

A Christmas Plea.

Christmas! It is a name on the word. Although my step is less elastic than it once was, and a heavy burden of life's cares are on my shoulders, at the very thought that Christmas is but a short time in the future, I feel myself growing young again.

Such associations as it revives! A child in a happy home, fond parents, loving sisters and brothers, all eager to contribute their share to make that happiest and most mysterious of all times one of joy.

Such expectations as Christmas brings! What an equal eagerness, the impatience the unsatisfied joy that a child feels just before the presentation of his gifts? And is there any such unalloyed happiness on earth as that of the child as he holds in his hand a stocking, stuffed to the brim with unexplored riches? Such hilarity; such exclamations of joy and surprise as each gift, simple though it be, is taken out!

Yes, blessings on Christmas time; and blessings on those parents who have not permitted narrow dogmas and worldly desires and cares to cause them to forget the joys that Christmas brings to their childhood, and to ignore the childish hearts that are in their care.

It would seem that an appeal for Christmas, in behalf of the little folks, in this land of christianism and our high state of civilization, would be needless. I would have thought so, years ago. But contact with the world shows character in variety, and I have seen homes where a number of little hearts beat high in exultation as Christmas approached, only to meet with a disappointment which blackened their very lives, for the time being, as they witnessed the joy of other children of happier homes.

A few years ago I went to a man who was the head of a family, a Protestant church member, wealthy and learned. I asked for a donation for a public Christmas festival for children. He replied that he did not believe in Christmas. That there was nothing really authentic that Christmas was born on that day. That any other day of the year could be celebrated with equal propriety as his birthday.

"Well, laying aside that belief, then," I said, "you would like to see the little hearts made happy once a year, would you not? Christmas is truly the children's day, and is the brightest spot in a child's life. And every one should do something to add to their joy at this time."

"No," he said, "I consider the distribution of gifts and the festivities of Christmas as pure nonsense. It is just a waste of time and money. Children should be taught sometimes of the stern realities of life, instead of indulging in such frivolities."

I left that man with his hard, practical ideas. Just as though the little hearts would not soon enough taste of life's bitterness? His boyhood and all the feelings incident to youth were as entirely forgotten as though they had never been. The sorrows of life had clouded his heart to the sweet influence of child nature, and he had lost all appreciation of the keen, joy-loving spirit that belongs to childhood.

I can point to another home, where are eight growing boys and girls. The house is large; between three and four hundred acres belong to the fine farm. A hundred head of cattle graze the pasture, a dozen horses are needed for the immense amount of work. The bank account grows every year, and abundance reigns everywhere. But, ah, pity and shame! In that household there is no joy and cheer. A stern, hard father, and a sedate mother, govern the home.

There is no time for anything but work and the accumulation of riches. While other houses around rejoice in gifts and a happy time, Christmas with them is only one of the other hard days of the year. The children witness the pleasures in other households, and gloomily and unhappily must submit to the close rigid rules of their parents.

Children's joy is perfectly infectious. They are so demonstrative and merry when they are happy, that the whole household feels the influence. I went to a child's show the other evening. In the room was a little ten year old boy, who had the merriest, most musical laugh I ever heard. At the occurrence of anything amusing, that child's laugh rang through the house, and the whole audience would join. It was perfectly irresistible.

It is just so in the home. Only make the children merry, and their joy will be diffused like sunshine. I do not recommend extravagance, but I do urge parents, now that Christmas is so near, to open both heart and purse and give the little ones a happy season. You have no idea how it will brighten up your own life. You will really wonder if the years are going backward and you are growing young again. You will ask yourself, over and over again, where that headache and that touch of rheumatism, and those blue days are gone to. Such things will fly during the excitement and joy of Christmas festivities.

As parents we have always with you. Wherever we are we will find unfortunate ones in life. Do not forget them. Our own pleasures will be all the sweeter to know that others are, too, rejoicing through our instrumentality.

An old fashioned Methodist revival is in progress at the jail in Cincinnati.

The Orient express train, running between Paris and Vienna, seldom has an applicant on Fridays for the thirteenth compartment of the ladies' Pullman sleeping car. The cars are always reserved beforehand, and the numbered tickets are only distributed at the last moment. In spite of this precaution, however, No. 13 of the ladies' tickets on that day of the week is almost invariably returned, and the train, although otherwise crowded, has to travel with one berth empty. Ladies have got so far that they will dare No. 13 alone on Friday alone, but the two together they cannot swallow.

