Christmas Long Ago

THE SNOWFLAKES on the sleeping earth their downy mantle fling,
While clanging through the frosty air the Christmas joy-bells ring.
It is the hour of eventide—the glowing fire burns low,
And in its depths fair pictures gleam of Christmas long ago.

I SEE THE little cottage nestled close behind the hill;
To us it was a refuge sweet from every earthly ill.
The blazing logs upon the hearth give forth a ruddy sheen
To tinge the frosted panes bedecked with wreaths of evergreen.

I SEE THE little stockings hung beside the ingle nook;
I see the childish faces—oh, how gay and bright they look!
While from the little trundle-beds their merry voices hum,
As eagerly they wonder just "when Santa Claus will come."

HOW BUSY were our mothers then from morn until they slept,
And from the quaint old kitchen spicy odors upward crept
From shelves all groaning 'neath the pies of pumpkin and of mince—
Such appetizing goodies have I never tasted since.

DEAR FACES that I see to-night have gone beyond the skies,
For them the joyous Christmas Day now dawns in Paradise.
But they seem to hover near me in the firelight's fitful glow,
Sweet spirits of the Christmas-time, dear Christmas long ago.
—Katherine L. Daniher, in Leslie's.

Santa Claus as seen in other lands.

THE Santa Claus who visits American children dons many a quaint and curious guise in making his annual visits in other lands. He even changes his name and sometimes goes as two different persons to the same house. In Germany, for instance, we find the good children waiting in joyous expectation for the coming of the beloved "Christ Child," while the naughty ones are waiting in fear and dread for "Knecht Ruppert." But even at his very sternest the dear old saint can not long grieve the heart of any child, for after Knecht Ruppert, hearing an old bell, with which he announces his coming, and an earthen pot, holding the presents, has questioned the children very sharply, threatening severe punishments for all the mischief of the past year, the blessed Christ Child appears, and laying his hands on the heads of the little ones, begs Knecht Ruppert to forgive them just once more, and give them their Christmas presents. Then the gruff old man, grumbling and scowling, finally consents to do so, and the gifts are taken from the earthen pot and distributed by the Christ Child.

The Christ Child is very generous, for he is not often content with giving the children their gifts in this way, he must have a Christmas tree as well. The Christmas tree is lighted on Christmas Eve, so that the little German children have a pretty long Christmas, starting in with the Christmas Eve tree, and celebrating all through Christmas Day with feasting and lavish gift-making. In Holland the children do not hang up their stockings, but put their little wooden shoes side by side, in straight rows by the fireside, sure that the good old saint will fill them with goodies before morning. In Belgium St. Nicholas is the patron saint of the young folks, and as his death is supposed to have occurred on the 6th of December, about the middle of the sixth century, it is on December 6 that St. Nicholas Day is celebrated. This day corresponds with our Christmas, but the children prepare for the gifts very differently from our children.

St. Nicholas makes his yearly trip through Belgium in a white chariot drawn by four white horses, and the children, after polishing their little wooden shoes very brightly on Christmas Eve, fill them with hay, oats and carrots for the good saint's white horses. The shoes are then placed either on a table or before the fireplace and the doors of the room are closely locked. You may be sure it is very early the next morning that the little ones unlock the doors and rush in the room. Such a scene of confusion reigns! It looks, indeed, as if the white horses had been there, for the furniture has all been turned topsy turvy, and every bit of food is gone from the little shoes. They are filled instead with toys and sweetmeats and gingerbread St. Nicholases. These images of St. Nicholas, made of gingerbread, are a very important part of the day. No feast is complete without one, and no home too humble to secure at least one. They come in all sizes and in all degrees, from tiny ones a couple of inches high, without any ornaments whatever, to the very large ones, three or four feet high, richly ornamented with colored icings and fruits and elaborately trimmed with tinsel and gold and silver paper. The white horses of St. Nicholas change drivers between St. Nicholas Day and Christmas, for on Christmas Eve they bear the Christ Child into Bohemia. It is just at twilight that the tinkling of silver bells announces the coming of the Christ Child to the watching children of Bohemia. Every door and window is then thrown wide open, and as the white chariot is whirled swiftly through the air the Christ Child throws his gifts into the hands of the children thronging doors and windows in eager expectation of his visit.

