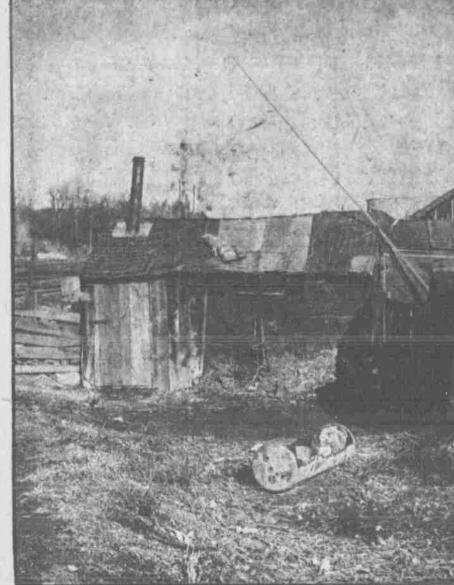
Life in the North Omaha Bottoms Where Christmas Never Comes



TIPICAL HOVEL IN NORTH BOTTOMS.

TH many thousands of homes in only a few boxes, a poor stove and a bed, Omaha where the Christmas that is frequently only an old mattress of spirit fairly permeates the at- a hay tick on the floor, and to make mat-mosphere; where for weeks past ters worse, things are not even clean. To the preparation for this day of call these homes is a misnomer, if that all the days of the year has been para- word is supposed to imply anything beyond mount to everything else with the smug- the mere sleeping and eating place. And ming in of mysterious looking bundles and yet these habitations are the only homes certain stowaway places forbidden to the that scores of families know and into them children; with the kitchen saturated every each year are coming little lives that must night after school with all sorts of de- form their standards from these surroundlicious odors that the utmost diligence falls ings and in turn perpetuate them through to reveal any explanation of and the whole another generation. But they are not all house fairly teeming with delightful mys- like this. Some of the very smallest and tery that nobody has really wanted ex- poorest are clean and even inviting, from plained, it is difficult to realize that there the clean scrubbed doorstep to the newspaare also scores of other homes within the per covered walls and the row of bright city's limits where on Tuesday, December plants in cans that make a cheerful show-25, will be no different from any other ing at the windows. Several days of each day of the year-where Christmas never week the yards of these little homes, for

Bomes in North Bettoms.

skirting Cut-Off lake and extending down been oiled to better shed the water, and a the river among the ice houses and railroad bank thrown up around the sides, at once tracks and hidden back in the bank among shutting out the cold and forming a ditch the weeds and rubbish that covers the plag face of the bluff, a district about two males long and including about 1,000 people, is such a place. To be sure it is not all a wilderness; there are some bright spots in the way of comfortable, frugal homes that have tarried behind in the general exodus of the more prosperous population that made room for the encroaching railroad tracks, but in the main the district is miserably poor-poor in the fullest, most inclusive sense of the term. Sunshine is its one harmony, sunshine and fresh air, but the latter is polluted and the beneficent effects of the former materially diminished by pools of foul-smelling, stagnant water that occur at frequent intervals over the flat territory backed up by the track beds or the established atreet grades and frequently sceping into the very rooms of the wretched little shacks that are the homes of dozens of families. So poor are some of these little habitations that they might easily be mistaken for shelter for cattle or horses rather than dwellings, and, in fact, in some instances they do serve as shelter for both. The majority of them are constructed from odds and ends of lumber, discarded tin roofing and patches of whatever may be picked up along the tracks or extracted from the junk piles, with now and then a covering of building or tar paper and occasionally a cheap little frame house or tent. Others are little more than caves. in the bluff with a shack built over the front-dugouts-that at least have the advantage of being warm when the winter wind sweeps down the river and across the bottoms, but when the weather is wet the poorer ones are little more than that prevents the water coming in These

Inside the Same.

And inside these houses are little better. The water supply is precarious. The city seems and children seem common to all.



these are usually homes, are hung with washings, other people's clothing, that tells the story of some mother's struggle. This Up on the north river bottoms over the year several tents have been added to the edge of the bluff that screens it from the colony. Some of these are large and warm, view of the residence portion of the city, with three or four rooms. This covering has



SHE NEVER HEARD OF SANTA CLAUS.



"HOMESTEAD ON THE HILLSIDE."





