

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

In the field with their flocks abiding, They lay on the dewy ground;

He sang, that first sweet Christmas The song that shall never cease—

To you in the city of David A Saviour is born today!

For they sang that Christmas Carol That never on earth shall cease—

And the shepherds came to the manger, And gazed on the Holy Child,

Oh they sang—and I ween that never The Carol on earth shall cease—

THE ECCENTRICITIES OF BULLETS.—At the battle of Peach Orchard when McClellan was making a change of base, a Michigan infantryman fell to the ground as if shot stone dead, and was left lying in a heap as the regiment changed position.

UNDER THE CHRISTMAS SNOW.

The wild, black night stoops down without a star, Above the Tyrol's snows—

Under their snow-fringed eyes, far down the valley, The window panes shine ruddy through the storm,

The wind sweeps roaring round the rocking belfry, The bells awake and ring;

Float faint and sweet along the frosty air; There in the little cradle lies the Babe,

But up above, among the roaring pines, The drifted depths of snow,

There at the wayside Road one woman lying, Like Magdalene of old,

The weary, uphill road lies dark behind her, Traveled in toil and pain,

Glories in Ecce—Immane! The dying lips take up the angels' song;

It is so cold! The snow is drifting—drifting— My feet sink deep—so deep!

The night lies dark on her eyelids, The snowdunes choke her breath;

The wild, black night stoops down without a star, The earth lies dead and cold;

Behind the splintered ice peaks slowly turning The day rolls up its fire;

Along the eternal snow-fields walks the morning, And, high in heaven, and higher,

Go back to heaven, and the night is done— The long world-darkness melts in light away.

At His dear feet in peace the mother lies, And on His breast, the child!

The late Bishop of Lichfield, who was alike remarkable for wit and learning (he translated into elegant Latin in one night, the address of the Bishops at the Pan-Anglican Council),

THE RING IN MARRIAGE.—The objection to the use of a ring in the marriage ceremony was felt by Puritans generally, in England as well as here, even by those who had no scruples about the solemnization of the rite by a minister.

been formed; but in the marriage rite itself it was probably not used until about the tenth century. The introduction of the marriage-ring was probably derived from the custom of giving the ring, with the staff to bishops at their consecration.

DAN WHEELER'S BEAR STORY.

AN ORIGINAL SKETCH BY ARTHUR J. GRAHAM.

Bears don't never show fight unless there druv'! Wal, p'raps you know a good deal, young man, and p'raps again you aint altogether a Solomon.

Wal, yes, I reckon I hev' seen a bear turn on a feller promiscuous like, and what's more the feller was just the party you're speaking to, and he don't want another slice off the same cake, you bet.

Want to hear the story. Wal, I suppose, now. Tan't much of a story, that's so. More kind of a curious experience, as them book making fellers call it.

Wal, about that bear. It was quite a while ago, somewhere about fifty years, I should judge. How old am I now? Wal boss, I reckon you'll hev' to take your own bearings and strike an average.

I remember the particler day, I'm telling you about same as if it was yesterday. One of the half-breeds, "Skinny Pete" as he was known in camp, come in late one night all excited like 'bout the trail of a large bear that he had struck on the out-kirts of the blueberry swamp,

The boys mostly took Pete's yarns jest for what they was worth, and we concluded he was probably layin' it on extra thick in the matter o' size. Still he war'n't likely to be much out where a bear's trail was consarned, and we turned in early, so's to be about fast thing next mornin' after the darned critter.

Wal, maybe turnin' in is sunthin' of a large word, seemin' as how we only had to roll ourselves up in our buffaloes and court the embraces o' Murphy, as young Doctor Weston, the scholar of our party used to call it.

Old Phœbus Pollo (that's the sun, on'y 'tother seems kinder more poetical) didn't get in a great deal ahead of us next mornin'.

Wal, we started as I said, Pete leadin' with the dogs a following him, p'raps a half a dozen in all, and the rest of us, five altogether, or six maybe, in Indian file, sneakin' along thro' the cracklin' branches and dead leaves, as quiet as field mice, and never a word spoke among us.

