

AN OLD-TIME CHRISTMAS.

WOULD like to have the Christmas time I remember now so well; So many things forgotten that would be a joy to tell; Not a gathering in a meeting house with a faded Christmas tree—Such things are common now-a-days, but didn't used to be—Where the parson and his family, all for Sunday meeting dress, Of the presents hung upon it always have the most and best! Where the little ragged urchin, with his face clad in regret, Can look with wide-eyed wonder at the things he'll never sell! There were no velvet cushions on our nineteenth century chairs; No fine and padded tapestry where we knelt to say our prayers; No costly paintings on the walls that somehow always stay, In a sort of mocking elegance when the guests have gone away. No gaslight throwing diamonds in your eyes at every turn, Nor trappé from the punch bowl, tea from costly silver urn; No prancing steeds and butler, with furs and furbelows, To shield the rose-clad maidens from the prying winter snows! But the old log house in Merman, that was such a cozy home, upon its shingle-covered arches that to us was heaven's dome; Its basswood floor of puncheon, the pegs beside the door, Just enough to hang the wardrobe of the family and no more; The rifle and the powder flask, with its curious catch and spring; The belt with sheath knife in it, bullet molds and everything, Hung upon the dry, cracked rafters out of reach of careless hands. But ready, opportunely, when a sudden call demands. Along in first December, when the woods and fields were white, And the owls were holding concerts of the hooting kind at night, There were hints of coming Christmas, and a half unconscious awe Settled on our youthful features in a way you never saw! Six of us in that household, I well may call it seven, But that one, a little three-year-old, had strayed away to Heaven; Six make even numbers, if we count it two by two, But I'll put the other in it for completeness; wouldn't you? We were told to hang our stockings and then to quickly leave—This was early in the evening of that famous Christmas eve, And we scrambled up the ladder to the chamber overhead, To whisper speculations on the things that had been said. Outside the storm was dancing in fantastic flights again, Bowing crystal stars in showers against the window pane, Yet sheltered in that household we little cared for this, When no harm would dare to venture between us and mother's kiss! Very early in the morning, while the stars were shining bright—For the clouds had fled the scandal of disrobing in the night!—We sought our hanging stockings on the backs of every chair; The ones we wore the day before, for we had no more to spare! Compared with what we have to-day it would be counted small, But the gifts were rich in kindness; for each one gave his all. The apples were like spheres of gold, and all the little things Were more to us than diadems from crowns of ancient kings! The hands that filled our stockings on that night so long ago, The hearts that beat for those they loved, are whiter now than snow That scatters on this Christmas eve its crystal fleece of white, Reminder of that household where in dreams we live at night. —Edward William Dutcher, in Banner of Gold.

WHEN LOVE WAS YOUNG.

IT WAS the Pentlands' first dinner under their own roof-tree. The plum pudding had made the circuit of the dining-room. Every face at the festive board reflected good cheer. As city editor and society chronicler of the Lone Star, the Pentlands had met, loved, married and continued to work side by side until their joint earnings enabled them to build this pretty Queen Anne Cottage; and to the house-warming had been bidden their Christmas eve friends tried and true. Elizabeth Pentland's ambition was achieved; she possessed a home. As she surveyed the table snowy in white linen, glistening in silver and cut glass, and caught through the holly and mistletoe the approving coo of the infant heir to Pentland "affections and good-will," and the congratulatory smiles of their guests, her happy face lifted in gratitude. "Thank God!" said Mrs. Pentland, "this is one social event I am not called upon to chronicle." "Amen," said the city editor. "How like a story," said Mrs. Weatherell; "one of those good, old-fashioned, wholesome love stories I am so hungry to read. By the way, can anybody tell us what has become of the old-fashioned love story?" "Like the day of miracles, my dear, it has passed," Elizabeth Pentland's cynicism was acquired before she met the city editor.

