

The Gift Of The Child



ONCE more, on ce more we read it, the Christmas story dear, and yet once more we tell it; all eagerly we hear. The years haste into centuries, the centuries grow old. Still never once too often is the blessed story told. And never once too often do we talk of that strange night. When humble shepherds witnessed the angels' southward flight; Never our thought grows weary tracing the sacred way. That leads us to the manger where Mary's baby lay. For He whom wise men worshiped brought gift of peace for strife. Brought joy for sorrow's darkness, brought hope and love and life. Wherever watching mothers pray for their babes to-day. The precious lives are safer because of One that lay. Defenseless in the manger two thousand years ago. Sweeter earth's babes slumber since that dear head lay low. Unharm'd beside the cattle, watched by the angel throng. While heavenly hosts were singing the first glad Christmas song. Wherever hearts grow weary, wherever sin abides. Whatever be our anguish, whatever woe betides. The darkness would be deeper, pain harder to be borne. If Heaven had forgotten to send that Christmas morn!

Once more, then, let us read it, the Christmas story dear, and yet once more repeat it that other hearts may hear. The years haste into centuries, the centuries grow old. Yet once again hearts hunger to have the story told. Tell the dear little children about that wondrous night. When watching shepherds witnessed the angels' earthward flight. Lead feet that long have wandered, into the better way. That leads them to the manger where Mary's baby lay. For He whom wise men worshiped brought gifts of peace for strife. And Christ was born from Heaven that mortals might have life. —Ada Melville Shaw, in Union Signal.

MISS CYNTHIA'S CHRISTMAS

MISS CYNTHIA MARSH sat alone—a not unusual thing in these days, and as her sharp blue eyes roved over the familiar room, a strange feeling of desolation stole over her. In vain she reminded herself of hard facts that had heretofore given her satisfaction; she was the richest woman in Dalesburg, her house was the largest and most imposing, her clothes the finest and most fashionable and yet—

She got up impatiently and, going over to the window, pressed her face against the pane and looked out into the December dusk. Muffled figures hastened past, carrying bundles of all shapes and sizes, for it was Christmas eve; the sight sent queer little thrills over Miss Cynthia and a great load seemed to settle on her heart. She had no one to buy gifts for, she told herself, and no one cared enough for the lonely old spinster to even give her good wishes.

It had not always been thus. She recalled the many, many happy Decembers she had enjoyed when Sidney Bruce, her nephew and only living relative, had lived in her house. She had taken him to live with her when he was a small boy, and her love for him had grown into a mild idolatry by the time he had become a man. Sidney returned her affection with all the strength of his loving heart until he wanted to marry Edith Blake. Miss Cynthia had other plans for Sidney, and refused to even discuss Edith with him, but Sidney was very much in love and cared not a farthing that Edith was poor and a sort of upper servant in his aunt's house. Edith was a peace-loving girl who found the situation almost more than she could bear, for Miss Cynthia had taken her when an orphan, six years before, and had been like a mother to her ever since. Edith loved Miss Cynthia dearly, but loved Sidney more, and one December day she went away with him and was married.

Miss Cynthia did not rave or storm; she simply ignored the existence of the youthful pair, and Sidney, reared in luxury, had to go to work at anything he could find to do. He had never even tried to support himself and now he had Edith to love and cherish—and support in addition.

Miss Cynthia changed into a cold, hard woman, and was filled with bitterness when her oldest friends openly sided with Sidney and Edith. The latter took a small house, not a great distance from Miss Cynthia's, and were happy but very poor. Sidney after many discouragements succeeded in obtaining a situation in a large factory as assistant bookkeeper, but the work was hard and the pay pitifully small.

Miss Cynthia watched from her plate-glass windows and saw Sidney trudging past day after day to his work, and her heart hardened, for apparently he never glanced at his old home. He passed with averted eyes and Miss Cynthia had ample opportunity to notice how thin and careworn his face had grown and how

shabby his clothes were as time went on.

