

THE NIGHT 'FORE CHRISTMAS.

By JOE LINCOLN.

Most gen'rally at eight o'clock I go up stairs to bed, An' jes' undress an' say my prayers an' cover up my head, An' shut my eyes up good'n tight an' go to sleep, an' then First thing I know it's mornin', an' time to git up again. Some nights, er course, don't seem so short, like 'fore the Fourth, yer know, Or 'fore a feller's birthday, or the night jes' 'fore yer go To visit gran'pa—oh, my, yes! they're kinder long, but, gee! The night that comes 'fore Chris'mus is a million years to me. Seems 's if December, anyway, 's the longest month they is; The months that's in the summer, why, they go so fast they whiz, But old December crawls along, so kinder slow and late That Chris'mus keeps so far away seems 's if you couldn't wait. An' when yer've marked off all the days but one, an' that's most through, An' yer've hanged up yer stockin' right 'longside the chimney flue, An' said "Good night" an' gone upstairs, my, don't the minutes creep! 'Cause when he knows it's Chris'mus eve no boy can go to sleep. Yer hear the old hall clock "tick tock" an' hear the wind, so low An' kinder soft an' lonesome like, jes' 's if 'twas goin' to snow; An' then yer wonder if it will, so's yer can slide next day, An' then yer think 'bout Santy an' his reindeer, an' his sleigh. Yer wonder what he'll bring yer, an' yer wonder how he guessed Yer wanted skates las' Chris'mus an' a bowgun an' the rest; An' then yer try to git to sleep, an' then, er course, yer don't, An' then yer say: "Well, you jes' will," an' then, er course, yer won't. I s'pose it must be right, but, oh! sometimes it does seem wrong That that one night boys wants so short should be so extra long; I've tried to think out why it is, but all the 'scuse I've found Is that it's long so Santy he'll have time to git around. But I know this, I'm mighty glad I ain't a Eskymow An' has to live 'way, 'way up north 'mong all the ice an' snow, I really don't see what they do, the boys, I mean—oh, dear! Jes' think of waitin' through a night that lasts a half a year. —People's Home Journal.

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.

He Made a Good Resolution But It Didn't Last Very Long.

One year ago, according to the Youth's Companion, Mr. Billings settled himself comfortably in his favorite chair beside the stove in the grocery store, and returned the neighborly greetings of the other regular attendants. "Yes," he said, meditatively, "this is the last night of the old year. Somethin' kind o' solemn 'bout it, too, when ye stop to think of it. A year past an' gone, an' a new one—mebbe the last some of us'll ever see—just beginnin'. It makes a man feel serious. People laugh 'bout New Year's resolutions, but I maintain it's a good thing for a man to pull up now an' then an' start fresh; an' the first of the year seems the most natural an' fittin' time to do it." "Makin' any res'lutions yourself, 'Lisha?" asked Nathan Hobbs, good-naturedly. "Yes, sir, I am!" replied Elisha, defiantly. "I'm makin' one, anyway, an' I don't care who knows it. I'm resolvin' to keep a better hold on my temper this year. 'He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city,' the Book says. I've had my failin's that way, as some of ye know; but now we're beginnin' a new year an' a new century, too, I'm goin' to turn over a new leaf." "What was that you said 'bout a new century?" asked old Eben Cook, from his seat in the corner.

"I said now that we was beginnin' a new century I was goin'—" "What you talkin' about, 'Lisha? The twentieth century begun a year ago. Tomorrow'll be nineteen hundred an' one, won't it?" "Course 'twill; but ain't 'one' the first number there is? An' don't that make tomorrow the first day of the new century?" "Not by a long shot, 'less I've forgotten how to count. It don't take a hundred an' one years to make a century, does it?" "No, but it takes more'n ninety-nine. S'pose I was to begin with one, an' count—" "Hold on a minute," interposed Judson, the storekeeper. "Let's say that Bill, here, owed me a hundred dollars an' started to pay me in dollar bills, callin' out 'one,' 'two,' 'three,'—" "Well, s'pose he did." "No, Jud," suggested Seth Gibson. "Here's the way I heard that feller up to the academy put it: How old is a man on his one-hundredth birthday?"

"Good land and seas!" shouted Mr. Billings, as he rose excitedly to his feet. "If he didn't know any more'n this c'lection of hand-picked lunkheads he wouldn't pass for more'n six or seven, at most. It's a waste o' breath talkin' to ye. My ol' sorrel mare's got more sense than the whole passel of ye!" and he started for the door. "What was it 'Lisha was sayin' 'bout New Year's res'lutions?" McPherson asked the storekeeper, as the door shut with a bang. But Judson was too intent on his argument with Gibson to reply.

