



XMAS WITH THE POOR

CLASS TO WHICH THE SEASON IS NOT ALL JOY.

YEARN FOR WHAT THEY SEE.

How the Loving Mother Denies Herself That the Stockings of the Children May Be Filled—Let the Anniversary Be Bright for All.

Christmas with the poor—how much the words express. The season, which brings joy to the hearts of so many, when expressions of good will and friendship are manifested by the making of gifts, when a spirit of generosity is supposed to creep even into the soul of the veriest miser, does not always cause happiness to those who find it a hard matter at all times even to make both ends meet. Say what you will, Christmas must be observed according to the customs which have prevailed for ages, and some attempt must be made to celebrate the day, even by those who can ill afford to do so. What mother can find it in her heart to say to the little brood which she is making such a struggle to rear that Christmas to them must mean nothing more than any other day on the calendar, and must pass by without regard to its observance? In truth, she cannot do this without striking a fatal blow at a childish faith, which she herself has taught, a belief in that imaginary personage in whose generosity the child has a trust which has never yet been shaken. Shall she, while the tender boy or girl has yet such a genuine faith in the existence of that sprightly elf-like creature, whose hoary locks never grow whiter, whose rotund proportions never grow less, and whose big heart never grows smaller, with one rude shock forever shatter the childish trust in those wonderful tales, and destroy just that much of the innocence and guilelessness of her offspring? No, as long as the child is susceptible to a faith so sweet and innocent, she will let it remain in ignorance of the hard, stern realities—a knowledge of which must come to him all too soon.

THE MOTHER'S SELF-DENIAL.

And so, when the holiday approaches, and she overhears what great things are expected of the Christmas visitor, who will stop at their lowly hearthstone when tired eyelids are closed in sleep, she heaves a sigh and she may make her limited means meet so great a demand upon them. But the class to which such a mother belongs is not that which is entirely destitute. There is a hard fight to be made by her at the season, and she has to deny herself many things, and in the conduct of her household affairs exercise the most rigid economy, but she is equal to the task, and on the eve of the holy day, when the little ones are snugly tucked in bed, she glances at the row of stockings hung so carefully by the chimney-piece, from the fat, chubby one of her 3-year-old, to the rather long, lank hose of the 9-year-old boy, whose faith is just beginning to shake, and she knows that on the morrow no one of them will be empty, and that moreover, by the bedside will be the coveted toys on which the children have set their hearts, and have never, for one moment, doubted would be left for them from their humble elf took his flight from their humble roof for never before, save the oil-curse of yore. Was a thing emptied fast that contained as much more.

THE POOR AND THE RICH.

The parents of these children are responsible, in a large measure, for this condition of affairs, and too often rather engender such feelings than attempt to overcome them. The boy, who is a creature of the streets, and who has already become somewhat hardened by his contact with the world, even this early in his life, meets the children of the rich on the great retail thoroughfare, and draws the contrast between his own patched coat and his broken shoes, with the well-dressed boy of his own age, whom he brushes against in the crowd. A feeling he cannot explain rises in his breast; he hates this well-clad, bright-faced lad, and he turns not an inch from his path when shoulder to shoulder they push in their efforts to pass in the great mass of humanity which is surging up and down, and swinging to and fro, like the swell of some heavy sea. It is but the beginning with this ragged arch of the old cry so often heard, of the "rich against the poor." It is that same feeling which makes of many a young man in these circumstances, a hardened criminal in after years, or an embittered man who forever holds up the inquiry into the workings of a providence which gives so lavishly to one and so stingily to another. It is the same feeling that

XMAS SPIRIT ABROAD

PREPARATION AT THE STORES FOR THE GREAT HOLIDAY SEASON.

CROWDS THROUGH BROAD STREET

Many Novelties on Exhibition—Great Display of Toys and Articles Suitable for Gifts—The Flower-Stores—Passing of the Yuletide Shrub.

The Christmas spirit is abroad in the land, and of all spirits it is the sweetest and the best. In the shimmering, glimmering world of society Christmas means some unusual burst of splendor, and the purse must be slender indeed that will not open to gladden some tiny heart. As the great festival draws nearer and nearer, the crowds on the main thoroughfares grow larger and larger. Hugs, bustling, good-natured crowds they are, whose one desire seems to be to banish care and revel in the fine delight of selecting from among the beautiful and useful things displayed in the stores tokens of love and tributes of esteem for those who are near and dear to them. Already the people from the country are beginning to flock to the city to make their holiday purchases, and Broad street is crowded each day from morning until night. It is no idle boast on the part of the merchants that their stocks are larger and more attractive this year than ever. The shop windows tell their own story, and present a gorgeous panorama of seductive wares and fabrics, irresistible no less to the masculine than to the feminine mind and purse.

