ONE fleeting year! Ah, me! how swift!
The heavy clouds of memory lift
And gleaming through their leaden haze
The changes of past hours and days
Peer out, like pictures, rich in tint,
Somber, or bright with sunny glint;
Brief visions of past joys and woes—
They call me at the old year's close—

Call me once more to turn and dwell
On days gone by. The sad farewell
Comes slowly from my aching heart
And silently the tear drops start.
A picture here of merry times
When life rang out its golden chimes,
When friends and welcome, home and power,
Filled with delight each passing hour.

Succeeding this in swift array
The dawn of sorrow's tearful day
Breaks through the sullen shade, and lo!
A vision of distress and woe:
The home forsaken, friends untrue,
Old treasures swept from longing view,
Parted the hearts that loved so well,
While anguish tolls each solemn knell.

Joy and distress, delight and pain,
Come surging o'er my heart again;
Back through the moments bright and drear
I live again the vanished year.
One fleeting year—and yet I dread
To name the griefs—to count the dead:
On joys alone my thoughts would dwell—
Thy joys are past—Old Year, farewell!
—Lurana W. Sheldon, in Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

TOMMY TO SANTA CLAUS.

Each Christmas you come at midnight
Across the billows of snow
To fill to the brim my stocking
With candies that richly glow.

You know how I prize the presents
You hang on my Christmas tree,
For you once were a little fellow,
And of playthings fond like me.

You woke up long before daylight,
And greeted the Christmas morn
By pounding your red drum madly
And blowing upon your horn.

You sat on the bed delighted,
To play with each pretty toy.
But who was it filled your stocking
When you were a little boy?
—R. K. Munkittrick, in Harper's Young People.

"NOW, Mary Jane Titus!" exclaimed Mrs. Jarvis Whitman, entering her spic and span kitchen three days before Christmas, "does my nose serve me aright? Can it be possible that you have put sage in the dressing of that turkey, and Jarvis' brother John and his wife, from Boston, coming to help eat it?"

"Why, yethem," lisped the cheerful, efficient, middle-aged maid of all work, nearly dropping the wide, white tray on which rested in state the corpulent yellow gobbler. "What should I theson the drething of a turkey with, I should like to know?"

"*Sage*, in this day and generation!" ejaculated the discomfited housekeeper, dropping into a chair and fanning herself with her stiff, white muslin apron, for the kitchen was warm and Mrs. Whitman was very stout.

"Now, Mary Jane," she went on solemnly, "look here! I want you to go to the barn and tell Sam to knock over another turkey, the largest of the flock—although that one was the biggest of them all—and you'll have to pick and dress it all yourself, Mary Jane. Before you go put a pinch of coffee and a pinch of sugar on the stove to smoke out the smell of the sage. I should be mortified enough to have any one come in and find that old-fashioned sagey smell hanging about the house on Christmas week. And, dear me! I must get that fowl out of the way as soon as possible, or all your fumigating will do no good. What can I do with it? O, I will tell you, Mary Jane. I will send it to the city to Mr. Whitman's cousin, Mrs. Heath. She was out here one day in strawberry time, with her whole brood, you know—pretty children, too. I remember how she went on about her grandmother's herb bed here in the garden. I wasn't over cordial to her, and didn't ask her to stay over night or come again. She is a good woman, only poor and plain, and my conscience has pricked me ever since. This will make amends, somewhat, I hope. I don't want to snub anybody, but I can't have Jarvis' poor relations liable to come in any time, as sister-in-law Elizabeth is; but she is so different. She knows the very latest style in everything, from decorating the house to seasoning the food. When you get the next fowl ready, Mary Jane, you may call me and I will instruct you how to stuff it with oysters and season it with something more modern than sage or thyme or summer savory."

"Modern? My goodness!" repeated Mary Jane Titus to herself as she sped along the narrow slippery snow path, with a thin, faded Highland shawl over her hood. "I wonder what fashion won't turn up in next. Sam said last night they were going to have a new cupola on the big barn, because this one was out of fashion, and now sage has gone out! If my memory serves me right, oysters were made before sage, or somewhere along about the same time. Well, I'm thankful that such things don't trouble me, and I'm glad I stuffed the old gobbler with sage, as glad as I can be, for Mrs. Heath, dear, good soul, will get him by the means, and when the box is packed I will slip in a little note of my own, and tell her just how it came about."