It was six years now since Sidney's marriage, and Cynthia had not relented nor had Sidney asked aid, although there were two little children, and Edith was nearly blind with an affliction of the eyes.

Miss Cynthia's heart yearned for those children, and whenever she passed a group of neighborhood little ones, her sharp eyes peered into each small face trying to discern which were the Bruce children, but she had never felt sure of their identity. Her heart was unusually tender on this Christmas eve, and for the first time she wondered if she had not been too hard upon Sidney and Edith. She had missed Edith's willing service many times in the past few years, and there had been no one to take her place in Miss Cynthia's household. She strained her eyes into the gathering darkness to see Sidney pass on his homeward way, but it was impossible to distinguish him in the hurrying throng. It was snowing a little now, and it was some time before Miss Cynthia noticed two little figures going along the sidewalk, hand in hand, laughing and shouting with glee. The fence in front of Miss Cynthia's yard was an iron one with the bars set some distance apart, and the children paused and pressed their faces between the pickets, gazing into the lighted house.

The room in which Miss Cynthia stood was still in darkness, and she could see them quite plainly but remained herself unseen. The children whispered together, then with hesitating steps came forward toward the gate and opened it with some difficulty. Slowly they came up the walk to the house and gave the bell a tremendous pull. Miss Cynthia went to the door with a pleased sense of anticipation,



"NOW CHILDREN TAKE ME TO YOUR HOME."

for it was seldom children came to the solemn old house. When the heavy door swung open, the children almost fell into the hall, as they had been leaning against it, wiping the snow from their little shoes.

"What do you want, children?" asked Miss Cynthia, assisting them to regain their balance and closing the door behind them.

They looked at each other timidly, their eyes growing large and solemn. The smaller, a little girl, put one fat finger in her mouth and looked up at Miss Cynthia searchingly.

"We have run away, and we liked this pretty big house, and I told sister we'd come and see who lived here," said the boy, boldly.

"Run away!" repeated Miss Cynthia, in shocked surprise; "that was very, very naughty; can't you tell me where you live?"

"It's just 'round some corners, and we ain't afraid, are we, Jean?" demanded the boy.

Jean shook her head and seated herself in a small chair that stood in the hall, with great calmness and deliberation.

"I like your house!" said the boy, thoughtfully; "it's got soft floors, and feels like you was walking on pillows," stepping around on the rich carpet with evident enjoyment.

"Haven't you any carpet on your floors?" asked Miss Cynthia, tenderly.

"No, only in two rooms, mamma's and the sitting-room. We used to have, but papa had them sent away, and asked us not to tell dear mamma, 'cause she might cry," answered the boy, looking into Miss Cynthia's face, gravely.

"Is your mamma sick?" asked Miss Cynthia.

"Yes, she's awful sick, and has to stay in a dark room all the time. She never laughs 'cept when papa's there; then she acts so happy, and told us once not to tell him that she moans when he's gone," said the boy.

"And who cares for you and Jean?" asked the woman, quickly.

"Just Mary; she washes the dishes and cooks our dinners and scrubs, and washes our clothes, and irons 'em, and—oh, yes—plays with us," answered the boy, joyously, while Jean smiled approval.

Miss Cynthia shuddered, and drew him to her arms, while Jean hitched her chair closer and leaned against the woman's knees.

"I'll tell you some'ing," she said, softly; "to-morrow's Christmas."

Miss Cynthia's smile was so loving, her best friend would scarcely have recognized her.

"Is it, dear; will Santa Claus go to your house?" she asked, gently.

"Not this year. Father says he can't come every year to our house, 'cause we musn't be selfish. Some little children never had a Santa Claus come," said the boy, his eyes shining with sympathy for the Santa Clausless children he spoke of.