STAGNANT POOLS A MENACE.

thorities are called upon if nothing else lessly into other influences from which will bring the parents to do their duty.

and hold them until they are secured to Work of the Churches Repeated efforts have been made by vacome under its jurisdiction. In the main, however, it is the City Mission at Tenth presence at the Mission classes.

such influences as will serve to guide until they may have attained safe standards of rious churches to attract the children, living is the work of the missionary which Knox Presbyterian church having been is so attractive and so discouraging. It is among the most persistent, while the rector such thankless work, for its reward is of Good Shepherd's Episcopal church has frequently the basest ingratitude that been an untiring visitor, rendering substan- must be forgiven, because, literally "they tial assistance to many families in distress, know not what they do." With no as well as to the juvenile court when an standards except those of material gain, for interested friend is needed to stand sponsor their very existence has depended upon for some of the young people who have their ability to hold their own against the wits of their own and the oppression of however, it is the City Mission at Tenth circumstances, they must be taught new and Capitol avenue that has reached the standards. "Do unto others as they do unto residents of this district. "Miss Magee's you," is literally the rule by which many Mission" they call it, for, with few ex- have been taught to live, and even little ceptions, children and parents alike know children many times seem so hopelessly the little woman who has for years given hardened that they afford discouraging her life to work among them, coming into material. Naturally Thanksgiving and the their homes in times of sickness or trouble holiday time affords the best opportunity and helping the boys and girls through the of the year for attracting these children. Mission classes, and many of the mothers Goodies such as they have seen in the shop through the Mothers' club. With a tact windows, and perhaps a toy, are to be born of sincerity, Miss Magee has gone given away to all who will attend the among them, winning their confidence and Mission or Sunday school classes, and this then their friendship, and finally their is the first inducement to join. But some show of qualification must be maintained at the missions and the children are told that only regular attendants at may share the Christmas celebration.

they cannot be reclaimed. To win them

"Along About Christmas." As a result the attendance at the tem perance, industrial and Sabbath school classes begins to swell about Thenksgiving time, and if the weather happens to be severe the opportunity of the missionary is decidedly increased. The warmth of the class rooms is an additional attraction for the poor little homes are not overly comfortable at best and usually the little bit of coal or other fuel that may be picked up along the tracks by the children after school, or that the scanty income can provide, must be saved for the comfort of a father or mother who will return from work with the darkness, and not infrequently in a condition of intoxication that conditions for which this curse is so often responsible. Tiny as these quarters are, some of them have been the scene of the most disgusting carousals that has alone enabled the authorities to remove the chil-

dren from their debasing surroundings. Children are wonderfully literal until experience has taught them different, and a few years of disappointment at the diserimination of the Santa Claus of which they have learned at school teaches them to laugh at the loftler sentiments of Christmas as well as its dear old myth. Deep down in their child heart is a longing for some recognition of his better impulses, and when this recognition is denied in contradiction of the promises of the re-



TENT DWELLINGS ALSO SPRING UP.

aged parents.

than they are outside. Few have more water is not piped to these neighborhoods, than two or three rooms and many have and except where an occasional well of only the cold, hard-trodden earth for a necessarily doubtful equally affords the floor, with perhaps a few boards or old supply, water must be carried from some macks or a strip of old carpet for covering. of the factory buildings or shops or dipped tal, moral and material, and a local clergy-The furniture is of the crudest-sometimes from the lake, river or from some of the

How the Other Balf Lives.

Why do people live so? Why are such conditions allowed to exist? Poverty-menfashlonable congregation to the less fortunate residents of the east end of town has added to this answer: "Selfishness on

for only a few dollars a month and that level. Omaha is deplorably destitute of comfortable small houses within the reach of the poor is perhaps the first attraction to bond of a common level and those who

and when the children are withdrawn from saction of any semblance of charity in the bettering influences only the authorities eyes of the purchasers, at least, and enables rate an investigation is made. The child are able to interfere. The treamt officer their well wishers to provide more than is questioned, and if there is illness the has been a valuable and tactful worker, one comfortable garment that would be incompared in the children in school, but the detention. This is the secret of the good clothing be the cause the family is investigated.

Nicholas, tao.

And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof.

The prancing and pawing of each little has been a valuable and tactful worker, one comfortable garment that would be incompared in the children in school, but the detention. This is the secret of the good clothing be the cause the family is investigated.

Down the children in a twinkling I heard on the roof.

And then in a twinkling I heard on the roof.

The prancing and pawing of each little heard in my head and was turning a second.

By the children in a twinkling I heard on the roof.

The prancing and pawing of each little heard in my head and was turning a second.

By the children in a twinkling I heard on the prancing and pawing of each little heard in my head and was turning a second.

The children in a twinkling I heard on the prancing and pawing of each little heard in my head and the roof.

The prancing and pawing of each little heard in my head and the prancing and pawing of each little heard in my head and the roof.