Mrs. Heath, who with her husband and her children lived in a narrow, tucked up flat in the city, had so many knick-knacks to buy for the little ones, that they might not be disappointed in their gifts, that she couldn't afford a turkey for Christmas, and decided cheerfully to tide over the day as well as she could with a plain roast of meat and a pudding. The parents were trying to lay by something for their children's schooling, but any small lack in the dinner should not spoil the festival for them.

"Christmas in Massachusetts wasn't made much of when I was small," she explained to the children as she went on with her simple preparations. "And now I believe more in the Christmas spirit all the year round than I do in the hurrah of one day's special observance. To my mind the best thing about the day now is that at Christmas, sensitive, poor, proud people can receive things they really need without feeling hurt. To be sure I have never been remembered much in that way. Thank the dear Lord, however, we are above real want, even if we have few luxuries, and we have no relatives left on the earth to think of us at holiday time. It was different when I was young and lived at the dear old roomy homestead in the country. But Thanksgiving was then the day of days," and the good mother gave the children, who were greatly interested, a detailed description of the observance of that festival at the old home.

"O what flocks of fowls we saw there last summer!" said the oldest little girl. "How fine it would be, mamma, should they remember to send one of them to you, and it would never be missed among so many."

"They have a great many things to think of," replied Mrs. Heath, "and so did my grandmother, for that matter, but she always thought of those who had less than she had herself, and invited her guests accordingly. I remember, as if it were only yesterday, how she used to stuff the turkey two or three days beforehand, and set it away in a cool place so that it should be thoroughly seasoned through."

Just then Mother Heath was broken off from her pleasant retrospection by an expressman, who set a large covered basket into the neat room, saying with as pleasant a smile as if the gift had been from himself: "All charges paid!"

"With Cousin Jarvis Whitman's compliments," it said on the label, and when with eager, trembling fingers the lid was removed there was the plumpest, yellowest turkey Mrs. Heath had set her patient brown eyes upon for many a day.

Tied to one of the skewered legs was a fancy card on which was written:

"Owing to the old-fashioned ignorance of yours truly, in putting sage in the dressing!"

On the opposite side under a wreath of blue forget-me-nots was printed in gilt letters: "Mary Jane Titus."

Mrs. Heath laughed a little, and then she cried a little as she took out the turkey, finding beneath it a bag of cranberries, a ball of golden butter, and all the chinks filled in with big rosy apples and plump hickory nuts.

"I don't care," she said, "if it did come about through a mistake of Mary Jane's. I am just as thankful as I can be to the Lord, and to my cousins, and to Mary Jane Titus. It was the most wonderful thing it's being brought just as it was when we were talking about the old farm. I will make the most of it that I can in every way, for it is the first time in my life that I have had a turkey on Christmas."

She did indeed make the most of it. She showed it to the neighbors, and told them it came from the very farm where she grew up, and that the dressing was seasoned with sage from her grandmother's bed of herbs. But Mary Jane's card she kept carefully out of sight.

On Christmas morning she put her turkey in good season into the oven, and set her doors and windows open so that any passers in the narrow cross street might know that one family dwelling there was getting up a Christmas dinner.

The Heaths had a lodger, a somewhat peculiar middle-aged man, who for a long time had rented their furnished front room from week to week, and who very sedulously minded his own business.

The night before, however, after the children were in bed he passed in a large bundle labeled: "For the best behaved little people I ever knew," thereby quite winning the gentle mother's heart.

On this eventful morning, Mrs. Heath said to her husband: "Leonard, I want you to keep watch now, and if that lodger sniffs, as he passes through the hall, in a way as if he smelled something agreeable, and as if he was brought up where he had a grandmother and friends, and a turkey on days that brought the family together, I will invite him to dinner, for every family ought to entertain some one at Christmas."