A great resolve was forming in Miss Cynthia's heart. She would take these children to their home, and then send them such a Christmas as they would never forget. She could not do it for Sidney's children, but here were two little waifs who could take their place. Hastily she donned her hat and seal-skin coat, and taking a hand of each wondering child, went out into the night.

"Now, children, take me to your home, and when I have explained your absence to your Mary, I'll hunt up Santa Claus and send him around to your house," she said, as they went down the steps.

The boy pulled her along the snowy street, talking so rapidly all the time of what he wanted Santa Claus to bring that Miss Cynthia did not notice which way they were going until they stopped before a small house on a dark street. Around the side of the cottage the trio went, and the boy opened a door noisily into a poorly-furnished dining-room. At the sound, a young Irish girl rushed in and clasped the truant in her arms.

"Oh, you naughty ones! Mary's been so worried, and the poor mother—herself's been cryin'," she said, tearfully.

Miss Cynthia was about to explain, when the door behind her opened, and

Sidney Bruce stood there, staring in amazement.

"Aunt Cynthia!" he gasped. Miss Cynthia turned, and all the hardness of years melted from her heart. "My own boy!" she murmured, laying her hand on his arm, and gazing into his face as if she could not gaze enough.

"What does it mean?" the poor fellow said, as he noticed the children run forward and cling to her skirts.

She told him all, and he listened wonderingly until she finished, when he drew each small figure to his breast and kissed them, with tears in his eyes.

"Let me go now to Edith, while you get the children ready, and then we shall go home. Don't refuse me, Sidney; I know I don't deserve your forgiveness, but I'm getting old and I need you all—every one," Miss Cynthia pleaded, tremulously.

Sidney pointed to the door of Edith's room, and Miss Cynthia entered. What the two women said will never be known, but an hour later a carriage drove up and the Bruce family entered and were driven home.

Miss Cynthia never did things by halves, and that Christmas was one of joy, not only to her own family, but to many others, for happiness opened the way to all her treasures, and Miss Cynthia opened her heart and hand and gave lavishly to the poor.

The children found that Santa Claus knew the way to Aunt Cynthia's, and that was sufficient for them. They did not think, as their elders did, of the words, "A little child shall lead them." —Ohio Farmer.

Only Two Realities.
Billy—So yer didn't git nothin' but a jack-knife and a sled for Christmas?

Tommy—Yes. Dat's all I got worth speaking of. Dere wuz a suit wuz clothes, and a overcoat, and a hat or two, and some underclothes, and a Bible, and a book wuz poems, an some stockin's, and gloves, and collars and cuffs, and a few other trifles like dat, not worth speakin' of.—Puck.

Wearing on Him.
Tommy—I shall be so glad when Christmas comes!

Nellie—I suppose you think you're going to have a lot of nice things?
Tommy—It isn't that so much. It's awful hard to be good all the time.—Boston Transcript.

The Churches, the Poor AND THE Tragedies of New York

It's a curious development that makes New York an ecclesiastical side issue to the Aleutian islands.



Bishop Tikhon.

Bishop Tikhon, of the Aleutians, came but the other day to consecrate a new Russian church in New York. When Alaska was a Russian possession Episcopal sees were generously parceled out there. Later came a few Russians to San Francisco and they were added to the island diocese. Later still began the extraordinary immigration of Russians to New York, and the country was added wholesale to the already elongated charge of the good bishop.

The Aleutian churches are rude and small; the new church in this city gleams and shines with barbaric splendor, resembles a fine church in Russia itself, recognizes the czar as its spiritual head, and cost \$140,000.

The money is in a way necessary. Wherever the Russian church is built splendor is its main characteristic. Rome has bigger churches than St. Petersburg and Moscow, but in detail no more beautiful ones; in gold and gems and jewel-set croziers and books of costly bind a poor Greek monastery will outshine the wealth of many a great city church in western Europe. Greek and Armenian churches as well as Russian we have; the latter differ considerably from the Russian type. The Coptic church, which claims to be the oldest of all, and which is certainly most primitive, is not represented.