The Bambino is the Christ Child of Italy, and the Italian children are all taken to church on Christmas morning to worship the Bambino before receiving his gifts. After a mass has been said a sacred image of the Bambino is held by the priest for each child to kiss, and after this ceremony is ended the Bambino comes among the children and distributes his gifts. In Spain, where Christmas comes with roses and sunshine instead of ice and snow, the children hide their shoes and slippers among the blossoming trees and bushes on Christmas Eve, and find them filled with fruit, sugar plums and toys on Christmas morning.

In Sweden and Denmark the greatest mystery and the gayest sort of merrymaking accompanies the gift-making. The Christmas box is wrapped in numberless papers, designed to conceal its shape and size as completely as possible, and the name and address of the recipient is clearly marked upon it; then the box is intrusted to some fantastically disguised messenger, who rushes to the house, gives a resounding rap on door or window, and as it is opened flings the box in and swiftly disappears. If by any chance a door or window is open when the messenger arrives, so much the better; for then, without any preliminary warning, the box is tossed into the house apparently by unseen hands. The streets are thronged on Christmas Eve with a motley crowd. Dwarfs and giants, angels and devils, fairies and gnomes, beggars and princes, cripples on crutches, cavaliers on horseback, rush helterskelter, pellmell, jostling one another, joking and laughing, each one bent upon delivering his Christmas box in the most mysterious manner possible. A very pretty custom is taught the children of these Northern countries which it would be well for you little ones to remember—that is the old one of feeding all birds and animals at this great holiday time. The children hang sheaves of wheat on the fence and eaves of the building that the birds of the air may share the Christmas feast with them, and all the animals are given special feast at this season.

In France, the Jesus Bambin is the children's Christmas saint. The French children, as well as the Dutch, range their little shoes in front of the fireplace and find them well filled in the morning. In the country places of France, Jesus Bambin often comes in the guise of a young girl attended by angels. On her head she wears a crown of gold paper, set around with tapers, and she carries in one hand a silver bell, and a basket of sweetmeats and toys in the other.

In Austria, the coming of the Christ Child is told by some one who takes the part of the angel Gabriel. The greeting of the angel to the people who have come to meet the Christ Child is as follows: "My name is Gabriel; from heaven I come to greet you, and to tell you of the approach of the Christ Child. In my hands I bear the sceptre He has given me; on my head I wear the crown." As the angel ceases to speak a chime of silver bells announces that the Christ Child is near, and a moment later a little figure, white clad and wearing a golden crown, enters the room, carrying a basket filled with nuts, cakes and fruit.

"Down from high heaven I come
Into your hearts to dwell,"

chants the Christ Child, and then, while the little ones stand in awed silence, the Christ Child mingles among them. He asks each one if he attends church faithfully, says his prayers, and is a good, obedient child. If the answer is yes, gifts accompanied by loving words of praise are the reward from the Christ Child; but if the little one confesses to a bad year, then the angel Gabriel steps forward, and the unlucky child gets from his hands only a switch, while the Christ Child pleads with him to be a better child during the coming year.

Though Christmas is celebrated, you see, in many ways in these old lands so far away from us, still in the Old World, beyond the sea, as well as in our own, the same message, "Peace on earth, good will to men," is in every heart.—Newark Sunday Call.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS MADE BY BOYS AND GIRLS

A Circus Rug. (By Helen Trew, Macon, Georgia.)—A circus rug, intended for my little nephew, was made of dull green denim four feet long and two and one-half feet wide. A two-inch border of denim of a darker shade was sewed around the four sides of the rug, and five inches in from this binding was placed a one-inch band of the same dark green denim, leaving a five-inch space of the foundation material on which to place the circus procession. From story books and magazines I cut pictures of circus animals, clowns, dancing girls on horseback holding aloft circus hoops, etc., carefully traced these on gay-colored cambric, cut them out and pasted and appliqued the designs on the light denim between the two borders of darker denim, to resemble as nearly as possible a circus parade.

A Croquet Inkstand. (By Harold Jackson, New York.)—Cut a croquet ball in two a little above the centre. In the larger section bore a hole, to

contain the ink well. Saw off the bottom so that it will stand firm, and attach the cover by means of a brass hinge. Draw a design and color and varnish the whole. On the top outline a monogram by little brass nails driven close together.

