

Christmas, 1893

CHRISTMAS EVE.

Patter, patter, 'tis the patter of the raindrop on the roof;
'Tis not the raindrop, 'tis the clatter of the reindeer's tiny hoof.
The children are all fast asleep and tucked away so snug,
Dreaming of the coming morning, when one will have a mug,
One will have a candy pistol, one will have a slate;
Every one will have a treasure, each will have a plate!
Papa, mamma, dear Kriss Kringle, a long time have looked out,
And know when they the presents purchase what they were about.
Christmas morning, bright and charming, comes but once a year;
Let us each one then determine to make it bring good cheer;
Be the morning bright or cloudy, be it rain or shine,
Take the blessings as we find them under our "fig and vine."
Let us feel nowhere the pleasure which we find at home,
Then indeed we will be happy and never wish to roam.
Let contentment be our watchword ever through this life,
Remembering home and Christmas morning ever in the strife.
A happy childhood with memories bright and gay
Off helps the tired wayfarer on his lonely way;
In looking back he views his childhood's home so bright
That while he dreams of home and strives for heaven, he sees the beacon light.
—Philadelphia Times.

THE LOST GROSCHEN.

It had been snowing all day, intense cold had succeeded the storm, and the stars, shining brightly in the clear sky, looked down on the good old town of Nuremberg in the year 1500. It was a beautiful winter night, and although the curfew hour had passed the lights still glistened through the small diamond shaped window panes in the houses, and the church bells rang out loud and clear.
The people were coming out of their dwellings and walking slowly but cheerfully along the streets, not seeming to mind the crisp cold nor the deep snow under their feet.
The throng of people had passed on and the voices of the bells had become mere reverberations, when a little girl about 8 years old appeared in the principal street, which was now silent and deserted. She was alone and looked so small as she walked fearlessly along, taking short steps so as not to slip on the hard glistening snow, and singing in a soft voice, made a little tremulous by the sharp cold, an old Christmas hymn about the angels, Bethlehem and a child asleep in a manger.
Suddenly she stopped, uttered a cry of dismay, and falling on her knees began searching for something in the snow. She was evidently unsuccessful, however, for her sighs changed to tears and her grief increased until it found vent in sobs.
"My money," she cried; "my poor groschen! O dear infant Jesus, bring me back my groschen!"
Like an answer to her prayer there sounded not far off a strange, sweet melody, and she dried her eyes suddenly and looked about, half expecting to see an angel, for she thought the music must have come from heaven, so beautiful it was.
But she soon perceived a figure without wings, harp or halo, a lad about 15 years old, dressed unlike any one in Nuremberg, with dark blue breeches, a short cloak on his shoulders and a little red cap on his black hair. He carried a musical instrument and touched the strings as he glanced up at a house where a light was gleaming. It was the home of a rich merchant, and a lantern swung from above the doorway, and this light had attracted the young musician. When he had played a few chords on his lute, he sang, and the little girl, remembering the guide of young Tobias who had seemed but a simple traveler, began to think that the singer was indeed an angel. The child did not understand the singer's words, and feeling sure that he was using the language of heaven she threw herself at his feet, clasped her hands and raised her eyes entreatingly to his face.
"Good angel, I pray thee," she cried, "help me to find my groschen! I beg thee in the name of the infant Jesus!"
"What is the trouble, little one? Tell me, and if I can help you I will. There is so much sorrow in the world for every one that I always like to help other people carry theirs." He smiled cheerfully as he spoke, and the child answered:
"I have lost my money—my groschen. We never have anything nice for supper, but because it is Christmastime my mother gave me the money to buy a sausage and an apple pie, but I have dropped my groschen in the snow. We have no more, and now we can have no Christmas supper."
"Where did you drop it?" asked her listener, and when she pointed to the spot he knelt down and began turning over the snow. His back was turned toward the child, when he gave a cry of triumph and held up a coin in his fingers.
"Oh, you must be an angel!" cried the little girl joyfully. And he added with a smile:
"A Florentine angel then. My name is Maso Napone. Remember it and pray for me sometimes, little one. Now goodbye. Go buy your supper."
"Not until I have been to the midnight mass," replied the girl. "My mother is ill, so I must go and pray for her."
"Then I will go with you," said Maso, taking her hand. "What is your name?"
"Christine Dachs. My mother is the Widow Gudule."
"Your mother has to work?"
"Yes, she does beautiful embroidery. I do a little of it, but I have not learned to work very well yet. Pretty soon I shall do it better, and then mamma can rest. She is often tired and weak, and when she cannot work we have no money."
"I am all alone in the world," said the youth when Christine stopped speaking. "I have no parents, no money, no home."

