THE CHRISTMAS TREE

(According to Tommy.)

The trees in our orchard and down by the In summer time give us our cider and The apples and peaches, the quinces and pears. The plums I can pick from my window up-

All grow in the summer; and oh! it's a To have all the nice juicy fruit you can But none of the summer stuff satisfies me

Like that which we pick from the Christmas tree! The fruit of the summer is good in its

stone-bruisy feet and with tan on your face It's fine to climb up where the robbins have found A nice yellow apple all mellow and round. And take it away from the robber so bold While he and his mate fly around you and It's fun at the time, but it never could be As nice as the fun of the Christmas tree. One time I remember my bad cousin Jim Dared Charley and me to climb out on a

No bigger than one of my thumbs; and *Cause Jimmy was calling me "Sissy-boy The limb-well, you're certain what happened, I guess. And Jim got a whipping; 'cause big sister Told Jim's pa and ma what happened to

I never fell out of a Christmas tree. The Christmas tree grows in a night, and Things lots and lots nicer than apples and I've seen on its branches doll-babies and And steam-cars and soldiers and big sugar-

gathered new mittens and picturebooks, too, Right off from the bent-over twig where they grew, And candles grow lighted there, so you can 'Fore daylight the things on the Christmas-

Sometimes in the parlor, sometimes in the Sometimes in the dining-room-best place of all-The Christmas-tree grows with its wonderful fruit, And sometimes it has a pine-box for a root! The funny thing is that I oftentimes find Right there what for weeks I had had on my mind. And always, on Christmas, who wants to see me Had better look under the Christmas-tree. -Strickland W. Gillilan, in Leslie's Week-

The Message of the Bells

UN clouds scudded gustily across the sky, hiding the peaceful face of the moon, whose radiance touched the edges of her somber veil with a fringe of silver. The great gray tower lifted its head far aloft in the midnight stillness, and the wind moaned around its rough-hewn corners a requiem for the dying year. Within the tower sat the old bell-ringer, waiting for the stroke of twelve from the clock, and, as he waited, his thoughts drifted back to the years long buried in the dimness of the past-the years when his floating white hair had been crisp and black, when his long, slender fingers were strong and supple, and struck from the midnight chimes music of entrancing beauty.

Oh, happy memory! Oh, long ago! It was on another night like that that Ruprecht was born; and the joy which beamed from the pale young mother's face was reflected in his own, as he left her with her baby on her bosom and rushed to the bell-tower to make of his chimes a pean of praise to the Father who had filled his life with blessing. How they loved him-that baby-their only one-their all! How he and Elspeth had watched each new development-how proudly guided the first tottering step; how carefully repeated the first lisping word.

The boy studied-improving every opportunity with untiring zeal, until at last the great organ in the Cathedral below thundered its glorious music responsive to the touch of the boyish fingers. People thronged to hear. Ruprecht's services were demanded elsewhere-brilliant prospects opened before him, and the inevitable separation drew near.

New Year's Eve! How many anniversaries this shadowy hour held! The boy bade them good-by while Elspeth clung to him and sobbed, and her husband rushed away to tell the chimes his agony as he had poured into them his joy. As he sat waiting, even as now, a step came up the stair, and some one entered the belfry chamber, and the voice he loved said tenderly ".Mein Vater, let me play the chimes to-night. I will leave with them a message to comfort you when you are sad-a message for you and the mother, too. When I hear it in the far-off land it will be my mother's voice that sings to me, and when you play it, mein vater, it will say to you, 'Ruprecht loves me.' Then you will pray 'God watch over my boy and keep him safe for me,' and the All-Father will hear."

When Ruprecht struck the massive keys it was the simple old Pleyel's hymn he played, but he lent his beautiful voice to the clangor of the bells and sang his mother's favorite words:

Children of the Heavenly King As ye journey sweetly sing, Sing your Saviour's worthy praise Glorious in his works and ways.

A moment later he was gone. The years had been many and long since then, but no tidings ever came, and Elspeth's hair grew white before the look of expectancy in her dear eyes changed to the calmness of resignation. He was dead, of course. They had heard of the wrecked ship. They had moved to a new home. They were only waiting nowhe and Elspeth-for the summons which should call them to the happy reunion where there would be no sad good-bys and hearts forget how to ache.

