Christmas, 1891.

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER.

Lord, for the lonely heart
I pray apart.
Now, for the son of sorrow
Whom this tomorrow
Rejoiceth not, O Lord,
Hear my weak word.

For lives too bitter to be borne,
For the tempted and the torn,
For the prisoner in the cell,
For the shame lip doth not tell,
For the haggard suicide,
Peace, peace, this Christmastide!

Into the desert, trod
By the long sick, O God;
Into the patient gloom
Of that small room
Where lies the child of pain
Of all neglected most—be fain
To enter, healing, and remain.

Now, at the fall of day,
I bow and pray.
For those who cannot sleep
A watch I keep.
Oh, let the starving brain
Be fed, and fed again;
At thy behest
The tortured nerve find rest.

I see the vacant chair.
Father of souls, prepare
My poor thought's feeble power
To plead this hour:

For the empty, aching home
Where the silent footsteps come,
Where the unseen face looks on,
Where the handclasp is not felt,
Where the dearest eyes are gone,
Where the portrait on the wall
Stirs and struggles as to speak,
Where the light breath from the hall
Calls the color to the cheek,
Where the voice breaks in the hymn
When the sunset burneth dim,
Where the late large tear will start,
Frozen by the broken heart,
Where the lesson is to learn
How to live, to grieve, to yearn,
How to bear and how to bow,
Oh, the Christmas that is fled!
Lord of living and of dead,
Comfort thou!

—Elizabeth Stuart Phelps in Independent.

WATCHING FOR ST. NICK.

Christmas eve, after the children had hung up their stockings and got all ready for St. Nick, they climbed upon papa's lap to kiss him good night, and when they both got their arms around his neck they said they were not going to bed till he told them a Christmas story. Then he saw that he would have to mind, for they were awfully severe with him, and always made him do exactly what they told him; it was the way they had brought him up. He tried his best to get out of it for awhile, but after they had shaken him, first this side and then that side, and pulled him backward and forward till he did not know where he was, he began to think perhaps he had better begin.

The first thing he said after he opened his eyes and made believe he had been asleep or something was, "Well, what did I leave off at?" and that made them just perfectly boiling, for they understood his tricks and they knew he was trying to pretend that he had told part of the story already, and they said he had not left off anywhere, because he had not commenced, and he saw it was no use. So he commenced:

"Once there was a little Pony Engine that used to play around the Fitchburg depot, on the side tracks, and sleep in among the big locomotives in the car-house"——

The little girl lifted her head from her papa's shoulder, where she had dropped it. "Is it a sad story, papa?"

"How is it going to end?" asked the boy.

"Well, it's got a moral," said the papa.

"Oh, all right if it's got a moral," said the children. They had a good deal of fun with the morals the papa put to his stories. The boy added, "Go on," and the little girl prompted, "Car house."

The papa said, "Now every time you stop me I shall have to begin over again." But he soon saw that this was not going to spite them any, so he went on: "One of the locomotives was its mother, and she had got hurt once in a big smash up, so that she couldn't run long trips any more. She was so weak in the chest you could hear her wheeze as far as you could see her. But she could work around the depot and pull empty cars in and out and shunt them off on the side tracks, and she was so anxious to be useful that all the other engines respected her, and they were very kind to the little Pony Engine on her account, though it was always getting in the way and under their wheels and everything. They all knew it was an orphan, for before its mother got hurt its father went through a bridge one dark night into an arm of the sea and was never heard of again. He was supposed to have been drowned.

"The old mother locomotive used to say that it would never have happened if she had been there; but poor, dear No. 236 was always so venturesome, and she had warned him against that very bridge time and again. Then she would whistle so dolefully, and sigh with her airbrakes enough to make anybody cry. You see, they used to be a very happy family when they were all together, before the papa locomotive got drowned. He was very fond of the little Pony Engine, and told it stories at night after they got into the car-house at the end of some of his long runs. It would get up on his cowcatcher and lean its chimney up against his and listen till it fell asleep. Then he would put it softly down and be off again in the morning before it was awake. I tell you, those were happy days for poor No. 236. The little Pony Engine could just remember him; it was awfully proud of its papa."