My father's creditors took everything except my lute, so I left Florence, and now I earn a little money by singing in the streets, but I often have to sleep in the open air and without supper."
As they entered the church Maso doffed his hat reverentially, dipped his fingers into the holy water font and touched them to Christine's. Then the two children knelt down in the shadow of a great pillar which rose to the high arched roof. At the end of the nave stood the altar, gleaming with wax lights and flooded with the rising incense; priests, acolytes, and chorists were engaged with the Christmas service, and one could see the fluttering white surplices and the glitter of gold and precious stones on copes and stoles.
The whole congregation joined in singing the carols, and the weak, broken voices of the aged, the silvery tones of the children, the sweet tones of the maidens, the clear high notes of the young men and the strong, deep ones of their elders combined to produce harmonies both powerful and sweet. Maso could not keep silence. Suddenly his voice rose above the rest, and it was so full, so clear and so sweet that every one near turned to look at him. A tall man wrapped in a great cloak left his place, and coming nearer to the lad listened attentively, with his eyes fixed upon Maso's face as long as he continued to sing. Neither of the children noticed the stranger.
After they left the church Maso led Christine into a provision shop, and not allowing her to spend her only coin purchased ham, fruit and pastry for her, and then, seeing that she shivered in the cold night air, he took off his own cloak and put it round her shoulders. "Now I will take you home," he said. "And when they reached her door she asked wistfully: 'Will you not come in and have supper with us, as if you were my brother? Mamma will be so glad.'"
Maso followed her in and was welcomed by the Widow Gudule. While they sat at supper Maso told them of his childhood's home in Italy, which had been opulent, but sad, because motherless, of his father's ruin and death and of his own wanderings.
"And so, mother, he sings—you should hear him! The angels in heaven have not sweeter voices," exclaimed Christine, and the lad, taking up his lute, struck the chords lightly, then began to sing, while the mother and daughter listened with clasped hands and tearful eyes. As soon as he stopped there was a knock at the door. Christine opened it fearfully, for there was nothing in that poor home for robbers. Outside stood the tall man who had been in church. He recognized the child and smiled as he said:
"My dear, I want to speak to your brother, who has just been singing."
"He is not my brother," said Christine, surprised.
"No? Well, it does not matter. I want to see the lad who was in church with you. Tell him Master Kriegwinckel wants him a minute."
This man was one of the most celebrated musicians of that time, not only in Munich, where he lived, but throughout the music loving world. Little Christine, however, knew nothing about him, and thinking that the stranger merely wished to compliment Maso upon his singing she bade him enter. He bowed politely to the widow and then addressed Maso, saying:
"You have a beautiful voice, my lad—an unusually fine one. I am an old man, but I have seldom heard such a voice as yours. You understand what you sing, too, and you love music. You have all the makings of a great artist. But—you do not know how to sing!"
"That is because I have never been taught," said Maso sadly and humbly.
"I observed that. It is not your fault, and it can be remedied. How old are you?"
"Fifteen on Candlemas day."
"Very good. I have a proposition to make you. Have you relatives?"
"None. I am all alone."
"Better still. I will take charge of you. I will take you back to Munich with me; I will teach you music and singing, and in three or four years—you will see! Kings and princes will invite you to come to court and sing for them, and I shall have the honor of giving the world another great musician. Perhaps you have heard of me. I am Kriegwinckel, leader of the choir in Munich."
"I would be only too happy, master," Maso stammered. "But I am obliged to earn my living. I have nothing."
"You will not need money. I will treat you as my own son, and you will earn a great deal more than your living when I have taught you music. It is agreed, is it not? Ah, it was not for nothing that I watched you in the church, followed you out and after losing sight of you in the crowd searched for you until I heard your voice through that window. But I must leave Nuremberg tonight. Come."
The boy took up his cloak and lute, saying: "Goodby, Christine, I will come back some day. Do not forget me."
The girl clung to his arm and whispered: "I shall never forget you. I thought at first that you were an angel because you sang like one and were as good as one. I will love you all my life."
"Then ask your mother to kiss me good night. It will bring me luck," he said, and the Widow Gudule, clasping him in her arms, prayed that heaven's blessings might always follow him. As he turned away he handed his purse to Christine, saying:
"The master says I shall not need money, so here are my day's earnings. I have had a very good day, and they will help you until your mother can work again."
Eight years passed.
The Christmas bells were ringing merrily, and the people, coming out of their houses to attend midnight mass, greeted each other with Christmas wishes. Among the throng there was none who received more salutes and friendly smiles than an elderly woman who leaned on the arm of a beautiful young girl, tall and slender as a reed. By the light of the torch she carried, the girl's bright blue eyes, rosy cheeks and golden hair were seen, and every passer looked at

