

Whether Common or Not.

The Long Ago.

'Tis Christmas eve! Turn low the lights; let quiv'ring shadows fall
Athwart the curtained windows there,
and play along the wall.
Lay work aside. 'Tis time for rest;
'tis time to put away
The cares and trials that beset the weary hours of day.
'Tis Christmas eve. Quick, stir the fire!
Now, in its ruddy glow
We'll live again the happy hours—
Christmas times of long ago.

We'll walk again the old-time paths;
the old-time friends we'll meet;
And to the old-time homes of youth
we'll trip with merry feet.
And hand in hand, and heart to heart,
we'll tread youth's golden ways,
And live again the joyous hopes we lived in other days.
The clock ticks on; its pendulum swings slowly to and fro,
And ev'ry tick a mem'ry brings—
Christmas times of long ago.

And so another Christmas comes. We linger in the gloom,
While ghostly forms of childhood's friends troop in and fill the room.
No words we speak. To mem'ry's view come visions thick and fast,
And for an hour we live again the dear days of the past.
Old time the tide of life turns back, and on its ebbing flow
We glide again through golden hours—
Christmas times of long ago.

A SNOWBOUND CHRISTMAS.
A True Story.

The train, puffing bravely and pushing over the new road into the new and sparsely settled northwestern part of Nebraska, was one of that class commonly called "mixed." It was made up of a few box cars, and on the rear was a combination passenger coach. The compartment ahead was filled with cattlemen who smoked almost as prodigiously as the little engine, and in the rear compartment were several women, a clergyman, two or three Omaha traveling men and a newspaper man who was going up into the "Hills" in search of material for sketches.

The train was hours behind its schedule time, and the passengers were grumbling and growling because those living far up the line saw all hope of getting home in time to spend Christmas eve with loved ones disappearing. It was terribly cold and the frozen snow drifted before the fierce north wind, heaping up huge banks on the curves and filling the cuts level full. Every now and then the little engine would buck into a drift, shiver and stand still. Then it would back off, take another run and drive still further into the drift. Usually the second or third effort would clear the track and the little engine would give a shriek of triumph and gather speed for the next one.

It was the day before Christmas—late in the day, too, for the sun had dipped far into the southwest and already the chill gray of the December twilight was over all. What the belated cattlemen in the smoking compartment said is not necessary to relate. But they said their say in lurid language that betokened easy familiarity with the method of expression. The traveling men and the newspaper man

played "cinch" and "hearts" when not talking about the weather, and the women gazed out into the gathering darkness and looked gloomy.

But there was plenty of life and jollity in the car. A little, care-worn woman had two children, both girls, the eldest not more than nine years old and the younger one about four. They romped up and down the car aisle, making frequent trips to the water cooler, and every time the brakeman came in to stir up the fire in the little stove they watched him with childish awe for his brass buttons and jaunty cap. They did not make friends readily, but when spoken to replied bashfully and sought refuge with the tired mother.

"Think we'll get through, old man?" asked a traveling man of the conductor.

"Don't look like it. The drifts are getting deeper and we're likely to buck into one that will hold us."

"Well, that's what we get for venturing out the day before Christmas," said another traveling man. "I wanted to go home for Christmas, but the house ordered me to Chadron to sell a fellow who's getting ready to open a new store."

This set the men to talking and the way they grumbled at not being able to spend Christmas at home was remarkable.

Just as the brakeman came in to light the lamps the train slowed up with a jerk that threw the passengers out of their seats, and fairly made the windows rattle. Then, instead of backing up for a new start, the train quivered for a moment, and the whistle gave a despairing wail. The brakeman rushed out, and when he returned a few minutes later it was to remark: "Stuck tight in a drift and the nearest station eleven miles off."

When he went in and told the cattlemen not even the thick partition and the closed door could keep out the echoes of their lurid remarks.

"What are we to do?" asked one of the women.

"We can't do nothing," replied the brakeman. "We's got to stay here till a snow plow can get us out, and that may be twenty-four hours from now."

This calamity produced a silence that was thick enough to cut with a knife. Then one of the traveling men arose with the remark that he had a few things to say that would much better be said outside.

The idea of spending the night on the bleak prairie without supper or breakfast was enough to daze every passenger.

"Wonder what them kid's 'ill do?" whispered the brakeman.

But this query was answered when the tired mother opened a basket and began dealing out lunch to the little girls.

"Mamma, when will we get home?" asked the oldest.

"Not tonight, dear."

"Won't we see papa tonight?"

"No, dear. We'll have to stay here in the car tonight, and we'll not see papa until morning."

"But what will Santa Claus do if we don't get there?"

"Perhaps Santa will wait for us," said the mother. "We must not think

The Combination Oil Cure for Cancer.

Was originated and perfected by Dr. D. M. Bye. It is soothing and balmy and gives relief from unceasing pain. It has cured more cases than all other treatments combined. Those interested, who desire free books telling about the treatment, save time and expense by addressing the Home Office.—DR. D. M. BYE CO., P. O. Drawer 505, Indianapolis, Ind.

about him, dears, until we get to papa."

One of the women went forward and talked to the mother for a few minutes, and apparently learned a part of the family's history. At any rate she told the clergyman that the mother and children were from Ohio, and that they were on their way to Chadron, where the father had gone nearly a year before to take up a homestead.