The boy lifted his head and looked at the little girl, who suddenly hid her face in the papa's other shoulder. "Well, I declare, papa, she was putting up her lip."

"I wasn't any such thing!" said the little girl. "And I don't care! So!" and then she sobbed.

"Now, never you mind," said the papa to the boy. "You'll be putting up your lip before I'm through. Well, and then she used to caution the little Pony Engine against getting in the way of the big locomotives, and told it to keep close around after her and try to do all it could to learn about shifting empty cars. You see, she knew how ambitious the little Pony Engine was, and how it wasn't contented a bit just to grow up in the pony engine business and be tied down to the depot all its days. Once she happened to tell it that if it was good and always did what it was bid perhaps a cowcatcher would grow on it some day, and then it could be a passenger locomotive. Mammas have to promise all sorts of things, and she was almost distracted when she said that."

"I don't think she ought to have deceived it, papa," said the boy. "But it ought to have known that if it was a Pony Engine to begin with it never could have a cowcatcher."

"Couldn't it?" asked the girl gently.

"No; they're kind of mooley."

The little girl asked the papa, "What makes Pony Engines mooley?" for she did not choose to be told by her brother; he was only two years older than she was anyway.

"Well, it's pretty hard to say. You see, when a locomotive is first hatched"——

"Oh, are they hatched, papa?" asked the boy.

"Well, we'll call it hatched," said the papa; but they knew he was just funning. "They're about the size of teakettles at first and it's a chance whether they will have cowcatchers or not. If they keep their spouts they will, and if their spouts drop off they won't."

"What makes the spout ever drop off?"

"Oh, sometimes the pip, or the gapes"——

The children both began to shake the papa, and he was glad enough to go on sensibly.

"Well, anyway, the mother locomotive certainly oughtn't to have deceived it. Still she had to say something, and perhaps the little Pony Engine was better employed watching its buffers with its headlight to see whether its cowcatcher had begun to grow than it would have been in listening to the stories of the old locomotives and sometimes to their swearing."

"Do they swear, papa?" asked the little girl, somewhat shocked and yet pleased.

"Well, I never heard them near by. But it sounds a good deal like swearing when you hear them on the up grade on our hill in the night. Where was I?"

"Swearing," said the boy. "And please don't go back now, papa."

"Well, I won't. It'll be as much as I can do to get through this story without going over any of it again. Well, the thing that the little Pony Engine wanted to be the most in this world was the locomotive of the Pacific Express, that starts out every afternoon at 3, you know. It intended to apply for the place as soon as the cowcatcher was grown, and it was always trying to attract the locomotive's attention, backing and filling on the track alongside of the train, and once it raced it a little piece and beat it, before the Express locomotive was under way, and almost got in front of it on a switch. My, but its mother was scared! She just yelled to it with her whistle, and that night she sent it to sleep without a particle of coal or water in its tender.

"But the little Pony Engine didn't care. It had beaten the Pacific Express in 100 yards, and what was to hinder it from beating it as long as it chose? The little Pony Engine could not get it out of its head. It was just like a boy who thinks he can whip a man."

The boy lifted his head. "Well, a boy can, papa, if he goes to do it the right way. Just stoop down before the man knows it and catch him by the legs and tip him right over."

"Ho! I guess you see yourself," said the little girl scornfully.

"Well, I could," said the boy; "and some day I'll just show you."

"Now, little cock sparrow, now!" said the papa, and he laughed. "Well, the little Pony Engine thought he could beat the Pacific Express, any way, and so one dark, snowy, blowy afternoon, when his mother was off pushing some empty coal cars up past the knownothing crossing beyond Charlestown, he got on the track in front of the Express, and when he heard the conductor say, 'All aboard!' and the starting gong struck, and the brakeman leaned out and waved to the engineer, he darted off like lightning. He had his steam up and he just scuttled.