her with admiration; young and old greeted her smilingly, even portly burghers murmured as they met her. "God bless that sweet young creature!" while the poor people exclaimed aloud, "God bless the widow and her daughter for their goodness and charity to us!"
These two were but simple working people, yet all Nuremberg honored them. Every one knew that Dame Gudule Dachs, when left a widow with her child to bring up and her husband's debts to pay, had set about bravely to perform the task. She had become the most successful embroiderer in the town, her daughter had soon grown celebrated for her taste in designing new patterns, and now the widow owed nothing and could hardly fill all the orders she received from the richest ladies in the land.
As the people entered the church the organ's peal rose to the vaulted roof, and Widow Gudule, kneeling at Christine's side, heard her murmured prayer: "Sweet Saviour Jesus, protect him! Bring him back to us that I may tell him I have not forgotten him!"
The mother smiled sadly, for she had had experience of the world, and she knew that with young people remembrance often fades. Every Christmas eve Christine had said, "Suppose he should come tonight!" and when her mother tried to explain how unlikely it was that the youth who for a single hour had been their guest should ever think of them again the girl only shook her head and answered, "He will come."
The widow was growing uneasy, for her daughter was 16 years old.
Suddenly, just as the priest turned round to administer communion to the faithful, a voice in the choir rose above the organ's strains, and Christine's face was transfigured as she whispered, "It is he!"
Oh, that beautiful voice—powerful, impassioned, yet as sweet as if it came straight from heaven!
"Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth!" it sang, and Christine, carried out of herself as she listened, wept softly and wondered whether it were not indeed an angel's voice. With a saddened look in her soft blue eyes, she followed her mother out of the church, casting a wistful, timid glance up the dark winding staircase which led to the choir, and the widow, who also had recognized the voice, hurried her daughter away.
When they reached the street, the girl looked about her in vain, for there was no sign of the red cap and dark curls of the young lute player, no strange figure was to be seen except a tall man wrapped in a handsome cloak and wearing a gold embroidered cap which glistened in the moonlight. When the two women arrived at their home, this person stepped quickly up, and with a bow said:
"Merry Christmas to you, Dame Gudule! Merry Christmas, Miss Christine! Will you let the Florentine singer share your supper once again?"
"I knew he would come, mother!" cried Christine, and the widow, in spite of her misgivings, almost against her will, added:
"He is welcome as before."
They all entered the house, and when the girl had lighted the candles on the supper table Maso Napone gazed round the room eagerly. It was unchanged, and he even recognized the old chest on which he, the poor orphan minstrel, had laid his cloak and lute on that night eight years before. When Maso took off his cloak, Christine was astonished to see that the slender stripling had become a strong, handsome man, who looked at her with smiling admiration. Her simple yet well fitting blue gown showed her graceful figure to advantage. While she filled his cup Maso said to her, "One might take you for an angel now."
Then he related how Master Kriegwinckel had brought him up and taught him and been a father to him. The old man was dead now, and Maso once more traveled about to earn his living by singing. But he went as a great artist, not a poor vagabond. Kings and princes wrote asking him to come and sing to them, just as the master had predicted. He was rich and honored, and yet he was not happy, for he was alone.
"Dame Gudule," he added after a pause, "you once gave me a mother's kiss—will you now accept me as your son? Will you let me ask Christine if she remembers her promise?"
"I remember," murmured the girl, while her mother smiled and nodded.
"You promised not to forget me, and to love me all your life," he said, taking her hand. "I have always thought of you, and I love you, Christine, my little Christmas rose! Sweetheart, will you be my wife?"
"I knew you would come back," was all her answer.
Then Maso put upon her finger a gold ring set with precious stones, and said gaily, as he kissed her lips:
"A queen gave me this ring, and I kept it for you, my darling, that are more precious than all the queens on earth!"—J. Colomb in Short Stories.

