WHEN MARJORIE REMEMBERED.

A Story of Christmastide.

WRITTEN FOR THE EVENING STAR BY ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL.

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"My dear sir—"

Dr. Sperry fitted his finger tips together with careful precision before he continued.

"My dear sir, it is one of the strange cases, but it does not stand alone in the records. I have known of others, a few, quite parallel. There is only the one treatment."

"And that?" interrupted the little man opposite, haggard with anxiety.

"Is the one I have prescribed all along. There is no change."

The little man, Marshall Graham, got on to his feet and began to pace the floor with nervous little runs. He plunged his hands in his pockets to hide their trembling.

"We must humor her still, doctor?" he asked. "You mean that?"

"You must humor her still—I mean that. I mean just that. Humor her—humor her. Believe what she believes—if you can. If you can't, make believe. I tell you—"

The fitted finger tips parted and the shapely white hands came down resoundingly on the learned doctor's knee.

"I tell you, Graham, you've got to do it if you'd save her. It's the only way in a case like hers, and, good Lord, man, haven't I been studying these cases forty years? I tell you—I—tell—you—"

One long forefinger timed the words on the other palm. The doctor's face was solemn.

"She—must—be—humored! Any rude shock—any forced awakening—will be her death—or something worse. She must awaken herself. She must come out of her delusion by herself, of herself—naturally and quietly."

"B-b-ut—" the little man's lips stammered helplessly. The rest of his question would not ask itself, but the doctor read it in his anxious face. He got up and forced the little man into a chair gently. Then he stood over him with his big square bulk and gave him comfort.

"Man alive," he said, "are you going daft, too? 'Will she come out of it?'—that's what you want to ask, eh? Well, then, listen—I believe she will. I—believe—she—will. I believe there will be a quiet, natural waking up of her own accord—when the time comes. But you've got to wait for it. You've got to watch over her constantly and see to it that no lubbering idiot breaks the spell of her dream for her. I told you what that would mean. You've got to wait—and the Lord give you patience!"

"It is terrible—the waiting," Marshall Graham said slowly.

"It is terrible to see her so happy, doctor!"

"Good Lord, man, wouldn't it be worse to see her miserable?"

"In one way—in one way," groaned the stricken little man.

The doctor settled back into his pivot chair and adjusted his finger tips once more precisely.

"It's an unusual case—an unusual case, my dear sir," he said in his stilted professional tone. "The shock was so severe—it is seldom one loses four children at a single blow. And then her terrible illness that followed—it sapped her constitution and put a tremendous hindrance on nature's method of cure. It is only what you would expect, that the cure is delayed immensely—immensely. By the way, Graham, are the servants all trustworthy, eh?"

He wheeled about and put the question abruptly. Marshall Graham awoke from his deep preoccupation.

"Perfectly—every one of 'em, doctor," he said briskly. "I can trust them down to the last iota. They are all devotedly attached to Marjorie—to Mrs. Graham."

"Good! That's of the utmost importance. Humor her, do they! Fall in with all her vagaries about the children?"

"All. Poor things, it's terrible for them, too. They were all so fond of the—the—little ones."

"Is the children's nurse still with you?"

"Roxy? Oh, yes—Mrs. Graham will not think of letting her go. She is waiting for them to come home."

The little man's voice broke pitifully. He caught up his hat and hurried toward the door.

"Good morning, doctor," he said over his shoulder. He shut the door behind him and his heavy steps sounded down the long hall. But Dr Sperry was at the outer door a second later and called him back. The big white right hand was held out to him, and when it got the little nervous, tense one in its grasp, how it gripped!

"Good day, Graham," was all the doctor said, but the little man's heart was lighter in proportion to the tingling of his hand, and he went away home with footsteps that rang less heavily on the stone pavements.

Marjorie Graham, his pale, sweet wife, met him at the door. She was holding out both hands in welcome.

"Oh, Marshall, have you come at last?" she cried; "and here I've been waiting and waiting! You bad boy, to stay so long!" She drew him into the hall and blew the flecks of snow from his shoulders, and patted his face gently. He saw at once the look of delightful secrecy on her face, and steeled himself for what he knew must be coming.

Marjorie Graham was tall—half a head above him—and delicately frail. The rings of soft hair lying on her brow were almost white, but she was very far from old. Her whole aspect was happily expectant. A stranger looking at her sweet, pleased face would have told himself she must be expecting some beautiful happening—and the stranger would have been right. Marjorie Graham was expecting her four little dead children to come home in a few days. She was getting ready for them. Only the restless, wistful eyes betrayed any mental disorder, and even in them it was hardly apparent to ordinary notice.