"Well, he was so excited for awhile that he couldn't tell whether the Express was gaining on him or not, but after twenty or thirty miles he thought he heard it pretty near. Of course the Express locomotive was drawing a heavy train of cars and it had to make a stop or two—at Charlestown, and at Concord Junction, and at Ayer—so the Pony Engine did really gain on it a little, and when it began to be scared it gained a good deal. But the first place where it began to feel sorry and to want its mother was in Hoosac tunnel. It never was in a tunnel before, and it seemed as if it would never get out. It kept thinking what if the Pacific Express was to run over it there in the dark, and its mother off there in the Fitchburg depot in Boston, looking for it among the side tracks? It gave a perfect shriek, and just then it shot out of the tunnel. There were a lot of locomotives loafing around there at North Adams, and one of them shouted out to it as it flew by, 'What's your hurry, little one?' and it just screamed back, 'Pacific Express,' and never stopped to explain. They talked in locomotive language"——

"Oh, what did it sound like?" the boy asked.

"Well, pretty queer. I'll tell you some day. It knew it had no time to fool away, and all through the long, dark night whenever a locomotive hailed it it just screamed 'Pacific Express,' and kept on. And the Express kept gaining on it. Some of the locomotives wanted to stop it, but they decided they had better not get in its way, and so it whizzed along across New York state and Ohio and Indiana till it got to Chicago. And the Express kept gaining on it. By that time it was so hoarse it could hardly whisper, but it kept saying 'Pacific Express! Pacific Express!' and it kept right on till it reached the Mississippi river. There it found a long train of freight cars before it on the bridge. It couldn't wait, and so it slipped down from the track to the edge of the river and jumped across, and then scrambled up the embankment to the track again."

"Papa!" said the little girl warningly.

"Truly it did," said the papa.

"Ho! that's nothing," said the boy. "A whole train of cars did it in that Jules Verne book."

"Well," the papa went on, "after that it had a little rest, for the Express had to wait for the freight train to get off the bridge, and the Pony Engine stopped at the first station for a drink of water and a mouthful of coal, and then it flew ahead. There was a kind old locomotive at Omaha that tried to find out where it belonged, and what its mother's name was, but the Pony Engine was so be wildered that it couldn't tell. And the Express kept gaining on it. On the plains it was chased by a pack of prairie wolves, but it left them far behind, and the antelopes were scared half to death. But the worst of it was when the nightmare got after it."

"The nightmare? Goodness!" said the boy.

"I've had the nightmare," said the girl.

"Oh, yes, a mere human nightmare," said the papa. "But a locomotive nightmare is a very different thing."

"Why, what's it like?" asked the boy. The little girl was almost afraid to ask.

"Well, it has only one leg, to begin with."

"Pshaw!"

"Wheel, I mean. And it has four cowcatchers and four headlights and two boilers and eight whistles, and it just goes whirling and screeching along. Of course, it wabbles awfully, and as it's only got one wheel it has to keep skipping from one track to the other."

"I should think it would run on the cross ties," said the boy.

"Oh, very well, then," said the papa, "if you know so much more about it than I do. Who's telling this story, anyway? Now I shall have to go back to the beginning. Once there was a little Pony En"——

They both put their hands over his mouth and fairly begged him to go on, and at last he did. "Well, it got away from the nightmare about morning, but not till the nightmare had bitten a large piece out of its tender, and then it braced up for the homestretch. It thought that if it could once beat the Express to the Sierras it could keep the start the rest of the way, for it could get over the mountains quicker than the Express could, and it might be in San Francisco before the Express got to Sacramento. The Express kept gaining on it. But just zipped along the upper edge of Kansas and the lower edge of Nebraska and on through Colorado and Utah and Nevada, and when it got to the Sierras it just stopped a little and went over them like a goat—it did, truly; just doubled up its fore wheels under it and jumped. And the Express kept gaining on it.