The children ate their lunch, played a while in the car aisle, and then began to grow sleepy.

"Mamma, can't Santa Claus find us here on the train?" asked the oldest.

"I'm afraid not, dear."

"But can't he try, mamma?"

"I'm afraid he'll look for us where papa is."

"But can't we hang our stockings up here so's if he comes he'll know it's us?"

"Yes, but I'm afraid he'll not find them, dears."

But the little ones insisted, and two little stockings were securely pinned to the rack overhead, and two little heads were soon pillowed on the velvet cushions.

About 9 o'clock the cattlemen came trooping back, having been warned that the coal supply was low and not sufficient to keep two stoves going for any great length of time. As they came in one brawny man happened to see the stockings and he stopped in surprise. He didn't say a word, but pointed to them and smiled. The men gathered in the rear of the compartment and talked in subdued whispers. Finally one of the traveling men went forward and talked to the mother, and when he came back he told a story full of pathos. It was the old story of a man striving to make a home on the frontier and encountering even more than one man's share of hardships. But he had managed to get enough money to send for his family.

"Them kid's has got to have a Christmas!" ejaculated one of the cattlemen.

"That's what!" said another.

And then there was some scheming. One of the traveling men represented a grocery house and he happened to have a few samples of confectionery. These went into the "pot." Another fished up a couple of pairs of pretty gloves out of his sample trunks, and the other one produced two pretty bottles of perfume from his sample case of drug sundries.

"I've got a few toys up ahead that I got in Omaha for my kids," said one of the cattlemen, "but I can get some more in Chadron. I'll chip them in."

He brought back a little doll buggy and a china doll wonderfully dressed, and a Noah's ark full of impossible animals.

"One of my girls is a boy," he explained, "so I can't dig up but one doll."

The newspaper man produced two measly little oranges from his grip, remarking that if he had known what was coming he would have bought a crate. "It's the best I can do for the babies," he said, but the oranges were received with suppressed delight.

The women were allowed to contribute and one gave a little lace handkerchief and another contributed a silver thimble.

"I ain't got nothing but chewing tobacco," remarked one of the cattlemen in an injured tone of voice, "and I reckon that don't go in this pot."

"If it did I could chip in some considerable myself," said another.

"I ain't got no kids—nor wife neither," said another. "That's why I ain't stocked up considerable on Christmas fixin's. If I had 'em I'd be so tickled I'd have a box car full ahead."

"Perhaps you could contribute what a few toys would cost," timidly ven-

ured the clergyman.

"Say, parson, you're a brick!" said the cattleman. "I'd a never thought of it. I'll just chip in the price of a steer." And he tossed a bill with two "X's" on it into the little pile.

"I'll see that raise," said another.

"I'll have to stay," said a third.

"I'll have to call for a 'sight'," remarked the newspaper man as he added a small bill to the pile, the traveling men following his example.

Then the two women were called into requisition and were delegated to fill the stockings. The mother was shown the contributions, and her eyes filled with tears.

"God bless all of you," she said.

"Amen!" echoed the clergyman, and the rest of the men looked their thanks at him.

Then silence fell over all.

A few hours later the passengers were awakened by shrill shrieks of joy.

"Mamma, mamma! Wake up! Santa did find us!"

And such a scene of happiness ensued that the beholders have not yet forgotten it.

"Let us sing a song," said the clergy-

For Singers and Speakers

The New Remedy For Catarrh is Very Valuable

A Grand Rapids gentleman who represents a prominent manufacturing concern and travels through central and southern Michigan, relates the following regarding the new catarrh cure, he says:

"After suffering from catarrh of the head, throat and stomach for several years, I heard of Stuart's Catarrh Tablets quite accidentally and like everything else I immediately bought a package and was decidedly surprised at the immediate relief it afforded me and still more to find a complete cure after several weeks' use.



"I have a little son who sings in a boy's choir in one of our prominent churches, and he is greatly troubled with hoarseness and throat weakness, and on my return home from a trip I gave him a few of the tablets one Sunday morning when he had complained of hoarseness. He was delighted with their effect, removing all huskiness in a few minutes and making the voice clear and strong.

"As the tablets are very pleasant to the taste, I had no difficulty in persuading him to use them regularly.

"Our family physician told us they were an antiseptic preparation of undoubted merit and that he himself had no hesitation in using and recommending Stuart's Catarrh Tablets for any form of catarrh.

"I have since met many public speakers and professional singers who used them constantly. A prominent Detroit lawyer told me that Stuart's Catarrh Tablets kept his throat in fine shape during the most trying weather, and that he had long since discarded the use of cheap lozenges and troches on the advice of his physician that they contained so much tolu, potash and opium as to render their use a danger to health."

Stuart's Catarrh Tablets are large pleasant tasting lozenges composed of catarrhal antiseptics, like Red Gum, Blood Root, etc., and sold by druggists everywhere at 50 cents for full treatment.

They act upon the blood and mucous membrane and their composition and remarkable success has won the approval of physicians, as well as thousands of sufferers from nasal catarrh, throat troubles and catarrh of stomach.

A little book on treatment of catarrh mailed free by addressing F. A. Stuart Co., Marshall, Mich.