The first stroke of midnight sounded and an instant later the bells pealed forth, while the old man sang with trembling lips and voice that no one heard but God-as he had sung every New Zear since that one:

Children of the Heavenly King As ye journey sweetly sing, Sing your Saviour's worthy praise Glorious in his works and ways.

away, he stumbled down the narrow stairs toward home and Elspeth.

Not far from the tower stood a mansion, where a great throng had assembied to watch the old year out and the new year in. Silken draperies rustled, jewels gleamed, music rippled on the perfumed air, and happy voices rang sweet and high. But every sound was silenced, and bright eyes grew dim in the flood of melody which suddenly poured about the gay throng. They crowded toward the music room, trying to catch a glimpse of the player. Those who were near saw a slender man, with fair curling hair brushed back from a brow as pure as a woman's. Quietly he sat before the grand piano, playing without the slightest effort such masterful music as had hushed the listeners to awe-struck silence.

"Who is he?" was the question passed

from one to another. "He is a friend of father's," the hostess told them. "Father met him abroad some years ago, and by helping him in a search for some missing friends, won his heart. Father invited him here suddenly and unexpectedly appeared. just as loud. These great musicians are always eccentric, you know. I heard him tell father like to spend alone.

It was almost twelve o'clock when a gether on Christmas eve. new voice suddenly broke into a momentary pause. Everyone looked up to see half hopeful, half terrified, draw close the musician standing in the door.



HRISTMAS tide has come again | figure spreads out his hands and says: and all the little children are thinking about Santa Claus, and ▲ some are wondering if he will come to their house this time. There is hardly any reason for any child to believe that he will not come. A good many things change in this world, but on Christmas Eve merry old Santa Claus is always heard of-his hair as ber of iced cakes, gilded nuts, gingerwhite, his nose as red, as ever; his bag for the holidays this year, but he de- of toys just as full; his cry down the clined the invitation, then this evening chimney of "Any good children here?"

Kris Kringle is another name for Santa Claus, and a very good name, that this is an anniversary he does not too; and stockings are not the only things that hold toys. Little German peasant At eleven o'clock the hostess seated children often set their wooden shoes her guests in a circle, saying, "Now we on the hearth on Christmas eve, pretty will turn down the lights and tell ghost sure of a cake and a toy; for children, stories till midnight." The young people however poor their parents may be, are fell in with the spirit of fun, and ghosts | made much of in Germany. And in some walked, hobgobblins shrieked and ghouls places in Europe a curious thing hapmoaned, till the more timid begged for pens. The mother, the father and the rest of the family sit about the fire to-

All the room is tidy. The children. to mother, father, or grandmothers, as "My friends," he said, "my story is they hear a sound of trumpets or horns

"The little ones will be better next year." Then he takes one of the rods from the black visitor and drives him out. The visitors play on the instruments they have brought, and the whole family sing Christmas hymns. The angelic visitor then empties his basket on

Christmas day is a happy one for most children all over the Christian world, and I hope that because this is so they will remember that this day is kept because eighteen hundred and eighty-one years ago Jesus, who said "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," was first a babe in his mother's arms.-Mary Kyle Dallas in the New York Ledger.

Christmas Hints.

A simple and tasteful home-made picture frame may be constructed from not of the spirits of the unseen world- outside. Then the mother says: "What | common gas pipe cut into suitable length it is of a lad who once, on a night like can this be?" and opens the door. As and tied together at the corners with this, left home and friends and went she does so, a number of very strange shoe strings. A neat paper weight may out into the wide world, with Music as looking figures come in-amongst them be made by wrapping half a brick in the priestess who presided at the altar, one person dressed in white, with wings, paper such as butchers use and tying it where burned the fires of his ambition. and a great basket in his hand, and an- with red tape. A dainty towel rack

the table, and leaves there a great numbread horses, and wooden toys, and then departs. The mother tells the children

to be good all the year, lest the rod should really be left for them on the next Christmas, and all have supper and go to bed.

THE UP-TO-DATE SANTA CLAUS.