"By this time it couldn't say 'Pacific Express' any more, and it didn't try. It just said 'Express! Express!' and then ''Press! 'Press!' and then ''Ess! 'Ess!' and pretty soon only ''Ss! 'Ss!' And the Express kept gaining on it. Before they reached San Francisco the Express locomotive's cowcatcher was almost touching the Pony Engine's tender. It gave one howl of anguish as it felt the Express locomotive's hot breath on the place where the nightmare had bitten the piece out, and tore through the end of the San Francisco depot and plunged into the Pacific ocean and was never seen again. There, now," said the papa, trying to make the children get down; "that's all. Go to bed." The little girl was crying, and so he tried to comfort her by keeping her in his lap.

The boy cleared his throat. "What is the moral, papa?" he asked, huskily.

"Children, obey your parents," said the papa.

"And what became of the mother locomotive?" pursued the boy.

"She had a brain fever, and never quite recovered the use of her mind again."

The boy thought awhile. "Well, I don't see what it had to do with Christmas, anyway."

"Why it was Christmas eve when the Pony Engine started from Boston and Christmas afternoon when it reached San Francisco."

"Ho!" said the boy. "No locomotive could get across the continent in a day and and a night, let alone a little Pony Engine."

"But this Pony Engine had to. Did you never hear of the beaver that clomb the tree?"

"No! Tell"——

"Yes, some other time."

"But how could it get across so quick? Just one day?"

"Well, perhaps it was a year. May be it was the next Christmas after that when it got to San Francisco."

The papa set the little girl down and started to run out of the room, and both of the children started after him, to pound him.

When they were in bed the boy called down stairs to the papa, "Well, anyway, I didn't put up my lip."—William Dean Howells in Harper's Young People.

He Got the Tree.

"Say, ma," said Tommy, "aren't we going to have a Christmas tree this year?"

"No, Tommy," answered his mother, "I haven't time to attend to it this year, and your father is so busy that he will not have time to fix it up either."

Tommy was silent for some time, then he went over and sat on a footstool beside his mother, who was doing some fancy needlework.

"Say, ma," said Tommy meekly, after a long pause. Seeing that her son was not inclined to finish the sentence she said kindly:

"Well, Tommy?"

He rested his elbow on her lap and leaning his head on his hand he watched her fingers working dexterously for a few seconds, then he continued slowly:

"Say, ma, you told me I mus'n't fight, didn't you?"

"I certainly did, Tommy."

"Well, say, ma, you know Jimmy Jones, what lives across the street?"

"Yes."

"Well, I was talking with him yeste'day and he said 't his mother was nicer'n mine, an I sed 't she wasn't, and then we got to fightin, an say, ma, you won't be mad if I licked him, will you? An I told him 't my mother was the nicest looking lady in the street, an don't you forget it, an I said 't mother wasn't old and wrinkled like his mother was, an he said 't his mother was more generous'n mine, an 't she was going to fix him up a nice Christmas tree, an then I couldn't help it, ma, an I licked him some more, and just then a big policeman came along an said 't he'd run us both in if we didn't stop fighting, an"——

But his mother had got up from her chair by this time. She called Bridget and told her to go to the grocery store and order a nice Christmas tree—the nicest one they had.—New York Tribune.

Christmas Mottoes.

It is the blessed Christmastide,
The Christmas lights are all aglow.
—Whittier.

Above our heads the joy bells ring,
Without the happy children sing.
—Whittier.

Kindle the Christmas brand, and then
Till sunne-set let it burne.
—Herrick.

Give the honour to this day
That sees December turn'd to May.
—Herrick.

Let winter breathe a fragrance forth
Like as the purple spring.
—Herrick.

The neighbours were friendly bidden,
And all had welcome true.
—Old Song.

A man might then behold
At Christmas, in each hall,
Good fires to curb the cold
And meat for great and small.
—Old Song.

The Price Reduced.

Persons who may be undecided what to purchase for a Christmas present will be interested to know that a locomotive which cost $30,000 ten years ago can be bought today for $9,000. A reduction of $21,000 is a big item to consider when selecting a Christmas present.—Norristown Herald.

A Seasonable Sign.

About this season of the year you will notice that the eastern girl wears a very jealous expression when she cracks her jokes about the size of the western girl's stockings.—Life.

Christmas Presents.