The Christmas Box.
The origin of the term "Christmas box," as applied to donations of Christmas spending money, is uncertain, though antiquarians generally seem to think that it was derived from the custom of placing money for masses to be said or sung on Christmas day—therefore "Christ masses"—in a box, which from this use was called a Christmas box, a term gradually corrupted to Christmas box and finally applied to all money given as a Christmas gratuity.
Yuletide Song.
Heigho, the Winter! The bluff old fellow,
In meadow and field he roars again,
The maple that late was deck'd in yellow
Has doff'd its leaves in the gusty lane.
Heigho, sweetheart! I will find thy tip-top,
Thy dainty foot for thy golden head,
And out in the frosty air we'll trip it
And over the stubble gaily tread.
Heigho, the Winter! He brings the holly,
The frolic of Yule's enchanted tree,
And the mistletoe—now, by my folly,
There will be a kiss for thee and me!
Heigho, sweetheart! With a "Hey down derry!"
We'll sack the wood of its treasures now.
But, oh, there's never a bramble berry
Is half so red as thy lip, I vow!
—Richard Burton.

THE SONGS OF THE WIND.
How sighs the wind in the splendid day
When the world is wild with the wealth of May?
"The world is thrilling with light and love;
There was never a cloud in the heavens above;
Never a mateless and moaning dove,
Never a grave for a rose to hide,
And never a rose that died!"
How sighs the wind in the hopeless night
When the lone, long winters are cold and white?
"There are rainbows back of the storms to be
Back of the storms and their mystery;
But oh, for the ships that are lost at sea!
And oh, for the love in the lonesome lands,
Far from the clasp of the drowning hands!"
So the wind singeth. Its God decrees
The wind should sing such songs as these;
Should laugh in the sunlight's silver waves
And toss the green on the water's sad graves.
But why, in the night, should it sing to me
Of the ships, the ships that are lost at sea?
—Frank L. Stanton in Atlanta Constitution.

