



WHEN I HUNG UP MY STOCKING

WHEN I hung up my stocking—So long it seems to-day Since children three flush with glee left off their merry play, And, pinning to the mantelshelf their stockings in a row, Each laughing sprite in robe of white away to bed did go.

When I hung up my stocking—The world was different then; Unveiled the mind by things that blind and clog the souls of men; A prayer lisped at a mother's knee, a hope to "only peep—"

If we were quick—and see St. Nick while others lay asleep.

When I hung up my stocking—The gray dawn came so late Each little head in trundle bed grew weary with the wait; A stealthy rush of white-robed three—and then the stockings split Their treasure out, to laugh and shout, upon the patchwork quilt.

When I hung up my stocking—If now I could but feel Such bubbling joy without alloy as reaching to the heel Brought in the cold gray dawnings of those Christmas days gone by, Not anyone beneath the sun would be so glad as I.

When I hung up my stocking—No mine of golden ore, Or jewels rare, past all compare, as in Aladdin's store, Could make me feel such wealth to-day as once I used to know

When counting out, with laugh and shout, the pennies in the toe.

When I hung up my stocking—If we could always hold, Throughout our days of devious ways, like pictures framed in gold, Close to our hearts such memories of childhood's perfect bliss, We'd often find what now, too blind, in life we simply miss.

—Mary C. Huntington, in N. Y. Independent.

AN "INCURABLE" CHRISTMAS

THEY were dressing dolls; the whole 16, and they were talking—or chattering—like magpies, when the door opened and Rev. Edward Dayton walked into the room. Now Rev. Edward was tall, he was young, he had a pair of well opened, honest blue eyes, his fair hair showed decided symptoms of curling, when it was allowed to grow beyond the orthodox clerical length, his features were distinctly Greek in their outline, and his figure would have done credit to any young athlete; his clerical garb was well cut, and of the finest cloth, and when to these attractions were added a particularly frank and charming manner, and a most fascinating laugh, it can readily be understood why the new rector of St. Boniface, Chicago, was so popular with his congregation, and so adored by the feminine portion thereof.

Consequently when he entered the rectory drawing-room on the afternoon in question, where 16 pretty girls were employed in dressing dolls for the Christmas bazaar, and in an incidental manner, enjoying the excellent tea and cake dispensed by his maiden aunt, it was not to be wondered at that his appearance caused a little thrill of excitement to pass through the circle of fair workers.

The rector had only been at St. Boniface nine months, but already he was on fairly intimate terms with the ladies of his congregation, especially the young girls, so without any preliminary he stated his errand.

"I am in a fearful fix," he announced, in a very boyish and unclerical manner. "And I want one of you young ladies to help me out of it."

The offers of assistance were many and prompt, but the rector still looked worried and anxious.

"You see it is just this way," he began, balancing his spoon across the edge of his cup, and gazing at it intently. "I have suddenly been called away on some errand for the bishop and it will be impossible for me to get back to Chicago for Christmas day."

He paused here, and a storm of exclamation and regrets was poured forth, in the midst of which a saucy young voice was heard to exclaim:

"And you want us to write your Christmas sermon for you? How perfectly charming. I have always fancied it must be most delightful to stand up in a pulpit and deliver nicely pointed little moral axioms—always, of course, carefully pointed at some one else."

And the speaker, a slight, graceful

little blonde, with a piquant expression, and a pair of mischievous blue eyes, shot a half-laughing, half-defiant look at the handsome young rector, who reddened slightly as he replied in rather constricted tones: "Many thanks, Miss Evelyn, but I won't trouble you to that extent. I have arranged to have one of Mr. Brooke's curates take the services for me, but he leaves directly after the morning service, to go to one of the mission churches, and you see I had promised to devote Christmas afternoon to the patients of the 'Home for Incurables' and they have counted on having some one read to them and make the afternoon a little bright; and I can't find anyone to take my place; everyone wants to be at home on Christmas day, so I must tell the poor things that I cannot keep my promise—unless—"

He broke off hesitatingly, and looked entreatingly at the bevy of fair damsels before him.

But they all began with one accord to make excuse.

One was "so sorry, but she had promised months ago to go to a matinee on Christmas afternoon, and couldn't break the engagement," another "felt just awfully to refuse Mr. Dayton anything," the last, with a melting glance from a pair of big brown eyes, "but grandmamma was coming to spend the day, and it would seem so disrespectful to leave her."

