



CHRISTMAS MORNING.

Last Christmas Morning golden  
Of these one of the least  
Was glad in the light of heaven  
As it came from over the East.

MR. THOMPSON'S CHRISTMAS PARTY.

Mr. Thompson sat in his easy-chair before his open fire and watched the glowing embers, and mused.

It was the night before Christmas, and Mr. Thompson had been busy all day down-town buying presents for his friends; for notwithstanding his peculiarities, he is a good-hearted old fellow, and besides his many young friends, this year he was obliged to buy a present for Miss Angelina.

He had changed his boarding place, when he returned from the country, so as to be near her, and had moved all his goods and chattels from his bachelor's apartments to the big front room under hers. He now had the satisfaction of hearing her footsteps just above. Every time she crossed the room to her writing-desk and then went back to the window, Mr. Thompson knew that she had taken the paper, pen, and ink from the desk, got a book from her shelves, and had gone over to the window, after the manner of womankind, to write on her lap.

It always puzzled Mr. Thompson why, with a prettily furnished desk in the room, a woman will always prefer to write on her lap. He gazed fondly at a handsome lap tablet which he had purchased for her, and murmured softly, "I would I were a Christmas present!"

A pretty-looking Christmas present you'd be, chirped a stuffed sparrow, which sat on an impossible-looking bough just over Mr. Thompson's mantel.

Now Mr. Thompson had become quite used to having live animals talk to him, but to be addressed by a stuffed bird was a new sensation—so new, in fact, that he could not refrain from remarking, politely, "I spoke to a cousin of yours last summer, but it is hardly the thing for a stuffed bird to speak;" and he added to himself, with a shudder at the recollection of the usual result of these conversations, "I'll be turning into a stuffed bird myself before I know it."

"You are stuffed enough already," said the sparrow, pertly, "after all the dinner you ate."

Mr. Thompson sighed as he remembered the mince-pie and coffee, but said nothing.

"Humph! I should think so," said a new voice, which seemed to proceed from a case of birds which ornamented one side of the room. He turned, and the case all was activity. The great quack, or the bird with the lantern, who was evidently the speaker, was snapping his bill viciously; the crow was pulling at the imitation grass, which he mistook for corn; the gray owl was winking on his perch, and the little prairie owl was skurrying around, vainly looking for a prairie-dog's burrow. Without thinking, Mr. Thompson arose and threw open the glass doors. Such a flutter ensued!

"So you want to be a Christmas present!" said the sparrow, jeeringly, as he left his perch and sat familiarly on the arm of Mr. Thompson's chair.

"Yes, or a stuffed bird," replied Mr. Thompson, desperately. "You must have a pretty good time of it; no one to bother you, no fear of hawks, or men with guns, or anything of that sort."

"Of course, of course," answered the crow, sarcastically. "But just look at my wing, half-eaten up by moths, and my feathers covered with dust!"

"Yes," chirped the cat-bird; "and to be obliged to sit day after day tip-tilted on a bit of twig in a position I could not hold a moment except for the wires."

"Or to stand on one leg from one year's end to the other, and have everybody take you for a stork," grumbled the crane.

"But the very worst is to have you tell a different story about each of us every time you have a new visitor," said the owl, glaring at Thompson reprovingly. "Your mendacity is something alarming."

"Where did you get the dictionary?" shouted all the birds in chorus, turning upon the owl.

Mr. Thompson was beginning to feel decidedly uncomfortable, and was glad of any change in the conversation. He was also becoming angry, and he blurted out, "I'll give the whole lot of you away."

"To who? to who?" asked the owl.

"To Miss Angelina," answered Mr. Thompson, defiantly, turning to his desk, and rapidly penning a note to her to that effect.