"I've got a secret to tell you—and something I want to do," the sweet voice cried gayly in his ear.

"You didn't know—you funny, absent-minded boy not to!—that next Saturday's Christmas! Christmas, do you hear, Marshall Graham? To think I had to tell you! And the children coming just in time! Those people—where they are, you know"—the puzzled look in her eyes—"must have planned just right. They must have remembered Christmas, if you didn't, forgetful boy. I'm so thankful—why, Marshall Graham, what kind of a Christmas would it be without the children! And that makes me think of the rest of it. That's the secret, and now what I want you to do is—can't you guess?"

She tilted her head and looked at him archly. He made a brave attempt at smiling and shook his head.

"Can't do it, ma'am. I'm not as good a guesser as I am forgetter."

"Well, then, take your wife out in the sleigh to choose a Christmas tree!" she cried. "That's what. You took me last year and the year before—and before—and before. Oh, most back to the flood! Did you think you were going to get off this year? Not a bit of it, sir! We'll go right after lunch—way out in the country, you know. I'm going to be very particular to get a fine one this time."

She chatted on too busily to notice the look of pain on the little man's face. When she glanced at it, it was smiling again bravely.

They went right after lunch. The sun was shining and a smart little wind sent a flurry of light snow into their faces, and Marjorie laughed at it. The cutter sped along out of the city, into lovely snow-christened country roads.

"I'm so happy, dear boy," Majorie said. "There's so much to be happy over! The children coming home—isn't that enough to make a mother feel happy? Oh, but you don't know—you can't think, dear, how I've been missing them! How could you know when you're nothing but a man, poor boy? It's different with mothers—there, you needn't look so grieved, dear! Of course you've missed them, too."

"Yes, I've missed them, too," the little man said steadily.

"Elsie and the girlie twins are bad enough," ran on the sweet voice in his ear," but Oh, the baby! You can't think how I miss that little peck o' mischief, Marshall! It makes me ache. I keep all his horses and things lying round to keep me patient till he comes. I don't see—I can't understand—"

"Isn't that a good tree? Look, Marjo!" Marshall Graham interrupted quickly, pointing with his whip, and the little crisis was past. They bent their attention to the choice of a Christmas tree after that, and nothing more was said about the children's coming home—the little children that never would come.

The tree was found at last that suited Marjorie—that had straight enough, symmetrical enough, low enough branches, and was just big and just little enough. She

HE SAW THAT SHE HAD REMEMBERED.

was very hard to suit—"for," she insisted, gently, "it must be a perfect one this year—just a perfect one, dear boy."

It was marked plainly and the locality distinctly noted, so on the morrow the man could go after it, and then, in the early, crisp winter twilight, they rode home.

The next afternoon Marjorie sat by her window, absently watching the little Coopers next door build a deformed snow man. There were four of them, all sizes, and they all wore little stout red mittens. Everything else they wore was old and worn and shabby, like the little Cooper house itself, but all the little mittens were dazzling and new. Mrs. Graham's eyes followed them in unconscious fascination. She had never noticed the little Coopers much before—her own little children had never played with them. If she thought of them and their small, shabby house at all it had always been with gentle vexation because they were there at all, behind her own pretentious, handsome home. They were the only blot on her pretty "view."

Today she was not thinking of them really. She was trying to decide what things she was to get for the children's Christmas. The decorations for the tree—of course—those were easy enough, but the toys. They puzzled her, baffled her strangely. She couldn't seem to remember—

"Taey've been gone so long, the children have," she murmured, wistfully. "That's why, but I should think I'd remember. I should think I'd know what Elsie'd like, and the Girlie twins and little Peck. Mischief—Oh, I don't see why I'm so stupid I can't remember—I can't decide. Oh, dear!"

Roxy, the children's nurse, came into the room on an errand—or was it to make sure the children's mother was quite safe?

"Roxy," the children's mother said, abruptly, "did you ever have any little sisters and brothers?"

"Me, mem? I had a little brother once, but he di—he went away when he was a baby," the girl answered, quietly.

"Oh! Then you can't help me. I thought you might be able to remember."

Marjorie began her restless rocking again, with a little sigh of disappointment. Then her eyes fell once more on the little red-mittened band outside. They were just putting on the snow man's head. The oldest girl was holding the baby up to do it. Mechanically the pale woman at the window counted little cold blue noses. "Why,"

Into the Enchanted Land.

she cried softly, "why, Roxy"—but Roxy was gone—"there are four of them! There are just four and—why, they are almost the same sizes, too! One, two, three—three of them girls and the little one's a boy!"

