The Port Tobacco Times

AND CHRALES COUNTY ADVERTISER.

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Christmas Morn.

[The] bells are ringing their Christmas chimes
[And] they seem to be saying, Good times!
Good times!
Good times for the girls, and good times for the boys!
Do look at the candy, the games and the
[toys] for Johnny, and for Harry this [drum!]
[Buzz], buzz, buzz, and then bum,
[What] is this? Why, a trumpet to
[which] Tommy will toot, toot, toot!
[A whi]stle's for baby; O, my! how it squeals!
[It f]rightened poor Puss, and she takes to her heels;
[Now], dear Grandmother, with a start and ... [s]care,
[Loo]ks this way and that, and then under her chair.
[In] the midst of the din, and terrrible clatter,

[Cu]rly Head peeps in to see what's the matter;
[She] espies a new dolly arrayed like a queen—
[N]ever before such a beauty was seen!
[H]er hat has bright feathers, so grand and so gay.
[And] her Langtry bang hang every possible way.
[Th]e Curly Head laughed and said to herself;
[No]w, somebody's been here, a fairy or elf.
[Her] slippers and stockings! They're just like mine,
[And] her gloves and her fan—now, isn't she fine?
[She's] her mamma's own darling; she's as sweet as a rose.
[An]d who ever saw such a beautiful nose!
[And] see! here's her bureau, her sofa and chair—
[Th]ere's everything under the sun, I declare!
[W]ell, I never—I never in all my life
[Sa]w so many things. And here is a knife,
[A] fork and a spoon, and the prettiest tray,
[An]d saucers and cups. But I'll put them away
[In] this dear little play house, with windows and doors,
[Just] like the big houses and all the nice stores.
[And] that's just what I wanted. Old Santa Claus knows
[Th]at little girls like—but "where are my clothes?"
[N]ow Curly Head's toes began to look red;
[Wi]th a hop and a skip she jumped into bed,
[An]d she said "I'll take dolly, I like her the best;
[The] dear: she's so pretty, but she isn't undressed."

[Sh]e kissed her and hugged her and held her tight,
... [tra]veller sight,
... snug little nest she lay?
... suppose she was thinking
... "nighty." "I'll ask ...
... to make one, three, two;
[A]nd trim them with edging and ruffles and bows."
[T]hen she kissed her dolly, this time on her nose,
[N]ow wasn't she happy, curled up like a mouse,
[A]ll the while peeping slyly at her pretty play house;
[B]ut why do you think she shut up her eyes?
[S]he woke up so early she saw the sun rise,
[J]ust then the door opened, and what did she see?
[N]ot old Santa Claus—he can jump like a flea—
[B]ut her own dear mamma, and her doll close by
[I]ts eyes glaring open, but never a cry;
[T]hen her mamma stooped down and gave her a kiss,
[A]nd she said, "Was there ever such a Christmas as this!"

JOE'S CHRISTMAS.

[H]ow Christmas Came to a Boy Who had Never Seen Fields and Flowers.

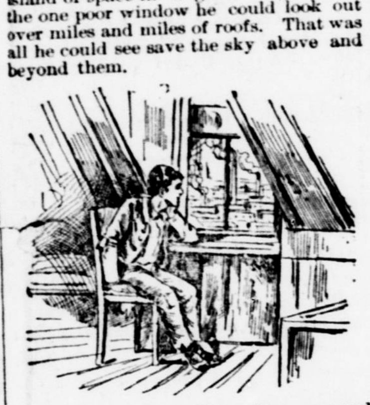
Little Joe sat by the attic window and [l]ooked out on the dull, gray afternoon, [t]hinking.

Little Joe was always thinking. He [h]ad nothing else to do.

For he was a cripple. He had never walked as other boys do. He never would, they said, and when they said [t]hat they looked at him pityingly. But [h]e didn't mind. Why should he?

Joe couldn't have told you about his thoughts, for he was not used to putting them in words. There was no one to [t]ell them to except his grandfather, and [h]e was away all day at his work: when he came home he was tired and sleepy, and not much was ever said between them. So Joe lived in his own little world alone.

