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THE H. M. JENNE SHOE STORE

Falls City, Nebraska

Love Of Christmas Time

MRS. WILLIAM M. WILSON.

There is no more beautiful story than that of the first Christmas. "Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace and good will toward men," was the first Christmas anthem and the world has not improved upon it. It has been said that if it were not the beginning of a new era in the history of mankind and that if it had no religious significance, it would still be unsurpassed in its touch upon all the poetic imaginations and romantic instincts of our nature. But for millions of mankind it has a religious significance appealing, as none other can, to all that is highest and best in us, making it a time of good will and charity for all. In its social features Christmas stands first as the most joyous holiday of all the year—bringing together relatives and friends from whose reunion happy memories are created that give perennial pleasures. It would, indeed, be difficult, to find anyone, who cannot recall some happy and cherished incident associated with Christmas. It is only when we ask, "What would the year be without Christmas, that we realize how great an event it is in our lives. In its inspiration to charitable acts it is the most beneficent of seasons—not only giving happiness to thousands of poor and needy—but exerting an influence in the cause of benevolence that will reach far beyond.

Away back in fifteen-hundred old Thomas Tusser sang, "At Christmas play and make good cheer, for Christmas comes but once a year." In Tusser's day it was chiefly an occasion for mirth under the sanction of religion, and far off be the time when such an observance of Christmas shall cease. For what this age needs, and coming ages promise to need it quite as much, is mirthfulness. Unhappy is he who does not know that the key note of the universe is joy, and that Christmas laughter is the echo of the sunny sympathy which lightens the shadows in many a lonely heart. He is happiest upon Christmas, who makes most others glad. If we would gather flowers we must sow seed.

It may not be possible for every one to indulge in the comfort of making many gifts—but every man, woman and child may constitute himself or herself a tiny part of the universal movement to bring heaven a little nearer to some one. It is well at this time to remember the wisdom of Mohamet, who said "that if he had two loaves of bread, he would sell one and buy hyacinths for they would feed his soul." Our homes can be made more bright with the treasures of the field and the beauties of the forests, and our gifts more eloquent of love. Then in

after years as we glance backward into the golden age of childhood, these sunlit Christmas gardens will bring to us our happiest memories. May the fates be kind to the parents who can find neither time nor money to furnish some simple gifts to the little ones, for it is the greeting which we give to these latest arrivals from Heaven, whom we call children, that bring to us our greatest joy. Christmas trees are as green in the humble homes as in the mansion, and the beautiful rooms filled with costly gifts do not bring any grater joy than comes to the waif who receives a humble present from the Santa Claus who visits missions and looks after the little folks whose surroundings would be almost unbearable were it not for the few bright spots which Christmas brings into their lives. Mothers give your children a happy Christmas. The tooting of horns and the beating of drums is hard on the nerves, but in after years its memory may be sweetest music.

Then too, the fruits of the Christmas tree are usually short lived, but oh, what a good thing there is in the destruction. Punching a hole in the drum head is more fun than it would be to play for a whole year on the stretched parchment, and the small boy gets twice as much enjoyment in hearing the wind gush out of a rubber foot ball as he would have in kicking the expanded ball about the yard. The poor dolly with battered face and broken arms, clasped in her chubby hands at bed time, is far dearer to the heart of the little girl than a dozen big wax dolls hid away in the closets.

The first certain traces of Christmas festival are found about the time of the Emperor Commodus 180-192 A. D. A few years later in the reign of Diocletian a church full of Christians gathered to celebrate Christmas, were burned by order of the Emperor. The birth of Christ was celebrated in January, April and May—it is almost certain that the 25th of December is not Christ's birthday, as it is the rainy season in Judea and the shepherds could hardly be watching their flocks by night in the plains at that time. Christmas was observed generally in the latter half of the fourth century. After the conversion of Constantine and subsequent to the council of Nice it was decided by the fathers of the church to celebrate Christmas on the 25th of December. Among the causes that co-operated in fixing this period as the proper one—perhaps the most powerful one was that almost all the heathen nations regarded the winter solstice (the time of the sun turning northward) as a most important period of the year. It was

the beginning of renewed life and activity of the powers of nature. All heathen nations celebrated that season as the old Norse Yule feast. The Germans held their great Yule feast at that time, in commemoration of the return of the great sun wheel, commencing December 25th and continuing twelve days. Many of the beliefs and usages of the old Germans also of the Romans passed over from heathenism to Christianity. It has taken the best of all religions. Its games, its cheer, its legends, its fairies are Pagan. Its charity, its love, its universal forgiveness, its chants and prayers are Christian.