"All right," said Mr. Heath, who was one of those agreeable men who always said "all right" to anything his sensible wife suggested, and he forthwith stretched himself out on a lounge near the open doorway of the narrow little hall to watch for the appearance of the lodger.

He came presently. They heard his footfall on the stairs, and Mrs. Heath ran to the lounge and seating herself beside her husband began to look for a fray on the cuff of his Sunday coat.

"ALL CHARGES PAID!"

She glanced up at the lonely man, quite accidentally of course, just in time to see his nose wrinkle, and a pleasant, surprised expression steal over his usually grave face.

A vigorous sniff, sniff, sniff followed, and, looking up and seeing the amiable couple, he called out, heartily:

"Good day, good day. A merry Christmas to you. The turkey in your oven is giving notice that you are New England people. I always thought the smell especially of sage-seasoned dressing was a very good part of a turkey dinner."

Thanks for the children's gifts and the invitation to dinner followed promptly, and was as promptly accepted; but Mrs. Heath, being a conscientious woman, could not appropriate the extravagant praises of her dressing.

They were on such good terms with the lodger by this time that she did not hesitate to relate the history of the turkey, and in the laugh that followed Mary Jane's card was produced and displayed.

"So you see, sir," went on Mrs. Heath, while her guest studied the name beneath the blue forget-me-nots, "that, although I cooked the fine fellow and browned it to a turn (and if I do say it the browning is half in cooking a turkey), the dressing is none of mine."

"Mary Jane Titus," repeated the stranger. Mrs. Heath fancied his voice trembled, and, glancing at him, was sure his face was flushed.

"Goodness!" she thought, "I hope Mary Jane's sage dressing isn't giving him apoplexy," and as he went on: "How old is she? How does she look?" she decided that the dinner had warmed him up and drawn out his sociability wonderfully, and she replied:

"A nice, plump, rosy, curly-headed little body of five-and-thirty, with a friendly, sociable way, and the dearest little lisp when she talks, that somehow makes anyone take to her right away."

"And where do you say she lives?"

"Down at Greenville Center. Not very far out, you know."

"Yes; yes, I know," said the lodger, finishing his dessert, "but I have business, very important business to see to at once, and you will have to excuse me," and before any of the family had collected their wits enough to express regrets, he was up and away.

Late in the evening as Mr. and Mrs. Heath were finishing up the day with walnuts and apples and a slice of mince pie, the children being in bed, they heard the lodger let himself in with his latch key, but instead of going to his own room as usual, he came directly down the hall to their sitting-room and ushered in Mary Jane, whom he introduced as his wife.

"We were engaged two years ago," he said, "but a trifle parted us, and somehow the very sniff of that dressing brought her to mind, and seemed exactly like a message begging to me to come back to her."

"And," lisped Mary Jane, "I was thinking how hith mother taught me to make drething when I stuffed that turkey, or I shouldn't have done it without consulting Mrs. Whitman. She and her sister-in-law Elizabeth both said it was awful unfashionable to be married in such a hurry, but I told her we had been engaged fifteen yeath, and I didn't call that a hurry at all."

"It seems a good while to me," said the lodger, "when I think of the fourteen sage-seasoned turkeys I've missed!"
—Mrs. Annie S. Preston, in Christian at Work.

Keep Your Resolutions.

New Year's day has long been the one on which men have resolved to turn over a new leaf. It is a day that naturally stands out as a milestone in life. It is a vantage point from which to review the past and look the future squarely in the face. Those habits which have led to failure or a retrograde existence should be reformed. The man whose extravagance has embarrassed his financial success should adopt the lesson of economy. The man who has neglected business for pleasure should gird up his loins and move forward to his proper place in the rapid race of life. The drunkard, a sad disappointment to himself and his friends, should bravely put the tempter behind him and not only abandon his besetting sin but do works meet for repentance. The debauchee should live more closely to the laws of health and decency. The young man who is wasting his time should devote himself to mental, moral, physical and financial improvement. Aside from adherence to pure and honest convictions nothing can do more to make life pleasant and successful than good books and good associations. Stick to your New Year's resolutions. Time past is irrevocable and your one hope lies in the proper improvement of opportunities as they present themselves. Have the courage of your convictions and stick to your resolutions.—Detroit Free Press.