She sat up, mildly excited. Little red spots blossomed out in her white cheeks. Just four and just—almost—the same sizes! Then she had an inspiration.

"Oh, yes, they'd know," she cried. "They'd know everything!"

She raised the window a little way and called down to them in her clear, sweet voice that "carried" distinctly.

"Little children! Little girl—you oldest one! Won't you please come over here and see me a little while? I want to ask you something."

The children stopped their play and looked at each other with round, astonished eyes.

"Oh, my!" said Nip, excitedly.

"Oh, my!" said Tuck.

Nip and Tuck always said the same things.

"Let's go tell mother," advised Ann Sophy wisely. "I'll ask my mother, ma'am," she called up to the eager face at the window.

"Mother, mother," they all chorused, "the Queer Lady wants us to go over there an' see her—she called us out o' the winder, honest she did! She wants to ask us somethin'."

"Yes," Ann Sophy recapitulated with slow emphasis, "honest."

"Well, of all things!" ejaculated Mrs. Cooper in amazement, "I declare! Well, I 'spose you'll go. She's harmless and they say she has to be humored. But you've got to clean up. Ann Sophy, you scrub the baby's face. Nip, you braid Tucky's hair ever again—smooth, mind you, and you may tie her best ribbon on. Hurry."

After a good deal of hurrying and smoothing down and washing up, the small Coopers went, in a solemn litttle procession, to the Queer Lady's.

She was waiting at the front door.

"Come right in," she said eagerly, "and you'd better take off your things."

"Oh, no'm," Ann Sophy cried hurriedly. "We couldn't: We only had time to clean up outside—keep your mittens on," she whispered in a shrill aside to Nip and Tuck.

Mrs. Graham pointed to chairs, but Ann Sophy arranged them in a straight line, side by side, before they sat down. Then she seated them gravely, according to sizes, herself at the head and the baby at the foot. They sat up primly and folded all their gay little mittens on their little shabby laps. The baby's stout, abbreviated legs stretched straight out before him, and barely reached the chair's edge.

"Now, ma'am?" Ann Sophy said, expectantly, taking a last sidewise view of her line of parade.

"What do you want for Christmas?" asked the Queer Lady.

The question was so abrupt, so unexpected, that a row of little gasps broke forth unmuffled. Ann Sophy swallowed hard.

"Ma'am?"

"What would you like best? Tell me all the things," the Queer Lady's sweet voice hurried on earnestly. She was too absorbed in her own thoughts to see how surprised and how wistful the little faces all were. She hardly noticed them at all. She was waiting, pencil and tablet in hand, for Ann Sophy's reply. "First—what?" she urged. "I want to make a list."

"Oh—oh!" Ann Sophy was too bewildered to consider clearly. Her eyes sought her red mittens in her lap, and then, in a flash she remembered the fervent ambition of her narrow little life. "Oh, a pair o' kid gloves," she cried, "with plenty o' buttons! An' a book with pictures of cows an' trees an' country in it—an' a music box—an' side combs, an'—" her tongue was loosened. She poured out her cherished dreams in a little turbulent flood of eloquence. The Queer Lady's pencil could hardly keep up with it. Ann Sophy had given them courage and they stayed not upon the order of their saying, but said it all, with shrill enthusiasm. Even the baby expressed his wishes fluently, if not clearly.

On their way home the little Coopers talked it all over.

"She's a-goin' to give us a Christmas!" shouted Nip in an ecstacy of delight.

"She's a-going to!" echoed Tuck.

"Hush, she'll hear you!" Ann Sophy cautioned them, but her staid little face was quietly radiant. She was almost ready to believe it herself.

"I don't know—it looks kind of so," she said, wistfully.

"Huh, course it's so. What's she want us all to choose things for, then?" said Nip, scornfully.

"Yes, what'd she want us to for?"

"Well, I don't know—it kind of looks so honest," repeated Ann Sophy, slowly.

"Hoor-ray! An' we warn't goin' to have any Christmas before—not a single thing, Ann Sophy Cooper, 'cause the coal bin's most empty!"

"No, we warn't—not a single, Ann Sophy Cooper!"

"Hoor-ray!"

"Hoor-ray!"

"I can't help it—it looks kind of so," murmured Ann Sophy's wistful voice again.

The Queer Lady, left alone, was looking over her list. It was not altogether satisfactory. She was a little disappointed. Some of the things were so queer. If she could only remember—did children really want such things as those?