"Oh! oh!" said the owl. "He wanted to be a Christmas present; now he is his chance. Come along!" And before he knew what the matter was, he found himself in the glass case. All the rest of the birds had returned, and were regarding him with malicious eyes. He had time to notice that he was standing on one leg just opposite to the crane, and he realized that his long nose had grown longer, his neck thinner, and that, in fact, he was a stork, such as one sees on the fancy painted panels. Suddenly the glass doors shut with a click, and he was imprisoned.

How long he staid this way he does not know. After a time he heard a knock on the door of his room, and presently the chamber-maid entered.

round the room. "Well, I s'pose he's gone off to the country agin'. He's a square one intirely. Phwat's this?" she added, seeing the note on his desk. "A letter to Miss Angelina. Mebbe that'll tell where he's gone." And, to Mr. Thompson's vexation, she deliberately opened and read it. "No," she continued, as she held it musingly in her hand. "He only says he'll give her the old case of stuffed birds; and that's a funny present. Well, I'll be after taking her the present." And she left the room, returning shortly with the waitress. The two lifted the case carefully enough, and, after some consultation, bore it between them to Miss Angelina's room.

"Here's a Christmas Mr. Thompson bid me bring to ye, mum, and here's a bit more that goes with it," said the girl.

"Oh, how lovely!" murmured Miss Angelina, who was talking to two lady boarders when the case was brought in. "Where is Mr. Thompson?"

"Faith, I'm thinking he's gone to the country; he's not in his room, mum," replied the girl, going out.

"Isn't it nice!" exclaimed Miss Angelina to her friends, examining the case of birds.

The two ladies exchanged glances. "The case seems to be very cheap black-walnut," said one.

"And you'll find it an awful bother to keep those things clean," added the second.

"And they don't seem to be very well stuffed," said the first.

"And that stork is positively hideous," said the second, pointing to Mr. Thompson. His blood, or perhaps we should say his stuffing, fairly seemed to boil. But Miss Angelina set it all right by saying, brightly, "I think them very nice, and the stork is perfectly lovely."

The two ladies exchanged glances again, and left the room.

All through that long Christmas-day the boarders came into Miss Angelina's room to display their presents and talk them over, making quite a Christmas party, as Miss Angelina said. Many were the criticisms upon the case of birds, and much sly fun was poked at the stork.

Mr. Thompson noticed, however, that it was only the grown-up folks who found fault. The children were all pleased, and they seemed to like the poor stork. One bright little girl was the only one who seemed disappointed, and she gazed longingly at a beautiful doll held tightly by one of her companions; and then coming over to the case of birds, which Miss Angelina had opened, she stroked the head of the stork softly, and as she pressed her cheek against his soft feathers, she murmured, "I wish I had a doll like that."

Mr. Thompson's heart—for despite the stuffing he still felt his heart—jumped in his breast, for he remembered that he had just such a doll, which he had bought for her, snugly packed away in his closet down-stairs. He felt that he could stand it no longer. He must get away from this hateful case. He made a desperate effort, and found himself sitting in his easy-chair in front of his fire, which had long since gone out. A childish voice rung in his ear and a chubby hand was on his arm.

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Thompson." He turned, and there was the little girl at his side.

"You shall have your doll," he exclaimed, rising and going toward his closet. She looked at him in bewilderment, which was soon changed to joy in the possession of "Just the loveliest doll in the world," as she called it, hugging it tightly to her bosom. Mr. Thompson did not give the case of birds to Miss Angelina, but, as the young man who told me the story remarked:

"He told her the story, and she compromised by taking the stork, which she still thinks 'perfectly lovely.' So sometimes good results may come of eating mince-pie," the young man adds, with a mysterious smile.

Mr. Thompson, contrary to his usual custom in such cases, admits that he may have dreamed, but he too claims that it is sometimes a good thing to be stuffed before you go to a Christmas party.

THE LORD OF MISRULE.

CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES IN QUEEN ELIZABETH'S GIRLHOOD.