AN INVESTMENT.
Up at the top of the studio building in three small, cheap rooms lived old Parkes and his daughter Rose. She was a very pretty girl, and her figure was so good that she always provoked a favorable comment from the men about town who sometimes strayed into the precincts of that Bohemian quarter in New York, Washington square. But Rose, as she went through the park, kept her eyes modestly bent on the asphalt walk, apparently quite unconscious of the admiration she excited. It was the opinion of those who were acquainted with old Parkes' works that she was by far the best thing he had ever produced.
The truth is, old Parkes did not get along very well. How he got along at all was a mystery until Rose and he became acquainted with little Spacer, one of the best fellows that ever lived.
Rose, who was a born financier, perhaps could have explained how they managed to exist. At a ridiculously early hour in the morning she went to market with a basket, and she had the knack of making a deliciously appetizing dish with very little for a foundation. In short, Rose was a genius, and without her old Parkes would have found himself long ago in the poorhouse.
Though he was an excellent painter, who had spent years of his life in study abroad, his pictures somehow never seemed to sell well. Speaking from a mercantile point of view, his handling was too broad and free, and the people were not up to him. Then, too, his canvases were generally so large that they were not adapted to the walls of the average drawing room, and he capped it all by putting a price on them that frightened buyers off. As one well known critic put it, he would have done much better 50 years hence. Certainly he would not have done worse.
The few of his fellow artists who knew him did not like old Parkes very much, though they fully approved of Rose. His lifelong struggle with poverty had soured his disposition, and the nasty, cutting things he said were by no means relished. His overwhelming conceit rendered him a most disagreeable person. He rated himself far above the younger and more successful men—"pot boilers," he contemptuously referred to them—and it dazed him to think that they should do so well and he so badly. Rose was the only person he could get along with, and he had never said an unkind word to her in his life. Whenever he looked at her, he would always think of her mother, dead so many years, and then he would sigh to himself, Rose, who knew what he was thinking of, would come to him and throw her arms around his neck, with never a word.
When little Spacer fell head over heels in love with Rose, their financial condition materially improved. As I have already said, he was one of the best fellows that ever lived, and he was on the staff of a metropolitan newspaper and enjoyed a very good salary.
He knew nothing at all about art, which was the reason why perhaps the city editor gave him so many assignments to write of it. With a few stock words and phrases, such as "chiaroscuro," "fine atmosphere," "masterly handling," etc., he wrote up the exhibitions on the whole, quite creditably.
Little Spacer first saw Rose when he came to her father's studio for information as to where he was to spend the summer. He had been instructed to prepare an article with the title "Where Artists Will Spend the Summer." Old Parkes gruffly told him that he wasn't going anywhere, and he carefully noted down the fact. When he went away, he carried with him a vision of Rose's soft black eyes and Rose's creamy cheeks, and he was thinking of them still down at the office when he wrote these words, "Mr. Godfrey Parkes, the distinguished landscape painter, will remain in the city to execute a number of important commissions."
After that, upon one pretext or another, little Spacer kept coming so often that he grew to be a source of positive dislike to old Parkes. With Rose, however, it was different. The two had become such good friends that it would have grieved her very much if he had never come again. Little Spacer had two rooms near by, in West Tenth street, and he haunted the park in the hope of seeing her. Once, when he had been detained at the office very late and he was coming home completely fagged out at dawn, he had been refreshed by the sight of Rose going to market, and he had carried her basket for her, and they had had a jolly time.
As their friendship grew stronger he could see how miserably poor she was, and often in his lonely rooms he pondered over some way of helping her.
As Rose was such a proud little being, he realized that he would have to act with the utmost delicacy. Finally he decided that the best plan to follow was to buy some of her father's pictures, and with no other thought than to benefit her he began to recklessly invest in them.
When Rose appeared in a charming

