

# THE FOLKS



The smiling face of William J. Jefferson was seen on the street yesterday. He lives in Cincinnati, and has done well. It is his first visit to his home in twenty years. He is accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Jefferson, and Miss W. J. Jefferson.

That is just a humdrum news item clipped from a country paper. It has some thought in it for you, Mr. Busy Man. Nearly all of us live in the future. We are on the right side of the road, and we hope, many long years before us. If we are rich we hope to become richer. If we are poor we hope to become wealthier, and few people are really old, and a competent career is something that is not a thing of the past. It is the old folks who are in the country. That is where the majority of the successful business men come from. In thousands of cases father and mother are still on the old farm, content to die where they have lived, far from the strife of city life, close to the soil and nature.

This year you should clip a few things into a grip, catch the last trade and spend Christmas at home. It will be different from other Christmases, for hospitality means much in the country. It's genuine. It's unadorned with business considerations. You, father or the hired man will meet you at the depot, and on the way to the old house on the farm he will tell you of the things you did when you were a boy. He'll point out the old schoolhouse where you learned your a-b-c's and find some of the cussedness licked out of you, and the little old church where a preacher preached brimstone and fire in a way that made your flesh cringe and you didn't dare sleep alone.

It will all come back to you. You had almost forgotten that you were a boy, hadn't you?

You'll fill your lungs with pure air, feel the stinging breeze against your face and your heart will begin to throb with good impulses. Here everything seems to be honest and real and good. And the welcome! Don't be ashamed of the tears that wet your cheeks. An old man with snowy locks, trembling with affection, a grand old woman, your mother, who weeps softly, as women do, because her heart is filled with happiness.

You couldn't make that woman believe that you ever had a petty meanness; that you had even thought wrong; that you took a narrow view of life, or that you had grudged that embittered your existence.

You couldn't convince that old man that in the world could be found a madder "boy."

Love forgets faults and exalts virtues. To them your little successes seem like triumphs.

Don't forget the little room. You occupied it as a boy. You slept well in those days. You hadn't a care. You were free, and you were sound in mind, morals and body. It is good to think of those things. It is good to think of Christmas Day, of the gifts and the pleasure and good will that went with them, of the dinner and the long table, surrounded by relatives and neighbors, so poor to have their own Christmas dinners.

And when the gray old man bows his head, and with the faint of a child, says: "We thank thee, O Lord, for the mercies thou hast shown us," the simple prayer that follows will appeal to all that is good in you and give you new hope, new life, new courage.—(Cincinnati Post.)

## ON THE MAIN LINE.

THE city's streets were thronged. Crowds of Christmas shoppers hurried to and fro. Electric lights from the big stores shone on their rosy and happy faces, and the younger ones laughingly shook the snow from their hair and capes. Charlie Wempep noted all this as with his hand on the controller he held the big suburban car in check. It was crowded to the doors as it started on its trip into the country with its human freight. The passengers were in a merry mood. They had remained until the last car, the open run, and were going to their homes on the line, with their arms full of bundles and their hearts filled with good cheer.

All this swept through the brain of the tired motor-man, and there was no answering smile as gay laughter reached him through the closed doors of the vestibule. Here it was Christmas eve. He had had fairly steady runs up to the time the summer business began to slack off, when the time table changed and he went on the board as first extra. A wife and two little ones at home had to be fed and clothed, and his 20 cents an hour, with an average of six hours a day, had not placed him in a position of affluence, nor enabled him to look forward to the glad Christmas time with any degree of joy. He thought of the scant supply of coal in the shed, the almost depleted ledger and empty purse with pay day still more than a week off, and sighed to himself.

"Eight dollars and a half coming to me," he said, as he almost savagely swung around to six points. The car felt the current and sprang forward along the shining ribbons of steel which showed up in the glow of the headlight in the endless stretch of white ahead.

The city had been left behind and the firm boozes quickly slid back into the shadows as the car sped by. The shining rails no longer showed up ahead. It was all a dead level of white. The swift-rattling snow had covered with its mantle the rails and the ties, but the wheels still struck them and clung to them, and the car continued with the road.