Once more it was Christmas and old Santa Claus. With his white whiskers dangling around his fat jaws, Gave his engine a start, and then, laden with zeal And with gifts, started off in his automo-

He flitted past corners and whizzed up the lanes. He ran over dogs and he smashed into trains:

He came with a zipp and he passed like a He scared people's teams and knocked buggies to smash. He ran over chickens and knocked chim-

nevs down. And spread consternation all over the town. The odor of gasoline floated behind Where he hurried as if on the wings of the wind: He crippled old people and stayed not to

How badly they fared or learn whom they might be. The children who watched for his coming he crushed Beneath his broad tires, as onward he rushed! scattered his gifts while he sped

through the night, Content to permit them to fall where they might The wrecks and the sorrow and suffering showed The course that he took with his glittering load.

ties done, He murmured: "I guess I've the records all won; When they see where I've passed I don't think that they'll walt Very long to admit that I'm right up-to--L. E. Kiser, in Chicago Record-Herald.

And, having gone home with his glad du-

Uncle Jack's Gift

~~~~~

By Helen Watson Beck.

REAKFAST was usually a very peaceful meal in the Irwin household, but on Christmas morning the children chattered together so hard that poor Mrs. Irwin was finally obliged to call them to order.

"But it's Christmas, mother," they all objected, turning toward her three faces shining with happiness and excitement, "and we're all so happy! Oh, mother, do you think Uncle Jack will come today?"

"Let us look and see whether his ship has been sighted yet," returned Mrs. Irwin, as she turned to the newspaper. "He said he would try to be here for Christmas, but you know he could not promise in such stormy weather as this." The children crowded around her; even

little Alice climbed down with infinite difficulty from her high chair, and poked her curly head under her mother's arm as it held the newspaper, pretending, sly little tot, that she, too, was looking for the arrival of the ship.

Uncle Jack was a great person in the estimation of the children. He had the charm that lies in the mysterious, for they seldom saw him.

Mrs. Irwin knew that Captain Dornan had expected to reach Philadelphia before Christmas, but the stormy weather had delayed him. His ship was now four days overdue, and every one was becoming anxious. Mrs. Irwin exclaimed with joy when she saw that it had come safely into port the night before.

"Oh, children, how thankful we should be that Uncle Jack has come safely home again," she said to them. "We must watch for him all day, for I think he will be here to dinner."

Christmas Day slipped by and Captain Dornan did not come. Gradually the children deserted their post at the parlor windows, and turn d their attention to other things. When the beautiful winter twilight finally enveloped the city, Mrs. Irwin was the only one who saw the captain come up the street.

The Christmas dinner nearly shared the fate of the breakfast; the children were too excited to eat it. They chattered merrily with their sailor uncle, whose bronzed face and kindly eyes attracted them strongly.

"Well, children, let's see what 1 brought you from the East," he said after dinner, opening a bag which the children had only refrained from touching by the exercise of great self-control. "Here, Jack, is the kind of book that little Chinese boys use in learning to read," and he put into his nephew's hand a small roll of clothlike paper, printed with strange characters. "Here are some little shells for Ethel; they seemed to me to be very pretty, so I bought them from an Indian boy on the wharf." Jack thanked his uncle as politely as he could, remembering just in time that

boys never cry. Ethel also put a brave face upon her disappointment, though she had to bite her lips to keep them from quivering, as she assured her uncle that the shells were quite as pretty as he had thought them. But little Alice, seeing herself apparently forgotten, was too young for such politeness; sitting upon the floor, she lifted up her voice and Mrs. Irwin watched the brave courtesy

with which her children shouldered the disappointment that had come to them, with pride and with some little amusement, for she had noted a secret twinkle in Uncle Jack's eyes.

"Why, how surprising," said the Captain suddenly, looking into the depths of the bag, "here is a package for Ethel. How did that come here; the sea fairies must have sent it to a dear little girl in Philadelphia, I think."

Ethel's hands trembled as she untied git all dat's comin' to you. the strings. The sea fairies certainly understood how to tie sailor knots of a curiously nautical character.