That old attic was the only home he had ever known. It was like a little island of space in a great city. From the one poor window he could look out over miles and miles of roofs. That was all he could see save the sky above and beyond them.



Joe sat there on this afternoon and looked out into the dreary prospect, thinking, thinking, thinking. The sky was full of grayness that the smoke did not make. It had a sorrowful look in it. He wondered if it wanted to cry. He wondered if it had had a flower and lost it. He wondered if it had ever seen the green fields. And he wondered if it was hungry. Joe was very, very hungry. He had had only a crust of bread for his breakfast, and nothing since. "If I can't find work we'll have to starve," his grandfather had said, with such a discouraged look that Joe had cried out: "O, never mind, grandfather. I'm not very hungry now." Then the old man had gone away and left the lad alone.

As he sat there he heard a sound that he had never heard before. It was like pleasant thunder, low and deep, but sweet. It sounded far off, and then seemed to grow louder and come nearer. Joe, who could only look at what was directly before the attic window, did not know that close to the side of the old tenement-house a great church had been built. The thunder that he listened to with such delight was the voice of the organ, heard for the first time. They were trying it at their rehearsal of Christmas music. For the morrow would be Christmas-Day, and the children were to sing carols; and as he listened to the glad voices of the children so near by, but who had never heard of poor little Joe, and never would, perhaps, and whose lives were as happy as his was miserable, he was certain that he heard angels. His eyes glowed. His breath came and went in excited little gasps. His face was full of eager joy. "So sweet, so beautiful," he kept saying to himself as the music rose and fell and came near and died away, while all the while beneath the sound of the blithe voices the grand, deep thunder of the organ rolled about him, and made him think some way of God.

"It must be the angels," he whispered, clasping his thin little hands and listening in ecstacy. "O, I wish I could see them! They never came this way before. I hope they'll stay."

But soon the music ended, and Joe had to comfort himself with the memory of it. The sky grew grayer, and the wind blew into the bare and almost empty room and made Joe shiver. But he was used to cold. Then flakes of snow began to fall; great white things that danced about with every breath of wind, and made him think of the fallen petals of his one vanished flower. He wondered if the blossoms in the green fields had all at once fallen apart. If that were true how sorry the angels must be. He wondered how they could sing and be glad. The night came suddenly and hid the world outside the attic window, and Joe sat in the darkness and waited for his grandfather's coming, with the hunger that he had almost forgotten when the angels sang, gnawing, gnawing worse than ever.

"I wish I had something to eat," he said, in a voice that was full of tears. He did not want to cry, but he felt as if he could not help it much longer. By and by he heard a slow, heavy step on the creaking stairs.

"Grandfather's coming at last," he cried, and turned his thin eager face to the door. The moment it opened he cried out:

"I want something to eat, grandfather. I'm hungry, very hungry, for the crust was so small this morning."

The old man's answer was a sob. He tottered to a chair and sank into it wearily, hopelessly, and covered his face with his hands.

"What's the matter, grandfather?" asked Joe. "Couldn't you get any work?"

"N[ot] [a] hand['s] [t]urn, my poor Joe," they said they'd nothing for me to do. I've been hunting for something to do all day. I thought I should have to give up hours ago, I was so faint, but I kept on when I thought of you. It seemed as if I couldn't come back without a mouthful of something, but I have. O, Joe, I wish we were both dead, I do, though maybe its wicked. What's an old man like me to do when he can't get work? It's time to die, I think, when he can't get a crust."

"Never mind," said Joe, trying to make the words shine brave and cheerful. "Maybe you'll have better luck to-morrow." Then he sighed; he couldn't help it, he was so hungry—so disappointed.

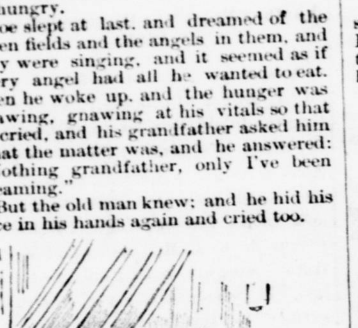
"And to-morrow's Christmas, too," the old man said. "To think of that and without a morsel. It's a hard world for folks like you and me, Joe—a hard, hard world."