Duelling still flourishes furiously in Continental Europe and the Hungarians appear to gather in the largest crops in the field of honor. The biggest contract on record in this business was recently undertaken in Pesth by Count Victor Orsini. He challenged forty gentlemen and nobles to mortal combat because they criticized rather severely some statements of his made in a club room. One of his invited victims was Count Francois Esterhazy, a gentleman with no less than seventy duels and six dead men upon his conscience. He positively refused to be counted among the propositi cadaveres, and gave no reason for the refusal. It is fair to suppose that he has retired from the field.

To-night. No golden head with glittering light; and a night instead of a night.

No dimpled hands, in keen delight; playing strands—no prayer to-night.

No bright eyes alight; to catch my sight; to close to mine—no prayer to-night.

No pearly tears; rather loud and bright; all its tears—no prayer to-night.

An aching heart, of care and blight; in every part—no prayer to-night.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SINCE ADAM.

A Great Many More Than Could Stand on the Earth at Once.

Did you ever make a calculation of the number of people that have inhabited this globe since the beginning of time, asks a writer. No doubt you will say that such calculations involve a loss of time and are, after all, barren of results, but as we are engaged in solving curious readings and odd calculations, let us take a few minutes' time and approximate, with a certain degree of accuracy, at least, the number of souls that have been ushered into and out of this sinful world since the time when it was not good for Adam to be alone.

At the present time it is believed that there are 1,400,000,000 human beings on our globe; but let us suppose there has been but an average of 900,000,000 living at one time since the creation. To give room for any possible doubt as to the average length of life, we will put it down at 55 years. (It may have been longer than that during bible time); it has been much shorter, however, since.) With the average length of life reckoned as above we have had two generations of 900,000,000 each every century for the last 6,000 years.

Taking this for granted we have had about 66,027,843,237,075,266 inhabitants on this globe since the beginning of time.

Admitting that there is a great deal of guess-work about this calculation and that it has been hastily and perhaps inaccurately done, it will be perceived, nevertheless, that our earth is a vast cemetery. On each rood of its 1,283 human beings have found a burial-place. A rood being scarcely sufficient for ten graves each grave must contain the remains of 129 persons. The whole surface of the globe, if all peoples bury within the earth as we do, has been dug over 129 times in order to get room for burial places.

A LONG TRIED SUIT.

Russian Justice Occupies Four Centuries in One Case.

A Russian paper notes the termination of a lawsuit begun in 1493, or four centuries ago. The litigation was over a forty-acre tract of uncultivated land, has been handed down through numerous generations, and curiously enough has been finally settled by peaceful arbitration. This protracted litigation, as well as the satisfactory manner of its termination, reminds us of the celebrated case described by Rabelais, in which Pantagruel acted as umpire. This classic lawsuit had lasted many years between two French nobles.

Innumerable law papers had been prepared on both sides, and all the courts had been gone through, with the result of utterly baffling and mystifying the claims of both parties. The empire above mentioned being appealed to agree to decide the matter provided that all the papers and documents should be burned up and the claimants then should plead their own case personally before the judge. As, owing to the lapse of time, they had both forgotten altogether what was the origin of the controversy, their respective arguments were made up of blind and incoherent repetitions of such of the legal jargon as they could recollect from reading the documents drawn up by their lawyers.

Therefore, Pantagruel gave his decree in language equally unintelligible as the pleadings' statements. Both parties were fully content with the incomprehensible sentence he passed, neither of them seeing any cause in it to make him think he had lost his case. When this satire of Rabelais was published somewhere about 1554, the Russian lawsuit had already been progressing over fifty years.

Father Christmas.

It is a question if the children who believe in Santa Claus are happier than those who know that loving human hands fill up their Christmas stockings. At all events, among little people whose hearts are in the right place, it is never the value of the gifts brought by the holy time, but the tenderness prompting them which ensures their grateful welcome. Says the celebrated author, George Sand, of her Christmas festival:

I have not forgotten the absolute belief I had in the descent down the chimney of Old Father Christmas, a good old man with a snowy beard, who, during the night, as the clock struck twelve, was to come and place in my little shoe a present, which I should find upon awaking.

