

A COUNTER IN A CHURCH.

HOW THE CHRISTMAS WAS SPENT IN BOSTON.

The Churches not Decorated—Using Them as Lodging Houses and Store Rooms—Hard Times in Many Homes—What the Charitable are doing.

Boston, Dec. 25.—It is Christmas day, a bright, pleasant Christmas, with the air tempered to such an extent that half the town is out without its overcoat.

It is well. For half the town hasn't got an overcoat, and it has it is a very shabby one, so much so that it would be very much out of place on a holiday.

It is a memorable Christmas day, one that thousands will not care to remember, for Boston is not in a happy mood. The churches, those great, grand affairs, which the chronic poor are afraid to enter, churches, which in former years lost themselves in flowers and evergreens, and whose congregation could well afford it too—they've not decorated this year. The money was needed for other purposes; to help the poor, the pastor said, and the wealthy classes, who could help the poor and decorate the church too, if they had a spark of that humanity, which characterized him, whose birthday they observed—these people said it was right and proper that the churches should not be decorated; and they were not.

Dreary thoughts for Christmas time. Yes. Yet they come; come, for instance, after one has attended a service in the Ruggles Street Baptist church, or Berkeley temple, or one of the many big, influential churches in this city, which find employment for a man, give him a square meal, then tell him about Christ.

You know Ruggles Street, at least you've heard of it? Most people have. It's a big church in the south end, where the "Ruggles Street Quartette" sings every Sunday and draws people from all over Boston to hear it.

It's a church of workers, with an employment bureau, a free dispensary, a reading room, and goodness knows what not. The pastor is a young man, full of energy and humanity, and his name is Rev. Everett D. Burr. But the pastor and the quartet do not complete the list. There is the Ruggles street doctor, eight or ten men and women, who devote their whole time to the welfare of other men and women, and a big church membership that helps them do it.

Ruggles street church wasn't decorated this year. That is as decorating goes. There was bunting and ever-green, and a Christmas air about the place, but it didn't cost much money.

The church was open all day today, and I'll tell you why.

Year in, year out the church is a friend in need to hundreds, but this year, the number has increased beyond all finding out. It includes people who have always been able to say "Merry Christmas," and mean it, but who this year, after months of idleness, say nothing at all.

Christmas has made these people even more miserable, and the workers going among them, heard children talk of Santa Claus, and Christmas trees and stockings, and toys, and all those little things which make little souls happy. An idea struck the pastor. He wanted to be a Santa Claus, indeed. So he formed a club, and his idea was to get all those things the children spoke about and deliver them in express wagons the night before. But he didn't do it. The number to be visited became too large, and the calls of others for the necessities of life too urgent, and the idea had to be dropped.

Then it was decided to keep the church open, to make it the Christmas home of those in the South end who could not have the observance of former years. That is what was done. The men and the women and the children, came and went all day, and with Christmas trees, and good things, and a slight of hand performance in the big church in the evening made merry Christmas in the church instead of at home.

A number of other churches did the same, only in a lesser degree.

Perhaps, somebody from St. John was up here, last week, and saw the crowds on Washington street, tried to wedge through them, and perhaps wandering into one of the large stores, endeavored to reach the counters. Such crowds! Simply impassable. Such bundles! Everybody had one. The whole population seemed to be a-bu-ying. And the Christmas trees, and the wreaths in the windows in the residential sections, the brilliantly lighted windows, the gaily decorated stores. Christmas was rampant, like one of those lions on the crests of the St. John aristocracy. There was nothing to show that the mayor was at his wits ends how to provide work for 50,000 people; nothing to show that 2,000 or 3,000 people were going about with notices to quit, from their landlords in their pockets; nothing to show that the police were taking a census of the unemployed, filling note books and the big-hearted ones emptying their pockets; nothing to indicate that the school room of a city church had been turned into a coffee house, or that the counters of charitable institutions were filled with coats for the homeless to occupy that night. Yet that was Boston, of a few days ago.

I used to hear it said that Christmas was nothing up here to what it was in St. John. Thanksgiving day, the story went, was

the Christmas of Boston. Perhaps it is true but the Christmas of Boston is the Christmas of St. John. The same buying the same festivities, everything the same, but here the Christmas tree, and the holly branch, and the wreaths of evergreen come out strong. The people decorate, so that outsiders will know something about it, for in hundreds of windows to-day, wreaths hung close to the panes, and glimpses of Christmas trees and candles could be had. The bundles on Saturday told the rest.

R. G. LARSEN.

NO TRUTH IN THEM.

Tales of Our Boyhood New Said to have no Foundation in Fact.

There was probably no such man as Romulus.

There never was such a person as Pope Joan, the so-called female Pontiff.

Wellington at Waterloo did not say: "Up, guards, and at 'em!"

Alfred the Great did not visit the Danish camp disguised as a minstrel.