"Well," she said, folding the list carefully, "I'll get all these things, anyway, and perhaps they'll suggest others that aren't so queer."

The few intervening days went past on swift wings. Marjorie Graham was very busy and happy. The children would come on Christmas eve, just in time to hang up their stockings. And, meantime, there was so much to do—so many beautiful things to see to!

Two days before Christmas Marshall Graham came home unusually early in the afternoon. Twilight was just beginning to fold in the merry Christmas world. He hurried up the steps. Roxy let him in.

"Where is Mar—where is Mrs. Graham?" he asked anxiously.

The girl's pleasant, buxom face quivered suddenly. She pointed toward the parlor door.

"In there," she said huskily. Then she sank down on the stairs and broke into hushed sobbing, swaying back and forth and rocking her arms.

"She's fixing the—the—it," she sobbed under her breath.

The little man braced himself as for a blow, and went into the parlor. Marjorie came to meet him with a laugh of triumph.

"See, dear boy!" she cried, "isn't it lovely? It's all ready but lighting the candles. I couldn't wait till Christmas to fix it. You see, I can keep the parlor door locked—the children won't know, and I can keep coming in to admire it. No, come over this side—there! that's the best view of it Now, you dear boy, say it's the loveliest tree you ever saw—say it! Begin, 'It's the loveliest—'"

She was darting in and out among the laden branches, readjusting and relooping. Her eager eyes shone like candles to him.

"Say it, dear boy, why don't you begin?" she cried gayly. And the little man drew a long, sobbing breath and said it as well as he could. It satisfied her. She was too preoccupied to think his voice was stilted and strained.

"Those little Cooper children helped quite a lot. I called them in. You can't think what funny little things they were! There, it's quite, quite done. Tie my hands so I won't touch another thing! And over here, see, on this sofa, are the stocking things. Four piles—this little soft one's Peck o' Mischief's!"

The tears were running helplessly down the little man's face, but she did not see them. He kept his head turned away. Four piles of toys were ranged in a prim row and four little black stockings lay beside them, their limp lengths dangling over the sofa's edge. Outside in the hall Roxy rocked her arms and cried tears of honest love. That evening Marshall Graham called on Dr. Sperry again. He told the whole sad little story, and the kind-hearted doctor hemmed and coughed and polished and repolished his spectacles. "My dear sir," he began, then coughed and tried again. "My dear sir, you must wait. Wait and the Lord help you! I tell you there's nothing else to do; she must waken of herself. Shock? Man alive, could she waken without a shock? But it will be mercifully easier if it comes as naturally as possible. I tell you it will be the difference between life and death to her. You say she talks of not remembering? Just so. I believe she is going to remember by and by. And it will come upon her gently. I believe it. You must wait."

"But Christmas, doctor?"

"I know—I know. It will have to come. But wait, wait. The waking up may come, too. If not in time, you must explain, prevaricate, anything to satisfy her."

And so, with his heavy heart, the little man went home.

In the middle of the night he woke up in unexplainable terror, to see Marjorie coming in at the door with a lighted lamp in her hand. She had on a pale blue wrap and in the dim light she looked too pale and frail to be embodied. He sat up in bed and held out his hands.

"Marjo, Marjo," he called. And then as she came nearer he saw her face plainly.

"Oh, Marjo!"

For he saw that she had remembered. He read it instantly in her face, in her sad, quiet eyes. There was no restlessness in them at all. She came up quite close before she spoke. The hand that held the lamp did not tremble. It was quite firm when she set the light down beside him.

"I went down to look at the tree, dear boy," she said steadily, "and all at once I remembered. The children are dead. They are not coming home to Christmas. Dear boy, dear boy!"

With a sudden cry she threw herself beside him on the floor, with her face in his arms, and cried the terrible, beautiful, life-saving tears he had longed for. An hour—two hours—they never knew how long they lasted. It may have been but a short time. It seemed a long, long time to the little man.

The first faint light of morning was creeping in to them when Marjorie lifted her face. It was swollen and stained with the blessed tears, but it smiled at him bravely.

"Dear boy—poor boy, I am glad I remembered for your sake," she said gently. "And—and we have each other, dear boy."

Christmas morning ushered in the most wonderful, the most glorious day in all the short lives of the little Cooper children. Their wildest hopes were realized, and though Nip said "I told you so" in gleeful triumph, for once Tuck failed to echo her.

"You never!" she cried in scorn, "you never told me so, Nip Cooper. You couldn't 'ave told it all if you'd been tellin' me so ever since!"