Twelve o'clock at night! that mysterious hour unknown to children, and which is represented to them as the impossible limit to which they can keep awake. What incredible efforts did I not make to resist my tendency to sleep before the appearance of the little man!

I felt anxious yet afraid to see him; but I could never keep awake long enough, and the following morning my first anxiety was to go and examine my shoe in the fireplace.

What emotion did I not feel at sight of the white paper parcel! For Father Christmas was exceedingly clean in his ways, and never failed to wrap his offerings carefully.

I used to jump up with joy. It was never a mere matter of treasure. It was never a wealthy. It used to be a little cake, an orange, or simply a nice rosy apple; but nevertheless it seemed so precious to me that I scarcely dared eat it.

Like Many Lawyers.

Smith (a physician)—I tell you, doctors are a necessary, but lawyers are not.

Briefs—They are not? How do you make that out?

"Because necessity knows no law."

He was Learning.

Mrs. South Church (of Toronto)—Did any one call, James?

James (a recent acquisition but determined to emulate culture)—Yes, madam; Mrs. Fairchild and the Misses Fairchildren.

A Question of Habit.

"Pat, you must be an early riser. I always find you at work the first thing in the morning." "Indeed, an O'iam, sir. It is a family trait, O'iam de dhinnik." "Then your father is an early riser, too, eh?" "Alas, my father, is he? He rises that early that he'd go to bed a little later, he'd mate himself gettin up in the mornin'."

A GREAT SURGICAL FEAT.

A Delicate and Difficult Operation Successfully Performed.

BALTIMORE, Md., Dec. 10.—The surgeons at the city hospital have performed an operation which is said to be one of the most remarkable in the annals of surgery. The patient is a German, John F. Bursenbruch, and he is 14 years of age. His disease is due to the ova of a peculiar kind of worm which inhabits the dog and other animals.

The ova finds its way into the stomach of man in drinking water, thence it is carried to the liver by the blood vessels. The egg is about 160th of an inch in diameter, and the parts which develop it are found in the water on the ground, and stick to the surface of vegetables, and thus it is possible in eating vegetables uncooked to take these ova into the body. The animal from these ova, however, is not developed in man. The eggs once in the stomach of man increase at an enormous rate. From the stomach they are absorbed by the blood vessels leading to the liver. Here the ova form cysts, or little bags, around themselves, like the caterpillar in its cocoon. When this cyst is taken into the stomach of the dog it develops into the full-grown hydatid, which is one-quarter of an inch in length, with a head one-sixteenth of an inch furnished with numerous little hooks and suckers.

Bursenbruch was a laborer at the Jesuit college at Woodstock, and had complained of a dull but severe pain in his right side since last spring. He had wasted away and lost nearly forty pounds of flesh. Prof. Bevan, who diagnosed the case, made an incision in the wall of the right side of the abdomen, just below the ribs, and about a gallon and a half of pus was taken from the man's liver. The method of removing the hydatid cysts is by means of draining the liver, which operation is very modern surgical art. The pain of the patient before the operation was intense, the tumor in his right side having distended his liver nearly fifteen inches. The great pain seemed to leave him shortly after the operation, and he now appears to be recovering from his terrible disease.

HERE AND THERE.

The production of Brazilian coffee has been doubled within the last ten years.

The English Board of Trade reports 569 strikes during 1888, with 88,000 strikers.

It is proposed to light up horse's heads with electric light during fairs in London.

The youngest officer in her Majesty's service is a second lieutenant of exactly eighteen.

At present prices it is estimated that the ivory collected by Emin Pasha would be worth a million sterling.

There is a young gladiator six feet eight inches high, said absolutely to be only twelve years old, on exhibition in London. She is a Don Cossack.

There is advertised for sale in Worcester a piece of property on a lease which has 171 years yet to run. It was made for 2,000 years in 1600.

The Leeds Mercury says that Lessaps and his colleagues will soon have to abandon the Panama Canal. The subscribed capital is nearly exhausted, and no more can be raised.

Isabella, the Vagabond Queen.