NOT ALWAYS JOY TO THEM.

Christmas with the poor often means anything but joy, and brings with it nothing but gladness. Christmas with the poor means the exercise of all the good qualities within one, the entertaining of a feeling of resignation to things that be, the effort to bring out the better part of human nature, that they may unite, with true heartiness, in the spirit of the anthem which rings out all over the Christian land on the dawn of the day of the Saviour's birth—*"Peace on earth, good will toward men."*

Kris Kringle's Call.

(Judge.)
(The True Version.)

In the dawn of Christmas, e'er peep of the day,
I was but devoting the past night away
To doll-baby dressing and cedar adorning,
From Nellie, who led them, to wee tot-up
When there broke on my dreams in an ominous noise
The rollicksome sport of my girls and my boys.
Pit-a-pat on the stairs came the tramping of feet,
As 'twere forty wild burrows a-loose in the street,
Aback on its hinges the door opened wide,
With a chorus of "Christmas girt!" yelled on each side,
And Tommy and Willie and Johnnie and Belle—
How many old Santa Claus only can tell—
From Nellie, who led them, to wee tot-up
Like the tail of a comet they streamed down the hall,
Then jostled and pushed and rushed in with a shout
To each "dear little stocking," its sides built up
And chattered and scampered and danced in their sleep
Till the rafters were giving, it seemed like to work
And "papa" joined with them, though he tried to look grim,
When the least baby choked with a big sugar-plum.

Oh, the foot-horn was there and got down to its work
As no power in Keely's vain motor doth lurk;
And the fuse of firecrackers was held at my nose,
While hot, stubby ends burned around on my toes.
There were wagons and skates and dolls shining new,
And I asked as they came, "Will they and speed on get through?"
For never before, save the oil-curse of yore,
Was a thing emptied fast that contained as much more.

"Merry Christmas to all!" With our memories bright
We pile up the Yule-logs and dream in their light
Of childhood's fair day, when as happy
And we joy in the mirth of these frolicsome elves;
Then as gladly we hallow this brightest of morns
(Hark! I hear in the distance the blowing of horns)
That St. Nicholas brings with the frost and the snow
(Bombardment of torpedoes firing below)
But the best of all blessings sent down to this sphere
Is that Christmas can come—only once in a year.

INDIA BARTON HAYS.

A Scheme.

(Edgar L. Warren in Youth's Companion.)
Into a famous toy-shop
Went little Jo and I,
In the crisp Christmas weather,
To see what we could spy.
It was a place of wonder,
A real enchanted ground,
Where everything that heart could wish
Might certainly be found.
There were swings and rocking-horses,
And sleds for boys and girls,
And games, and book, and puzzles,
And dolls with flaxen curls.
"Now find what she most wishes"
(It popped into my head),
"And get it her for Christmas."
"And so I spoke and said:
"If you could have but one thing
Of all the things you see,
Now tell me, little daughter,
What that one thing should be?"
The little maiden answered,
Scanning the treasures o'er;
"If I could have but one thing,
I think I'd take the store."

XMAS FEASTS.

DISTINGUISHED CHEF HAS SELECTED MENUS FOR OUR READERS.

BOTH MAY BE COMBINED.

They Will Save Much Wrinkling of Pretty Faces Over the Problem of What to Get for the Christmas Dinner.

(For the Dispatch.)
Christmas and poor fare is an anomalous conjunction of words. It sounds better, and it certainly is better, to couple the name of the festive season with such expressions as good cheer, joviality, and abundance of the blessings of life. This being so, it is well to begin to write about Christmas dinners with the assumption that the possession of the dinner is a foregone conclusion. It is a melancholy thing to reflect that some of the people in this favored land are looking with hopeless eyes for the turkey that is not for them. To give to these, who let us hope are few, an elaborate menu for a Christmas dinner, is suggestive of the man who said a quick-kill flea powder, with full directions inside every box, which, when opened, contained these instructions: "First of all you must catch your flea, tickle him under the fifth rib, and he will laugh. Put the powder in his eyes, nose, and mouth, and he dies directly."
It is taken for granted then, that every one who reads this has caught his turkey. This is to be a happy-home dinner story. It has nothing to do with boarding-houses, which an everybody who has had a large and many-sided experience with that great American institution will admit, is the dreariest of all dreary places during the holiday time. If an inmate of one of these establishments has read thus far, he is assured that the rest will have no earthly interest for him, and he is recommended to turn to the advertising pages of those journals that are engaged in the philanthropic business of bringing together forlorn and isolated couples, enabling them to bridge with the little hoop of gold the great gulf that separates miscalled single-blessedness from the happiness of married life.
In order to tickle the palate and stimulate the jaded appetite of those to whom the menus given further on are a common, every-day story, we have selected from among a number of old-fashioned dinner lists that were considered by our grandmothers to be the essence of epicurean luxury, the following, which is a fair sample of a first-class dinner of the old Colonial days:
Roast Turkey, Oyster Dressing, Cranberry Sauce, Baked Corn, Stewed Onions, Chicken Pie, Olives, Mince Pie, Apple Pie, Pumpkin Pie, Cheese, Coffee.