A Slipper Needle Book. (By Hazel Hope, Jonesboro, Georgia.)—The two soles should be cut out of cardboard, padded with cotton and covered with pretty velvet or woolen. A cap of the velvet should be sewed on the end of one of the soles, and serves

as a pocket for the thimble or thread. A rosette of red satin ribbon is placed on the top of the cap to imitate the bow on a slipper. The heels of the two slippers should be joined at the back and finished with a ribbon, by which the slipper is hung up. The edges should be bound with white silk cord, and inside there should be three pieces of white flannel for the needles.

Handkerchief Bag. (By Olive Akins, Berkshire, New York.)—Take two large, fancy handkerchiefs and cut a circle in one about as big as a small saucer. Lay the handkerchiefs one on top of the other, and stitch them together on the borders

and brier stitch them across the corners. Cover a wooden embroidery hoop with ribbon, and attach it to the circle cut in the top handkerchief. Suspend by a ribbon sewed on opposite sides of the hoop, and finish with bows of ribbon.—Woman's Home Companion.

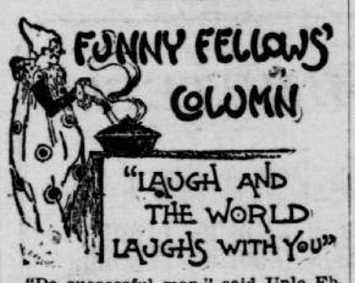
The voice a man has been known to carry three miles through a twenty-foot trumpet.

A MODEL WIFE.

Chloe is the best of wives—
Just a fault or two may be;
But so many sweets she hives,
Scarce a fault I e'er can see.
Worries long have ceased to throng—
Not a figurative gnat—
How could any linger long?
Chloe loves me—think of that!

Chloe always goes my way.
Life's so very smooth indeed
Oft I find my wit astray;
I must ask her what I need.
Quickly then the thing is done,
Chosen auto, house, or flat;
Ah, my rule's a perfect one;
And she loves me—think of that!

Chloe says I am so kind
That 't would truly be a sin
If she did not always mind
Each behest ere I begin—
Says that she can always guess
All my wishes—says it pat.
Obedience brings happiness,
Chloe says—now think of that!
—Samuel Minturn Peck, in the Boston Transcript.



"De successful man," said Unle Eben, "keeps quiet so's he kin hear opportunity knockin' at de do'. De failure tries to do all de knockin' hisse'f."—Washington Star.

First Society Matron—I've just paid $300 for a fascinating little rag to wear to your bridge. Second Society Matron—So charmed! Who is your ragman now?—Life.

Bill—Is that watch your father gave you ten years ago still doing good service? Jill—Yep! I pawned it again today for the twentieth time.—Yonkers Statesman.

Sir Pompey—I say, Blaggs, you've got a fine lot of ancestors. Mr. Blaggs—Bless yer 'eart, Sir Pompey, they ain't mine—they're the children's.—Ally Sloper's.

"What do you see in me to love?" sighed the ardent swain. "Oh, I don't know," answered the girl. "This is the silly season, you must remember."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

"Well, there's one thing about Nuritch, he's always ready to confess his faults." "Nonsense! Why, he's forever bragging about being self-made." "Of course; that's just it."—Philadelphia Press.

Blobbs—Bjones is the most unlucky fellow at cards I ever met. Slobbs—Then I suppose he is lucky in love. Blobbs—I suppose so. At any rate, he has never been married.—Philadelphia Record.

A smart Irishman was leaning against a post when a funeral procession passed. "Who's dead?" some one asked. "I don't know," answered the Irishman, "but I presume its the gentleman in the coffin."—Philadelphia Inquirer.

"Hows yer husband arfter the accidwent, Mrs. Ginerty?" "Faith, sumtoimes he's better an' sumtoimes he's wurse, but frum the way he swears and yills an' takes on whin he's bether, Oi think he's betther whin he's wurse.'—Puck.

Miss Sweetner—Isn't it laughable to see the youthful airs Fan Billiwing gives herself? She must be at least ten years older than I am. Miss Capsicum—Fully—and you wouldn't tear under the wing, you know, either.—Chicago Record-Herald.