It is difficult to understand why the Spaniards, a proud, sensitive people, should have submitted so long to a ruler whom they could not respect; her good-hearted, happy-go-lucky nature seemed to cast a charm over them. Her total lack of reticence appealed to them; they could follow so easily all the workings of her mind, whether, with childish petulance, she was reproaching her ministers with betraying her, or confessing with remorse she had wronged them. If her nine years were open so was her repentance.

Year by year, when Italy Week came round, this Roman, who for the other 61 weeks had been outraging every law, human and divine, knelt in church for the hour together, and, with loud sobs and groans, proclaimed her sorrow for the past, her resolution to make atonement in the future. Her sobs, seeing her sorrow, sorrowed too, and when Easter Day arrived, were as convinced as she was that a new era in her life was at hand. The Maundy Thursday ceremony never failed to win for her hearty adherents. She washed the feet of the beggars with such manifest zeal; spoke to them such kindly, loving words; served them with food as if she thought it privilege to do so, and at the close of the feast, cleared the table with a decency that showed her heart was in her work. Her splendid robes—she always wore full court dress upon these occasions—seemed to enhance the touching humility of her attitude, and, although the free-thinking part of the community scoffed at what they called the popish mummeries of the whole affair, that was not the feeling with which the bulk of the population regarded it. One year, while she was serving at table, a diamond fell from her head-dress on to the plate of one of the beggars. A dozen hands were stretched out to restore the jewel, but the Queen motioned to the man to keep it, remarking simply: "It is not her nature to say 'no' to a beggar; it is not the one point upon which she made a firm stand against her Ministers was insisting upon her right to exercise mercy, and the hardest struggle she ever had with them was a question of pardon granted at the request of Ristori. A queen has many chances of doing little gracious acts, and Isabella never failed to seize each one as it came in her way; not, however, for the sake of winning popularity, but simply to follow the bent of her own nature, which, as she showed the other day, is still unchanged, for she of all Paris was the first to remember that Prado's victim needed help and comfort."

[Gentlemen's Magazine.]

Drawing materials—Corkscrews.

A trial has begun in Galicia against sixty-five men for fleeing emigrants during ten years past. Among the accused were persons of all ranks, the first on the list being District Governor. The Galician peasants are so simple that such a device as a little alarm clock served to telephone to the "Emperor of America," who was regularly asked whether he would accept a particular emigrant; and a favorable answer was always paid for highly.

African Slavery—International Conference at Brussels.

On Monday, civilization, as represented by fifteen Powers meeting in Brussels, will be girding its loins and gathering its whole strength to strike a death blow at the African slave trade, in the hope that the great century which has witnessed the introduction of railways, shall see the last of the odious traffic in human flesh.

Those who may view this attempt as a piece of maudlin sentimentalism, should remember that civilization was primarily, and remains solely, responsible for the evil it means to uproot.

Enlightened Europe invented the barbarous African slave hunting three centuries ago, when it began colonizing North and South America, and felt the want of cheap labor and sun-hardened laborers to cultivate the soil of the New World and build up its great British, Portuguese and Spanish Republics. Europe even patented its invention.

Who can forget the time when the Spanish and Portuguese Governments chartered regular slave raiding companies, which undertook to provide annually 10,000 or 20,000 "tons of negro" (aye, that was the way they spoke) from the Guinea Coast; the time when the Portuguese Bishop of Angola, on the West Coast of Africa, stood upon the beach and gave the blessing of the Catholic Church to the slave lader and slave galleons sailing out to the lands of forced labor?

Who can forget that hardly a century ago the great Liverpool and London merchants were still making a tremendous business in providing the United States with "Uncle Toms and Topics"; that within the first decade of the present century Cuba received no fewer than 12,000 black wretches intended for the cultivation of its tobacco, and that, as recently as 1870, the Brazilians bought 50,000 unfortunate negroes, to ensure when the human flesh hunters had been compelled to fight and kill about as many again?

And yet, as in the case of Lady Macbeth the perfume of Arabia fall in "sweetness" the slave raiding and slave owning crime which we are going on still through-out Central Africa and even spreading further. During three centuries, civilization taught the coast Africans to invade the interior of the Dark Continent and enslave their brethren for the purposes of civilization itself. Now that the coast Africans have lost our custom, they are practicing that terrible spartan trade on their own account.

The slave traffic has removed its markets from Christian to Mahomedan or heathen markets—what's the only change.