The prancing are the children in a twinkling I heard on the street the night before. At any and then in a twinkling I heard on the children in a twinkling I heard on the children in a twinkling I heard on the street the night before. At any and then in a twinkling I heard on the street the night before. At any and the prancing and pawing of each little heard on the street the night before. At any and the prancing and pawing of each little heard on the street the night before. At any home have frequently been employed in the that has misled many to the belief that the and if neglect is found the juvenile ast- He was dreshed all in fur from his head to

pools. Scattered indiscriminately among interest of better citizenship. The in wretched little houses are not a true index. Shy and suspicious, anything that sug- wards that come to "good" boys and girls, fonts will be the winter quarters of several the houses and with such disregard for sun- trusion of strangers is emphatically re- to the real conditions of the families that gests patronage is a signal for retreat, and it is little wonder that he accepts his own families that include little children and itation as can result only from ignorance, sented and by methods rather discouraging occupy them. It is difficult to believe once their suspicion has been aroused the methods of gratification and justifies them are stables or pigpens, while dogs, chickens, to many whose visitations are prompted that bright-faced, comfortably clothed chil- work of winning their confidence has to as well. And so, with nothing in the home nouncement that greets the visitor who approaches by way of the long steps at the neighborhood. foot of Ohio street. "Look out for gote" is a significant warning that appears in large letters a little further down the street and still another sign reads "Fero dog here," this posted high on a shaft The fact that these houses may be had

Children at School.

Just how many children there are in this this district, but a few months of this en- district it has been difficult to ascertain.

ONE OF THE ROWS UNDER THE ELUFF by the best of intentions. One of the most dren are suffering a moral starvation, com- be done all ever again. Sometimes this upon which to draw, Christmas becomes popular means of warning off these well pared with which even less than they have takes only weeks, but oftener months, and one of the bitterest disappointments of the wishers is a little sign posted high on a bodily comforts would be luxury. Some of frequently the needed opportunity does not year to the children of the poor and one house or some other equally conspicuous the little faces are pinched and drawn to come again until they have drifted hope- of the most embittering experiences. place. "Bad dog here," posted on the be sure, but more often it is a bright smile corner of the nearest house, is the an- or a keen look of inquiry that greets the stranger who takes occasion to visit this

years may bring, and even such a handicap as is there cannot overshadow that inner sunshrine that beams just because the day is bright or someone has spoken a friendly word. When school is out "Tinbeds that St. Nicholas soon would be there; The children were nestled all snug in their bods.

| All s pack | His eyes how they twinkled! his dimples how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry; His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow. years may bring, and even such a handi-Sherman getting the majority, and these little shack to the colory, thus eliminating house rent from their expenses and so become permanent residents. In this way one house after another has been built, for the rent of the ground is little or nothing. The recent order of the juvenile ing. The recent order of the juvenile is done so that the beneficiaries of the substitutes children avail themselves of the substitutes of the provided in the should be income that familiar and the should be income that familiar and the should be income the first in the should be income that familiary in the majority, and these for they have shared the Christmas stories that have been the rewards of the school rooms are contributing to their lives more than almost an order of the juvenile in the should be income in the should be income that have been the rewards of the school rooms are contributing to their lives in the should be a school rooms are contributing to their lives in the should be a school rooms are contributing to their lives in the school rooms are contributing to their lives in the school rooms are contributing to their lives in the should be a school rooms are contributing to their lives in the school rooms are contributing to their lives in the should be a school rooms are contributing to their lives in the school of the school rooms are contributing to their lives in the school of the pass yes court that families with children shall are spared any embarrassment, for these in the way of merrymaking and reveiry snow that their elders provide and who can tell Gave a luster of midday to objects below: place for them at rent within their reach. city, that it may not be recognized, and so be probation off who have as who have as the children watched that Joy?

Moore's Classic Poem on Christmas Eve

Blessings of Childhood.

A wise Creator has ordained that child-hood shall be happy, no matter what later years may bring, and even such a handican alley," the "Paver road" and other while visions of sugar plums danced in streets resound with shouts of laughter their leads; as the youngsters come trooping home, and mamma in her kerchief, and I in my the stump of a pipe he held tight in his test. cap.
Had just settled our brains for a long win- And the smoke it encircled his head like a deer.
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

of myself.

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head Soon gave me to know I had nothing He spoke not a word, but went straight to And filled all the stockings; then turned

The Holly Tree. O hast thou ever stood to see The holly tree! The eye that contemplates it well pre-

Its glossy leaves Ordered by an intelligence so wise As might confound the artists' sophis-triesould my youth, as youth is apt

And should my youth, as youth is apt.
I know,
Some harshness show
All vain asperities I, day by day,
Would wear away
Till the smooth temper of my age should Like the high leaves of the holly

Christmas Sentiments of the Household

that's worn by Fauntieroy:
Love to chawnik grees apples an' go swimmin' in the lake—
Hate to take the castor-lie they give me for bellyache!
'Most all the time the whole year round there ain't no files on me;
But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be!

