

THE CHRISTMAS SONG



GOOD WILL to men!
Good will to men!
O, loud and high, O,
sweet and clear,
The song rang
through the
dazzling space
in that wintry time
of year.

"Good will to men! Good will to men!"
Ah, who sits wan and wistful there,
No Christmas joyance in her soul,
Upon her lip no prayer?

"Good will to men! Good will to men!"
In the rich place the tones made way,
The pictured saints leaned down to hear,
Green-wreathed for Christmas day.

"Good will to men!" O, lady fair!
In splendor weeping thus apart,
How strange it seems a ragged boy
Should have so glad a heart.

For hungry are the helpless ones
Who look and long for his return;
And bare the chamber where they sit,
And low the hearthfires burn.

"Good will to men!" The meaning pierced,
Though selfish impulse barred the way,
Deep to the lady's inmost heart,
That shining Christmas day.

And dimpled children, cherub-fair,
Who into Heaven had slipped away,
Seemed whispering to the mother there
Thoughts meet for Christmas day.

Of little ones who moan for bread
While Christmas bells ring merrily,
"O, give to them," one seemed to say,
"As once you gave to me."

Then to herself that lady said:
"For my lost babes I've sorrowed long,
There comes a cure for aching hearts
In that sweet Christmas song."

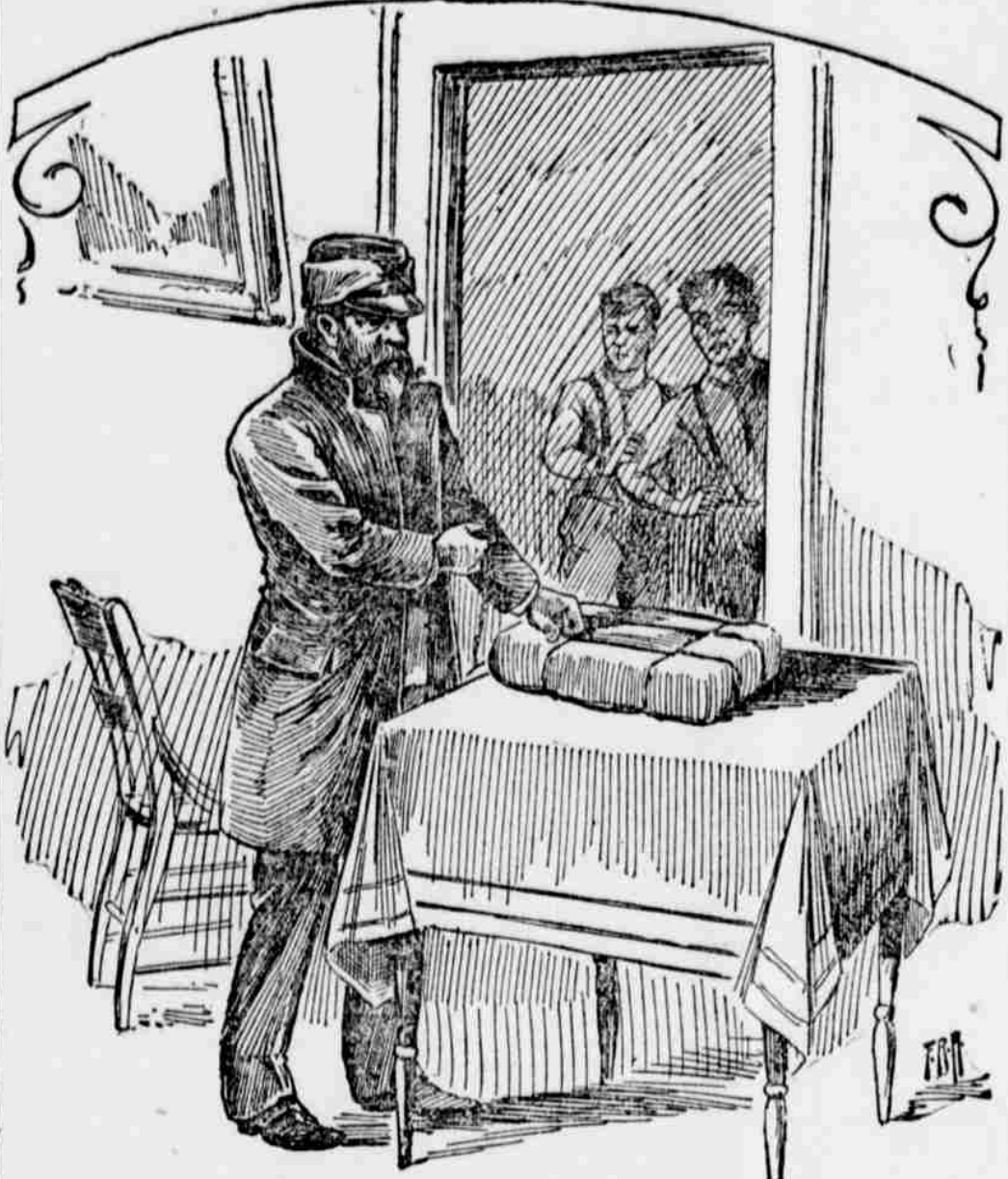
She called the singer from the street.
He sang it o'er and o'er again—
"Peace on earth to all who mourn;
Good will, good will to men!"