With rites, un-Christian New York is well provided. It has rival Chinese josses, one newly housed in a splendid joss house, gleaming with gilding but concealed behind a dingy Mott street exterior. Mohammedans worship in the Turkish quarter; Hindoo castes eat rice by all their ancient formulas on board vessels straight from the orient; theosophy is taught rather as a fad than as a working religion. Buddhism has hundreds of devotees. I have seen a dancing dervish of undoubted genuine quality going through his strange devotions in an artist's studio before a "society" audience.

The "Servant Girl Famine."
With all our huge immigration, one class of immigrants fails to appear in the old numbers.

Of household servants New York suffers the greatest dearth in its experience.

The rosy Irish, English, German and Swedish lasses who for years did the household "chores" of the city are scarcely seen at Ellis Island now. When they come it is not to enter domestic service, but to enter the families of relatives. The new races—Turks, Armenians, Croats—do not bring women in such numbers, nor would they by language or training be qualified to do housework, though some few Armenian men have been trained as servants. The result is chaos.

Wages have doubled. It is not uncommon for a girl to receive \$35 per month "and found" for duties requiring no especial skill. Women cooks get from \$50 up, and "none to be had." Housekeepers not only expect from \$100 per month upward, but they will not go to houses where less than three or four servants are kept. The "general servant" has almost ceased to exist.

This cause, with the high rents and scarcity of coal, is driving people faster and faster into family hotels and apartment houses. It is amazing, but it is literally true that, with all its prosperity, only one-seventh as many private houses were built in old New York last year as in 1890. Even the total annual cost of new private houses, in spite of such palaces as those which are being erected for Carnegie, Schwab and Senator Clark, is less than it was ten years ago.

The Cost of Living.
In such a New York house there is a "servants' hall" as big as the average parlor of a rural cottage. In it meals are served to twice as many people as sit at the family table except on state occasions. The attic story is cut up into little bedrooms for the "help"—who are never called that!

A cook should be French; a valet, by all means English; so should be the other maids, if possible; even the lady's maid is English now oftener than French. This demand and the high wages paid have caused a dearth almost as pronounced in London households as in New York.

Such conditions perpetually fight against the city. They drive people

out of town, where—strange to say—the servant question is now no more acute. Plenty of men doing business in New York live in the suburbs and come into town from Monday or Tuesday morning until Friday night only. The rest of the week they stay in the country. In town they go to the hotels. Here the influx of guests is responsible for some strange things. The "privileges" of a hotel are themselves worth a fortune. Aste, the horse owner, made his money from hotel boot blacking stands. The boot blacking privilege of a new Broadway hotel that is to be opened in two months is already sold to a man who pays \$8,000 a year rent and fits up his own room.

Strangest of all results of the great cost of living in New York is the distance to which men "commute" for the sake of doing business here. Philadelphia is 90 miles away. Enough men live there and come into New York to work every Wall street day to be known on "change as the Philadelphia crowd." On the way back and forth they form a railroad club and play games of levity and interest. The trip takes two hours. In other directions no such distances are "commuted," but as much time is consumed on slower trains in reaching Port Jervis, Poughkeepsie or Greenport.

The Service of the Poor.
When life gets so complex there is more than ever excuse for trying to get out of it. A young millionaire has just made a great sacrifice to do so.

You may have read, a year ago, of Anson Phelps Stokes entering the church and a "neighboring house." His brother, J. Graham Phelps, has just followed that example, except as to "taking orders," and will hereafter be found in the University Settlement society's house on the East side. The head worker of the settlement is Robert Hunter; before him that office was held by James Reynolds, now Mayor Low's private secretary. These men know the poor of the city as even a Tammany politician does not.

The Stokeses are zealous. They are heirs to perhaps \$5,000,000 each. They are related to "Willie" Stokes, builder of famous hotels and the slayer of "Jim" Fisk; also to the elder Anson Phelps Stokes and to the Phelps family, of whom William Walter Phelps is the best known member.