Got a yeller dog named Sport, sick him on the cat;

First thing she knows she doesn't know where she is at!

Got a clipper sied, an' when us kids goes out to silde,

"Long comes the grocery cart an' we all hook a ride;

But sometimes when the grocery man is worried an' cross

He reaches at us with his whip an' larrors

Say "Tessum" to the ladles an' "Yessur" to the men,
An' when they's company dont pass yee plate for ple again;

But, thinkin' of the things yer'd like to see upon that tree.

Jest force Christmas be as good as yer kin be.

Secrets of the Season.

He reaches at us with his whip an' larrups up his hoss; An' then I laft an' holler, "Oh, ye never teched me!" But jest 'fore Christmas I'm as good as I kin be.

Gran'ma says she hopes that when I get to Til be a missionarer like her oldest brother, But gram'nn she has never been to a wild
west show.

Now read the life of Daniel Boone, or size
I guess she'd know

That Buffle Bill an' cowboys is good
enough for me.

The go where you do not belong."

At least the parlor in the rear
Is quite sufficient for my dreams:
When wifey cries: "Not there my de
You like to poke around, it seems." That Hou to see an end of the cellur! I at last have found as I kin be.

A corner to myself—but no; For wifey cries: "You're set and and then old Sport be hangs around so sol
To see what's hidden down below

And then old Sport be hangs around so solemn like an' still;

His eyes they seem a-sayin'; "What's the
matter, little Bill?"
The old cat sneaks down off her perch an'
wonders what's become

A wilderness would be less tough.

Herace Seymour Keller in New York Sun.

Wather calls me William, sister calls me Will;
Mother calls me Willie, but the fellers calls me Bill!
Mighty glad I ain't a girl-ruther be a boy, Without them sashes, curls an' things that's worn by Fauntieroy!
Love to chawnik green apples an' on any min' in the later.

So, wash yer race an brush yer hair an mind yer ye and q's.

And don't bust out yer pantaloons and don't wear out yer shoes.

Say "Yessum" to the ladles an "Yessur" to the men,

An when they's company don't pass yee plate for ple again;

But, thinkin of the things yer'd like to see upon that tree.

Secrets of the Season. wander to the closet where I keep my best cigars and wine; When wifer cries: "Stay out of the things within it all are mine."

Unto the library I wend My way to rest, to think, to read; When wifey cries: "You will offend Me if you go in there, indeed."

above a gate that raises it to the street

They are distributed among three public schools-Sherman, Lake and Cass-Lak and were only renters originally add another Sherman getting the majority, and these for they have shared the Christmas stories ing. The recent order of the juvenile tact little is done so that the beneficiaries the city has sent many families to the teachers and pupils. The clothing is so how these children minds will interpret Even the probation off ore who have as-sisted in this work of emoval have had to as soon as possible after a need becomes sisted in this work of semoval have had to as soon as possible after a need becomes admit this and as a result an agitation has been begun that peoples to result in some tangible achemy for providing decent, samplify and the purses of the teachers, this is many live for small rent and amid wholesome surroundings. It is to such a plan that people who cannot give their personal which their clothing is supplied. Hundreds which their glothing is supplied. Hundreds which their clothing is supplied. Hundreds which their clothing is supplied. Hundreds which their glothing is supplied. Hundreds which their clothing is supplied. Hundreds of particular to the top of the purse, and principal. If the what counts are ded becomes as soon as possible after a need becomes as soon as possible after a need becomes and christmas soon as possible after a need becomes and christmas soon as possible after a need becomes and christmas and principal in must be St. Nick.

And laying his finger aside of his nose.

And laying his finger aside of his poursers they as coursers they as come.

And laying his finger aside of his nose.

And laying his finger aside of his season agenthes.

The sprange his foursers they as come.

And laying his finger aside of his season as coursers they as come.

And laying his finger aside of his season as coursers they as come.

And laying his finger.

And laying his fing that people who cannot give their personal which their clothing is supplied. Hundreds removing and principal. If the wall' works may be asked to subscribe at a not of perfectly good garments are collected bility of teachers and principal. If the Now, dash away, dash away, dash away, dash away, and a way, dash away, da among the women of the churches every year are nearly of the finite lines and the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and stale and spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and fall and offered for sale in the spring and sale in the sale in the spring and sale in the spring and sale in the sale in