"Jack, you go out in the hall and see if you cannot find something sharp to help your sister in cutting those knots," commanded his uncle, his eyes twinkling more merrily than ever. In the hall was a long package. He tore the paper that covered his gift. It was a saber of shining steel, the edge safely dulled for the present. It was just what he needed for his gymnasium work with the broadsword. Along the finely tempered blade he saw an engraved motto. On one side he read:

"Never draw me without cause." and on the other.

"Never sheathe me without honor." When he reached the partor again he found his sister hugging Uncle Jack enthusiastically, while little Afree danced up and down before the mirror attired in a soft gown of embroidered silk that had been made for her "very self" away off in China. She looked like a veritable "sea fairy," with her bobbing curls and her brilliant flower decked sown

"See, Jack, what uncle brought me," cried Ethel, holding out for his inspection a beautiful necklace of delicate pink coral carved with wonderful skill by some artist of the distant Orient. The chain was formed by stringing together pieces of coral as big as Ethel's thumb nail. Each piece was carved in the likeness of beautiful classic faces, half of which were laughing and the other half crying. These two faces were so like the sensations the children had endured during the last hour that Ethel noticed it, and when she held up the chain and explained the resemblance Uncle Jack laughed more heartily than any one else. -Philadelphia Public Ledger.

#### CHRISTMAS EVE IN BETHLEHEM.

Observances in the Christian Town Set in the Heart of Mohammedanism.

Bethlehem, the central spot of interest in the Holy Land at Christmastide, is a Christian town set in the heart of Mohammedanism, where once a year the Greek church grants the use of the grotto of the Nativity to the Latin church, says London Sphere. The ceremonies begin on Dec. 24 by the image of the youthful Christ being carried from the basilica of St. Helena to the sacred grotto of the Nativity, where the traditional spot of Christ's birth is marked by a silver star set in the rocky pavement.

The service begins at 10 o'clock in the evening. It opens with the chanting of psalms without any musical accompaniment. The patriarch of Jerusalem usually officiates in the grotto, but on this occasion he is represented by the Latin bishop. The interior of the church is most picturesque, for there are only a few chairs provided for foreign visitors, while the buik of the congregation is made up of the Bethlemite women in their blue dresses with red frontlets, wearing peaked caps when married and flat caps covered by white veils when single.

As they enter the church they at first kneel down and then sit upon the ground in true oriental fashion. "In the dimly lighted church," says one who has seen the service, "these squatting varicolored figures, with their beautiful faces lit up by fits and starts by flashes of the candles, intent on devotion, seem like so many modern Madonnas come to celebrate the glory of the first Madonna."

Precisely at midnight the pontifical high mass is celebrated, the figure of Christ is brought in a basket and deposited upon the high altar, and the procession forms to accompany it to the crypt. As the long, chanting procession winds through the dimly lighted church there is something weirdly solemn about the ceremony, and as the sacred image passes various acts of worship are performed by the devout attendants. On the procession moves through the rough hewn, dimly lit passages from the Latin church to the grotto of the Nativity.

When the procession of richly robed ecclesiastics reaches the silver star set in the pavement the priests pause and stand in a group about the basket, which is deposited upon the star. Around this star is the inscription, "Hic de virgine natus est" ("Here he was born of a virgin"), for this is the spot upon which tradition places the actual birth of Jesus. There the impressive narrative of the birth of Jesus as found in the gospels is slowly recited, and when the passage (Luke ii., 7), "And she brought forth her firstborn Son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn," is read the figure is reverently picked up from the star and carried over to the opposite side of the grotto, where it is put into a rock cut manger. This concludes the service.

## MAKING CHRISTMAS TOYS.

Thriving Industry in Germany, France and Switzerland.

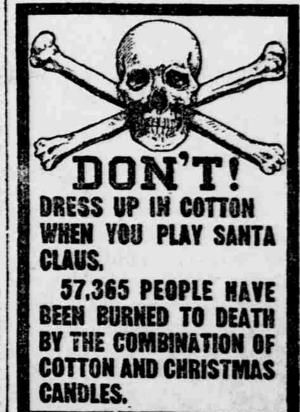
In parts of Germany, France and Switzerland every humble householder takes more interest in Christmas than the average American boy. This seems like a strong statement, for Christmas is pretty thoroughly appreciated by the young of America. But, great as the festival is to them, it is not essential to their existence. They could get along without Christmas, but the toymakers in Switzerland, the Tyrol and south Germany would starve without this midwinter holiday which makes a market for their goods. There are wood carvers, doll dressers and toymakers in every hamlet and home of the Tyrol. They depend upon the small wages they make from these toys to put bread and butter in their mouths.

