

# ∴ KEEPING CHRISTMAS IN THE HEART ∴

"A gran' rasslin' match is goin' on in ivry corner iv th' civylyzed globe," says Mr. Dooley in the American Magazine, "an' we're all in a tangle, fightin', quarrelin', robbin', plundhrin', or murdhrin', accordin' to our tastes. It's what Hogan calls th' struggle fr' existence, an' it'll always go on while there's a dollar in the wurruld, a woman, or a ribbon to wear in our coats. But on the three hundred and sixty-fifth day suddenly we hear a voice: 'Gintlemen, gintlemen, not before th' childher.' An' we get up an' brush th' dust off our clothes an' shake hands pretindin' it was all fun. Th' kids have come in."

Wouldn't things be changed if after the truce observed December 25, 1906, the men and women of the world failed to renew the fighting and the quarreling? Wouldn't life be more than worth the living if after keeping Christmas in the form, by filling the children's stockings on Christmas eve and exchanging gifts and salutations with friends on Christmas day, we kept Christmas in the heart for the balance of the year?

One writer gave us a hint when he said that the kindness and good cheer generally prevalent during the Christmas season represents the normal condition of society when it shall reach that perfection possible among human beings. And there are those who believe that in spite of wars and rumors of wars between nations, in the face of oppression and greed among individuals, we are moving to that very condition where—keeping Christmas in the heart—men and women will obtain during all the year the inspiration and exaltation they derive during the few hours of the designated season when they keep Christmas in the form. And those who indulge in this bit of optimism tell us that love is leading the way.

Well, Love knows the way; and the men and women who follow her call will find it.

And how are we to put in the entire year "keeping Christmas in the heart?" Certainly not by hanging up the stockings every evening of the year; nor by continual exchange of gifts; nor by making perpetual the strain and labors of the Christmas season as we now observe it. But rather by toning down some of the madness—or, if you prefer to call it, the enthusiasm—of that season, so that in our efforts to make a showing for ourselves and our immediate friends we put no undue strain upon the pocketbook of our breadwinner, and impose no undue burdens upon the poorly-paid shop girl. She—though we sometimes forget it—is the child of some other parents who are just as anxious that their child be comfortable and free from vexatious burdens as we are that our child be surfeited with Christmas gifts.

It is by the use of a little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump; by a little spreading out of the great pile of friendly salutation, of generosity, of good cheer and of kindly disposition that now characterize the Christmas season; so that without detracting from the joy of that period, we contribute to the continuing happiness of men and to the permanent well-being of the world. "But only Love may lead love in, to Arcady, to Arcady."

One would be thought simple, indeed, were he to ask in this day: "What is love?" There are, ready at hand, so many answers to the question and most of them are plainly illustrated in every day life.

The mother bending o'er her first born tells us that is love—and the love light that lies within

that mother's eyes tell us that, at least, is truth.

The father, ready to sacrifice his all for the future of his boy, tells us that is love; and we know that he speaks as one who feels and, feeling, knows.

The maiden knows that love is described in that picture where:

"A warrior so bold, and a virgin so bright  
Conversed as they sat on the green.  
They gazed on each other with tenderest delight,  
Alonzo the Brave was the name of the knight—  
The maiden's the Fair Imogene."

The manly lad with the first touch of down on his lip knows what love is when, turning to the sweetheart of his youth, he says:

"If you become a nun, dear,  
The bishop Love will be;  
The cupids every one, dear!  
Will chant—"We trust in thee!"

One poet tells us "Love is madness, love is sadness;" another that it is "The sweetest joy, the wildest woe." One grown crusty in bachelorhood calls it "a delusion and a snare;" and a hopeless one declares "Love is the tyrant of the heart; it darkens reason, confounds discretion; deaf to counsel it runs a headlong course to desperate madness."

But the biliousness of the poets and the cynicism of the despondent can not affect the views of the man who has walked by love's side; walked by love's side when he gathered the myrtle with Mary; walked by love's side when he led to the altar the girl of his choice; walked by love's side at the cradle of the first born to that holy union; walked by love's side—and held within his own trembling grasp love's firm hand—by the little grave in which was centered that common interest which binds two hearts closer than any marriage vow yet spoken by a priest.

We know that when the maid and the lad, the mother and the father, and the friend have spoken they have told us of love—and that that is love, indeed! But all these are but representative of the real thing—the out-cropping in particular individuals of that which was to affect all individuals; the triumph in particular quarters of that which was to dominate in all quarters; the hint—strong and beautiful, but a mere hint nevertheless—of that great "truth of truths" which Disraeli described as "The principle of existence and its only end."

Keeping Christmas in the heart as a rule of life rather than as a mere holiday pastime it will not be necessary "when the children come in" for us to "brush th' dust off our clothes an' shake hands pretindin' it was all fun." Then "the children's season" will last the year 'round; then the air will be full of music; the world will be full of flowers; life will be full of hope—because the hearts of men are full of love.