A third "was taking part in a concert their guild was to give on New Year's eve, and she had promised Mr. Trevor faithfully to practice his accompaniment with him on Christmas afternoon; he was so anxious to be well up in his part of the trio."

A fourth girl "wished dear Mr. Dayton would ask her something else, for she would just love to help him, but really it made her so dismal, seeing those poor souls suffer, that mamma had positively forbidden her to go again."

They were all so sorry, and so regretted that they could not help him, that the young rector felt sure that it was not the will that was wanting, and thanked them for their ready sympathy as warmly as though it had been practical help.

But in the midst of the volley of excuses a bright thought struck one of the fair defaulters, and she exclaimed: "Why don't you ask Evelyn to take your place, Mr. Dayton? You would, wouldn't you, Eve, dear?"

The rector hesitated, then said, in

been asked to take an afternoon at the 'incurables' since he came until now, so he probably does not know that I am in the habit of going there. May, you are getting that ruff for her majesty too high."

And then they all plunged into the mysteries of dolls' dressmaking again.

When Edward Dayton first came to St. Boniface he had been irresistibly attracted by Evelyn Gwynn's pretty face and saucy speeches, but lately his manner had been much colder, for he had arrived at the conclusion that Evelyn cared too little for serious things to consent to become a clergyman's wife, and he was too unaccustomed to women to divine that her flippant speeches were assumed, and that her gay, careless manner concealed a warm, generous heart. The fact was that Evelyn was so disgusted at the sudden mania for parish work, which had seized the young ladies of St. Boniface since Mr. Dayton's advent, that she had taken particular pains to appear indifferent, and even frivolous, and had on one or two occasions evaded doing some church work which Mr. Dayton had asked her to attend to personally; hence his remark about the "incurables" not being "in her line." Evelyn felt sore and hurt at his opinion of her and mentally resolved that for once she would desert her invalids rather than have Mr. Dayton imagine she was influenced by his wishes, but better counsel came with the morning, and she consoled herself with the thought that Mr. Dayton was out of the city and would probably never discover that she had taken his place.

It was Christmas afternoon and Eve was descending the staircase of the "Home for Incurables" on her way to the small ante-room where she had left her coat and hat.

When she entered the house it had been a bright, clear day, and as she had passed from room to room she had seemed to the poor sufferers to have brought something of the vivid outside brightness with her; now the situation was reversed, the frosty sunshine had given way to the sudden winter twilight, and, in sympathy with the change, her heart was heavy with vicarious sorrow. Like many seemingly volatile natures hers was a quickly sympathetic one, and she was sad with the sight of so many who were doomed to spend the last years of their life in suffering.

The little ante room was dark when

"Because I have misjudged you." "Please don't say any more, Mr. Dayton."

"But I must. I have been sitting in judgment on you—as you know—I know you know it, and to-day I came here, and going from room to room found that you had been there before me, and had left such a trail of brightness behind you, that your path was easy to follow. The poor souls here are witnesses to qualities in you that I have been blind to."

"Please don't say any more," pleaded Evelyn. "You are going to the other extreme now, and I really won't know myself. Perhaps you did not give me credit for some things, but after all you know I am very frivolous!"

But the laugh with which she said it was not quite natural, and there was really no reason for her to walk to the window and look out, for there was nothing to be seen there but a blur of light from the window opposite.

There was a pause, and then a voice came from the shadowy figure in the center of the room.

"Miss Gwynn, you have done a great deal for these poor souls here; won't you do something for me?"

"But you are not an 'incurable,'" said Evelyn. The fur monstrosity had evidently come unfastened again and required a great deal of attention, also it seemed that the blur on the opposite side of the street had acquired a fresh interest, so it was to the back of a dimly outlined figure in the window that Rev. Edward spoke next.

"I am an 'incurable,' Miss Gwynn; I am suffering from something that I must carry with me the rest of my life, and I don't want to be cured. Eve, dear, listen to me a moment—do not speak, dear, until I have finished—let me have my say, even if the answer is 'No.' I love you, dear, so dearly; I have loved you, I think, ever since I met you, and like a self-righteous Pharisee I have endeavored to put my love aside. I had not wit enough to see the best in you, and have tortured myself by imagining I was in love with a thoroughly worldly woman. Eve, dear, I deserve nothing at your hands, but, darling, if you will only establish a home of your own for 'incurables' I will try with all the love that is in me to make you happy. Will you marry me, dear?"