A man may not be so badly off for presents if he only has but presence of mind.—New Orleans Picayune.

Not That Kind.

Nobody should be hungry on Christmas. It is not that kind of a hollow day.—Merchant Traveler.

The Family Buyer.

"Augustus, dear, I bought something awfully nice today in town," remarked Kathrine at dinner last evening in the little Queen Anne cottage on Staten Island, as she looked across the table at her young husband.

"Yes, dear?"

"Yes; I bought your present."

"What is it?"

"Oh, I can't tell you now. And I bought the present you are going to give Marjorie."

"My present to Marjorie?"

"Yes, and the present you are going to give the baby."

"But, my dear, I"——

"Oh, it is just lovely. You will see it on Christmas eve. And I bought the present you're going to give me, and"——

"But, really Kathrine, I should like to choose my own present to"——

"Oh, I know it is just what you would have thought of, and I saw a lovely thing which I am going to get for Marjorie to give you, but you'll have to give me the money for it, dear; I spent all I had. And I want to get your present to sister Jessie, too, and"——

Augustus said something right there, but as he said it to himself it wouldn't be fair to repeat it.—Exchange.

What She Expects.

It may not be so, of course, but the idea suggested itself that people got to writing it "Xmas" because your best girl expects you to invest an X in her Christmas present.—Somerville Journal.

A Pointer for Poultry.

"Hooray, whoop-ee!
Ha-ha! He-he!
We're still among the living!"
Two pullets cried
Who had not died
In slaughter for Thanksgiving.
"It strikes me you're
Too premature,"
Said a hen who heard their fun.
"Preserve your boast
Until the roast
For Christmas dinner's done."
—Selected.

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

"I came to ask you"—his voice was low—
"For something"—his face had a ruddy glow;
"I hope that your answer will not be 'no'
I came for my Christmas present.

"I think your heart knows what I mean;
I feel your eyes must have surely seen
How much I love you; I want, my queen,
Yourself for my Christmas present.

"My past is dark with grief and pain,
But not with any blot or stain.
Ah! shall I plead, my love, in vain
For thee as my Christmas present?"

"Forget the past; 'tis gone and dead;
Just think"—she bent her graceful head,
The color o'er her fair face spread—
"Just think of your Christmas present."
—Selected.

LITTLE BELLE'S CHRISTMAS.

Thrilling Reunion of Father and Child on the Eve of the Coming Holiday.

Every one who knew "Little Texas" agreed that she was the most amiable and altogether the sweetest and most lovable child to be found anywhere.

A pretty child, too, was "Little Texas," with her wealth of golden curls, blue eyes and sunny features.

She was a child of the people.

No one ever seemed to know who her parents were, nor what was her real name, nor how or where she lived. That she was poor was evident, as she earned daily a pittance by selling flowers, mostly to the occupants of one of the large office buildings on lower Broadway.

She had a smile and a good word for everybody, but was very reticent as to her antecedents. Belle, she said, was her name, and she lived, so she stated, with an aunt somewhere under the big bridge. But whether it was Belle Smith or Belle Jones the child would never say.

"My aunt does not wish me to tell my name," she would answer when questioned on the subject.

Little Belle then—she was only ten years old—visited the various offices in the big Broadway building each morning, and the kind hearted men bought her little bunches of violets and roses, often paying many times what they were worth, for little Belle had such a sweet smile of thanks for those who purchased her wares.

From day to day the child sold her flowers, and, although daily questioned, she would never reveal her full name nor say where she lived It was finally accepted as a matter of course. Little Belle was a mystery.

In one of the large offices of the great building one morning last week a middle aged man, with a full brown beard and slouch hat, careless and easy in his manners, but well dressed withal, sat discussing general topics with a party of gentlemen there assembled.

"Yes," said the stranger, "Christmas comes but once a year, as you say, but that is just once too often for me." At this there was a general exclamation of surprise on the part of his auditors. The stranger continued:

"It is a sad story and one that had its beginning on Christmas day six years ago. I had one of the prettiest homes down in Texas then you ever saw. My wife, she's dead now," he said with a sigh, "and the sweetest child, a little girl with golden brown hair and blue eyes. Little Belle was her name.