Wempep, one of the most careful, but also one of the newest men on the road, had no misgivings as he sped along the snow covered way. Suddenly ahead there was a bluish light which seemed to dance in the air. "My God, what's this?" he exclaimed as he sprang from his seat white as the driven snow which surrounded the car. He shot off the current and put on the air with such force as to bring the car almost to a standstill, and threw the passengers from their seats. Quickly the controller swung around and the car slowly started to move backward. To the man in the vestibule it seemed as if before the wheels began to revolve backward. The car was on a long but straight curve. Wempep knew that the bluish light meant. It was an inbound coming toward him at full speed.

What caused the mishap Wempep did not know, but he did know that to remain on that curve meant certain death to himself and the sixty odd passengers on the car. The headlight of the approaching car now loomed into view. It was coming at breakneck speed, but Wempep's car with its load of human beings was now also speeding forward. There had been no orders as the last telephone booth and the out-bound car was supposed to have a clear track.

Witnesses the error, it was a palpable fact that the coming car was upon him. There seemed to be no effort on the part of the man in the other vestibule to

anger, for it was a dead hand that held the controller, and the stare was one of combined madness and death. Not a living soul was on the inbound car. Turning off the current, Wempep took the controller from the stiffening fingers and ran back to the sub-station, about a quarter of a mile, and the power was once more turned on. During his absence the truth was discovered and when he came back to the well-lighted and comparatively uninjured car, a cheer went up. The men passengers grabbed him in the hand, while the women shed tears of gratitude. His own eyes moistened and a lump came in his throat as he thought of the cottage and its occupants.

Compiling the two extra journeys was resumed and the passengers began to get off. As they did so every one dropped something in the hat at the door. When the end of the run was reached, a new cheer forward. In his hand he held a list which was stuffed full of bills and silver. Taking a slip of paper from his pocket the passenger looked it up and typed it with the other contents of the hat, into the cap of the astonished Wempep.

Take this with a Merry Christmas and a God-bless you from the passengers you saved from death," he said, and then left the car.

His eyes glancing, Wempep scanned the list. There was over a hundred dollars in money. The slip of paper was the check of a prominent banker of the town at the end of the line for \$100.

three numbers added together gives the largest sum total wins the first prize. "Christmas candles" is a good old time game. A lighted candle is placed upon a table. The player is blindfolded and stationed with his back to the candle, about a foot from it. He's then told to take three steps forward, turn around three times, then to walk four steps toward the candle and blow it out. His attempt to do so will probably be as amusing to the audience as disconcerting to himself.

## CHRISTMAS IN SERBIA.

Santa Claus Receives Presents Instead of Giving Them. In Serbia they keep Christmas eve in a somewhat peculiar way. The father of the family goes into the wood and cuts down a straight young oak, choosing the most perfect he can find. He brings it to the spring, "Good evening and a happy Christmas," to which the present say, "May God grant both to thee, and mayest thou have riches and honor." Then they throw over him grains of corn. Presently the young tree is placed upon the coals, where it remains until Christmas morning, which they salute by repeated firings of a pistol.

The national dish in Serbia is pork. The poorest family in Serbia will pluck themselves all through the year so as to have money enough to buy a pig at Christmas. Shepherds to a long piece

## FIFTY YEARS AGO.

Last night they had a Christmas tree down at the new church, and a lot of things were done. A lot of things were done that we never saw done before. Way back among those Christmas times of fifty years ago.

The preacher rode to meet me in a new steam wagon which made such a racket that it might have been the devil's chariot. The sermon fairly rocked with words nobody ever heard flow from good old Brother Dan's Wiggins fifty years ago.

The organ was most wonderful, but then it didn't sound as sweet as it somehow ought to be. But when they sang "Joy to the World," that thrilled my soul those Christmas times of fifty years ago.

And though that good old anthem I seemed to know, I never could see across clear to the vision above. I tried and tried, but I could not let that sweet hymn be sung.