It was Christmas Eve. The great hall of Hatfield House gleamed with the light of many candles that flashed upon scabbard and armor and polished floor. Holly and mistletoe, rosemary and bay, and all the decorations of an old-time English Christmas were tastefully arranged. A burst of laughter rang through the hall, as through the ample doorway, and down the broad stair, trooped the motley train of the Lord of Misrule to open the Christmas revels. A fierce and ferocious looking fellow was he, with his great green mustache and his orange-like face. His dress was a gorgeous parti-colored jerkin and half hose, trunks, ruff, slouch-boots of Cordova leather, and high befeathered steeple hat. His long staff, topped with a fool's head, cap and bells, rang loudly on the floor, as, preceded by his diminutive but pompous page, he led his train around and around the great hall, lustily singing the chorus:

"Like Prince and King he leads the ring;  
Right merrily we go. Sing hey-trix, trim-go-trix,  
Under the mistletoe!"

A manager after-dinner dreams could not be more bewildering than was this motley train of the Lord of Misrule. Giants and dwarfs, dragons and griffins, hobby-horses and goblins, Robin Hood and the Grand Turk, bears and bores and fantastic animals that never had a name, boys and girls, men and women, in every imaginable costume and device—around and around the hall they went, still ringing out the chorus:

"Sing hey-trix, trim-go-trix,  
Under the mistletoe!"

Then, standing in the center of his court, the Lord of Misrule bade his herald declare that from Christmas Eve to Twelfth Night he was Lord Supreme, that, with his magic art, he transformed all there into children, and charged them on their fealty, to act only as such. "I absolve them all from wisdom," he said; "I bid them be just wise enough to make fools of themselves, and do decree that none shall sit apart in pride and eke it self-sufficiency to laugh at others; and then the fun commenced.

CHRISTMAS-GIVING.

Hapless is the lot of man who, in this Christmas time, has no gift to give or no gift to receive. Melancholy must claim him for her own and life to him must be a condition of utter and unrelieved cheerlessness. Now, when Christmas fires are kindled on countless hearths, when all mankind is given over to merry-making and well-wishing, when Kris Kringle usurps all other rule, he who has no home is indeed a woful wight; and he who has a home and yet provides no Christmas tree is a wretch for whose neglect there is no extenuation.

It sometimes goes hard with those who cling to the notion that Christmas Day should be an occasion of quiet, devout, contemplative religious ceremonies, that the popular observance is marked by feasting, hilarity, good humor, and the giving of gifts. Such persons are not your true philosophers. Christ himself declared that his followers would be known by the fruits of their devotion. And generosity is most assuredly a Christian grace. Because there may appear a very long stretch of sequences between the Adoration of the Magi and Mr. Pickwick's frolic under the mistletoe, they are sequences, nevertheless; for, while the solemn ceremony of the one was a recognition by indirection—in the one case there was kneeling in the presence of the Christ-child; in the other, a manifestation of that temper of kindness which is the sweetest illustration of the Christian spirit.

The interchange of tokens of affectionate regard on Christmas Day is quite in accord with the injunction to love our neighbors as ourselves. The fundamental principle of the Christian religion is exemplified in the gift. All the forms of the day's celebrations are protestations against selfishness. Christ constantly insisted upon self-denial, self-restraint and self-subordination. One's



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duty to others is variously enjoined in the scriptures. Therefore the Christmas gift comprises the essence of the religion He taught—a religion which, instilling charity into the hearts of men, was to make all men happier through the efforts of each individual to make his fellow happier. The modern method of commemorating the Advent is entirely fitting, even though we give ourselves over to the Good Genius of the Christmas-tree, with only incidental regard to the bells that "knoll to church." The most important observance is that beneath the branches of the gift-bearing evergreen, where all hearts grow young in the atmosphere of good-cheer and loving-kindness. It is there that each one sees the happy results of his own beneficence and finds his full reward in the consciousness of the pervading gladness. Such is the blessedness of practical Christianity; such the beautiful outcome of a religion intended to solace, to ameliorate and compensate—a religion of a Master who finds His most grateful worship in the kindly acts of His children—"one to another."