In the early evening, just at early Christmas tree candle light—for Marjorie would have it so—all the little Coopers formed in awed procession and crunched through the new snow to the Queer Lady's. And the Queer Lady met them at the door and led them into Enchanted Land. She was smiling down at them.

Afterward Nip confided to Tuck that that smile looked just as if she was crying.

"But she didn't look 'queer' a bit—not even kind of so," said Ann Sophy softly.

"THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS."

How the Famous Old Poem Was Written.

From the Chicago News.

It has been nearly three-quarters of a century since the verses beginning,

"'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,"—

first saw the light of print, appearing in the Troy Sentinel of December 23, 1823. As published then it was anonymous, but it was prophetical of its coming popularity that even in that day, unfavorable as it was for newspaper illustration, it was accompanied by a picture of Santa Claus on his rounds. In the time intervening it has become known to practically every man, woman and child in America, has spread hence to the widest limits of the English-speaking race, has been translated into the language of every nation that has a Santa Claus, and is little, if any, short of being the most popular poem in the world. For years it was an annual feature of all American newspapers. Then, in 1844, it was acknowledged by its learned author, being included in a little volume of his poems published in New York. Thence its inclusion in school readers and all kind of declamation books was only a matter of a short time. In 1859 the edition that first attained wide distribution was issued, with the pleasant illustrations made by Felix O. C. Darley, which are remembered gratefully by any number of persons now crawling reluctantly into middle life. It is surprising, considering the vogue they once enjoyed, that they cannot be bought today in a modern edition.

It will be a surprise to many to learn that "The Night Before Christmas" was written by the erudite doctor of laws who prepared the first Hebrew dictionary ever published in America. He was Clement C. Moore, a descendant of a famous family in the history of the Episcopalian church, and himself one of its most notable benefactors. His father was the Right Rev. Benjamin Moore, who succeeded Bishop Provost in the diocese of New York, having been the president of King's College—now Columbia University—and the rector of Trinity Church in New York, all the dignitaries named being then, as now, the highest in the gift of the denomination. Bishop Moore was the son of Lieut. Samuel Moore, a gallant officer in the colonial wars, and five generations removed from the Rev. John Moore who was the first minister in Newton, L. I., dying there in 1657. Charity Clarke Moore, the mother of the poet, was the second daughter of Maj. Thomas Clarke, who fought for the British crown and its possessions in the days before the revolution. He was a man of large means and built him a mansion, which he called "Chelsea," a goodly distance out from the city of New York in those days, though its exact site was what is now 23d street, 200 feet east of 9th avenue. At that time it stood on a high hill, the lawn sloping down with handsome terraces to the shady banks of the Hudson. Built about 1750, the original structure stood until its destruction by fire during the last illness of its owner. He was rescued with difficulty and the shock undoubtedly hastened his end. It was rebuilt by his widow and came by inheritance to the poet's mother. It stood until 1850, when it was torn down to make room for the advancing city.

It was in this spacious house, with its acres of beautiful grounds, that Clement Clarke Moore was born on July 15, 1781. The only child of his parents and the heir to great wealth from both his father and mother, there was nothing which money, learning and distinguished ancestry could not obtain for him. His father gave him his preliminary education and he was graduated from Columbia in 1798. Though intended for the ministry, he never took orders, but occupied himself with his Hebrew dictionary and other matters suitable to his erudition. He was early interested in the General Theosophical Seminary of the Episcopal Church. In 1818 he gave it the tract of land bounded by 20th street, 21st street, 9th avenue and the Hudson. Three years later he accepted the chair of oriental and Greek literature from its faculty, and there busied himself until his death at his summer home in Newport on July 10, 1863.

The poem which has given him greater fame than all his learning and benefactions was written as a pastime and given his children as a Christmas present just seventy-five years ago. He thought little of it at the time, or later. Indeed, it is possible it would never have become known to the world at all had, not the eldest daughter of the Rev. David Butler, D. D., rector of St. Paul's in Troy, N. Y., seen the lines during a visit to New York the year after they were composed, and published them in the paper mentioned without their author's consent. It is said that nothing but the speedy popularity the verses attained procured Miss Butler's forgiveness. All these facts, with a facsimile of Dr. Moore's own manuscript, have just been published by William S. Pelletreau, A.M.

How He Announced It.

From the Troy Times.