The existence of the Colossus of Rhodes is considered by some historians extremely doubtful.

There is no historic authority for the statement that little George Washington cut down the cherry tree.

Cromwell and Hampden did not attempt to sail to America just before the outbreak of the English revolution.

Phil. III. of Spain was not roasted to death by a roaring fire because court etiquette forbade any one to come to his assistance. He died a natural death.

Pocahontas did not save the life of John Smith. It has been ascertained that this worthy man was the most able-bodied pre-icator of his century.

Seneca was not a half-Christian philosopher, but a grasping money-lender and usurer, who died worth over £3,000,000.

Cesar did not say: "Et tu Brute."

Richard III. was not a lurcher, but a soldier of fine form, some pretensions to good looks, and great personal strength and courage.

Gen. Cambronne did not say: "The guard dies, but does not surrender."

The words were the invention of a Paris journalist and attributed to him.

Mary Stuart of Scotland was not a beauty. She was cross-eyed, and to save the trouble of having her hair dressed cut it off close to her head and wore a wig.

Sappho, the poetess, was not a wanton beauty, nor did she throw herself from the Leucadian cliff to be cured of an unworthy love. The latest investigations prove her a respectable married woman with a large family.

Queen Elizabeth was not the angelic creature represented in the history and poems of her own times. Her hair was red, her temper red-hot. She sometimes drank too much, and at any provocation would carry on like a trooper.

WASHINGTON, ENGLAND.

The Original Process Employed in Birmingham, England.

The directors of the Birmingham mint have adopted a practicable method of remedying a long-endured nuisance. The thick black volume of smoke proceeding from the high chimney stack of the local mint had long been a serious annoyance to the district, and the shopkeepers in particular have suffered to no inconsiderable extent from the same source of trouble.

The mint company has suffered perhaps as largely as any one in the vicinity and has had on many occasions to answer the complaints of the health inspectors and to pay heavy penalties incident to the proceedings that have from time to time been taken.

Recently a gentleman who owns a large joinery establishment at Newberry, Berkshire, expressed his willingness to wash the smoke by an original process of his own.

The invention which he has introduced at the mint has met with the entire approval of the directors of the company, and has also given satisfaction to the health authorities of the city. An opportunity was afforded a reporter of inspecting this extraordinary arrangement of making black into white.

First the smoke is drawn from the stack by a powerful fan, and it is then forced through a revolving cylinder into a tank filled with water. Perforated beaters are affixed to the back of the cylinder, and these drop into the water, and scrub or wash the smoke, which is put back into the chimney in the form of a perfectly pure vapor. The solid carbon which is washed from the smoke is brought out at the bottom of the tank, all bubbling and boiling over, to all appearances a black, foaming froth. The arrangement of the apparatus allows an inspection of the washing process and of the vapor, which, after the cleansing has been performed in the tank below, is perfectly white and odorless, and is thrown through the chimney into the air as steam. It is an interesting fact that the black extract is admirably adapted for use in the composition of paint and printing ink, while the ammoniated water remaining after the process of washing possesses the properties of a powerful disinfectant.

How Women Lose Things.

A curious illustration of women's tendency to lose things is furnished by the collection in the lost and found bureau of the Columbian exposition. There remain in it 600 women's wraps, 520 gloves, 25 veils, score of portmanteaux and handbags, to say nothing of 800 umbrellas, a good share of which were left by women, and 200 pairs of spectacles, most of which, no doubt, belonged to women. They lose things when away from home because they are more likely than men to be carried away by new scenes and to forget everything except what interests them for the moment. Even when visiting they are excited by the closing conversation at the door, and often have to be called back to get something they have forgotten. A woman has too much imagination to keep her wits about her as a man does, but that is largely due to the life she leads in the quiet of home. Tied down there she travels in fancy, and when she travels actually thinks only of what she has come to see.

A TOOTHACHE STORY.

An Operation Necessary to Complete her Appearance.

Pauline Viardot, the ever to be remembered "Fides" in Meyerbeer's Prophete, had one of her teeth longer than the rest of her pearly jewels, which somewhat damaged the beautiful expression of her physiognomy. A few evenings before the production of the Prophete, during one of the general rehearsals of that opera, Meyerbeer went into her room and advised her that he could not consent to let her sing "Fides."

"How so?" exclaimed the great artist, stupefied at such a dreadful revelation.

"Am I wrong in any part of the role? If so you should tell me, sir, and I would endeavour to correct myself." Madam you are a perfect "Fides," and I could not dream of any songstress to sing and play better than you," answered the maestro "but—"

"But—you cannot perform 'Fides' unless—"

"Unless what?" quickly asked Pauline Viardot, bursting into tears.