Christmas Day! Joe sat and thought about it. He knew the names of the days, but he had never heard this name before. Had they made a new day? Would he have to add Christmas to Saturday?—Friday, Saturday, Christmas. He wondered if he could remember it, and what was the use of having a new day. There seemed enough of the old ones.

By and by Joe said he would go to bed, and his grandfather carried him to his poor little cot and covered him up well. He shouldn't be cold if he must be hungry.

Joe slept at last, and dreamed of the green fields and the angels in them, and they were singing, and it seemed as if every angel had all he wanted to eat. Then he woke up, and the hunger was gnawing, gnawing at his vitals so that he cried, and his grandfather asked him what the matter was, and he answered: "Nothing grandfather, only I've been dreaming."

But the old man knew; and he hid his face in his hands again and cried too.



On one hard and wrinkled finger he wore a ring that was now but a slender hoop of gold. Once—years and years ago, when his wife placed it there—it was a broad, heavy band of yellow gold. As he held his poor old hands against his face it cut into his cheek, the edge of it had grown so sharp. He started up with a sudden thought. Why hadn't he thought of the ring before? It would surely buy a loaf of bread. He would go out and sell it as soon as morning came. But the resolution gave his heart a wrench, for it was the last thing left of Mary's—the Mary who had been dead so many years. It seemed the link that bound them together. "But she'll know; she won't blame me," he said and waited for the dawn.

It came at last. He got up and went to the window, and saw a new white world. The snow had fallen in the night and hidden away all unsightliness. As he stood there the bells began to ring, reminding him that this was Christmas morning.

The voices of the bells stole in upon Joe's slumber and awoke him. He rose up in bed and looked at his grandfather wonderfully, as if to ask what the bells rang so early for.

"Because it's Christmas," the old man answered in reply to the unspoken question of the boy. "You don't know what Christmas means, do you? Well, years ago Christ was born, and this is his birthday. They ring the bells because the world's glad."

"Christ?" Joe said, wonderingly, questioningly.

"God's son," the old man explained.

"Where is he?" asked Joe.

"Dead—and gone to Heaven," was the reply.

"O, to the green fields!" said Joe. "I wish I could. I dreamed of them last night, and I heard the angels. I heard them yesterday, too. They were close by. Do you s'pose they were in the green fields when I heard them sing, grandfather?"

"I don't know," the old man answered, not at all surprised at Joe's question. He was used to such talk from him.

"Becau[se] if they were it can't be very far to the [gre]en fields," said Joe, "for I could hea[r] [the]m sing just as plain. O dear!" sud[denly]. "I'm so hungry."

"You sh[all] [h]ave something to eat," the old man said. "I'll go after it now. I won't be gone long." And then he went out.

Joe laid his head back on the poor pillow and thought while he waited. This was Christmas, then; the new day; the day when the world was glad. Then the world must have enough to eat, for how could it be glad when it was hungry?

Suddenly he heard a voice, a strong, sweet voice that seemed just outside the window, and it was singing something about Christmas. It was the sweetest sound Joe had ever heard. It seemed to be calling him.

"It's one of the angels," he cried in delight. "O, ain't it beautiful! I don't feel hungry now. I don't believe I ever would if I could hear the angels."

Joe could not know that it was a woman singing in the church near by, rehearsing her song for the morning service, held in honor of the King, born in a manger. She could not know that away up in the attic of that old tenement-house a boy lay listening and thinking he heard an angel. If she had known this I wonder if her song would have been sweeter?

"The angel's glad," said Joe. "I know it by the way it sings. It's because of the green fields. I wonder if I could find 'em? They must be close by. If I could get there I'd never be hungry any more. I wonder if I could?"

He crawled out of bed, full of excitement at the thought. He put on his old, tattered clothes with hands that shook, because of the eagerness that had possession of him. Then he dragged himself to the door and out into the dusky hall. He reached the stairs. There he paused a moment to take breath. It looked dark down the narrow opening before him. But that was the way he must go to find the green fields.