Bishop Wilson of Calcutta was called eccentric, which seems a mild term in view of some of the stories told of him. Here is one: "A young clerical servant of the company, newly arrived from home, was a guest at the palace, awaiting orders, and interceded with the domestic chaplain to get him a good station. The importunity reached the bishop in due course, but for some days produced no response. At last one evening the decision was thus strangely imparted: "Behold, O Lord, thy servants assembled under this roof, especially the Rev. Mr. ——. Cast over him thy protection, seeing that he leaves us tomorrow morning for the remote and insalubrious station of ——,' naming one of the 'penal settlements' of the service."

A CHRISTMAS DINNER.

GENUINE ENJOYMENT

How Tommy Atkins Spends the Greatest Day of the Year.

ALLOWED TO OVERSTEP ALL BOUNDS

Stints Himself for Weeks to Splurge Just Once.

PLENTY TO EAT AND DRINK

Written for The Evening Star by Lieut. R. Scallan, R.A.

CHRISTMAS DAY TO the soldier in the United States army means little more than an annually recurring holiday, with its customary plum pudding and freedom from drill, bringing also to the more fortunate perhaps, a day's leave on which to visit old friends and relations. There are practically no regimental or service traditions connected with the great feast, and, though discipline is slightly relaxed for the day, yet there is but little to distinguish Xmas from the other great American holidays.

But to the British soldier Christmas is the "day of days," a brief, flitting term during which the military character is relegated to a back seat and "Tommy" enjoys a short return to civilian life and liberties. The men left in barracks who, whether from choice or necessity, have not yet taken their month's "furlough," begin to look forward to the annual merrymaking for weeks beforehand, and speak of it for days afterward with an affectionate remembrance. That is, the old hands, or veterans; to the younger generation, unacquainted with the traditions of the service and dazzled by modern cricket luncheons, regimental races and the annual "sports meeting," Christmas is no longer such an object of veneration, and has been somewhat shorn of its pristine glory and splendor. Yet enough of the old-time practice remains to make an account of them prove highly interesting and diverting to an "outsider."

The Preparations Begin.

About a month before the great day the steady, prudent men begin to save from their "pocket money" whatever small sums they can, laying these by in hoarding receptacles, or "dimmocking bags," as they are called, with a view to enhancing the festivities by a contribution on Christmas eve. Some there are who, doubting their ability to refrain from consuming their regular quantity of beer and tobacco at the canteen, so long as the jingling coppers seems to burn holes in their pockets, request the sergeant major to deduct so much from their weekly pay and put it down to the regimental Christmas dinner fund; in the vernacular, they are said to be "on the peg," or under "stoppages." As a consequence of this abstinence the morning "defaulter's list" begins to diminish and the guard room to show a corresponding lack of inmates, for punishment at this season means a probable loss of privileges and incurring penalties, such as being detailed for guard duty on the day itself.

Soon the barrack rooms begin to assume an unwonted aspect, and the orderly officer conveniently winks at the disordered state of the walls and roof during the days devoted to decoration. The ever-present handy man is detailed to superintend the work of ornamentation, and under his directions and with his assistance the occupants of each room devote their leisure time to adorning the walls, roof, fireplace and even doors with unique reproductions of the regimental motto and crest, while seasonable illustrations from the current papers and periodicals are pinned up in every vacant spot, and elaborate festoons of colored or gilded paper endow the hanging lamps or gas jets with an extraordinary appearance of gaiety. At the dullest of times the bare look of the barrack room is relieved by some pretty and attractive decorations, but at Christmastide "gorgeous" is the only word that conveys an idea of the effect produced. Adjacent shrubberies even are despoiled under the cover of darkness to supply the "green stuff" necessary, and holly, mistletoe and evergreens endeavor to conceal the objectionable white-washed walls.

Goose or Pig.

The major, captain and subaltern officers also contribute liberally to the fund, providing each a quart of beer per man or a load of coal to each room, and adding a substantial sum in money to aid in obtaining the all-important dinner. A most amusing feature is the inevitable debate among the members of each barrack room as to what shall be obtained as the piece de resistance for the feast. It must be remembered that in the British army the men sleep and eat in the same apartment, twelve or fourteen beds being allotted to each barrack room. Hence, each company contains several small "messes" which are distinct. Generally the occupants of two rooms form a mess of about twenty-four or twenty-five in one of the rooms; this is especially the case on great occasions, such as the present. Now ancient custom and time-honored traditions have decreed that there are but two dishes fit for a Christmas dinner—roast goose and roast pork. Rarely, if ever, is this rule departed from, and naturally the adherents of either delicacy are very stubborn and irreconcilable. It is a curious fact that the old soldier inclines to the homely but satisfying "bird," while the "cruity" and young soldier seems equally prejudiced in favor of the more succulent pig. In deciding this knotty question the majority, of course, is bound to rule, and the disappointed "gourmands" take to their defeat very kindly, to judge by results at the table. The usual scale of provision is one goose or a leg of pork to every three men.

