. BUCH.

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\$1 a year in advance.

Address,

J. F. BUCH,  
Lititz, Pa.

YOU ALL WANT

LUXURIES and SUBSTANTIALS

For the Holidays.

In looking around do not forget that the

## RAILROAD RESTAURANT

Is the place to get them.

We have just the things to complete your holiday bill of fare, including

LARGE PRIME AND OTHER OYSTERS,

APPLES,

POTATOES,

FRESH CRACKERS,

MUSTARD,

APPLE BUTTER,

PREPARED HORSE RADDISH.

VINEGAR, &c. &c.

During the holiday season we shall have a full supply of all kinds of goods in our line, and would invite you to call and see.

Oysters delivered to any part of town free of charge.

L. R. HACKER,

Proprietor.

## Bomberger & Co.

## Hardware Dealers,

LITITZ,

Have a Choice Assortment of Goods, among it many articles suitable for gifts.

LARGE LOT OF

POCKET KNIVES,

SCISSORS,

SKATES,

SLEDs,

SLEIGH BELLS, &c.

All kinds of Stoves, Heaters,  
Ranges, Tin and Woodware.  
Come and see what we have.