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AN ODE TO A TURKEY.

BY WALT MASON.

Written for the Christmas Courier.

A sigh for the grim old turkey,
The relic of ages gone,
That lived through the drear Thanksgiving,
To perish on Christmas dawn.

The waves were wild, the skies were dark,
When Noah landed his famous ark; the hissing
rain in torrents fell, the ark was tossed
by heaving swell. He heard the shrieks of
those who tried, by climbing trees to dodge
the tide, of those who tried to gain the shore,
but only sunk to rise no more. For days and
days the torrent poured, for days and days
the billows roared; at last old Noah landed flat
upon the heights of Ararat. He open flung
the heavy door, to let his circus reach the
shore; then came the beasts abreast in pairs,
the chipmunks and the polar bears; the ostrich
and the kangaroo, the jointed snake
from Timbuctoo; and at the end two turkeys
came—the male was gray, and half and lame;
his head was bowed, his eyes were blind, it
was the father of its kind; and we should
happy be, I say, to have this noble fowl to-
day.

A sigh for the gray old turkey,
The relic of ages dark,
The parent of modern turkeys,
The patron of Noah's ark.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

BY H. T. DOBBINS.

He was a poor, forlorn looking sort of an individual and he looked even more forlorn than he really was as he stambled along one of our streets the other evening. Every once in a while he would stop, look into the brilliantly lighted shops resplendent in holiday attire and filled with happy things of gift-seekers, only to turn away and resume his weary walk. His tattered clothes, his almost shoeless feet and his hardened visage all betrayed the fact that he was a nameless wanderer. Despite the ravages of exposure and general shiftlessness it was easily seen that he was yet a young man, not even thirty at the farthest. Sitting here by my fireside to-night, with the warmth of the glowing fire encompassing me about, while without I hear the wild wind whistling, the image of that lonesome-looking figure—lonesome though on a crowded street—comes up before me. What caused him to become a wanderer upon the earth? Why does he choose to lead the life of a nomad, unloving and unloved? Alas! No one can tell and few take trouble to inquire. Perhaps in years gone by he was the idol of some loving mother in some happy home. Some guardian angel may have whispered sweet lullabies into his childish ears and soothed his troubled fears as only mothers can and do. Some father's hands may have guided his youthful foot-steps in the labyrinthian paths of knowledge, and stayed his hands with the wise counsel of experience. Some sister's clinging love and sweet companionship may once have held him close to the magic influence of the home circle, and kept him from the baneful companionship. Perhaps in some far-off eastern home an aged father, a white-haired mother, wait and watch for their boy, the pride of their hearts, the joy of their early married life, whose childish prattle still rings in their ears. They watch and wait for him; but he comes not, nor will he. The wasted years of manhood rest upon his head with added weight, and the joys, the hopes of his earlier life are but dead sea fruit on the lips of time. But not knowing, still they wait and watch and yearn for his return, until first one and then the other sinks beneath the weight of years, drop into the nameless sleep and are laid at rest beneath the waving grasses and green sod that grace the city of the silent. Maybe, nobody knows and nobody cares. He is only a tramp. Whether the force of adverse circumstances, the sweeping away and being of every tie that held him to the things he cherished, whether the inscrutable workings of Divine Providence, or the more worldly but equally invisible workings of the unwritten law of capital and labor, forced him out into the world to prey upon and in return be kicked and cuffed by the more earthy of us, we are not aware. Be it as it may, he, and hundreds, nay, thousands like him, are turned loose upon humanity.

You, whose bright homes ring tonight with the merry laughter of happy voices; you, to whom Christmas is but the harbinger of joys to come as well as joys present, look upon this poor outcast in pity. Turn him not away from your door in these glad times of festivities. He is only a tramp. True, but he is one of the same great brotherhood of man to which you and I and all of us belong. For him no Christmas dinner is spread, for him no gifts are brought, for him no loving words are spoken. His life is a blank. He is only a tramp.

On this precious Christmas evening when the incense of grateful thoughts and prayers rise from the altars of many happy homes, let there be mingled with them an cry for the outcast and the wanderer. And in the midst of your holiday rejoicing remember that there are many to whom Christmas is a stranger and its reputed joys but a myth.

The fire on the hearth burns low, the wind louder and louder whistles as it sweeps thro' the bare limbs of the maples, and in fancy I see the poor unfortunate, shuffling and shambling, fade from my sight as he seeks the repose of some secluded nook where wild winds blow not.

Wonder if in all their Christmas purchases, our readers will think of the humble newspaper scribble. Remember our office is now in the new Burr block, on our postoffice driveway, which is quite large, is number 63, or if necessary we have an express wagon that will call for all large packages. But we want it distinctly understood, diamonds will not be accepted.

THE PAST.

Written especially for the Christmas Courier.

All silently, bedraped in trailing garb
And shrouded in the sable shades of night,
With solemn pace the Old Year stalks away,
And sweeps the threshold of the sombre Past.
Farewell, old friend, and, tho' thy reign is o'er,
And Youthful Hope usurps the car of Time,
Tho' bright and beauteous be the lovely boy
Amid the garlands of the coming year,
And like a star o'er dark-rolled waves at night
Throws a long gleam athwart thy shadowy realm—
E'en yet, oh Seer! While all the busy world
Bestows no thought but on the Future hour,
Let me, with thee, in all subdued delight,
Dwell in the dreamy valleys of the Past.
What tho' the sun of Hope in brilliance sheds
His glories o'er the Future's fairy fields;
Humbly I'll walk with thee where Sorrow's moon
In midnight silence walks the blue serene,
And where the myriad silent stars appear
To charm the chastened vista of the Past.
What tho' frondescent in the Future year,
The bursting verdure decks the smiling earth,



And where the myriad silent stars appear
To charm the chastened vista of the Past.