What the Fire Said.

(F. L. S., in Atlanta Constitution.)

I.
This is what the Fire said
To the little boys in the trundle-bed,
While the blaze was burning red and blue
And the wind sang over the chimney flue.
"Bad little boys,
They get no toys,
They will never taste of the Christmas joys."
They will never know
Where the reindeer go
With Santa Claus, or the Christmas O'er the housetops high
He will pass them by
Over empty stockings they'll weep and sigh.
He will pass them by,
He will pass them by,
He will pass them by."

II.

And the little boys in the trundle bed
Turned to the Fire, and, weeping, said:
"When your red flames glow
They chatter for you he would never know
If it wasn't for you
If it wasn't for you
We'd have toys, too—
While the shadows flicker and dance
O, for a rain to put you out!"

III.

But the Fire said: "The skies are bright;
There will be no rain from the clouds to-night;
My flame is fierce; I am strong to fight;
And while I burn
With his horns and drums,
And a sleigh half-full of sugarplums,
I'll blister the burning heat,
And drive him back to the snow and sleet;
I will make a game of his
O'er empty stockings you'll weep and sigh;
He will pass you by,
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IV.

That is what the Fire said
To the little boys in the trundle bed;
And then, they covered each curly head
But when all save the noisy Fire was still
(Ever singing its angry will)
And on the housetop, and on the hill
The snow lay white and deep,
There came the sound of a tinkling sleigh,
And a fairy trumpet blew far away,
And Santa Claus, in his coat of gray,
Came on with a merry shout!
And over the chimney shaking the snow
To the place where he knew the flames
Were slow,
The flakes fell fast on the hearth below
And put the Fire out!
Then, down the darkened chimney he sped,
And, standing close by the trundle bed,
And seeing sorrowful little boys,
He said their stockings and hats with toys!

A Color Scheme.

(Washington Star.)
Who is it says Santa Claus was but a pagan myth?
Away with all your manuscripts and your books;
Your "ologies" and "isms" that you puzzle people with,
Your lengthy sentences and solemn looks.
Science oft has been misled,
And there's evidence in sight
That old "Santys" is a patriot staunch and true.
For the holly-berry's red,
And the mistletoe is white,
And the fir-trees in the forest glimmers blue!

In a land of peace and plenty at a time of hope and cheer,
Shall such ungenerous moods the gladness mar?
Shall we relegate the old saint to an alien atmosphere
When his colors are so plainly sung afar?
Let us cherish him instead,
For the way he read aright
Our festive centuries before we knew;
For his holly berry red,
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CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

CHRISTMAS-GIFTS, AND NEVER HAVE PRICES BEEN SO UNIFORMLY LOW.

In the markets the holly and the mistletoe have already put in their appearance. The trade in Christmas-trees is on the decline, and in another twenty-five years will have entirely disappeared. So say the dealers in the Yuletide shrub, and they ought to know something about it. All the same, there is at present a smart traffic in the evergreen dear to children, and hundreds of them will be sold this year.

Christmas-Gifts and Christmas Tips.

(Milwaukee Wisconsin.)
Now that Christmas is approaching, let every one remember that it takes the life out of the pleasure of Christmas-giving to give unwillingly to the swarm of thrifty mendicants who solicit holiday tips, and then to see their exactions down in the category of Christmas gifts. People who dislike to be "sand-bagged" by thrifty exploiters of the Christmas spirit should have moral courage enough to withstand the attempt. There will be a revulsion from holiday giving of all sorts, and Christmas and New-Year's presents will become a reminiscence of the past unless something is speedily done to check the growing abuse. A man who lives in a flat has sought to relieve his feelings in print, because covetousness compels him to give at Christmas to the iceman and the janitor and a host of other tip-seekers whose salaries pay them for all that they do. He finds that when he has discharged these irksome obligations he is left with only 50 cents left wherewith to buy a Christmas present for his wife. The man should help to establish a new and better convention by resisting the convention whose impositions he justly resents. "Who would be free themselves must strike the blow." Let there be a society for the redemption of the holiday season from the odium that threatens to becloud it, if it shall become a season of tipping.

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