Ah, 'twas a vision in my heart! The organ tinkered and tinkered, and the organist tinkered and tinkered, and the organist tinkered and tinkered, and the organist tinkered and tinkered.

And over all I heard a voice like high and low, and over all I heard a voice like high and low, and over all I heard a voice like high and low.

Ah, they were blue as summer skies—those tender eyes I know; And ever from their depths I saw love's bright sun shining through—Love's sun that shone for me alone straight out of judgment.

And as the sweet-voiced singer sang, again there came to me A vision of the old log church, the little Christmas tree.

Abate with thy lights, I heard a voice I need to know And love in those old Christmas times of fifty years ago.

I felt her hand upon my arm; I heard the slight-bells ring; And through my mind the echoes ran, "Let Heaven and Nature Sing!"

Again I felt my sweetheart's kiss of fifty years ago. Sing on for aye, O triumph song! My spirit soars above.

And join an anthem divine, a song of purest love. I've cast away the thrills of age, flung off the yoke of time; The intellect and holy laughs above us breathe and think.

The song was done. The lights were out. The echoes all were still—The blue eyes once more sleeping on the long forgotten hill; And I am old—ah, very old! and yet my dimming eyes Have caught a gleam prophetic from the gates of paradise.

"Joy to the World!" I quaver over the haunting old refrain And smile on through the lonely tears that fall like summer rain; For every year that bows my head but nearer brings, I know, My love of those old Christmas times of fifty years ago.

—Lowell Otis Reese, in Leslie's Weekly.

## THE VIOLINIST'S CHRISTMAS

He was old and feeble and poor—just one of those examples of a man who has lived too long. Slowly he wandered his way down the crowded street until he reached that sign which marks the border line of hope and despair for so many human hearts—the three balls. Poverty shone from his threadbare coat and worn shoes, it trembled in his old hand, it quivered in his thin lips and looked from his great, thoughtful, hungry eyes.

Proud blood flushed the pallid features of the old man as he approached the broker. More years than man has yet lived seemed weighing upon the bowed head, and not only the deep set, hungry eyes, but every feature of that pathetic old face expressed the humility of despair. He was facing the hardest trial that comes to the children of men—the self-confession of failure.

There, on the pawnbroker's ledger, which, like the roll of the recording angel, marks the downfall of many a soul and suffering enough to redeem it, was written the name of this old man, and over on the shelf in a rough case lay his Amati—the child of his old heart, the mistress of his soul. Yes, he had failed, and in the ever active, exacting drama of the world there was no part for him to play.

"I haven't any money," admitted the old man. "But it's Christmas eve, and if you will allow me to sit here and lend me my old violin I will play you a Christmas carol—a rhapsody."

There was a pleading in the old voice that would have opened a harder heart than the golden balls. The night had grown old, and it lacked less than an hour of the day which was to bring peace to the world. The old musician shivered; it was the cold of the world without and the chill of a heart within that quivered from his very soul.

The touch of a loved one brings to life again all the glory of our dead selves. Youth to old age—strength to weakness—light to dull aching eyes—courage, ambition, love, laughter—all it awakens. Gently the sacred prize was lifted—reverently its keys and strings were touched, as the old violinist drew the bow that was so perfectly welded to his master hand. The look in the deep set eyes was less hungry now and the hand was steady again.