The world is not growing worse as some of the disconsolate would have us believe. It is growing better and there flows, at this moment, from the hearts of men more of the milk of human kindness than at any other time in the history of the world. What if meanness and oppression are revealed? The very revelation shows the power of public opinion; and shows, also, that the trend of men's thought is upward. What if doctrinaires complain that men are becoming indifferent to the details of creeds? That is be-

cause they are more determined than ever in their efforts to get closer to God.

Dr. P. L. Hall, one of the best known of Nebraska bankers, responding to the question: "Is the world getting worse?" replied, "No," and added: "There never was a generation in this country in which the moral hazard as a basis for credit entered so largely as in this."

Practical men are turning to the better things of life. They know that love and the things it stands for are alone worth cultivating; they know that to cherish malice, to lay traps for one's neighbor, to encourage vanity and indulge in bombast is a veritable waste of time. They feel with the poet of old who wrote:

"The warrior for the True, the Right,  
Fights in Love's name;  
The love that lures thee from that fight  
Lures thee to shame;

"That love which lifts the heart, yet leaves  
The spirit free—  
That love, or none, is fit for one  
Man-shaped like thee."

"Keeping Christmas in the heart" will yet become the habit of men; and he who adopts that habit will find

"My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to Thee  
The more I have, for both are infinite."

In art and literature the little child is made the representative of innocence for obvious reasons. The Danish queen who wrote, "Oh keep me innocent, make others great" voiced what is today the wish of many thoughtful parents with respect to the future of their children, as it well might be the wish of thoughtful men with respect to the future of their race. Men of the past who were controlled by vanity where they were not moved by greed, struggled under the embarrassments and handicaps of those who would be "great;" let the men of the future be touched with the satisfying qualities of innocence and find that contentment awaiting those who are willing to seek it along the simple lines where Love will lead the way.

For my own children I breathe this Christmas prayer:

Give them knowledge; but hold them true.  
Ripen their intellect; but keep their hearts young.

Lead them to the heights where by learning much from their teachers men may give much to their fellows; but let them retain to the end a practical trust in the tenderness of men and a simple faith in the goodness and the allness of God.

Let them be kind to every creature—to every man grown weary, to every woman grown faint, to every child made homeless, to every bird in the air and to every beast in the field—finding in all things something to command their concern, and in all beings something to stir their affections.

Keep Christmas within their hearts, work-day and play-day alike, making each one feel, during all the journey through life, that:

"Whatever mine ears can hear,  
Whatever mine eyes can see,  
In nature so bright with beauty and light,  
Has a message of love for me."

RICHARD L. METCALFE.

## CARE FOR THE AGED

One of the growing problems of this country is that of caring for the aged and indigent poor who, while not to be classed as paupers, are not wholly able to provide for themselves. There are a great many of these who have some means that would, if properly handled, maintain them, but which would be entirely inadequate for their needs if they were left to their own judgment as to investment. It would be unwise to let these aged ones undertake to invest their little funds, for there are too many so lacking in conscience that they would defraud their helpless victims. Clearly, then, it is the duty of the state to take a hand in the matter and provide for these aged and practically helpless ones. Privately conducted homes for this class have not been markedly successful, the element of personal profit being too prominent.

Under state supervision these homes could be conducted without the element of profit entering therein, and the guests of these homes could,

by contributing from their slender means, be relieved from the feeling of dependence that is so repugnant to those who have been able to provide for themselves until misfortune beyond their power to prevent overtook them when they had arrived at an advanced age. This is a matter which demands immediate attention in all parts of the country.

There is a growing need for that kind of charity that is in reality love—for that is what charity means.

## THE ULTERIOR MOTIVE

The newspapers are devoting much space these days to giving accounts of wage increases on the great railway systems of the country, and many of these newspapers seem to believe that the increase is due to the extreme generosity of the railway managers. Others look a little deeper and make note of the fact that the railway brotherhoods have exerted their power of or-

ganization to secure the increase. But while it is doubtless true that the railway brotherhoods have had much to do with the increased wage, it is equally true that there was another reason which had great weight with the management of the railroads.

Realizing that the general public has been aroused to the fact that they have been paying exorbitant freight rates in order that inflated dividends might be paid on watered stocks, the railway managers have conceived the idea that they can blind the public by granting an increase in wages. "We have just increased wages ten per cent, therefore it is not possible just now to decrease the freight rates," will be the excuse offered by the railway managers for a continuance of the exorbitant rates. Of course the managers would rather grant a ten per cent increase in rates than to reduce dividends to a fair percentage on the actual investment. And if the people will only talk enough about the generosity that grants a ten per cent increase in wages they may forget to demand a reduction of freight rates to a reasonable basis.