The Christmas tree with its hanging toys comes from the Romans and is told about by the poet Virgil. The visits of Santa Claus bearing gifts belong to St. Nicholas. All nations in the north have striven from the earliest antiquity to light up the dreary days of winter. Trees no longer bear leaf, flowers or fruit. The Christmas tree, therefore, must bud and blossom with gifts. The holly must throw its rich color over the snow, the red fire on the hearth from the Yule log, which burns twelve days, must replace the sun which they have lost from the heavens. The hospitality of the man must heal the inhospitality of nature, and food and good cheer must go from the rich kitchen to the poorer one. In Sweden where the people are of musical temperament the early hours of Christmas morn are ushered in with singing of carols.

Although the Christmas tree comes down from the Druids, it disappeared from England for many centuries. Even in the Wassall days when Christmas was a great day of feasting, we hear of no Christmas tree till the Duchess of Kent, true to her German recollection had one dressed for Queen Victoria when a little girl at Kingston Palace. But Christmas has always been splendidly kept in England. At eight o'clock on Christmas eve all bells greet Old Father Christmas with a peal which arouses the most distant echo. Children parade with drums and trumpets.

Noise is the form which enthusiasm takes among Anglo-Saxons, when the Yule candle is lighted. In noble English the host lights the Yule log, and great ill luck is foretold if its light goes out for twelve days. The Christmas feast required four dishes—roast beef, which meant strength; plum-pudding, which by its richness, typified the gifts which were brought by the wise men of the east. The porridge made in honor of the new little brother and sister up-stairs, and the mince pie to show that the eater was not a Puritan. Ale was drunk in honor of all the saints and martyrs, and the lord of misrule was expected to turn the house upside down.

In Rome, Italy the noisy music of trumpets ushers in the festival of the Befanta (Santa Claus) and a sort of fair is held in the public squares.

In the church of Ara Coeli, the prettiest scene takes place. A tableau of the Virgin Mary, a figure richly dressed, rocking the Holy Child in a manger, is revealed to the populace and little Italian girls make impromptu addresses speaking of the humility of the Christ child. This church which has the famous stairway up which pilgrims go on their knees, is crowded with worshippers, who adore this element of Christmas. The whole family of Polish nobles would gather around the brilliantly decorated Christmas tree, supper was a sort of picnic served all night, everybody going in and helping himself—the health of the belle of the dinner was drunk from her slipper. The mistletoe was carried from house to house and the sturdy Dutch lover would embrace his fair Katrina and the maiden who failed to be kissed beneath the mistletoe was doomed to remain unmarried during the coming year. The Germans have always spread the soft Scandinavian influence over the many superstitions. It was their forte to change the witch who rides a broomstick into the dignified Kriss Kringle, who rides in his own sleigh decked in furs. Befanta had a bunch of rods for the naughty boy and a few presents for the good one.

Kriss Kringle omits the rods and tries the logic of flattery. The German adores the stork who builds on his roof, and tells his children to protect the bird who cares for her young with such self-sacrificing fidelity. He teaches them that the Yule log signifies light and warmth—the great principals of life, that the Christmas tree means the eternal mother love, here the good cheer—the bounteous table, and far above it all is the Christ Child who made Christmas. There is the blessed Madonna and there stands the tree laden with gifts. No wonder the German child, as he listens to the beautiful stories of Kriss Kringle wishes that it could be Christmas all the year. Unfortunately for us the Mayflower brought their duties as on other days and kept no Christmas tree to "Plymouth Rock." The Puritans attended to their children away from what they considered the contamination of the pagan festival. The few Bostonians who believed in observing Christmas kept on unmindful of the rebukes of the elders and enjoyed the day as they had learned to do in their homes across the water. When the Puritan elders saw how popular the observance of Christmas was becoming, they promptly enacted a law to prohibit it. The law was passed in 1659 and not until 1681 was this green law repealed. The Puritan contempt for the green at Christmas was based upon the fact, that the hausing of green was following an old heathen custom. The green also kept alive an old tradition, that as the holly brought in at Christmas was smooth or rough, the wife or husband would be the one in authority during the coming year, and surely

no man ever of Puritan stock would tolerate the idea of being other than the "lord of creation." The Puritan influence was so strong in Boston that it is in the remembrance of some now living—that the day was ignored and Washington Irving's description of an English Christmas was all they knew of its true poetic side. Our natural and peculiar feast of Thanksgiving for many years told heavily on the institutions of Christmas. Scarcely were the indigestions of the Thanksgiving mince pie overcome before it was time to invite those of the Christmas plum-pudding.