SLAVERY UP TO DATE. A MACBETHIAN STAIN.

Of course, all this is over now. Ever since 1794, when our consciences were aroused to shame by the splendid outburst of a great revolutionary and abolitionist Frenchman:—"Let our colonies perish rather than our principles of human freedom ('Que les colonies perissent plutot qu'un principe!')"—ever since then the civil world has been slowly endeavoring to cleanse the bloody slave stain from its hands, and the great American Civil War, followed by last year's final netting of the slavery badge in the Empire of Brazil, have been the crowning incidents of this general white washing process.

The principal slave hunting ground stretches from west to east, from the Niger to the Blue Nile, right through the Soudan, over an expanse of something like 3,750 miles, very nearly connecting the Atlantic with the Indian Ocean, and extending southwards through the Niasa Main country, right down to the northern frontier of the Congo Free State. And even this portion of the picture doesn't say the whole truth. Since Mr. Wauters has drawn up his map, we have got from Stanley the terrible news that the Mahdists, coming down from Khartoum, have invaded and captured Emin's province, where the traffic was dying out, so that the slavery canker now again extends southwards, right down through the Unyore and Uganda countries, to Witou, that portion of the East Coast where the English, under Mr. Mackenzie, and the Germans, under Captain Wissmann, are striving to establish European domination.

Then going backwards from the East Coast, there is a second wide slave hunting ground, which begins in the neighborhood of Stanley Falls on the Upper Congo, and expands through the Manyema country, Ujiji, and the borders of Lake Tanganyika, right down to the northern bank of the Zambesi eastwards and to the Lyndia country westwards, covering and far outspreading the whole central and southern portion of the Congo State territory, which Europe has allowed to King Leopold, but up to which the Belgian sovereign has not yet had either the time or the means to carry his flag and his civilizing efforts.

The wonder is, how can such immense tracts of country be so easily invaded, where are their unfortunate population taken to, and to what use can all this human flesh be put?

WHAT THE SLAVES ARE WANTED FOR.

The tracings of the slave convey routes on Mr. Wauters' map will show that the coast Arabs who overrun the western portion of the great Soudanese hunting ground carry their booty through the immense Sahara wilderness, northwards to the Ouaddani, where the negroes are used for home consumption, as ivory carriers, domestics for the local Sultans, and so forth; to Morocco, where there are several slave markets controlled from the European Consuls, and to Tripoli, where a negro is used as currency as an equivalent to the American dollar, the English sovereign or the African beads or cloth. From the eastern portion of the central hunting ground, the caravans of weeping, bleeding, heart-broken black martyrs are dragged and whipped towards Nubia, Berber, Khartoum, the Mahdi's dominions, the males for domestic purposes, the females to satisfy the lust of the polygamous chiefs of Darfour and Kordofan, or else shipped across the Red Sea to Peria, Arabia, and the Turkish Sultan's Asiatic provinces.

A peculiarity of this Eastern trade is that many of the male slaves captured for the purpose have been extremely and horribly mutilated either in early youth or as the very time of shipment, in order that they may be fitted to play the part of eunuchs in Oriental seraglios and harems. Until about seventy or eighty years back black slaves were almost unknown in the Turkish Empire.

The largest number of servants were of the type of poor witty hunchbacked Ethiopians, drawn from Greece, Cyprus, or other Eastern Mediterranean islands. But civilization

having conquered and closed those sources of supply, the Turk then resorts to the new slave hunting grounds opened up in Africa by civilization itself, and this is a fact of not very widely known—not only do the Sultan's subjects consume thousands of negroes as house and harem servants or janissaries, but also hundreds of them as future Mussulman missionaries, who are taught the Koran, converted to the Moslem faith, and then sent back to Africa to spread it throughout the pagan people of the Dark Continent, so that Christendom, while opening up that portion of the world to the Turkish slave commerce, has at the very same time been fostering a regular crusade against its own religious creed and increasing tenfold the difficulty of educating the blacks into the religion of the civilized West.

As to the "tons of 'slaveryware' kidnapped in the second great hunting ground comprised between the Upper Congo, the Lyndia country, and the northern bank of the Zambesi, it supplies the neighboring chieftains with domestic slaves or with martyrs to be massacred on the altars of the pagan gods in the religious ceremonies of heathenism, while a portion of the captured wretches are also shipped southwards to Madagascar, the Comores and other large islands of the Indian Ocean.