Young Stokes is modest. "I'm not here because I think it my duty," he says, "but because I want to be. I am near my friends. My friends poor? Don't get that idea! People who are at work cannot be called poor. It's nothing to do that is poverty. I've just escaped that."

Not without an effort, I may say. It took Stokes more than a year to put his affairs in such shape that he could leave them.

The Ford Tragedy Recalled.
The tragic death of Paul Leicester Ford, the novelist, and his brother Malcolm will not be forgotten.

The widow of Malcolm Ford has just remarried. She is now Mrs. Leavy; wife of a wealthy young brewer. She is the daughter of a rich wall-paper maker of Brooklyn, now dead, whose great house upon Clinton Avenue was much admired for the brief time he lived in it. Poor Malcolm Ford, who was gifted beyond the lot of common mortals with grace and strength and beauty, went to his grave crazed for the lack of money; crazed by a sense of injustice because he thought he had not been fairly treated by his wife, by his father, by his sisters, by his brother.

The profits of authorship are meantime indicated by the proving of Paul Ford's will. His father was a rich man, but in the old-fashioned way, not measured by many millions. He left considerable property to his favorite son. This Paul increased by shrewd investment. His estate was appraised at \$220,000; much of it was in Standard Oil and similar "gilt-edged" securities.

The elder Ford, shrewd old Scot that he was, had one soft spot in his nature. He loved literary ability. Literary work was his dream for his sons. He was an associate of Horace Greeley, a part owner of the New York Tribune. His son Paul became a historian and later a novelist. His son Worthington C. Ford became a statistician and writer upon antiquarian topics. Paul was his favorite; Paul, with his bright eyes and his tiny, distorted body.

Malcolm also was not without literary ability. Unfortunately he was also the best amateur athlete up to his time that had ever stepped upon the American turf. His writings upon athletic topics did not pay as well as they would.

He Was So Careless.
Mrs. Gaddie—My husband's slipshod. His buttons are forever coming off.
Mrs. Goode (severely)—Perhaps they are not sewed on properly.
Mrs. Gaddie—That's just it. He's awfully careless about his sewing.

THE TIPPING HABIT.

"I maintain that the indulgence in the tipping of waiters, servants, such as bell-boys, porters, and the like, barbers—the practice of tipping of any sort, in fact, is a mixture of vanity and a lack of moral courage on the part of the tipper," remarked a well-known Washington clubman the other day. "Along with my neighbors, I'm hopelessly addicted to the tipping habit, but the mere fact that I'm a tipper myself doesn't serve to blind me to the moral cowardliness and the vanity of the practice. I am so vain that I don't want menials or understrappers to think ill of me if I fail to tip, and I haven't the moral strength not to care a rap what they think under such circumstances so long as I feel the consciousness that I really have the best of the contention. That, in my opinion, is the tipping situation in a nutshell, and it is the simple weakness of the tipper that permits of the continuation, not to speak of the constant spread of the tipping evil. Every man, no doubt, or nearly every man, has once or twice in his life made up his mind with what he considered great positiveness that he would stop tipping his barber for shaving him. He has looked at the situation from all points of view, and he has failed utterly to see why the barber should be entitled to a tip after being paid his legitimate price for his work. Yet I would venture to say that there is actually not one man out of a hundred who has ever been able actually to keep his vow that he would not tip the barber. He finds such an acuteness in the situation by the time he has placed his hat on his head and started for the door, there is such a light of expectancy in the barber's eye, an expectancy based upon so many tips received, that the majority of men simply cave utterly under the situation and pass over to the barber the customary tip.