"Foiled again!" hissed the heavy villain as he lit a fresh cigarette, "but my time will come. I shall yet turn the tables." And the beautiful heroine stood on the canvas mountain and waved her hand. "That's easy, Gaspard. Get a job in a roundhouse."—Chicago Daily News.

"If you wish to have everybody for your friend," counselled her elderly adviser, "don't be a talker; be a listener." It was not until after she had secured a job as telephone girl in the central office that she found out what a mistake she had made in taking the advice literally.—Chicago Tribune.

Discovery at Mammoth Cave.

Every one has heard of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, but few probably are aware that its discovery was due to the search for suitable earth for the manufacture of saltpetre. The anxiety to find saltpetre earth was due to the embargo bill passed by Congress in 1807, which forbade American vessels to sell for Europe and foreign vessels to land cargoes in America.

The Americans needed gunpowder, and to make it they required saltpetre. They had been getting it from Spain and Italy, but the embargo bill stopped that, and there was no American supply of the substance. A roving chemist, named Samuel Brown, had shown how saltpetre, or potassium nitrate, could be obtained from cave earth. And so the quest for caves was begun, and assiduously continued.

When the Mammoth Cave was found, every port of the great cavern was searched for cave earth. From pit, by-ways and avenues slaves carried out the heavy loads of petre earth. Many thousands of tons were treated, and the rude chemistry of day produced something like 100,000 pounds of saltpetre within two years.—Kansas City Journal.

Springfield's Old Bell.

A group of citizens called on Mayor Sanderson in his office yesterday morning and presented to his attention a plan that they had formulated for the preservation of the old City Hall bell for use in the new municipal building.

The old bell tolled the hours to downtown Springfield for many years, announced unusual catastrophes and spread the alarm of fires from the tower down from which it crashed during the burning of the old City Hall. When it was cooled enough to permit its being dragged from the debris and examined it was found that the bell was intact excepting the top part, upon which the hanger and tongue had been attached. This part was broken off, and so the old bell has remained ever since, posed on a low pedestal in the present municipal building, with a great hole yawning in its top.—Springfield Republican.

LITTLE OLD NEW YORK.

Larger Population Than Sixteen Different States and Territories.

Some one who is apt at figures has shown that New York city today is larger in population than sixteen different States and Territories, and further that within a radius of twenty miles are living over 10,000,000 people.

The improved methods of transportation, which are fast widening the limits of New York's business energy, will soon embrace a radius of fifty miles, within which are located 2,364 different towns and cities whose total population, with that of Greater New York, is equal to fully one-fifth of the population of the United States.

When it is realized that the permanent increase in population of New York last year was about 400,000, a city the size of Cleveland, Ohio, some idea of the tremendous growth of the city can be appreciated. One of the assurances of a continued and permanent growth is to be found in the 50,000 marriages that take place every year.

Besides this permanent increase New York is entertaining an average of over 150,000 transient visitors every day, and at some seasons, when the hotel accommodations are taxed to their utmost, fully 300,000 people are chronicled in their home papers as "spending a few days in New York on pleasure and business."—National Magazine.

RABBITS ARE HARD FIGHTERS.

The Charge of Cowardice a Slander—Defeat of a Ferret.

Tell a man that he hasn't the pluck of a rabbit and if he doesn't disprove it by hitting you he is certain at any rate to be extremely annoyed.

Yet the taunt is a libel on the rabbit. A doe rabbit will fight like fury in defence of her young. She will charge like a battering ram and use those long sharp incisors of hers to capital purpose.

An old buck rabbit is not to be lightly tackled by weasel, stoat or even ferret. On the sanded floor of a small public house near Chestnut a ferret of long experience was matched with an old lopeared buck, the property of the landlord.

The ferret made straight for the rabbit's throat, but the latter was in the air before master ferret could reach him, and leaping clean over the ferret's head let out with those powerful hind legs of his a kick which hurled the ferret bodily against the wainscot. Twice the ferret returned to the attack and twice he missed his grip and went hurtling through the air.

The third repulse was enough for him. He knew he was beaten and could not be persuaded to stand up for a fourth round.—Pearson's Weekly.

Moliere's Misanthrope.