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Our camp was fixed in a little clearing pretty nigh the top of a hill that sloped down gradual may be three parts of a mile or more towards the blueberry swamp I told you of. The river run clear through this hill pretty nigh north and south, passin' close by the camp and

comin' out on the plain 'bout a mile and a half to the south. It ran through a kind o' ravine, maybe a hundred feet or more of perpendicular rock hangin' right over it.

The whole hill was covered with a pretty thick bush, stretchin' away for miles to the north, and 'most impossible to push through 'thout usin' an axe.

Wal, boys, I aint anyways good on descriptions, but I hed to wade in and try my level best to shew you the way things war fixed, so's you'd kinder understand what happened a while later.

We took the reg'lar way down along the edge o' the cliff, as I was saying, and Weston, who was just a head of me, stopped 'bout half way down to look over into the river.

He give a look over, and whispered to me, "That 'ud be an ugly place for tumble, eh! Dan." "Wal, it would, that's a fact," sez I, "though its a mighty pretty sight too."

Wal, we marched along pretty quiet till we got down to the open ground. Then we held up awhile on the edge of the bush, and put our heads together to lay out our plans.

Then we held up awhile on the edge of the bush, and put our heads together to lay out our plans. The tracks Pete hed noticed when he was comin' home was crossin' from the bush into the blueberry patch, and the way he come on 'em was by making a short cut, in his darned Indian fashion, up along the edge o' the swamp to the camp, which lay pretty near in a line with it.

After a bit o' talk, we concluded to spread out along the edge of the prairie and send Pete on ahead with the dogs to strike the swamp on the far side, to see 'ef he couldn't drive that there bear to break on our side, so's we'd get a chance to tackle him in the open.

Course after bear get afoot, we were to shift for ourselves, best way we could. I guess it was hardly five minutes after we got fixed that we heard one of the dogs give a yelp, and then another, and then Pete aollerin' and cheerin' to 'em, and a minute after Charlie Thombs,—Charlie was standin' right on the corner o' the swamp—hollers out, "There he goes, boys."

With that he runs forward a few yards and fires his rifle, kind of a snap shot seemin'ly, and then 'thout stoppin' to load agin, tears along the edge of the swamp like mad.

Weston and I was a bit further up towards the river, and couldn't see a thing on'y we heard crash, crash in the bush, as the old brute thundered along through the undergrowth.

"Doc" and the rest of the boys tumbled right in after him, jest where they happened be standin', but I thought I know'd a trick worth two o' that. The bear was making straight for the river, and, as I was telling you the bush was terrible thick right there. I was a piece behind the rest of the party, and not far from the bank we'd come along by, so I concluded to try back up the path and head the old critter off when he struck the top of the hill.

Wal, I put right straight up the path runnin' pretty smart. I could hear the bear and the dogs crashin' along, and once in a while I heard a stray cuss from some o' the boys, when they got stuck in the bush. He was makin' right straight for the river, I could hear that plain enough, so I chucked a piece at the idee o' getting the first chance at him away from the rest o' the fellers.

All on a sudden the cry to the dogs commenced to get fainter. I stopped and listened a spell. That was no mistakin' it, the bear had turned off toward the other side of the bush, 'way off beyond the camp.

You may believe I was riled. I jest set down and cursed for quite a while. To think that I was clean out of it, the first bear hunt of the season too, and a rattlin' fine bear at that, for I could tell by the way he crashed through the underbrush that he was a stunner and no mistake. It was all my infernal foolishness leavin' the dogs, to go cavortin' up the hill and get on the wrong track after all. Maybe the boys wouldn't smile—durn 'em all.

After a spell I got through cussin' and concluded to make the best of a bad job. I reckoned I'd strike back to camp and get breakfast before the boys got in. I got my legs moving and started up the hill piece, till I got most opposite where the Doctor and I had pro-spected over the ravine in the mornin'.

Jest around here I thought I might as well light my pipe, so I fetched up sittin' on a log that lay right along side the edge.