"Just how strong a character it takes to assume the genuine anti-tipping stand and stick to it is shown in the case of no less eminent an individual than J. Pierpont Morgan. Mr. Morgan is the chief of all the anti-tippers. He's a liberal man with his employers, and at Christmas, every year, he distributes literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in the form of presents among them. He's a generous man in his handling of his household servants, of the people employed on his yacht—of all hands whose names appear on his regular payrolls. But it is a straight fact that he has not handed out a single ten cent piece in the form of a tip to persons other than his own employes or servants in five years. He became disgusted with the tipping system as he had seen it exhibited for so many years in Europe about that time, and he made up his mind that he, for one, would utterly drop the habit of tipping. He's a pretty strong man, it is needless to say, and he has stuck to his determination. My route was a good deal along the same general path as his last summer, for example, and I saw him leave no less than eight hotels, some of them in France, but most of them in Switzerland, without conferring even a copper pourboire upon the expectant and sorely disappointed and mystified servants.

"You know how the hotel employes line up over there for their tips when you're taking your departure from the hostelry. It's the regular and accepted thing for them to form themselves into the 'hedge' formation, so that you'll have to pass through the two lines of them in order to reach the conveyance that is to carry you to the station. You begin at the two rows of expectant ones as you emerge from the hotel, and you make your donations in accordance with the degree of the recipient extending his hand. They're all there, from the house steward down to the boots, and they all confidently look to you for a tip, no matter whether they've turned over a hand for your comfort or not. Indeed, there are some of the hotels in Switzerland where even the proprietors, incredible as it may seem, expect their tip when you leave their hostleries.

"But Mr. Morgan was equal to it, as I say, on the several occasions that I saw him leave the continental hotels, and the amazement with which he was regarded by the expectant ones, who looked for little less than a shower of gold from so fabulously wealthy an American, Mr. Morgan, they all took pains to call him during his stays—the astonishment with which they gazed after him as he swung serenely through the long lines and stepped into his carriage without so much as once putting a hand into his pocket, was nothing short of amusing. They didn't dare, in his case, to make audible remarks about him as he swung along, for the respect of European underlinings is pretty strong for those who invariably occupy suites of rooms set aside for royalty, but their blankness in looking into each other's eyes and throwing up their hands and shrugging their shoulders as they dimly slouched back to their working stations was worth witnessing.

"But there are, as I say, few men capable of sticking to such a determination with the calm indifference of J. Pierpont Morgan. A few weeks ago I dined at a famous New York restaurant, where the waiters are all Frenchmen, in company with a New Yorker of large wealth. We fell to talking of the tipping business during the meal, and he announced to me that he was not going to tip the waiter serving us—he had invited me to dinner, and of course he was to settle the reckoning. I laughed at him, and told him that he wouldn't have the nerve to fail to tip a steely-eyed French waiter with black mutton-chop whiskers, who was so obsequious in his attentions, and whose manner so plainly betokened that he expected to be well rewarded for his exertions.

"I won't, eh?" said the New Yorker. "Well, just watch me. I'll not only do what I've stated, but I'll do something more incredible, more out of the question; more daring, perhaps—I'll give that Frenchman one five-cent piece for his pains."

"Well, of course I never thought he would dare to do it—it was too far out of the question, as he said—to bestow a nickel upon one of the smoothest waiters in one of the most famous eating places in the world—it looked too absurd for belief."

"But my friend did it. The bill for the dinner came to an exact \$17. Carefully going over his silver change and extracting a worn nickel from it, he placed it on the waiter's ready tray, saying in French: "That is for you."

"The waiter picked it up, examined it, smiled, and laid it down.

"Monsieur or the mint has made a mistake," he said in French. "The piece is not gilded."

"His cool wit won him out, and he got a \$5 note."—Washington Star.

He Was So Careless.
Mrs. Gaddie—My husband's slipshod. His buttons are forever coming off.
Mrs. Goode (severely)—Perhaps they are not sewed on properly.
Mrs. Gaddie—That's just it. He's awfully careless about his sewing.



A Volunteer in the Slums.



The Servants' Hall.



Paul Leicester Ford.

OWEN LANGDON.