MODERN CHILDHOOD.

Charlie (to Ethel)—Now you want to act as if you really believe in Santa Claus, if you want to make mamma and papa enjoy Christmas.—Demorest.

The Truth About It.

Stuffer—What do you think? Jones has actually invited me to dine with him on Christmas day at his boarding house.

Dashaway—Ha! ha! Did you ask him if he had a grudge against you?

Stuffer—Yes. He said no; that he had a grudge against the landlady.—N. Y. Mail and Express.

THOUGH the "old folks" talk of the good old times,
When land was plenty and cares were so few;
Yet the "young folks" listen with doubtful smiles.
Convinced they were not as good as the new.

Those were gay sleigh rides, grandpapa, I know;
While lassie ne'er danced lithe as dear "grandma'r;"
But some things could be said 'bout a modern beau.
And a cozy jaunt in a palace car.

Those were wonderful loaves dear "grandma'r" made,
And she broidered your socks with a wondrous dara;
Yet she wondered sometimes, I'm sure, if it paid,
(Would have left had she dared for a promenade
And enjoyed to have spun a little street yarn.)

No doubt her papa, great-grandpa, you know,
Really frowned when she purchased her wedding dress,
And sighed as he wished for the "good old times,"
When bonnets were cheaper and dresses took less.

While his great-grandpa, I've heard it said,
Wouldn't spare the wool for his daughter to weave;
But sighed for the fashions of Paradise,
And longed for the fig leaves of Mother Eve.

Soon forgotten is pain, when pleasures are o'er,
"Distance enchants us," the poet was right;
Who wanders his memory back to deplore,
The collar too high or the boots all too tight?

The maiden who lingers o'er past hours of bliss,
Forgets as she day-dreams of heroes and rings,
How her hair wouldn't crimp and her gloves wouldn't fit;
For "deeply depraved are inanimate things."

There are bountiful times in these good new days:
There are lives as beautiful, pure and true,
As any who moved to the simpler ways;
And it may be a trifle better, too;—,

Since God with infinite, loving design,
Is raising the nations nearer to Him;
And the steady sweep of the centuries,
Ever chants a progressive, happier hymn.

Then a glad New Year, this my earnest wish,
I send in hopeful, jubilant tone;
That the coming year, rich-freighted with love,
May prove the best that you ever have known.
—Elizabeth B. Harbert, in Chicago Saturday Evening Herald.

A LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS.

Sammy Withers' Clever Scheme and Its Admirable Results.

On the twenty-fourth day of December, as Abner Withers, the senior partner in the firm of Withers & Co., picked up the mail that always awaited his arrival at the office, an unstamped letter on the top of the pile at once caught his eye.

It had been marked: "Returned to writer for prepayment of postage," above the address; and the firm's business card in the upper left-hand corner of the envelope showed where the post office people had obtained the information that enabled them to return the letter.

"The boy has evidently been careless," thought Mr. Withers. "He has dropped that letter in the box without stamping it. I've no doubt it's an important one, too—what's this?"

Mr. Withers had taken the letter in his hand, and the break in his meditations had been caused by the address it bore, which was simply: "Santa Claus, Esq."

"Huh! some tomfoolery of the office boy, I suppose," he continued. "He is always wasting my time. Let's see."

The letter read thus:

"DEAR SANTA: We are Affraid you have forgoten were we Live. you dident bring me or bertie Any thing Last cristmas Like you use to. we dont want you to forget us this time. Pleas bring me A pare of Skates and A big drum and A Safty and bertie wants A choo-choo car that will go wen you wind it up, And you might bring him some pictcher books too, and A Set of bilding blocks. dont forget us, dear Santa claus

"Your friend, SAMMY WITHERS."

As Abner read the letter he grew thoughtful. The hard lines of his face relaxed. When he reached the signature, a moisture had gathered in his eyes.