"Not at all, madam. I have just ordered the Queen of Prussia's dentist to come from Paris for the express purpose of attending your operatic majesty, and you may rely upon his unsurpassed skill." As it was the unalterable condition imposed by the hard-to-please maestro, Pauline Viardot made up her mind to confide in her beautiful head to the dentist, who first chloroformed her, and with magic dexterity, removed the obnoxious bit of ivory. A few nights after Pauline Viardot won her crown of immortality in the role of "Fides," in which she will never be equalled. When the tremendous echoes of the enthusiastic applause had abated, and the artists were allowed to leave the stage, Giacomo Meyerbeer, trembling like a child with emotion, respectfully took the right wrist of "Fides," and to this he adjusted a diamond bracelet worth about thirty thousand francs in the middle of which, and surrounded by rubies, stood the small piece of tooth that for so many years had been prominent in the features of the great artist.

A WONDERFUL PEN.

She Knew his Fallings and was Exceedingly Septical.

A countryman, on a visit to Glasgow, had his attention drawn to a card of pens in the window of a stationer's shop in the city, the information on the card being that, by the use of this pen, over one thousand words could be written with one dip of ink.

Our friend, astonished at this novelty, resolved at once to become the grand possessor of one, and thereby very much astonished his friends at home. He accordingly entered the shop and requested the shopman to sell him one of the pens that can write a thousand words.

The shopkeeper, all smiles soon produced the desired pen, and Tammas left the shop greatly pleased with this (to him) latest triumph of science. Having afterwards to transact some business in the town necessitating the use of pen and ink, he did not fail to make use of his wonderful pen, politely declining the use of all other pens offered for his use.

Thinking that he should make his better half acquainted with his safe arrival in the city, he could not do better than use his pen on a telegram and on going to the telegraph-office wrote out the following—

"Dear Wife,—I arrived all right in Glasgow: I am writing this to you with a pen that can write a thousand words with only one dip of ink."

His wife, after reading the telegram, exclaimed: "Puir man, drinking again; he says he wrote this with a pen and ink, and there's nae ink about it at all, for it's just lead-pencil only."

Troubles of the Pulpit.

The pulpit in the nave of Westminster Abbey, it is said, has a movable floor, which can be raised or lowered at pleasure to suit the height of the preacher. There is a story told that one day a very short man was expected to preach, and the pulpit floor was raised considerably. Being prevented by illness, or some other cause, he was unable to fulfil his appointment, and at the last moment a substitute had to be provided.

The clergyman who obligingly undertook the office proved to be a man of stature considerably above the average. On reaching the head of the pulpit staircase he

found the floor raised so high that he was obliged to stand on his toes to reach the pulpit.

He was so embarrassed that he was obliged to descend the pulpit staircase and to wait until the floor was lowered to its usual height.

He then ascended the pulpit staircase and delivered his sermon.

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law to his dismay that the official in charge of the simple machinery had apparently not been informed of the change of preacher.

The clerical "son of Anak" was, however, equal to the occasion; he scrambled on his knees, and in that uncomfortable posture preached the sermon. It is believed that no one in the vast congregation noticed the uncomfortable position of the preacher.

MUSIC HATH CHARMS.

This is an old saying but is not always true.

It is a curious fact that Cardinal Manning, with all his undoubted talents, had, unlike his great compeer Newman, no taste for either poetry or music.

On one occasion, having to preach at a suburban church, the organist, knowing the Cardinal's objection to florid music, chose one of what he considered the quietest masses of Haydn—that known as No. 16.

When the service was over he was sent for by the Cardinal, who complimented him upon the music.

It was devotional, he said, and did both vocalists and organist the greatest credit.

About a year later the Cardinal paid a visit to the same church, and at the conclusion of the service the organist was again sent for. Anticipating a further compliment, he hurried to the sacristy, and to his utter astonishment, was overwhelmed with indignant reproaches.

"Never let me hear such music again, sir," the Cardinal said. "It is these lamentable exhibitions that drive people away from High Mass, and are altogether a disgrace to the Church."

He left the astounded and abashed organist vainly trying to mutter what was the simple truth—

"Why, it was the same mass that we sang when he was here before!"

THE CLERIC PASSED ON.

The Farmer Was Not Ready to Receive His Teaching.

A good story is told of a well-known clergyman. He had a neighbor, a testy old fellow, who rented an allotment outside the village. On one of his rambles round the country lanes, he passed the old man's allotment, and found him planting potatoes in a patch near the road. The divine being somewhat of a gardener himself, noticed some peculiarity in his neighbor's style of planting, and, after a few minutes' chat, he called his attention to it, and he said the old man argued the point awhile. "After all," concluded the reverend gentleman, "I don't think you are doing it as it should be done for the best results." The old farmer rested his arm on the fence, and looked at him steadily. "There ain't neither one of us," he said, "above havin' fault found with us, but if you jest go on preachin' your way an' I go on plantin' potatoes my way, I don't think we need be no wuss off in the end." The suggestion was accepted pleasantly, and the cleric passed on.

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