Yet still, Old Year! with thee I'd choose to roam,
Like Dante with his Virgil, thro' the grooves
'Neath which th' autumnal treasures of the Past
Lie thickly strewn—where softly-tinted leaves
All mutely plead for notice as you pass,
And gleam with richly painted breasts, and thus
Remirror in the matrix of the mind
A thousand mellowed thoughts that had gone by.
'Tis said "All is uncertain 'neath the sun,"
But yet, oh Paraclete! Thy Kingdom stands,
Eternal in petrain posted Past—
The waves of Violence and Accident
In vain roll on—they cannot change the Past.
Nor can we by weakness—e'en should we choose,
Forego one single item of thy power—
Not awful Fate herself can wrest from thee
A single moment of thy changeless reign;
But Mem'ry's harp and long-vibrating wires,
Shall seem to ring along thy corridors;
And, like a long-swept wave, come rolling up
To present hour thro' portals of the Past.

—R. M. R.

CHRISTMAS ON THE MOUNTAIN.

BY H. M. RUSHNELL.

Written for the Christmas Courier.

When the sun rose this Christmas morning upon a Christmas day not many years ago it rounded the southern side of the "hump" and shone down through the keen, frosty air upon an old homestead and farm house that seemed to have climbed as high as it was possible to get, up the rugged, rough and timbered side of the old mountain. Age and decay marked this only sign of civilization that, in the warm summer days marked more than the halfway point to tourists making the ascent, and as stood out in the frozen, silent surroundings, above the yellow birches, the leafless beech and the black cedars, it looked above the reach of Christmas cheer and Christmas chimes. For two long months the drifts had piled high along the mountain sides and the dreary-voiced elements had supplanted the sighs of summer breezes in the scattered pines, still higher on the mountains, for many brief, early winter days. But, if the old homestead looked drear and frozen far up the mountain, the panorama was a grand one from the old farm house, looking over the tops of the timbered hills off into the valley, where, two miles distant, at the very foot of the mountain nestled the quiet village that, for nearly a century, had grown as unchanging as the mountain above it. It is in no way necessary that this little village be called by name, but if you wish, call it Underhill. From the homestead on the mountain the long wreaths of smoke ascending from the clustered houses of the village, grew into small clouds in the still morning air, and the village church spires and the dome on a little church slightly isolated from the others, shone in the sun's rays like burnished silver. Beyond the village the landscape widened and a long white line marked the frozen river, and still beyond, fairly resting on the horizon, was the long white plain of frozen lake with, rising still beyond it, in indistinct lines of blue scarcely discernible from the blue of the sky, were the long lines of mountains beyond its western shore.

The old homestead that, on the eminence, overlooked this vista, had its history. Upon this western side of the mountain, in the days of the revolution, a detachment of Green Mountain boys had built signal fires to warn the scattered inhabitants that Burgoyne, with his army of invaders from the north, was skirting the lake on his march southward. From one of the signal stations the forest had been fired and it was upon the black clearing made, that a pioneer, after independence had been gained, planted his home in the wilderness, and for a century fathers, sons and grandsons, "content to live where life began," had wrung from the cold, rugged mountain side, all that their frugal necessities demanded. The old house had grown from a block house of 1750 to a farm house of no mean pretensions that, for many years, had enjoyed the distinction given by a red coat of paint, but as many of its occupants had done, it was now going back to childhood and the red was rapidly disappearing, and the loosened boards revealed the ancient timbers of its early years.

At the old farm house on this particular Christmas morning, of all who had called the old place home only two remained, and for three score years their home had been on the mountain. It was the father and the mother who, like countless other fathers and mothers, had been left behind when the children had flown out in the world from the home on the mountain. It is needless to say that on this Christmas morning they thought of Christmas days in the years long gone by, when the old home rang with laughter on a Christmas morning, and the little home presents went around; in the years before a little yellow haired girl had been laid in the church yard under the hill and before a sturdy boy went out into the world, and into the west, to join the push and throng of modern days. "It has been so long since we have heard from Charlie," the mother had said several times the day before, and there was just such a wistful look, as comes only to mother's eyes, as she moved from place to place in the old home on this Christmas morning. The good old custom of church upon Christmas day had not been forgotten in the little village under the hill, and the almost indistinct chimes of the bells in the little town called to them on the mountain, the father assumed good cheer and brightened the hopes of the mother, who had been all the long years up and down beside him, with the prophecy that the mail that day should bring them a letter, and there was a cheerful echo to the prophecy in the distant whistle of a train that echoed along the mountains from the line of road beyond the hills and the river in the valley. It might not have been, but still it seemed to the father and the mother that the white-haired man who spoke to his people on that Christmas morning, that he, too, was holding a lamp of promise to them as he spoke of the faith of the fathers, of the faith that followed on, brought joy not sorrow, and of the day star that should arise in their hearts. From the church it was but a few steps to the village store that possessed the added dignity of post-office, and the father thought with a sinking heart of the loneliness of the day, and the home, and the mountain, if the letter did not come; and he went to the far end of the little store where the rows of boxes stood before a table and a chair, and he looked through the glass and around the great red number that half covered the little square of glass—and the letter was there! It is needless to dwell upon the happiness the rest of that Christmas day in the old home on the mountain, for the Christmas gift that came that day was priceless to them, for it told that all that was left them on the earth had not forgotten the old home, that a boy could become a man, and a wanderer and yet that at the Christmas time he would not forget the father and the mother and that they loved him even as the Christ child loved humanity in the long ago when the morning stars sang together. And if the wanderer from his mountain childhood home could have seen the father and mother in the twilight looking from the window over the darkened panorama of the morning, up at the stars in the upper heights, he would have known that the most precious gift at Christmas time is a letter home.