"We had such a happy home too. And that Christmas day. Ah, how well I remember it now. The child had a nurse whom she used to call Auntie. Somehow I never trusted that woman much. Well, there's no use in going into particulars. Little Belle and her nurse went out for a walk on that Christmas morning. Neither the woman nor the child has been seen since. My poor wife died—it broke her heart. And I, well I"——

"Want any flowers today, sirs?" came from the voice of a little child who had just entered the office.

"My God! Whose child is that? What's your name, girl? Who are you?" came from the Texan in excited tones.

Little Belle, the flower girl, for it was she, stood irresolute for a moment, eying the stranger suspiciously. Suddenly her basket dropped and the light of recognition shone in her eyes. "Why, you're my papa," she said simply.

Tears streamed down the Texan's face as he clasped the child in his arms.

"Thank God!" said he, "I have found her at last, and so near Christmas too. This is indeed a Christmas blessing!"

Father and daughter left the office together. It was afterward learned that Belle's supposed aunt was the nurse who had kidnaped her and brought her to this city six years since. The men about the big building heard of it, and as little Belle had gone to her Texan home the day following a purse was made up among them, and one of their number with it purchased a handsome silver cup, which is now on its way south.

"Little Texas, from many friends. Merry Christmas!" was the inscription on the cup.—New York Herald.

The Pinkertons.

There are in this country a uniformed and armed company of men numbering 32,000, known as the Pinkerton detectives, kept and paid for the express and determinate purpose of quelling strikes, riots, and—to protect corporations. The uniforms of this bedizened army cost $960,000, at the rate of $30 each. Their rifles and revolvers $960,000 more at the same ratio. Their average pay per month is $40 each, which enables this army to live fairly well on $1,280,000 for thirty days and $15,460,000 will about supply them annually—$17,000,000! Who pays out this money? That is a soft nut to crack. English and American capitalists have leagued together to oppress American workingmen, and when they resent such encroachment of capital—such tyranny—the Pinkertons are on hand to settle the discussion with bullet and bayonet. The people have permitted alien ownership of land, and the very money that supports this army of detectives is ground from the people by foreigners, and American plutocrats are so allied that the Pinkertons are applauded every time they fasten the mouths of those who are making "brick without straw" when they cry "It is wrong, it is wrong!" The days of Pinkertons and corporations and alien ownership of land-holders are fast going. The fourth plank in the Alliance demands will yet be fastened to our ship of state. All lands now owned by aliens and foreign syndicates and all lands now held by railroad and other corporations in excess as is actually used and needed by them will be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only. Speed the day!—Economist.

The Caucasian: When the farmers and other wealth-producers began to complain of the low and falling prices of the products or their labor and to suspect that it was due to a contracted currency, the money power through its subsidized papers began, and has since been repeating, the statement that the law of supply and demand alone controlled prices. The time was when the farmer would swallow this, but now he is thinking for himself and knows that the law of supply and demand regulates prices only when the volume of money in circulation is controlled by the same law.

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30 Head of Aged Sows, Year-lings, Ones, Twos, Threes 30

All have proven good breeders. These sows are now being bred for March litters from three first class Boars—Champion Duke 25793, is a grandson of Longfellow 16835; he is a first class hog in every particular, will weigh now in breeding service 500 pounds. Also Swallon's Best 25299; he is also a grand hog, weighs 500 pounds or over. Also Reciprocity sired by Eclipse 25141, bred by B. N. Cooley. These sows can't be duplicated anywhere for the money it takes to buy them. I will also sell Champion Duke and Swallon's Best 25299 on order and ship after January 1, 1892, or as soon as the sows prove safe in farrow. I have also some young boars that will weigh from 75 to 200 pounds each. Also a few gelts of late litters. Write for what you want. All correspondence promptly answered. Address

S. T. JAMES, Greenwood, Neb.

Reference—First National Bank, Greenwood.

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—OF—

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Come and see me or write at once.

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