The figure at the window turned around, but it said nothing. Perhaps it did not need to. Attitudes tell a great deal sometimes, and then I think there was a shadowy outline of a little outstretched hand. At any rate, Rev. Edward took three long strides across the room, and the next attitude that showed against the dim window was a very confused one. But it did not matter; no one was there to see.

Was it dark? Well! Perhaps an ordinary benighted mortal, loveless and unloving, might have thought so, but to these two the room was full of radiance, for if one is supremely happy, one carries one's atmosphere about with one, and what the rest of the world moves in matters very little.—Ethel Longley, in Chicago Saturday Evening Herald.

At Christmas Time.
Who would not be merry at Christmas time,
And banish all worry at Christmas time!
A well-spring of cheer
From the heart of the year,
When earth lieth sore, is the Christmas time!

'Tis wise to be merry at Christmas time,
All malice to bury at Christmas time;
All envy and strife
To put out of each life,
That joy may be rife at the Christmas time!

'Tis well to be merry at Christmas time,
To open our hearts at the Christmas time;
That love and good will
Every corner may fill,
And vanquish all ill at the Christmas time!

'Tis good to be merry at Christmas time,
To open our hands at the Christmas time;
That some who are sad
May by us be made glad,
And glorify God at the Christmas time!

'Tis meet to be merry at Christmas time,
In a Christian land at the Christmas time;
When gladness and mirth,
Since that wonderful birth,
Have ruled o'er the hearth at the Christmas time!

And while we rejoice at the Christmas time,
Let this with the peal of our glad bells chime:
"All glory to God
For the love that He showed,
In the gift He bestowed at the Christmas time!"

—M. A. Mattland, in Outlook.

THE CHRISTMAS BIRD.



The Horse—It's a fine turkey, eh, Jimmy?
Jim—Fine? It's a dream!—Bay City Chat.

The Reason Why.
Willie—Mamma, if Santa Claus is such a good man, why does he give so many more presents to rich children than to the poor ones?
Mother—Because it takes so much more to please a rich child than it does a poor one, my son.—Golden Days.

WINTER HOUSE PLANTS.

How to Keep Them Fresh and Green Through Snowy Days.

Very few housekeepers, naturally ambitious to beautify their rooms in winter with foliage plants, recognize that like cats or dogs, canaries, or children, palms and ferns require a time for becoming naturalized and happy in their new homes.

A fern or palm brought in the most vigorous health from the florist's greenhouse will often droop and pine in genuine home sickness, and like young animals or birds, plants thrive most happily in each other's company. It is, therefore, advisable to begin a bit of window observatory, not with one, but let us say with three plants. The best selection is usually a sturdy India rubber tree, Ficus elastica, is what the florists call it; a parlor palm, that is, an aspidistra lurida, and a big pot of zebra plant, Eulalia japonica zebra, which you can tell by its long lovely striped green and white leaves that grow in an elegant cascade.

All of these are recommended because they are hardy, easily kept clean, and need potting only once a year. They will live, too, in a room where gas is burned, where an occasional pipe or cigarette is smoked, and where there is a fire. In turn for so much sturdy good nature, they must have not only care, but that given regularly every day. The woman who complains that she can't raise house plants is simply negligent of them. She moves them about too much, is not always heedful of their need of water, permits the room they sit in to become very cold at night, and then very hot during the day. Probably, too, she does not cover them up at night, nor in any way protect them from dust.

Happily, where so many sins of omission and commission are committed the poor things die quickly, and so escape their wretched existence. If you intend to keep plants put them in a window that has double sashes and where the greatest amount of sunshine strikes for the longest time every day. Roll the shades high and drape the curtains back far and only for the liveliest necessity move the pots. Every day, at as nearly the same hour as you can manage, water these household pets. They will be grateful for the regularity, and unfailingly once a week give them a bath. That is, with a sponge and clear tepid water gently pass over the leaves. Use many basins of water for this, and as far as you can protect them; don't let a cold draught strike through their foliage.