RATS IN A SILVER MINE.
Their Usefulness as Scavengers and Sagacity as Danger Signals.
The first rats were brought to the Comstock from California in freight wagons principally, most likely in the big "prairie schooners," stowed away among boxes and crates of goods. Their rapid increase, after their first appearance on the Comstock, was astonishing. From 10 to 14 young are produced at a birth, and there are several litters each year; besides, a rat is a great-grandfather before he is a year old. Then, the rats that colonized the Comstock town encountered no enemies. There were no cats in the country.
The rats soon discovered the mines and found therein a congenial home, and a home free from the terrifying presence of members of the feline tribe. Never was a cat seen in any of the lower levels of the mines, though they sometimes prowl about the surface of the tunnels. In the first opening of the mines there was no place for the rats, but as soon as the timbers began to be set up and cribs of waste rock built they were able to find safe hiding places; also there was room for them everywhere behind the lagging of the drifts. As they increased in numbers there was on all sides an increase of space through the rapid extraction of ore by the miners.
They doubtless soon discovered that, though man was their enemy on the surface, he was their friend down in the underground drifts and chambers. He shared his meal with them, and they scampered and capered about him with perfect impunity. The warmth of the lower levels appeared to be very congenial to the rats, both old and young. Cold is a thing unknown to them. It is as though they had been given immense hothouses in which to breed. Any temperature they desire, from 60 degrees to 130 degrees, is at their command. Rats are useful as scavengers in mines. They devour all the scraps of meat and other food thrown upon the ground by the miners while at lunch, eating even the hardest bones, thus preventing bad odor. As the decay of the smallest thing is unendurable in a mine, the miners never intentionally kill a rat.
The miners have a high opinion of their sagacity. The rats generally give the miners the first notice of danger. When a big cave is about to occur, they are seen to swarm out of the drifts and scamper about the floors of a level at unwonted times. The settling of the waste rock probably pinches the animals in their dens, causing them at once to leave in search of less dangerous quarters.
At times, when a mine has been shut down for a few weeks, the rats become ravenously hungry. Then they do not scruple to devour the young, old and weak of their kind. During the suspension of work in a mine that is not connected with other mines that are running, everything eatable in the underground regions is devoured, even the candle drippings on the floors.
When work is resumed, the almost famished creatures are astonishingly bold and fearless. Then they will come out of their holes and get upon the underground engines—even when they are in rapid motion—and drink the oil out of the oil cups, quite regardless of the presence of the engineers.
A fire in a mine slaughters the rats by the wholesale. Few escape, as the gases penetrate every nook and cranny of the underground regions, and often so suddenly as to asphyxiate them in their homes.—Engineering Journal.

Never Despair.
"This battle is lost," said Desaix to Bonaparte at Marengo, "but there is yet time to win another!"
With the aid of Desaix, the conqueror of kings, never stopping to brood over his misfortune, won that auspicious victory soon after blazoned on the banners of his guards. Repentance is a blessed state of mind, but in and of itself it never saved the day. Despair over defeat may be perfectly natural, but it has never won another victory. A conscientious but erring lady said the other day that she spent much time in sorrowing over past mistakes, and thus she committed the biggest mistake of all.
"Never despair!" said Sir Walter Scott, sitting down, an aged cripple, to write off a debt of stupendous size, nor resting until he had accomplished his purpose.
"Never despair!" muttered that gallant Frenchman, Bernard Palissy, as he hurled his last stick of furniture into the furnace containing the first glazed porcelain ever made in modern years. Hence never despair.—New York Ledger.

Queer Salutations.
The Abyssinians drop on their knees and kiss the earth when they meet. In saluting a woman the Mandinkas take her hand, put it to their nose and smell it twice. The Egyptians stretch out one hand, then lay it on their breast and bow the head. Among the less civilized tribes of the old world, say, the Kalmucks and in Polynesia, the custom of rubbing noses is pretty general. Perhaps the most extraordinary form of salutation is to be found in Tibet, where the natives put out their tongues, gnash their teeth and scratch their ears.—Lander und Volkerkunde.

The Mule Meant Well.
An ex-street car mule in Los Angeles, from force of habit, had wandered between the rails. The electric car came along, and the mule imagined he was at the old business. The motorman put on a little extra speed, but the mule maintained the regulation distance between himself and the car. Faster and faster went the car, so did the mule. He had no thought of shirking, to the huge delight of the spectators and motorman.—San Francisco Report.

Unusual Punishment.
A judge in Ohio sentenced a man to be hanged before daybreak. This may not be cruel or unusual punishment in the case of a farmhand, but it would be rough on most other citizens, who do not like to have their sleep broken.—Buffalo Express.