He put out his hand, gropingly, bewildered, almost frightened. Then he dragged himself along, down one step and another, and then—God help the lad, he fell!

The old man came up the stairs, bringing a loaf of bread and a little cake with "Merry Christmas" stamped across its face. "The boy'll think it's nicer because of that," he thought, "and it'll make Christmas seem different from other days. Poo[r] ... [to-m]orrow. ... luck."

[Good] luck? Not so. Joe's luck has changed, old man. Do you see that little heap in the shadowy corner of the landing? Ah, you do. Do you know what it is? No? Why, it's a boy who has started to find the green fields.

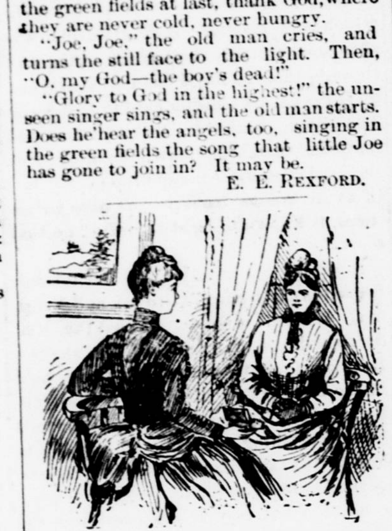
The old man bends down with a cry of surprise and touches the heap. It stirs. "My God! it's Joe!" he cries. Then he lifts it up, and as he does so the boy's face fills with sudden radiance.

"I hear the angels," he whispers. "Listen, listen! and I see the green fields! I knew I'd find them!" Then the little uplifted hand falls on the old man's neck, never to be lifted again. Joe has got to the green fields at last, thank God, where they are never cold, never hungry.

"Joe, Joe," the old man cries, and turns the still face to the light. Then, "O, my God—the boy's dead!"

"Glory to God in the highest!" the unseen singer sings, and the old man starts. Does he hear the angels, too, singing in the green fields the song that little Joe has gone to join in? It may be.

E. E. REXFORD.



"I presume you have bought all your Christmas presents?" said Mrs. Whitehead. "Yes," replied Mrs. Peters, "and how it does cost. I bought Harry a shaving-mug, and Laura a handkerchief, and—and—O, I saw such a lovely sealskin dolman that just fitted me, and I could not help getting it. It was only $400, just think!"

Swedish Folk Lore.

On New Year's Eve, after the light is put out in your bed-room, you must throw your slippers over your left shoulder and then look next morning to see in what position it has fallen. If the toe points to the door you will leave that house during the year; but if the toe points inward, then you will remain where you are for another year. It is customary, also, on the same night for the people to go out into the house where the logs of wood are kept that are used for fuel. Each one picks up the first log that comes to hand; if it is a clean and shapely piece, so will his or her future partner be, and vice versa.—*Notes and Queries.*

The United States uses three times as much paint as any other country in the world.

Albany girls have formed a league to accept no Christmas presents of greater value than 50 cents. All nice young men will marry good, wise Albany girls so long as there is one to be had.—*Binghamton Republican.*

Unto Death.

Look!

A gaunt, shambling wolf which has been making erratic circles on the prairie suddenly stops, lifts his nose high above the grass, and snuffs the air in every direction.

Hark!

A long-drawn howl—a sound which rasps on your nerves and brings a chill. The honest growl of the tiger would be music in comparison. It has no honest echo, but you hear the r-r-r-r-r sneaking across the half-mile of prairie to find evil company in the thickets beyond.

The echo is hardly lost in the pines before it is caught up and sent back by a dozen throats, and a moment after a pack of wolves break cover and race across the grass to join the lone animal which sent forth the rallying call.

Skulking-malignant-devilish! There are beasts which will look you square in the face. The wolf never does. Restless eyes—uneasy bodies—lolling tongues—yellow fangs!

The pack head across the prairie to the South, sniffing at the summer breeze as they run, and at each long leap their eyes grow fiercer and clots of foam fly from their red mouths to blotch the velvet grass. It is a trail they are following, and the scent is fresh.