"The telling, you mean; but love—not a bit of it. It's as young and as full of vitality as this King of Love Feasts—Christmas itself." Mrs. Weatherell was one of those rare women at peace with self and the world, despite the fact that the latter persisted in believing her wretchedly unhappy. As pretty a woman as one meets in a long day's walk was Mrs. Weatherell; nature and art fitted her to shine in brilliant society. But Mrs. Weatherell's beauty was of the spirit as well as of the flesh. Never was she known to complain. The husband whom the world dubbed a miserable failure was still to her the Prince Charming who won her heart when she was toasted the loveliest girl in her "set." At five and forty Mrs. Weatherell judged all marital relations from her own vantage ground—the love that is eternal. It was this refreshing, Arcadian strain in her nature that attracted and held the affection of Elizabeth Pentland, whose knowledge of "men and things" had come from hard knocks with the world. "I am sick unto nausea," sighed Mrs. Weatherell, "of the problems involved in the modern love story. How refreshing it would seem to meet once more in print love on the old familiar grounds!" "Fancy," laughed Miss Dashaway, sketch artist of Good Form, "the tag end of this century wading through Jane Austen!" "Notwithstanding the speed and spirit of the times," said Return Betram, a sculptor who had outlived his contemporaries, consequently his fame, "material for Jane Austen stories is not wanting in our own day." "No, not while you are with us, Betram," chuckled the city editor, replenishing the patriarchal chisel's glass. The ox-like eyes of the sturdy little sculptor, dilating with the youth that in art is never old, blinked knowingly. "Betram has a story he is bursting to tell," cried the city editor. "Mrs. Weatherell has given him the cue. I wager a choice public is about to be supplied with a revised, annotated, up-to-date edition of Jane Austen." "Imagine a Jane Austen of the Latin quarter!" smiled Mrs. Pentland, with an encouraging nod. "For once the clever Mrs. Pentland is in error," said the sculptor, settling in his chair with the ease of a raconteur sure of one telling arrow in his quiver. "Nothing could be more remote from the Latin quarter than this story which the drift of the conversation makes so timely. To be candid, my chief purpose in accepting Mrs. Pentland's hospitality was to recount Hillhouse's romance." "He was my best friend," continued Betram, encircling the table with a second significant twinkle; "I may say a lifelong friend. About a year ago Hillhouse was called to Barrington to work on the equestrian statue of which you may have heard. He took a studio in a back bay house that had outlived not only prosperity but gentility. The studio confronted a formidable row of dwellings in a very similar state. These houses were occupied for the most part by lodgers and mealers of various ages and colors and conditions of servitude. In intervals of inspiration, and they were not infrequent with Hillhouse, he fell, between whiffs of his pipe, to speculating on the daily occupation and the heart stories of his heterogeneous neighbors. One of his studio windows looked almost impudently into a hall-room of the most imposing house in the row. To Hillhouse's surprise, his mirror one day reflected its occupant, who riveted his attention with a fascination almost as irresistible as that which wrought the ruin of Paul Pry." Betram paused. The interest in his auditor's eyes urged him on. "She was a frail little woman," he said, at length, "with a certain faded splendor, the splendor of a brilliant autumnal flower that defies drought and frost, and with a color and perfume of its own, holds sway long after its garden companions lie withered and dead. She rarely went out save in the flush of the morning or late in the twilight. Her room, like herself, bespoke a faded splendor, discernible even from Hillhouse's studio. A window-garden of old-fashioned bloom and a plentifully-stocked bookcase that crowded the small apartment almost to suffocation, absorbed her days. "Certain hours she was wont to sit in the window, an open book in her lap, her heavily-fringed gray eyes lost in invisible worlds. I know not whether it was the style of her dress—the white mull fichu, closed on her low bosom to fall in graceful folds to the hem of her voluminous dark skirt, or the outline of the coiffure, so like the mode prevalent when Hillhouse was the Beau Brummel of his world—that attracted his attention; but the sculptor soon found himself modeling her delicate profile. Hillhouse, it goes without saying, was a bachelor, in whom the wine of youth was scarcely less ready at 50 than in the flush of youth. "Just such a chap as our own Betram," interposed Pentland. "Hillhouse's faith, devotion I may say, to the ideal in life, as an art," continued Betram, "has survived the gross materialism of the times with which advancing age found him curiously in and out of tune. Away back in the golden youth lay his romance—a romance that unconsciously shaped and colored his life, lending a perennial freshness to the man, which he strove to impart to his work. As the delicate features of his unknown neighbor grew under his deft touch the chords of memory awoke, and Hillhouse had begun to revel again in that golden past, when suddenly his model moved. "A carriage with the livery of an exclusive world had drawn up at her door. A lady muffled in sable alighted, and soon Hillhouse beheld his little neighbor in the arms of a stranger. It was the first visitor that had come, in Hillhouse's time, to that modest door. The next day it snowed steadily; but about three in the afternoon his