An Irishman solved the problem by writing home, "This is a fine countree, twice as fine as the ould sod, for haven't they two Christmas days, and plenty to ate for three of em."

Santa Claus, a corruption of St. Nicholas is strictly our own. The term was first used by the Dutch settlers of New York. The Christmas carol is said to have been imported into England from Italy, and it has undergone many changes. Every graceful pen that can write German, French or English has paid tribute to Christmas, and better than all the words of the poet of humanity, Charles Dickens: "Who of us will eat his Christmas dinner without thinking of 'Tiny Tim' and his patient hard working father, who brought the turkey which was so fat that he never could have walked on two legs, as they would have snapped off under him like wax; who so blessed the holy and consecrated the mistletoe. Who so cheerily led off the dance in the kitchen. Where in all literature shall we find a grater gourmand than the fat boy, an apotheosis of Christmas stuffing. And where will the genius of the future find the star which rose on Bethlehem shining through the clouds of the world's misery, as in those immortal pages. If he had done nothing else for mankind, Charles Dickens has left his Christmas literature, a most glorious legacy to the world. We twine his mottoes with our Christmas—green. We quote him in our toasts and with one voice we say with "Tiny Tim," "A Merry Christmas to you all, and God bless us every one."

A GOOD RURAL SCHOOL.

Here are some facts about a rural school in Grant township, Wright county, Iowa. It is taught by Miss Mary Fennington, and Mr. R. V. Crabtree is director. Compare this school with the one in your district. It has:

1. Teacher alive to her opportunity for rural uplift; a leader both in school and out of school.
2. School director and patrons full of interest and enthusiasm for better schools, united in a common cause.
3. Farm and home economics correlated with geography, writing, drawing, history, etc.
4. A daily class in "farm and home economics" for sixth, seventh and eight grade pupils.
5. A new and modern school build-

ing with a well-lighted schoolroom, washroom, cloakroom and porch.

6. Bookcase built in wall, with a generous supply of good helpful books some of them bearing upon rural life.
7. Belfry and bell, genuine slate blackboards around the room, chalk and erasers to fit new conditions.
8. A new heating and ventilating plant changes the air of the room every fifteen minutes and heats all parts of the room evenly and easily.
9. Complete new outfit of school furniture including single adjustable and sanitary steel seats, new desk and chair for the teacher.
10. Wall decorations. Several new wall pictures of Hoffman's Child Christ, pictures of Lincoln, Washington, etc.; none of them costing less than \$2.50 each.
11. A fine school garden, fenced with a beautiful sweet pea hedge, and containing a number of well-kept garden and experiment plots.
12. Over thirty new trees set out on last Arbor Day by combined effort of teacher, pupils, school director R. V. Crabtree, and Mr. and Mrs. James Bell, who assisted all day in planting, cleaning and making school garden, etc.
13. New covered sanitary drinking jar and individual drinking cups.
14. Gravel walk from school to the road.
15. They paid \$50 per month for their teacher and she earned it.

Public Sale.

Bankrupt Stock of Furniture and Embaiming, Falls City, Nebr. Commencing Dec. 16, 1910 at ten o'clock a. m. and continuing until the entire stock of furniture, carpets, etc., of the bankrupt estate of Edwar Landrigan is disposed of. The property will be sold in the following order:

Friday morning, Dec. 16, commencing at 10:00 o'clock—chairs and rockers.

Friday afternoon, couches, tables and stands.

Saturday morning, Dec. 17—commencing at 10 o'clock—bed room furniture.

Saturday afternoon, writing desks, china closets, dressers and chiffoniers.

Monday morning, Dec. 19th—rugs, and miscellaneous articles.

The said property may be inspected at "Landrigan's" furniture store on any business day prior to the sale between the hours of 10 a. m. and 3 p. m. The trustee reserves the right to withdraw any of said property from sale unless it shall bring at least seventy-five per centum of the appraised value.

Bids will be received on said stock in lots or as a whole, subject to the approval of the trustee.

Terms of sale cash. No goods removed until settled for.

This is a fine new large stock, no old shop or shelf worn goods.

Remember the Dates. 2t
Samuel Kimmel, Trustee.
J. G. Whitaker, Auctioneer.