"Poor Sammy and Bertie," he murmured! "my own motherless little ones! Bless their hearts! I have neglected them shamefully. To think they had to appeal to Santa Claus for Christmas presents when their own father is so able and willing to get them! Indeed, they shall have what they want, "safety," "choo-choo cars," and all.

As soon as the business of the morning was disposed of, Mr. Withers went to the toy-stores, and carefully filled the commissions which had been intrusted to Santa Claus by Sammy, and the work gave him greater pleasure than he had known in a long time.

He ordered the things to be delivered that night at nine.

Mr. Withers was unusually accessible to his boys that night. He told them stories, and he romped with them until Sammy cried, gleefully:

"Why, papa, this is just like the good old times we used to have."

But Abner could not help smiling to himself at the uneasiness the children evidently felt. Once Bertie even went so far as to ask Sammy in a loud whisper if he supposed Santa had their letter yet; and the father had to turn his back to hide a laugh, as Sammy pinched the little fellow and whispered energetically:

"Hush up, quick! Next thing papa 'll hear you."

But the children were sent to bed promptly at half-past eight, and the packages arrived soon after. Abner received them himself, and then noiselessly entered the boys' bed-room, and disposed about the chamber the articles he had purchased.

When Mr. Withers went to bed, he said to himself:

"I do hope I'll wake in time to hear them get their presents."

But there was no danger of his not hearing them, for their cries of delight at daybreak would have awakened Rip Van Winkle himself.

He tiptoed to the door, however, and peeped through the key-hole. Sammy was mounted on his bicycle, and leaned against the wall for support while he tried to put on his skates.

"Ain't they just boss?" the boy exclaimed.

"Oh-h-h! ain't dey dust boss?" squealed Bertie, watching his choo-choo cars careering over the floor. Then his great blue eyes filled with satisfaction as he murmured:

"Santa Tlaus mus' 'a' dot our letter, bruvver. Don't oo s'pose he did?"

"You bet he did!" And over Sammy's face spread a look of tender retrospect—a look as we see on the chubby faces of Raphael's cherubs—as he added: "You bet he got it! I put it in one of his own envelopes a purpose."—William Henry Siviter, in Puck.

Christmas Aphorisms.

Christmas has gradually evolved out of its theology and has come to stand for a festival of love. Therefore all men love it, for throughout the universe love is born of love and is worshiped for its own sake.

No conscientious person can enjoy his Christmas dinner if he knows anybody else within reach to be hungry. The consciousness that we have given food to the needy provides us with the finest appetite.

Of late years Christmas has become far more a domestic and merrymaking holiday than a religious one. But it is religious in the best sense, since it is a day of peace and rest, and opens the heart to human needs and human sympathies.

The most satisfactory way to observe Christmas is to do at least one good act to some of our fellows.

Christmas was formed, in the era of theology, from Christ and mass. In these practical and luxurious days it might signify that we should try to imitate Christ in dealing with the mass of mankind, who are usually more or less unfortunate. By so dealing with them we should make all days Christmas days.

Christmas is always associated with the good Jesus, who, whether regarded as God or man, was the purest, kindest, nobelest being that has walked the earth. He has inspired love in saint and sinner, in devotee and skeptic alike. Men may wrangle about creeds; but about Jesus and His beautiful life there can hardly be any difference of opinion, for He pitied all who suffered and strove to heal every aching heart.—Mail and Express.

A WILD MAN.

Freddie—Mamma, when are we going to see the Indians? I would really like to see a wild man once.

Mamma—You would like to see a wild man? Well, wait a few minutes until your papa comes in and sees these bills for Christmas presents.—Demorest.

Her Lifework.

Mrs. Bingo (who has invited the Slimson family around to Christmas dinner)—There, Mrs. Slimson, does this pumpkin pie remind you of the pumpkin pie your mother used to make?

Little Willie Slimson — Grandmother didn't make pumpkin pies.

Mrs. Bingo—Indeed. Why, Willie? What did she do?

Willie—She took in washing.—Brooklyn Eagle.

IT is supposed that Charles Dickens wrote "Hard Times" directly after "Christmas Stories."—Life.