neighbor surprised him by appearing at the street door, bonneted. With rapid strides she disappeared down the avenue—to appear before he had smoked three pipes at her favorite seat in the window. The light fell strongly on the profile, which now seemed rejuvenated by some inner glow. Hillhouse snatched the clay and made haste to finish the interrupted sitting. He had not worked long, however, until he was sharing his model's quiet mirth. "A street fakir had evidently inveigled her into buying a mechanical toy, such as abound in the streets of our large cities during the holiday season. Far into twilight this stately autumnal flower sat playing with the trivial thing; and the footprints of time magically vanished from her sweet face, as she repeatedly pulled the string, and the grotesque wooden monkey, with its multi-colored jacket, slid up and down the yellow pole. Through the veil of snowflakes Hillhouse continued to watch his neighbor, and as her smiles at the monkey's antics broadened his guffaws filled the lonely studio with companionable echoes. Suddenly there was a rift in the lute. The incorrigible monkey was perched at the top of the pole and refused to budge. In vain the scroceress cast her spell. The toy fell from her hands a wreck; disaster, dire distress, beclouded her face. Not a shadow escaped Hillhouse. In a jiffy he had seized his hat and was knocking at her door. "I have observed from my window—I am your neighbor," he exclaimed, locating his eerie den across the way—"that you have met with an accident. I am not without some mechanical skill, and I thought I might be of service." "She opened the door wide for him to enter. In the dignity of her presence the shabby gentility of her surroundings vanished. "You are kind, sir," she said. "Tomorrow is Christmas." "Ah! so it is," said Hillhouse. "I had forgotten." "I promised to take Christmas dinner yesterday after long years of separation. There is a little boy in the family, and I thought the toy would amuse him." "And so it will," laughed Hillhouse, "as it has you and me." "She colored like an old-fashioned garden pink, and her limpid gray eyes dropped as he picked up the mutilated monkey. In less time than it takes to tell, this grotesque representative of the "missing link" was restored to its pristine agility. "How can I thank you?" "By telling me some day," said Hillhouse, "that your young friend's enjoyment of the toy has been greater than ours." "Some days elapsed before Hillhouse had the courage to knock a second time at his neighbor's door. In the interval he had learned a little of her history. It was not without a purpose that he scanned the bookcase until his eyes lighted on a strangely familiar volume. "I see Miss Foxglove is an admirer of Lucile," remarked Hillhouse. "It belongs to the past." "Then it has not been opened for some time?" "Miss Foxglove's gray eyes turned within. "A quarter of a century," she said. "He took the volume from the shelf, and with strange misgiving turned the leaves until arrested by a much underscored canto, from which fell a faded-foxglove. "With a smile whose divinely deep sweetness disclosed Some depths in her nature he never had known." "The eyes of Lavinia Foxglove met his. "The volume has never been opened," she said—sudden pallor in her friendly presence—since an old, old friend borrowed it, returned it—and then— "What happened?" "He went away." "And then?" "The world changed." "She took the volume Hillhouse handed her to read in the lines the foxglove had stained, the confession she had waited in vain to hear from the lips of the borrower so long ago." "You don't mean to tell us," cried Miss Dashaway, "that there lives in this age a man stupid enough to expect a woman to look in a book for a proposal?" "But that happened a quarter of a century ago," laughed Mrs. Pentland. "True," said Betram, "and the poor lout supposed that the girl had eagerly devoured every word underscored, while she naturally laid the volume away and never looked at it again until Hillhouse opened it and bade her read the lines which embodied his proposal. Not having heard from her, he went away in a moment of pique and never returned. From time to time he heard of her conquests, but it seems they were but flirtations which he strove in vain to forget. Youth passed away, as did her family ties, until she was left alone in the world, with a mere pittance that cut her off from the gay circle in which she was once so brilliant an ornament." "Well, she must be a moss-grown foxglove," laughed Miss Dashaway. "I thought the species extinct. Fancy a modern woman pining over a delinquent lover, burying herself in a hall-room with an Angora cat and a window garden!" "How does it come, Betram," said Pentland, "that your quasi-Austen heroine escaped cludom?" "No reflection on club women," reproved the hostess. "To forget history there is nothing like helping to make it." "Bravo," cried the telegraph editor. "I can understand Miss Foxglove," said Mrs. Weatherell, giving the story teller a sympathetic smile. "She was born too early to grasp the spirit of the new movement and adjust herself to its exactions. Being an offspring of the old order of things, she clung

desire would some day be fulfilled. As she waited, opportunity slipped by." "If I recollect rightly," said Frothingham, "everything had plenty of time to slip by in a Jane Austen story." "But isn't it time for the cleric?" smiled Mrs. Weatherell. "Jane Austen without the cleric is Hamlet without the prince." Betram's glowing eyes took in the guests who had followed his story with the bantering old friendship admits. "To-morrow at high noon," said he, "Rev. Dr. Broughton will await you at the 'Red Brick church,' and after the ceremony Lavinia and I will be at home at the studio—its latch string, you know, is always out—where we hope to dispense 'Christmas cheer throughout the year.'" "The deuce!" cried the city editor. "You said the chap's name was Hillhouse." "And so it is," smiled the sculptor—"Return Hillhouse Betram." —Lida Ross McCabe, in Detroit Free Press.