Through lane and alley, side by side
The singer and the lady went;
And, strange to tell, he was her guide
To measureless content.

Within her stately rooms no more
She sits and sighs the hours away,
The pictured saints look down and see
Sweet children at their play.
—Mary F. Butts, in Youth's Companion.

"Do you s'pose that feller heard about the watch and shawl?" queried Sam, as we got into bed.
"How could he?"
"I dunno, but I believe he just came here to steal 'em. If he was goin' to look at a farm on the Six-Mile road why didn't he get off the train at Grafton? I'll bet you he robs the house and clears out before morning!"
"Let's tell father!"
"He wouldn't believe it, and it would only scare ma."
We talked the matter over for a few minutes and then fell asleep, and the old clock down in the kitchen was striking 12 when Sam nudged me with his elbow and whispered:
"That fellow is robbing the house!"
"How do you know?"

When he came back we ran upstairs and aroused father and mother, and just as we all got down, we heard the man kicking on the stable door. He had both horses ready to bring out before he discovered that he was locked in. From the rumpus he made you would have thought that he was tearing the whole barn down, but it was useless to kick against that door. In daylight he could have made his way up through one of the feed-racks, but he had used his last match and had to go slow in the darkness. We routed out the neighbors, sent for the sheriff, and in about an hour the door was unfastened and the fellow invited to come out. He had strapped mother's new shawl on one of the horses for a saddle, and father's Santa Claus watch was ticking away



WITH THE WATCH IN HIS HAND.

"Because I can hear him moving about. There—don't you hear that? We've got to go downstairs and stop him from taking that watch and shawl!"
"We wasn't!"
"Yes, we dast! I'll go first, but you come along! Robbers always run if they hear anybody, and maybe he'll get scared off before he gets the things."
We slipped out of bed and drew on our trousers and socks, and descended the stairs, which led up from the family sitting-room. Only two rusties, ignorant of the peril of such an undertaking, would have done as we did. When we got downstairs we found the parlor door wide open, the room lighted, and the stranger stood at the table with the watch in his hand. We had crept down so softly that he heard nothing. He was fully dressed, even to his overcoat and arctics, and as we watched him he pocketed the timepiece and removed the wrapper from the shawl. Sam's idea had been to raise an alarm, or perhaps rush in on him, but as we covered there and watched, a sense of helplessness came over him, and his teeth began to chatter before mine did. We were about to creep back to the stairs, when the man turned the lamplight almost out, and came into the sitting-room, and made for the outside door. He passed within a foot of us, and why the thumping of my heart did not catch his ear has always been a wonder to me. He unlocked the door, passed out and softly closed it behind him, and we heard him going down the frozen path to the barn. I was for going upstairs for father, but Sam drew me across to the side window, and pulled aside the curtain and said:
"He's got the watch and shawl and is now after that span of horses."
Let me explain that about the first of the month the sheriff of our county had taken possession of a span of fine horses, supposed to have been stolen, and they were being cared for in our stables until the owner should turn up. The stables were in the basement of the barn and half underground. The windows were very small and the door a stout one. This door had no lock, but fastened with hasp and pin. We watched the man until he opened the door and entered the stables, and then Sam said:
"Yes, he's after the horses and I'm going to do something."
"We must call father."
"If we do, the man will kill him, for he hasn't got nothing to fight with! You stand right here and hold the door a little open for me."
"What are you going to do?"
"I'm going to shut him in the stable. Don't holler nor run away, for I'll be back in a minute."
Out into the snow and cold dashed Sam. It was about 330 feet to the barn, and being in his stocking feet he ran like a deer and as noiseless as a cat. He found the door shut, and it did not take him ten seconds to lift up the hasp and slip the pin through the staple

in his vest pocket. Why he had no weapons I never could understand, for he turned out to be a professional horse thief and a desperate man, but he had neither knife nor pistol. He was marched off to jail while the roosters were crowing for Christmas, and Sam and I were in court later on when he was sent to prison for five years.
"Boys," said my father, after the man had been taken away from the stables and we had returned to the house, "boys, I thank ye a thousand times over for this watch, which is something I've sorter wanted for years, but let me jest tell ye that ye both orter be taken out and licked fer not tellin' me about that robber till ye had him safely locked up. Don't ye never do sich a thing as that ag'in as long as ye live on the face of this airth."
"And, boys," added mother, with tears in her eyes, as she hugged the shawl and us, too, "I not only thank ye as much as father does, but I say ye did jest right in not wakin' us up; I'd have had a fit and father might have tumbled downstairs, and there's no tellin' who'd a-busted up or who'd a tumbled into the cistern!"