It was in the upper part of this district that Dr. Nechtigal, the German explorer, witnessed terrible slaughter hardly three years ago, and shed tears of admiration and grief at the sight of mothers strangling their own children or throwing them amidst the flames of the burning huts, in order that they should not live to know the horrors of bondage. And it was in the lower portion of this district that as recently as last June some Scotch missionaries living in the Nyassa-Tanganika plateau witnessed similar scenes, and afterwards discovered that the attacking Arabs were nearly all armed with rifles of English manufacture, stamped "Tower," showing that civilization is not only guilty of having taught the Arabs their first lesson in slave raiding, but has also provided, and is still providing them with the weapons wherewith to carry on their horrible negro chases.

HOW THE CONFERENCE WILL BE COMPOSED.

Such, according to the most recent eye-witnesses and authorities your correspondent has consulted and to the last documents, published or unpublished, is the present condition of the black flesh traffic which in Livingstone's time made half a million victims annually, and now, according to Cardinal Lavigerie, makes two million victims—a figure which may have been exaggerated some months ago, but which, thanks to the capture of Emin's province, will soon be below the truth if the "African curse" be not quickly put a stop to.

And now the civilized nations are going to put all their heads together to stamp out the hideous evil, not only from sentiment and because they feel their moral responsibility concerning a plague of their own creation, but also from self interest, because, at the time when the overcrowded Old World is seeking to get out of its social troubles by preparing African outlets for its commerce and its surplus population, it is confronted and arrested on every side by its pupils the slave traders and slave hunters, who likewise wish to shut out Germany from the Zanzibar coast, England from the Somali coast, the Belgians from the Upper Congo, and light and progress from every point of the Dark Continent. And this is what has prompted Belgium, at the suggestion of Lord Salisbury, to convene a great Anti Slavery Congress which is now in session in the Conference Hall of the Foreign Office, in Brussels.

HOW THE AFRICAN CURSE IS TO BE REMOVED.

What anti slavery measures will be proposed neither President Carnot, Lord Salisbury, the King of the Belgians nor Prince Bismarck could probably say exactly themselves at the present moment seeing that no previous agreement has been come to, that each one is in the dark as to the other one's plans, and that the delegates will probably have to telegraph daily to their respective Governments for fresh instructions while the Conference is proceeding.

But several suggestions are already in the air which are likely to be brought forward. One of them is to render general the system carried out last summer by England and Germany on the East Coast—i.e., a blockade of the whole African seaboard, from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, from the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. Each country's men-of-war would be empowered with the right of searching trading vessels for slaves, under whatever flag they may be courting; and as a corollary to this, an International Court, composed of the Consuls, would sit, try and severely sentence all slave parties caught red handed.

Another idea, which will probably be mooted by the Portuguese, will be that civilization should summarily close all the slave markets of Morocco, Tripoli, the Eastern countries and Africa itself, by armed force, if required, and at whatever cost of money and blood the enforcement of this measure might cost.

Other delegates will suggest that all States possessing territories in Africa should be compelled to levy small flying armies and create watch stations, in order to keep the slave raiders in check or to give them chase, while all regularly constituted States, such as Turkey, Morocco, Tripoli, Madagascar, where domestic slavery has become a national necessity and has created vested rights, should be constrained to proclaim that "anyone desiring to be free, is free, and only such slaves remain slaves as wish to."

Then, again, there is a talk of proposing to institute a large International State fund for the creation of narrow gauge African railways and steamboats, which would naturally become substitutes for negroes as regards the carriage of ivory and other goods, and at the same time hasten the spread of education. And of course the importation of firearms may be prohibited, and also a heavy duty on the maddening spirit trade, which renders the negroes such an easy prey to the slave raiders.

Some of those ideas sound as though they came from the land of Utopia; others are sure to create great differences, and yet something may come of them, Lady Macbeth being so anxious to rid herself of the bad smelling stain.

Prayers may go begging for an answer but "What'll you have?" never does.

It is quite natural that the man who steps on a tack should be hopping mad.

A Kansas Sunday paper devotes a column editorial to "Morality in Chicago." It might have started off like the Irishman's essay on snakes in Ireland, "There are no snakes in Ireland."