Struck by the Resemblance.

Little Rodney (manipulating his Christmas toy)—Hoo-ee, pa! Mr. Scragginton—Well, what is it, my son? Little Rodney—Why, pa, my jumpin' jack cuts up just like you do whenever ma asks you for money!—Smart Set.



LISTEN! JOHNNY MUST BE PEEPING. WHERE IS HE?

He did not mean to speak, but the surprise of seeing Santa with his prying eyes caused little Johnny to exclaim: "Oh, ho!" Just as old Santa was about to go.

He was well hidden, as he meant to be, and where he thought old Santa couldn't see. Look sharp and well—he's but a little man—Hunt round the room and find him—if you can.

SOME UNBIASED OPINIONS.

It is not always the biggest stocking that contains the costliest present. When a girl is caught under the mistletoe she always pretends that she had forgotten it was there. A woman always likes a man better if the gloves he sends her are about two sizes too small. A woman declares she is delighted with her presents, but she never fails to look at the price marks on them. If the stone is small and cheap it is perhaps just as well to put a girl's engagement ring in her stocking. It always makes a woman sad if her husband hasn't bought something for her that she is afraid they really oughtn't to afford. —Chicago Times-Herald.

THE CHILD'S FESTIVAL.

There is a Special Significance in Christmas for the Little Ones.

The true Children's day is Christmas. The Lord of the feast was a child in Bethlehem, and He still loves little children as He did when, in the strength of His manhood, He took them in His arms and blessed them. If there were no children in our world to receive and enjoy, the advent time would lose much of its beauty and delight. The child's imagination, which transforms commonplace things, the child's receptivity, which does not stop to question, but enjoys—these reflect themselves upon our minds and bring us for the moment into the child-like mood of happiness. Nor is the child's thought of happiness simply one of getting. Neither the gift nor the surprise of the gift, dear as these are to the child's heart, brings as much pleasure as the planning and the giving. The best of Christmas is enjoyed before ever Christmas comes. We older ones need to be reminded every year that love is more than elaboration at the Christmas time, and that the value of the gift is measured by the affection of the giver; but unspoiled children know it and act upon it, as if there could be no doubt of it at all, and we would all be happier at Christmas if we were to learn of them. Then would the Christmas burden, of which so many are complaining, turn to pure delight.—Congregationalist.

An Important Day.

Nowhere is New Year's day more festively observed than in the east, and especially in Mohammedan lands. In Persia the No Rooz, (as the new year is called) is by far the most important holiday observed by the subjects of the shah. On New Year's eve the fun begins with the kindling of huge bonfires, and among the more active it is considered the correct thing to leap over or through the flames. The Persian is careful to perform his fire dance in old garments, for on New Year's day every one who has the means is bound by the strictest custom to appear in new clothes.—N. Y. Sun.

Willie's Useful Present.

Hired Man—So Sandy Claus he's brung ye a nice sled, has he? "Yep, an' left six cords of firewood for paw 'bout two miles down the pike so's I could haul it home."—Brooklyn Life.

A Very Important Gift

"Mamma," said a Brooklyn girl, "what would be an appropriate Christmas present to give Albert?" "How long has he been coming to see you?" asked mamma. "About four years." "Then I think you had better give him the sack."—Leslie's Weekly.

Don't Buy Bargain Presents.

Speaking of Christmas reminds me that it is not always safe to buy bargain presents for your friends who live in the same town with you. It's all right to do it if you are sending the gifts outside the city's shopping limits, but when you undertake to present your immediate friends with the cullings of the "marked down" sales of holiday week you run a big risk. For instance, one of the big dry goods shops made a special feature of liberty silk ruches, cutting the price exactly in half. They really were a tremendous bargain. Any woman who was not blind could see that with one eye shut and it was no wonder that they sold like hot cakes. A liberty silk ruche that looks like a \$4 one and costs just 97 cents is not to be despised. Pretty nearly every woman who went into that store looking for Christmas presents bought one and I happen to know of four women who bought three apiece and sent them to the other three. And as a consequence to-day those four women are the possessors of liberty silk ruches that are as alike as two peas in a pod and each one of them cherishes a secret opinion of the other three.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

THE DRUMMER'S CHRISTMAS.



DRUMMER—I'm off home for the holidays, boys. I know there is something nice waiting for me there.

FELLOW TRAVELER—I envy you your good fortune. My Christmas present will have to wait for me.

EMPLOYER—Just in time for Christmas John. Better take a week off to examine your presents.

THE CHILDREN—Oh, papa, mamma's got some Christmas for you up stairs. Go up and see them.

The pleasant Christmas surprise the Drummer's Wife had at home for him.