All through the winter season every boy and man carves out wood animals and toys for the factories. Everything is handmade. A Noah's ark of twenty or thirty wooden animals that retails for a quarter in this country does not pay the carver more than a few pennies. The boys are taught to handle the knife early, and they learn to cut out wooden ducks, hens, horses, cows and other toys before they have reached their teens. Working all through the early winter days and nights in their little homes, they make the wooden toys that delight so many children throughout the world.-New York Mail and Express.

## A Youthful Schemer.

Little Emerson-You don't believe in any such ridiculous myth as Santa Claus? Tough Jimmy-Naw! I'm next to

dat game. All de same, it's a good graft to let on you believe in him an'



# A CHRISTMAS JOURNEY IN COLONIAL DAYS.



-New York Mail and Express.

Shipwreck, a weary sickness and deliverance, a miscarried letter returned to to the lad, and when at last, overcome here?" by the deadly 'heimweh,' he turned toward his home, he found it empty-the loved ones gone. The years have passed and the lad is a man, but the father and the mother answers. the mother he has not found, nor does he expect to greet them again until the New Year of heaven dawns for him, as dren.' he believes it has already dawned for them. So, when the midnight comes I play each New Year's Eve as I-as the lad played on that last night long ago-

my message to my dear ones." The clock on the mantel warned for twelve, and the musician turned to the piano and played again simply and lovingly Pleyel's hymn, singing as in the long ago the beautiful words his mother

As the last note died away in the quiet room the tower clock began to strike. but was drowned by the music of the chimes. A thrill ran through the hushed circle as they recognized the strain they had just heard, but the musician arose with a mighty cry, "Mein Vater!" and ran out into the night, guided by the music of the bells.

When the old bell-ringer shut the door he could not see, for the tears that blinded him, the hurrying figure on the pavement. A moment later he was gathered close to the heart that yearned for him. and together, in the opening of the glad New Year, they went out from the shadow of the old bell tower, home to Elspeth, whose mother-heart came near to bursting, with the joy of a son's homecoming .- The Housekeeper.

## New Year's in France.

New Year's in France is a greater day for exchanging gifts than Christmas. The custom of New Year's calls, once so popular in this country, but now fallen almost into disuse, is still supreme in Paris. Great family dinners, in which the orange figures most prominently, add to the gayety of the day. So crowded are the pavements on the boulevards that pedestrians sometimes have to take the middle of the street.

#### Individuality in Gifts.

The personality of the giver expressed in the wrappings about the Christmas gift adds value to the simplest offering. After all, it is the spirit of the giver rather than the gift itself which gives the greatest pleasure. The favorite ribbon, the slip of mistletoe, the color of the tissue paper covering, the card which bears the Christmas greeting, all express love and well-wishing.

Devoushire's Yule Log. In Devonshire the Yule log is known as the Ashton fagot. The fagot is composed of a bundle of ash sticks bound Then, as the last reluctant echo died | with nine bands of the same wood.

other in black, with a bunch of rods. its writer long afterward-all these came | in white. "Are there any good children | and sandpaper, the bat. An ordinary

> "Are there any bad children here?" asks the black figure.

"My children are all pretty good," "I am glad to hear it," says the white visitor. "I have gifts here for good chil-

"Stop!" the black figure cries; "they are not good. Hans struck his brother yesterday. Gretchen does not know her catechism, and Petra broke a piece from the Sunday cake as it sat to cool on the

them with."

may be fabricated from a baseball bat "God bless you all," says the figure and two cigar boxes. Shellac the boxes cobblestone hand painted with lampblack and household ammonia makes an excellent door weight. A novel pipe rack for fastidious smokers may be made from a small strip of one-inch plank. Bore holes in it for the stems of the pipes to pass

## Christmas a Lucky Birthday.

through. A dried muskmelon shell makes

an attractive tobacco jar.

There is an old superstition that to be born on Christmas day is to be lucky all one's life, and in Silesia there is a window sill. I will leave rods to whip belief that a boy born on Christmas day must be brought up a lawyer or he The children begin to cry. The white will become a thief.

# NEW YEAR, 3003.



"What's the trouble down there—another volcano broke loose?" "No; just celebrating the completion of the Panama Canal"