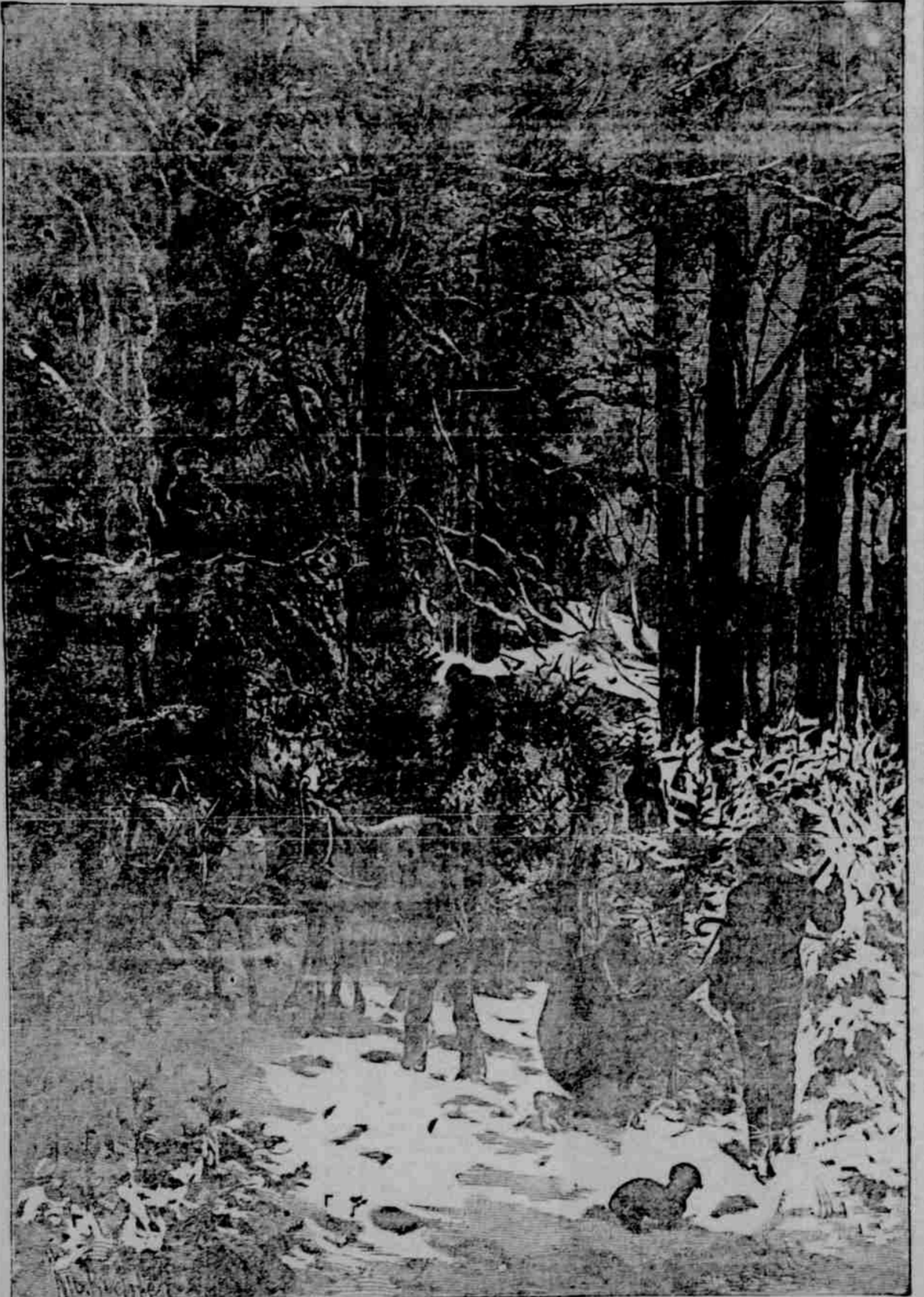
The heavy old hand was no longer lowered in grief and shame, but dropped to touch the bosom of his love. Out on the night air floated the joyous notes of the "Hosanna, Hosanna to the Highest." Loudly they rang—and then the echo, soft and silvery, quivered a moment. It was the pulse of the soul, surging in one magnificent blending of harmony. All the hunger and want and mortifying failure were forgotten, and the soul, young and strong in its glory, soared out in the tones of the Christmas anthem.

Then for a moment came the shadow of the present. The face became white again and the old hungry light shone from the eyes anew. Ah, how could he ever have parted with the companion of his soul for these hours? Poor goodness! At this price would he have sold his soul, but he must have stockings.

Good Thing, Too. The Christmas Tree—it is strange that children are so green as to believe in the existence of a Santa Claus. The Christmas Candle (spatteringly)—But they are not evergreen.—Woman's Home Companion.