Here, in America, the sprites and elves and geni of ancient lore have not thrived in the popular fancy. Even such superstitions as the Puritans brought over were forgotten or ignored by their children. The occupation of the New World kept their minds too busy with the duties at hand to allow them to ponder upon the supernatural. The American with each succeeding generation grew more practical-minded, and the Christmas fairies slipped into oblivion along with the faith in the divine right of Kings. Kris Kringle survived because he was a convenient appropriation and because, perhaps, he was such an extravagant old fellow whose largess was quite in harmony with the somewhat prodigal American disposition. But he alone has survived. He alone has any sort of actuality to the American child. Cinderella and Queen Titania and all the rest of them are read of and enjoyed, but without much faith in their existence. They are contemplated rather as charming creatures of admitted unreality. But St. Nicholas is still expected and eyes are shut to his mythical nature, despite base burners and registers and furnaces. Force a child to a confession of belief or unbelief in his reality, the decision would probably be in the negative; but the delusion is fondly cherished, notwithstanding. He is, as remarked, such a delightful convenience. He invests the Christmas tree with just enough mystery to give existences to

the pleasure of its unveiling—and long may he live to defy the image-breaking spirit of the age! He is the embodiment of good cheer; the genial instrument of impartial benevolence. He does not object if all his gifts bear the signet of father or mother, uncle or aunt, neighbor or friend. He is quite above such incongruities. The sentiment of mutual good will remains. Such is his mission; such was the mission of the angels who sang to the Shepherds of Judea.

THE CRADLE OF BETHLEHEM.

A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT.

There is something peculiarly significant and touching in the picture which the Christmas tide makes prominent—that of our faith beginning in the cradle of a helpless child. The manger of Bethlehem is the symbol of a universal faith. Before that symbol we feel that Christianity should never become a vigorous theology, dividing men into hostile camps; never be surrounded by pomp and the conditions of selfish, worldly power. Because it came to the world even as the purest blessing and the deepest joy come to the household—as a new-born babe! Is not the common Christmas picture significant? What is it gives to the word "Home" its solemn and lovely meaning? What draws to a common center all the discordant elements of the household and changes them to harmony? What gives dignity to love, deeper meaning to labor, and brings all hearts into a generous rivalry of sweet and disinterested love? The presence of the first-born in the home. Then married affection reveals the divineness of its life. Then wife and husband begin to know the beauty and mystery of self-sacrifice. The love that comes with the tiny nestling is the first faint shadow and suggestion of the kind of love which God has for His human children. Believing the

fancies, the fresh joys, the unquestioned love of children. And so common as this is our heritage of that faith of which the manger-cradle should be the universal symbol. Its simple truths, its boundless hope, its deep consolations, all fit it to become the commonwealth of the human heart. Its litany is the world's common wail of sorrow. Its prophetic hope is the spiritual restoration of all the ends of the earth; its ceaseless purpose, to change this world into the Kingdom of God.



MERRY CHRISTMAS.

NEW YEAR BELLS.

Now from every tower and steeple  
Clang the bells with a glad sound,  
Showering down on the hearts of the people  
The tidings glad of a year new found.  
Ring away sorrow and pain and care,  
Demons that brood o'er the lives of men.  
Let not the sound of a world's despair  
Fill our hearts with a deeper pain.  
Welcome and greetings O! new born year,  
With thy fair white page on which to write  
The manifold changes that greet us here,  
Which our hearts in sorrow or joy invite.  
Write them down with a golden pen,  
Blessings many and joys a few.  
Seek thy thoughts from the hearts of men  
Who have dared to do right and lived to be true.  
Set thy hand to redress each wrong,  
And never falter in doing right.  
If to help a fallen comrade along,  
Or to do each duty with all thy might,  
Duties will come with every day,  
Scorn them not if they seem but small.  
From God no action is hid away,  
And He a recompense finds for all.  
So write thy deeds with a golden pen,  
Write them down for the book of life  
Write them down in the heart of men,  
And be a hero in every strife.