A literary problem periodically debated by lovers of Moliere has been the identity of that famous type of Alceste in the great dramatist's "Le Misanthrope." The plausible suspicion that the character was suggested by the Marquis de Montausier, Marechal de Camp and Governor of Colmar under Louis XIII., and later the preceptor of Louis XIV., would seem to be henceforth beyond all doubt in consequence of a curious discovery made by M. Leon Lefebvre during his recent examination of the Colmar archives. He has found a voluminous correspondence exchanged between the Marquis and the town officials, and he noted in the governor's letters several passages virtually identical with the well known verses of "Le Misanthrope." He concludes that Montausier was Moliere's model. The demonstration of his discovery is to be found in a study published in the Correspondant, under the title "Le Drame de l'Ame Alsacienne au Dix-Septieme Siecle."—Paris correspondent of the London Times.

When a man imploringly heads off your hospitality, my sister, it doesn't necessarily indicate that he is too aesthetic to eat or drink. He may be an epicure.

INVALID'S SAD PLIGHT.

After Inflammatory Rheumatism, Hair Came Out, Skin Peeled, and Bed Sores Developed — Only Cuticura Proved Successful.

"About four years ago I had a very severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism. My skin peeled, and the high fever played havoc with my hair, which came out in bunches. I also had three large bed sores on my back. I did not gain very rapidly, and my appetite was very poor. I tried many 'sure cures' but they were of little help, and until I tried Cuticura Resolvent I had had no real relief. Then my complexion cleared and soon I felt better. The bed sores went very soon after a few applications of Cuticura Ointment, and when I used Cuticura Soap and Ointment for my hair, it began to regain its former glossy appearance. Mrs. Lavina J. Henderson, 138 Broad St., Stamford, Conn., March 6 and 12, 1907."

Our leading physician recommends Cuticura for eczema. Mrs. Algy Cockburn, Shiloh, O., June 11, 1907."

The cleverest girl is she who arranges her pompadour over a bump of old fashioned horse sense.

Separated.

"A regiment of soldiers were recently drawn up one Sunday for church parade, but the church was being repaired and could only hold half of them.

"Sergeant-major," shouted the colonel, "tell all the men who don't want to go to church to fall out on the reverse flank."

Of course, a large number quickly and gladly availed themselves of the privilege.

"Now, sergeant-major," said the colonel, "dismiss all the men who did not fall out and march the others to church—they need it most."

THE GRUMBLER.

"I see they are to have a hookless waist," said his wife.

"And just as I had got to be an expert in hooking them," he growled, being a natural kicker.—Philadelphia Ledger.

NOT QUITE SO CRAZY.

Mrs. Henpeck (to her husband)—"What would you do if I were to die?"

Henpeck—"It would drive me crazy."

Mrs. Henpeck—"Would you marry again?"

Henpeck—"I don't think I would be as crazy as that."—Pioneer Press.

Allah, she was a silent woman and I trembled before her.

THE REMNANTS.

Reginald—"Uncle died in Europe last week, and they are bringing his remains home on the steamer."

Marjorie—"You mean remnants."—Life.

Mix For Rheumatism.

The following is a never failing remedy for rheumatism, and if followed up it will effect a complete cure of the very worst cases: "Mix half pint of good whiskey with one ounce of Toris Compound and add one ounce syrup of Sarsaparilla Compound. Take in tablespoonful doses before each meal and at bedtime." The ingredients can be procured at any drug store and easily mixed at home.

HIGH HEADS.

Patience—"That grocer of ours is asking thirty cents apiece for cabbages. Isn't that rather ridiculous?"

Patrice—"Well that family always did hold their heads high."—Yonkers Statesman.

Improved Methods Insure Cheaper Goods.

For hundreds of years mankind used the same style and size of razor and had no thought that it could be improved until some genius evolved the safety razor. That genius reaped the benefit of his inventive talent by charging from $3 to $5 for each implement, people being glad to buy at those figures. Now comes another inventor who has made possible a still better safety razor, and for only twenty-five cents. That sum in postage stamps sent to the Book Publishing House, 134 Leonard street, New York, will secure a razor postpaid by return mail. This low price is only made possible by the invention of scientific machinery which produces wonderful results at small cost.

THE POISON AND THE ANTIDOTE.

Agent (hailing newly arrived steamer)—"What have you got for us?"

Captain—"There's three hundred cases o' gin. And there's a couple o' missionaries!"—Punch.