Santa Claus in the Philippines. Santa—Say, young feller, I can overlook the absence of chinmaya, but you must have stockings.

## CUTTING CHRISTMAS TREES.



attempt to check the speed and the most Kemper could hope to do was to lessen the force of the collision. On came the opposite car until less than 100 feet. It was one of the newest and most powerful on the road and Kemper's heart dropped as he realized that fact. The passengers by this time had ascertained they were speeding back, and the controller had his hands full striving to check the panic.

Looking now right into the vestibule of the opposing car, Wempep saw a livid face with glaring eyes. One strong, bony hand clutched the controller, trying to force it still further around to get more speed. There was a terrible smile on the white face. The man was mad. A cold sweat broke out on the forehead of Wempep. A cottage within which sat a woman smoothing the hair of a little boy while her body swayed gently to and fro as she lulled the baby to sleep, came before his vision. Who would fill the empty cradle now? Who replenish the dwindling coal pile? A groan burst from him as they pursued and pursued, sped by the power station and back over the switch. There was no danger from behind and they dashed on back into darkness, leaving the sub-station keeper rooted to the spot with astonishment. The fatal race was drawing to a close. Not ten feet now intervened between the headlights of the two cars when suddenly there was pitch darkness. The speed of the cars slackened and the wild inbound gently came upon the special. There was a crashing of glass as the two headlights, now dull and dark, came together, a slight jar and dark came together, a slight jar and dark came together, a slight jar and dark came together.

"A Christmas for the wee ones, after all," exclaimed Wempep, his face lighting up. "Here, Bill," he shouted to the conductor. "We go wickets on the coach."

Bill was both to accept, but finally consented and there were two merry Christmases on the Main Line. —Detroit Free Press.

## Ring Out the Old, Ring in the New.



Pat—Why is 'th' old year loike a whet towel, Nora, darlint? Nora—Why? Pat—Because they always ring it out.

## Two Christmas Games.

A Yuletide version of the donkey party is played thus: On a sheet sketch or paste a design of a Christmas tree. Have each branch of the tree terminate in a circle containing a number, using the numbers from one to ten or one to twenty-five, according to the size of the tree. Each person playing is blindfolded in turn and is given a rosette with which he must "decorate the tree." Each person aims to pin his or her rosette on or near to the highest number of the tree. Each competitor has three trials, the three numbers to which he pins nearest being written down to his credit by the hostess, who keeps tally. The one whose

of wood, the pig is turned over a blazing fire until cooked, the guests watching the process with increasing interest. After dinner stories are told and songs sung. Santa Claus, who, in the person of an honored guest, is present to receive instead of to give presents, departs, after the feast, decorated with a long ring of cakes around his neck and laden with such gifts as his friends can bestow.

## A Good Riddance.

When the New Year in at the front door creeps, And we'll throw the back door the Old Year creeps I hope he'll carry away on his back A load as big as a peddler's pack; And we'll stow away in his baggage them Some things that we never shall want again.

We will put in the pockery little pout That drives all the merry dimples out, And the crazy scowls that up and down Fold nice little foreheads right into a frown.

And the little quarrels that spoil the plays, And the little grumbles on rainy days, And the best-up plan, and the teasing jokes That never seem funny to other folks; And the stunts that are tossed—be sure of that—At rosin, red breast and pussy cat.

And we'll throw in the bag some cross little "don'ts," And most of the "ran'ts" and all of the "won'ts," And the grumpy words that should not be said When mamma calls, "It is time for bed."

If we get it all these in the Old Year's pack, And shut it so tight that they can't come back, To-morrow morning we'll surely see A Happy New Year for you and me.—Youth's Companion.

## Tough Luck.

"After all," said the busy merchant, "Christmas comes but once a year." "Yes," rejoined the old man who had seven children and nineteen grandchildren, "and I'm heartily glad of it."

Inherited Mistrust. "Bessie, have you written your letter to Santa Claus?" "Yes, ma; but don't you go an' give it to go to mail."