Christmas.

It was Julius I. who in the fourth century, after a long contest between the Eastern and Western Churches, fixed upon December 25th as the day for celebrating the nativity of our Redeemer. Down through the centuries that passed since that event no Christmas day has come, in which joyous happiness has not entered the door of every family in Christendom, so far as the will of its members would permit. As the day approaches in which Santa Claus is to make his annual visit down the chimney to fill the stockings of little children from the bounteous treasures he is credited with carrying from home to home, how the hearts of the innocent little ones throb with pleasure!

As the years of their lives advance and they learn that Santa Claus is after all a synonym for their parents and other of their dearest friends, the fading away of the illusion of childhood takes nothing from their continued interest in the coming of Christmas.

Old and young alike on that day properly strive to banish care, and be happy during the festival that celebrates the birth of the Saviour of the world. It is on that day especially that the injunction "Love thy neighbor as thyself" ought to be remembered, and in loving deeds be put into full practical operation by every man, woman and child in Christendom. On that day the Child was born at Bethlehem who preached a gospel that has brought comfort and solace to the hearts of countless millions. Our comfort, solace, joy, happiness are all increased in proportion to our readiness to obey the injunction of our Master. Christmas Day of 1885 will present peculiar opportunities for the practical application of the Redeemer. Let every man who is not the, to a disastrous extent, victim of the business crisis that is abroad in our land, remember his neighbor on that day to the extent of causing him to know that Christian benevolence is a reality and not verbal phantom. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Christmas Past.

The Christmas season recalls those who shall hear its cheerful greetings no more.

"With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth."

It restores, not mournfully, the figures of those of its own spirit, lay preachers in their lives and works of its lofty fervor of faith, of its humane and happy gospel. With all its social delight they are associated, and at the Christmas feast, if at no other, the old tale told of the spiritual Swedenborgians is made true, and a plate is set for the invisible guest. So also Thackeray sings in his Christmas hymn to the Mahogany Tree:

"Evenings we knew  
Happy as this;  
Fires we miss,  
Pleasant to see,  
Kind hearts and true,  
Gentle and just,  
Peace to your dust!  
We sing round the tree."

THE EVER-LIVING.

Though, since that morning centuries ago,  
That dawned upon the advent of the King,  
Have countless millions lived and loved to sing  
His praises; yet, all human joy and woe  
Is ever-blessed; for Christ is born again  
Anew each year within the hearts of men.

Set the Joy-Bells Ringing.

He will miss the chief delight of the Christmas season who fails, by word or deed, to brighten some dark and cheerless life. Even the poorest may, by a kindly word of hope or encouragement, set the joy-bells ringing in some heart lying in the eclipse of despair. And those who have been blessed with a profusion of bonnies—whose lives are always bathed in sunshine—how much can they do, in these Christmas times, if they will, to make the world a Paradise for the poor and unfortunate! Surely, it is better at such a time to lure to our firesides the angels of peace and content, than by cold indifference to the wants of our fellows to marshal the ghosts of squandered opportunities all along our paths.

HERE AND THERE.

Albany's bicentennial anniversary comes next July.

There has been sleighing in Prince Albert since November 1.

Middletown, Pa., has a dog that rides horseback behind his master.

Pennsylvania coal, anthracite, is sold in the City of Mexico at \$25 a ton.

Friccasead lily petals are mentioned as a dainty that tickles the Chinaman's palate.

Steinitz and Zukertort are about to play a game of chess for a stake of \$4,000.

Arrangements are making to establish in California a colony of 250 families from Alsace.

The Sacramento Bee says the Chinese take \$15,000,000 a year out of California and send it home.

A recent storm on the Pacific coast washed up many sea-shells, some of them of very rare varieties.