Early on the eagerly awaited "eve" the corporal in charge of each room collects the "dimmocked" hoards and obtains the "stoppages" money from the sergeant major. The latter official undertakes the necessary marketing, while the corporals are commissioned to expend the money they have obtained in purchasing a keg of beer and some bottles of wine or spirits. Two gallons of porter (always porter) to a man is the customary allowance, so that a fair-sized keg must be had, and in order that no undue expense be incurred this article is always procured, if the corporal be astute, from the nearest brewery.

The Christmas Pudding.

The preparation and cooking of the Christmas pudding is a momentous affair; toward the evening one can see the men working hard in each room, stoning fruit, beating eggs and chopping suet, under the careful supervision of some gray-haired veteran, who laboriously cons over and over again a bethumbed and ragged recipe. The pudding mixed, and every man having given it a good stir, to insure success, clean towels, carefully preserved for the occasion, are used to wrap it up in, and then a small procession escorts this sine qua non of all Christmas dinners to the cook house, and orderly men are detailed to take turns at watching the culinary operations during the lonely hours of the night. And wakeful must the watchers be, for an improperly cooked or burnt plum pudding means condign punishment "well laid on" for the offender.

Reveille! How alert every one seems this cold Christmas morning—no turning over for just another five minutes' snooze—all is life and bustle in the barrack rooms, for the great day has dawned at last. Rat-tat! "Good morning! A merry Christmas to all of you!" says a strong, cheery voice, as presently the "woman" of the room, who washes the men's things for them, and is herself a soldier's wife, eking out a scanty competence by the work, appears, according to traditional usage, and from the innermost recesses of her mysterious apparel produces a bottle and a glass—the latter, of course, empty, but the former filled with some queer but potent spirits. A measure to every inmate of the room, starting with the oldest, is this lady's program, and it is carried out without any variations, save that, perhaps, to the latest-joined recruit she may administer a kiss instead of a "caulker," advising him at the same time to henceforth consider the regiment his mother.

Laying Out the Tables.

This interesting inauguration ceremony over, attention is devoted to breakfast and preparing for church parade. Already one begins to observe a flushed look among some of the more reckless characters, for, though the canteen will not open till noon, and the barrel in the corner will not be tapped till after dinner, yet the soldier that wants a drink can always procure it from some mysterious source, no matter what the visible and outward restrictions may be. But today that unmistakable look passes seemingly unnoticed by the inspecting officers, and immediately after service every man has his work cut out to assist in the barrack room. Here the tables are laid out, clean sheets for tablecloths, and the crockery borrowed from the married women of the regiment. Every knife, fork and basin is polished till it shines again, and when at last the steaming hot dishes are brought in by the cook's mates, both the nostrils and the eyes are pleasantly assailed. Before the brave fellows can begin the repast, however, it is necessary to receive the officers.

First comes the officer of the day, with his customary brief visit. Then enters on the scene the colonel, attended by the battalion major, company captain and subaltern officers. After the usual inquiry as to complaints, the colonel in a few pleasant words admires the decorations and wishes the men a merry Christmas. In response a subdued "Same to you, sir, and many of them" is heard, and the officers are invited to partake of wine or spirits, as they prefer, which the sergeant offers on a waiter. A hearty cheer is then given for the colonel and another for each of the officers, in the midst of which the latter hasten out to the next room, though you will generally find the last-joined subaltern lagging behind to hear his name cheered and rejoice in his popularity!

A Royal Feast.

And now they fall to, those hungry devils, for many a one ate little or no breakfast in order to have the more room for dinner, and the roast meat is washed down with the officers' quarts of beer, followed by the glorious plum pudding and more beer. Then the tuckcart man, who has lain in a large supply of fruit, sweets and other delicacies, provides the dessert from his cart, and preparations are made for the afternoon sitting. Beds, forms and tables are crowded round the roaring fire; the barrel of porter so wistfully eyed all the morning is broached at last, and a large tin pail filled from it is handed round to replenish the vessels which do duty for mugs.