A sudden chill often blasts an otherwise healthy plant, and just as important is it to protect them from superfluous dust. When cleaning day comes around throw big bags of old muslin or dimity over the green things, and as plants are usually kept in a deep window, be sure at night to draw down the shades and portieres, where the gas is lighted.

The portieres should be of some heavy dark stuff to keep out the light, heat and possibly tobacco smoke. Before leaving the room for the night one window, as distant as possible from that in which the plants sit, ought to be pulled down at the top, to let in fresh air, while the closed curtains will still keep them warm enough. Then, not until she has made her fire, cleaned the grate and done her dusting for the day, should the maid push back the portieres and pull up the window shades.

Under such circumstances the following plants will gayly flourish in a sitting or dining room, or bedroom, where every day plenty of heat is supplied during the winter.

There is the fan palm and its dwarf mate, called C. Lulimia, the Scaphorhiza elegans with handsome fern-like leaves, Australian cabbage palm and familia Keutia Fosteriana, silky Australian oak and Eucalyptus globules, all worthy of cultivation in one's conservatory, all willing to flourish, if their needs are considered, and wonderful beautifiers of one's home.

Another hardy foliage plant is the Centaurea ragusina, with silver frosted leaves that serve on occasions to decorate the center table, but the list is really almost endless, though those given above are enough to fill an embersure and answer for green and refreshing decoration the year through.—St. Louis Republic.

Cape Cod Mince Meat.

Down on the Cape the housewives are preparing their mince meat for the winter. The Listener once gave the recipe for Cape Cod mince meat, and will not repeat it, especially at this time, when the people are tired of sensational literature in the newspapers. The Listener has heard of an excellent lady at Hyannis who has hit upon an admirable idea in the preparation of this article of diet. Instead of leaving the Jamaica ginger, tincture of rhubarb and other things of this kind to be taken after the mince meat is eaten, she gives it in them when the mince is prepared. One bottle of Jamaica ginger to a boilerful of mince meat is understood to be the proportion she favors, and yet there are mince meats which would seem to need a great deal more of the stomach-settling ingredients. The bane and antidote thus go together.—Boston Transcript.

—In Paris there are scores of restaurants where horse flesh is regularly served as an article of food, and the use of this meat has recently extended to many other cities of Europe.



"WHY, MR. DAYTON, HOW YOU STARTLED ME!"

formal tones, and without meeting Eve's eye:

"I am afraid that it would not be much in Miss Gwynn's line."

Evelyn drew herself up proudly and seemed about to reply, then a half amused, half hurt expression crossed her face, as she turned carelessly away, and sauntered over to a table where two girls sat chatting busily as they arrayed a round faced, dimpled, waxen beauty in the royal robes of Queen Elizabeth.

"Evelyn, why did Mr. Dayton say that visiting the sick was not in your line?" queried May Lindsay, as she adjusted the crown on the head of the doll queen. "I am sure there is not a girl in the guild who has done as much visiting at the hospital and 'Home for Incurables,' as you have. I don't see why he should seem to regard you as so frivolous lately, he never used to. Doesn't he know that for years you have gone to your 'incurables' every Sunday afternoon? Why, we all regard you as the most goodly, goodly girl in our set. I don't see what has come over the rector."

"It is not worth talking about," said Evelyn, lightly. "Mr. Dayton has never

she entered—so dark that she started, when a tall, shadowy figure loomed up before her, and a voice said: "Good evening, Miss Gwynn." I think he must have been waiting for her for some time, for his eyes were evidently to some extent used to the dim light; however that may be he could not see well enough, however hard he tried, to discern whether she looked pleased or otherwise, as she said, naturally enough: "Why, Mr. Dayton, how you startled me! I thought you were miles away."

"I got back as early as I could!" he replied, "and came around to see how the 'home' had fared for its Christmas. Let me help you into your jacket."

Well, it always is a terrible business getting a jacket to go snugly over one of our present enormous sleeved dresses, but these two seemed to make a worse job of it than usual. At length, when it was satisfactorily adjusted and Eve was fastening a monstrously elongated fur animal of some sort around her throat, Rev. Edward broke the awkward silence with a rush.

"Miss Gwynn, I want to beg your pardon."

"Why, Mr. Dayton?"