At Altoona, Fla., you can dine on young potatoes and green peas that have grown since September 23.

New barracks for the mounted police, a court house, and jail will be built at Battleford in the spring.

A Mormon who was accidentally killed in Utah the other day left sixteen children to mourn his loss.

Charlotte Wickliffe (colored) died Tuesday at Louisville, aged 117 years. She leaves a daughter who is nearly 100 years old.

In Maryland and Pennsylvania eight out of every twelve families have a big stock of trade dollars laid away, waiting for par redemption.

A North Carolinian man sent an application for a postoffice to "His Majesty Grover Cleveland, president-elect," but hasn't seen the office yet.

An opera-house to be erected at Long Beach will be opened before the next fashionable season. It will seat 1,500 people; and will cost \$20,000.

A single ticket from Boston to Denver and return was recently sold in Boston for \$2.48. It carries a party of nine in a special car with stop-over privileges.

Teamsters who hauled water for the Dominion soldiers when in camp at Battleford last summer have not been paid a cent for their work from the government.

The guitar has taken the place of the banjo in New York society, and it is said to be a pretty parlor ornament and to match well with the Spanish jackets now fashionable.

The New York Ontological society has officially promulgated the opinion that the excessive use of common salt is one of the main factors in the destruction of human teeth.

The petrified skeleton of a whale over thirty feet long has been discovered by an officer of the coast survey on a range of mountains in Monterey county, California, over 3,300 feet above sea level.

There appears to be an agreement among recent medical writers that water is fattening, or at least favors a fullness and roundness of the body. It should be drunk at its natural temperature and in considerable quantity. A new hypnotic—urethan—has made its appearance. Its discoverer believes that "it agrees with the patient," and "produces a sleep closely resembling physiological sleep." But they say these things of all hypnotics while they are new.

It is reported that "Blue Dick," a Chinaman of sporting proclivities, has won in the neighborhood of a thousand dollars during the past three weeks in a battle against the "tiger" in Phoenix, Arizona. His original stake, it is claimed, consisted of about 25 cents.

An editor in Kinslor, N. C., who doesn't object to good produce in lieu of cash subscriptions, gives emphatic and pointed notice that he will draw the line at "3 or 10 year-old roosters" which some subscribers have been in the habit of passing on him for chickens.

The comptroller of Tennessee estimates the receipts for the year at \$1,300,000, being sufficient to pay the interest on the state debt and current expenses, consequently the state will not have to borrow money to pay interest on the bonds as they are funded.

In formally putting out his shingle in Boston, a genuine Chinese physician believes he has adopted the descriptive phrase in vogue among the most enlightened portion of his contemporaries. His sign reads: "Dr. Lee Sing Sung. Can cure diseases where all others fail."

In the present discussion upon the claims of different cities to literary pre-eminence, it is refreshing to hear this frank admission from a Philadelphian: "Philadelphia has never put in a claim to be a literary center, and probably never will. Our lack of enthusiasm may be due to German pliancy or Quaker calm, but the result is the same."

The Canadian authorities are paying considerable attention to the work of strengthening Halifax as a military post, and the torpedo service will be enlarged by the addition of four first class torpedo boats of 1,000 horse power each. The military force will be strengthened by the addition of another regiment, the First Battalion of Berkshire, which did such valuable service during the late campaign in Egypt.

Hard drinkers will be pleased to know that their practice is considered by scientific writers to be, on the whole, a benefit to the community. In a recent paper on "The Economy of Vice and Crime," Dr. Brigham said: "The alcoholic road to self-extinction is one of the most speedy ways of destroying the weak and inferior, and although some who select this road are brilliant specimens of mental power, yet as a whole, they are weak and unworthy of preservation." Intemperance, though doing much harm, also does great good. The certainty and celerity with which intemperance destroys the weak and wicked classes of society favorably recommends it over the ordinary methods of to-day in the administering of justice."