SAM'S BROTHER. —Detroit Free Press. A CHRISTMAS DELUSION.



Susie (angrily)—Sir, what right had you to kiss me?
Tom—I was laboring under a delusion.
Susie—Explain yourself, sir. What delusion?
Tom—The same one you were under, the mistletoe.—Brooklyn Life.
Not That Kind of Boy.
Visitor—Johnny, are you making great preparations at your Sunday school for Christmas?
Johnny—I'm not going to Sunday school now, ma'am.
Visitor—Not going to Sunday school? Johnny—None. I quit last Sunday, I don't want folks to think I'm one of these boys that's only good durin' the holidays. I'll start again after Christmas is over.—Chicago Tribune.

VICTIMS OF HARD LUCK.

Washington's Helpless Poor Are Counted by Thousands.

Negroes Furnish the Largest Contingent to the Army of Unemployed—What Organized Charity is Doing for Them.

[Special Washington Letter.]
The most beautiful roses of summer are guarded by thorns; and that fact has often been used to point a moral and adorn the tale that all the sweets of life are mingled with the bitter. The beautiful snow has come again, bringing with it sorrow and suffering to thousands of the poor people in our cities. In the capital city of the republic fully 2,000 families were without fuel during the two days and nights of the storm. It was much like the blizzards of Iowa, Minnesota and Dakota, as they were experienced by the writer, some years ago.

The coming of the snow seems to have emphasized the fact that want and suffering exist among the poor of the city. However, this fact has been a familiar one to those interested in the administration of charity ever since the cold weather began. It is the cold that develops a good deal of the need for relief. It is the snow, as a rule, that causes the general public to realize that there are those who stand in need of help. It is natural, therefore, that the volume of contributions, either in money or clothes, for the benefit of the poor should be sensibly increased even since the fall of the snow the other morning.

The stream of public and private charity which flows deep and broad in this city is divided into a great many rivulets and rills of varying size and importance, but all reaching the homes of want and poverty and giving aid which is most needed. There is the charitable individual, sometimes with a heart as large as his purse, and then, again, with the purse in inverse ratio to the size of the heart. He or she visits the poor at their homes and gives help as it seems the occasion demands. They use their friends as their bankers, and very cheerful bankers most of them prove to be, with a good-natured laxness in regard to the cashing of checks. The truth is, the majority of good, charitable people prefer some one else to do the "summing," as it is sometimes called, while, on the other hand, they are perfectly willing to foot the bills. The drafts upon their time and sympathy are not so cheerfully borne as those upon their bank accounts.

"To every man his work." Since men and women of moderate means enjoy the work of saving souls and bodies in the alleys, it is well; and they are encouraged to go about doing good. Since the prosperous are willing to furnish the money, they are excused from the work of "slumming." The churches are doing a great deal to relieve human misery in this city. In nearly every church, of all denominations, are found societies which are devoted to work among the poor. They have a treasury to draw upon, and the members go about from house to house and thus dispense their alms. Then there are organizations of various kinds, which either incidentally, or, as one of the main features, look after the unfortunate class. The Central Union mission offers a conspicuous example. It furnishes lodgings and meals to those in need of temporary help and demands in return, where practical, a certain amount of work in its wood yard. Its



OUT OF WORK.

members minister to the body as well as to the soul, and they are not compelled to turn away deserving men and women simply because the hour has arrived when the religious meeting which is held daily must close. The influence of the mission continues after the meetings, and the endeavor is by practical means of help to keep men from falling any further into the slough in which they generally are when the mission takes hold of them.
We had a snow carnival on Pennsylvania avenue. Every sled, sleigh, cutter, in fact everything on runners or that could be put on runners, was brought into requisition. Horses, those faithful animals who are so cheap and are being discarded nowadays, were worth a dollar an hour, and apparently every horse in town was in the carnival. All of the pretty girls, the jolly boys, and even the gay old sports were in the procession. Hearing the ringing and the jangling of the bells, the peals of laughter, and the songs of the rushing rabble, no one would suppose that there was any suffering in this city.

The Associated charities is an organization which does much practical good. The secretary has had years of experience, and he knows the genuine from the sham sufferers at sight. For example, during the carnival on Pennsylvania avenue, a young colored man entered the room and told the secretary that he was out of work, and had been vainly trying to find some place as a cook, which was his business. He had failed. He had a wife and a little child five years of age. His wife was able to work, but could not get a place because her clothes were not "fitten," as the man expressed it. They had fuel in the house, but no food, having eaten their last meal last evening. The man said he was willing to work, and his wife was willing to work if they could get it to do.