Tobacco and pipes are put in requisition, and Tommy Atkins enjoys for a brief, happy period the delight of his life—an unlimited quantity of beer, openly consumed in barracks. By and by the married men and their wives drop in—a "little something hot" is always ready for the womenkind. Songs are the order of the day, always sentimental be it noted, for Tommy despises your comic song, and has only a passing fancy for those of a bacchanalian type. Beer and songs—songs and beer—that is his summum bonum. Speeches are the exception, for those that would cannot, and the few that could will not waste their time in mere words. And when at last the keg is emptied—another "dead marine," says Tommy, and turns his attention to levying sufficient pounds to lay in a supply of the necessarily inferior canteen brand. And so it goes on till "lights out" sounds, and another Christmas day is gone over to the majority. Among the officers the celebration of the day is conducted on a quieter scale. A supper, of which the exhibition of the regimental plate is quite a feature, speechmaking and dignified jollity all around are the order of the day.

Tackle.

From Life.

"Darling!" he cried, and threw himself at her feet.

The haughty damsel shivered, as in apprehension.

"That low Princeton tackle!" she muttered, striving to be calm.

Why Don't You take Brown's Iron Bitters?

nc9-a,tu,th-30t

ENGLAND'S ARMY.

The Real State of Great Britain's Soldiery Revealed.

London Letter to the New York Post.

For fighting purposes, there exists no British army in England. There is the mere phantom of an army. The chief defender of the present system has lately admitted that the home battalions are "squeezed lemons," and the reserve "something of a sham." The yeomanry—nominally 11,000 strong, though only 8,500 put in an appearance last season—is a plaything, enabling a number of well-to-do middle-class gentlemen to wear a showy uniform and to picnic for a week each year (jobbing their horses for that space of time) at a cost to the public of some £120,000. Finally, the volunteers, of whom there are about 230,000, though very creditable as volunteers, cannot be considered a force for a moment able to stand against a modern continental army. It would be unjust and misleading not to add that, by the avowal of competent foreign critics, what there is of effective British troops, like those in India, are first rate. The cost (£80 per man per annum) and the requirements of the British soldier, as compared with continental troops, are huge. But the material is second to none; while the officers have of late made rapid strides in professional instruction, they are full of zeal and proverbially brave. In case of a European war, however, England would be quite unable, as things are now, to place in the field a single efficient army corps.

These things were, of course, thoroughly well known to specialists, both army officers and members of parliament. Indeed, the disastrous results of the 1870 scheme were made manifest nine years later in South Africa. Complaints have since not been wanting, and explicit warnings were given in recent discussions of the war office estimates. But the real state of affairs was hushed up and all kinds of shifts and expedients were had recourse to in order to save appearances. Even the dispatch of the guards to Gibraltar had no other object in view. The heavy demands, however, made during the last twelve months upon the military resources of the country have brought matters to a climax, and Lord Lansdowne's intimation, two months ago, that another million would be required next year has had the effect which all demands for further credits have in this country—an inquiry how the funds already voted have been spent. Not that there is any indisposition to make the necessary and indeed a liberal provision for the army. While England devotes £22,000,000 for her unrivaled navy—a match for the combined navies of any three European powers—her army, such as it is, absorbs no less than £19,000,000, besides the sums contributed by India for the transport and maintenance of British troops in that dependency. The entire German army costs something less.

The explanation for this state of things is to be found in the fossilized traditions which pervade the army and the incurable worthlessness of the war office administration.

A Vegetable Hair Exterminator.

The "jumbai plant," which is found on riversides in tropical America, has curious properties. Horses, if they eat it, lose the hair from their manes and tails. When fed exclusively on corn and grass they will recover, but the new hair will be totally different in color and texture from the old. Ruminant animals are not thus affected, and its growth is actually encouraged as a fodder plant for cattle, sheep and goats.

Behind every great man you will find a great mother. Behind every great man you will find a healthy mother. A child's physical and mental welfare depend to a tremendous degree upon the mother's condition during the period of gestation. If, during these critical months, the mother suffers from weakness and disease of the delicate and important organs that bear the burdens of maternity, the chances are that her child will be weak, puny and sickly, with the seeds of serious disease already implanted in its little body at birth. If the mother, during the interesting period, suffers from the abnormal mental states which recur periodically with women who are weak in a womanly way, these conditions will impress themselves upon the mind of the child.

Every woman wants children who are both physically and mentally healthy. Every woman may have that kind of children if she will take proper care of herself in a womanly way. Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription is the best of all medicines for prospective mothers. It acts directly on the delicate and important organs that bear the brunt of maternity. It makes them strong, healthy, vigorous, virile and elastic. It allays inflammation, heals ulceration, soothes pain and tones and builds up the shattered nerves. It banishes the usual discomforts of the critical period, and makes baby's introduction to the world easy and almost painless. It insures the little new comer's health and a bountiful supply of nourishment.

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