OUR CHRISTMAS PRESENT.

It wasn't very much of a Christmas we reckoned to have last year. With nary a chick nor relation and only us old folks here. It tain't a hilarious banquet, no matter how fine the spread. This eatin' your Christmas dinner and thinkin' of them that's dead. But I guess that's what 't would have come to if I hadn't happened to speak of that little orphan of Wixon's, whose father had died last week; And sez mother—God bless the woman, her heart is the heart of a to— "Why not have him over for Christmas?" and sez I: "Old lady—done!" Well, I drove over to git him and fetched him back with me. And if he wasn't the tickled baby 'twas ever my luck to see, And cunnin'—well, honest Injun! It almost made me young To look at his leetle figger and hark to his prattlin' tongue. I told him about old Santy a' scramblin' down the flue, And he wondered about the stove pipe, how Santy could wiggle through. We told him to hang up his stockin', and that leetle chap, I swear, Made us promise to hang up, orn, so Santy could leave our share.

Then after it got his bedtime, we poked off up 't the store And loaded ourselves with presents, and Lord knows what not more. While I jest sorter managed to git by myself someway, And bought a few things for mother in honor of Christmas day; And when we was goin' homewards I see her a-tryin' to hide Some bundles she said was secrets and I mustn't look inside. Perhaps it was mighty foolish, but honest 't goin', I believe I'd never been hat't so happy 's I was that Christmas eve.

Say, that was a merry Christmas, if ever there was one yet; The youngster was nigh to crazy, and we was as bad, I bet. The old house fairly chuckled as the baby luffed and played, And at night we watched him sleepin' where our leetle boy had laid. Our own little tow-haired darlin'—and mother sez, soft and low: "He looks so much like the other, it's wicked to let him go. Perhaps for a Christmas present, God sent him to be our son, Let's keep him for ourn forever," and sez I: "Old lady, done!" —Joe Lincoln, in L. A. W. Bulletin.

TELEGRAPHIC BRIEVITIES.

At Springer (N. M.) the mercury has registered 11 below zero.

Frank Moran, a noted minstrel, is dead at Philadelphia, aged 72.

The heaviest fall of snow in 20 years has visited San Antonio, Tex.

W. J. Bryan is out in an interview opposing territorial expansion.

The Ohio river is frozen over at Wheeling and Parkersburg, W. Va.

Antonio E. Terry, husband of Sybil Sanderson, the opera singer, is dead at Paris.

The milling interests of Minneapolis, Minn., will not go into the gigantic combine.

Berlin and Frankfurt bankers have offered the porte a loan of 2,000,000 Turkish pounds.

Gen. Ludlow, the military governor of Havana, will leave for his post of duty on Saturday.

The whisky warehouse district of Maysville, Ky., was damaged by fire to the extent of \$80,000.

J. H. Franklin was sentenced to hang at Glasgow, Ky., for the murder of his mother-in-law.

Lionel Carden, the British consul at Mexico City, has been appointed consul general at Havana.

The London Daily Mail announces that the British occupation of Crete is to become permanent.

Dr. Barrows, recently elected president of Oberlin college, has left Chicago to take up his work there.

The new trust, the American Tin Plate company, will begin business after the first of the new year.

Jules Cambon, the French ambassador, expects to return to his post at Washington about January 1.

Four Belgian traders are reported to have been killed and eaten by natives of Upper Ubanghi, Africa.

Ex-Gov. Merriam, of Minnesota, is suggested as the probable successor of Secretary of the Interior Bliss.

The converted cruiser Yosemite has been ordered to Manila and the converted cruiser Badger to San Francisco.

On account of the illness of Gov. Schofield's son there will be no inaugural ball this year at Madison, Wis.

The American Federation of Labor has adopted a resolution against the adoption by congress of the anti-scalping bill.

The national board of trade has adopted a resolution favoring the construction of the Nicaragua canal by the United States.

As a result of the grounding of the battleship Massachusetts off Governor's island extensive and expensive repairs will be necessary.

The druggist's clerk at San Francisco in the trial of Mrs. Botkin positively identified her as the woman to whom he had sold a quantity of arsenic.

Otto Boshard, Charles Allen and Theodore Brazen have been chosen by the Wisconsin university to represent it in the debate with the Illinois university.

It is said that the insurgents of the Philippines are demanding the \$20,000,000 to be paid to Spain be turned over to them in exchange for the 10,000 Spanish troops held.

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