Come on!

It is a strange sight which meets our eyes. Lying stark and stiff on the prairie, fingers clutching the grass and a look of agony on the face already turning purple under the hot sun, is the body of a hunter. Dead? No need to ask that when you have seen the terrible hole in the breast, and the blood which has welled out and soaked the grass and changed the color of the flowers. His rifle lies at his side—his pack at his head. No accident? Perhaps yes—perhaps no. There is one who could tell us if he could but speak.

"Here, dog!"

Lying beside the dead—rising quickly up as we approach—is the hunter's friend and companion—a grand old dog. He looks straight into our eyes. If we have come to bury the dead with kind hands, it is well. If we have come to rob the master—beware! There is Courage and Fidelity and Determination.

Hush! The dog wheels about and faces the north. A sound has reached his ears which sets his eyes aflame and raises every hair on his back. Yelp! yelp! yelp! It is the wolves—the pack which picked up the trail he had made as he went to the north in search of water.

Now watch!

There are twenty to one, and the scent of the dead adds to their fierceness and daring, but as they advance to within ten paces of the dog every wolf comes to a stop. Standing with his fore paws on the breast of the corpse, the dog growls a warning at will fight the whole pack—he will die He defending his dead!

See! The wolves huddle together for a moment, as if in consultation, and then they break up and form a circle about their victims. The dog wheels slowly, growling his wrath and uttering his defiance. Even now he could break through and escape, but he will not. Of a sudden the leader of the pack dashes at him, but he returns to the circle—whipped—bleeding—vengeful. His place is filled by three companions, and for a moment the corpse is hidden from view and the uproar is frightful.

Grand old dog! They have tasted of his blood, but he has sent them crawling back. Placing his paw again on the breast of the dead he growls defiance to the last.

It is over! At a signal the whole circle closes in, and the struggle is ended and the feast begins. There is a tearing of flesh—a low growl of satisfaction—and it is scarcely five minutes before the last wolf has vanished from sight, leaving only the stains of blood on the grass for the vultures to look down on.

Spouting Oil-Wells in Russia.

The principal oil-wells of the Baku district lie at Balaxame or Balakhani, about six miles to the northeast of the town: this is an oil-field about three and a half miles in length by one and a half in breadth. To the south lies a smaller field called Bebeabat. One fountain at Balakhani, ninety-eight feet in depth, is noted as having been flowing steadily for upward of two years, and still continuing to yield 800 barrels a day. Another well not far off, 490 feet deep, commenced its career by throwing up a jet thirty feet in the air, and then flooding the land with oil for a considerable distance all around, overflowing other wells and several small refineries, so as effectually to stop their work. The roar of the rushing oil and gas could be heard a mile from the spot.

Various flowing wells are said to yield 6,000 barrels a day, and some far more; but, from the fact that these quantities are generally stated in the Russian measure of poods, it is not very easy to realize what is meant. One pood, we learn, is equal to thirty-six pounds English. Hence one thousand poods represent somewhere about sixteen tons. Accounts have just reached England of an oil-fountain which was struck last December, and flows at the rate of from fifty to sixty thousand poods daily, gushing forth with such force as to break in pieces a three-inch cast-iron plate which had been fastened over the well in order to divert the flow in a particular direction. In the same district a huge heap of sand marks the spot where an oil-spring, on being tapped, straightway threw up a column of petroleum to twice the height and size of the Great Geyser in Iceland, forming a huge black fountain two hundred feet in height—a fountain, however, due solely to the removal of the pressure on the confined gas, for there is no trace of volcanic heat. The fountain was visible for many miles round, and on the first day it poured forth about two million gallons, equal to fifty thousand barrels.

An enterprising photographer who was on the spot secured a photograph which places this matter beyond cavil. The fountain continued to play for five months, gradually decreasing week by week, till it finally ceased to play, leaving its unfortunate owners (an Armenian company) well-nigh ruined by the claims brought against them by neighbors whose lands were destroyed by the flood of oil.—*Popular Science Monthly for December.*