A crucial test, as it appeared, was made by the secretary who had brought out all this information by a series of questions when he asked the man in conclusion if he would saw wood. The man said he would, and then the secre-



AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

tary gave him an order for some meal, flour, meat, beans, and told him to go home and get something to eat and feed his family, and then returned to the office where he wanted him to go to work. The man promised that he would return, and taking his order, went off to the grocery store to have it filled.

It seemed, from experience, that the secretary's little wood shed in the back yard is the rock upon which the schemes of many who have designs upon the funds of the society split, and go all to pieces. The impostors don't want to work, and when the wood shed looms up before them, they manage to leave and seek more congenial scenery. Sometimes they break the saw or dull the ax with the view of lessening their hours of toil.

The chief of our city police says that the dumping lots furnish a field where many of those who scramble for existence find employment in raking out cinders and chips for fuel. When snow is upon the ground their occupation, as well as fuel supply, is gone. It is then that they appeal to the police. They crowd the station houses at times and are grateful for the smallest pittance. A pound of flour and a bushel of coal go a long way with the starving, shivering, half-clad old woman who lives in an alley garret. Those most dependent in the district are the colored people, to whose numbers the contiguous states of Maryland and Virginia largely contribute. Nourished in moderate climes, they soon collapse under the vicissitudes of a cold winter.

There is another class of poor, composed of people who do not ask for public relief until actually driven to do so. These are persons who have experienced better days, many of whom make a living on the streets either as laborers or peddlers, but are deprived of their vocations by bad weather. The policemen endeavor to acquit themselves with the condition of those who live upon their respective beats and the needy are promptly reported for assistance.

The demand for rent money is an unusual feature. The threatened evictions for non-payment of rent were almost as numerous as those reported from Ireland. Men, women and children, representing every color and degree of intelligence, called at police headquarters, some of them almost frantic for want of means to satisfy the landlord. In nearly every instance the "notice to vacate" was presented as a guarantee of truthfulness on the part of the applicant.

Food and fuel were distributed in the same systematic manner as has characterized this work for years. The deservings were given orders on some grocery or wood yard, over the signature of the lieutenant in whose precinct they resided. These orders were received by the applicants after obtaining the goods, and the accumulated orders and accounts were presented to the department for payment at the close of each month.

That tells the story, and it is a story which might be repeated again and again concerning all cities. Indeed if the true tale were told concerning the suffering of the poor in New York, Chicago and the other cities which are larger than Washington, it would be harrowing in the extreme. Superintendent of Police Moore tells me, however, that there is not a single family in Washington to-day without fuel and food; unless it may be some family too proud to let its poverty be known to the duly constituted authorities.

SMITH D. FRY.
—The only gem in the world which cannot be counterfeited is the opal.

OUR CHRISTMAS ROBBER.



WE PLANNED it one day—my brother Sam and I—as we sat under a harvest apple tree. We agreed to scrape and save and buy father a silver watch and mother a new shawl for Christmas. Sam was 15 and I two years younger, and we were the sons of a farmer who couldn't afford luxuries. We wouldn't hope to do it all by ourselves, though we did get enough together for the shawl. Our uncles and aunts and cousins chipped in, and the jeweler threw off \$4 on the price of the watch, and on the day before Christmas old Santa Claus had the watch and shawl and father and mother hadn't the slightest suspicion of what was in store for them. Sam and I had sold apples, embezzled eggs, disposed of old plowpoints, hoed corn for the neighbors, gathered and sold hickory nuts and worked various other schemes to get that \$12 shawl and we had a right to feel elated and proud. We had the articles hidden in the hay mow at the barn, and about once an hour we had to go out there and take a look at them.
It was growing dark on Christmas eve when a stranger on foot turned in at our gate and asked for lodgings. He was a well-dressed, keen-looking man, and the fact of his being on foot and the village tavern only two miles away, ought to have set father to thinking. Mother eyed him suspiciously, but when the man said he had rheumatism, and that he expected to pay for his entertainment, father invited him in and appeared to think that it was all right. Not so with Sam and I, however. We didn't like the looks of the man, and when we discovered that he used profane language and chewed plug tobacco we put him down as a bad man. After supper the man told father that he lived in Cincinnati and had come to look at a farm on the Six-Mile road. He made an effort to be entertaining and agreeable, and though he succeeded with the old folks Sam and I couldn't give him any credit.
There was a bedroom off the parlor, and it was arranged that he should sleep in there. Also that Santa Claus should leave the gifts for father and mother on the parlor table after he had gone to bed. Sam and I would hang our stockings in the kitchen. The man excused himself about nine o'clock and went to bed, and ten minutes later the watch and shawl were on the table, and mother had promised not even to look in. We hustled off to bed, and by half-past nine father and mother came up.