

The Soldier's Christmas.

Both the Union and the Confederate armies had gone into winter quarters, and the roads and fields of Virginia were covered with snow and ice. Just above one of our posts on the Rapidan was a farmhouse which held a woman and four children, and it had not taken us long to learn that the husband and father was in the Confederate Army. In a way, being within our lines, we protected those he had left behind, but it was little we had to do with them. Now and then we saw the children about, looking for food or gathering fuel, and once when I was on post near the house I offered them provisions from my haversack. They were shy, but hungry, and after a bit the oldest came forward and was about to take food from my hands, when the mother called out in sharp tones from the door, and my kindness was rebuffed. After that the children fought shy of us, and if a man in blue knocked at the door in search of a drink of water or to ask permission to boil his coffee at the fireplace, it was not opened to him. I, for one, realized the feelings of the wife and mother. War had taken her husband from her and war had stripped the farm of fences and orchards and out-buildings and crops, and had reduced her and hers to beggary. There were hundreds of such cases in those dark days of woe, and thousands who wore the blue never missed an opportunity to lighten the burdens as far as lay in their power. The waste of a single company of soldiers would have fed two or three families like that; but, it the mother's pride stood in the way, we did not care to insult it by making advances. There was one thing I made up my mind to do, however. The woe-begone looks of the children appealed to my heart, and at Christmas time Santa Claus should remember them in spite of war and misfortune and poverty. The mother might refuse to open the door to my knock, but that would not thwart me. Unlike Santa Claus, I could not descend by the chimney and fill the waiting stockings, but I could call out and leave the things on the steps if refused admission. I was ready when the day came. Through a comrade I had purchased toys in Washington, and from the regimental sutler I bought sweetmeats that all children love. I had my Santa Claus package made up, and had asked for a pass to leave the camp, when I found myself detailed with a squad to march in the very direction I wanted to go. Lee was granting his men furloughs, and scores of Confederates whose families were living within our lines were making attempts to visit them. Scouts and outposts had been cautioned to remain vigilant, and squads were sent to search farmhouses for spies around. There were seven of us who marched out that night, under command of a sergeant, and we had two farms to search. It was orders, and orders to be obeyed, but no man's heart was in the work. A Confederate soldier in the field was an enemy, but a Confederate soldier unarmed and seeking his fireside after a year's absence was a different matter. And, too, it was Christmas Eve, and as we trudged away through the snow and sleet we had visions of our own firesides in the North at that hour. I could not conceal my Santa Claus bundle, but the sergeant asked no questions. I think he suspected from the first. We reached the first farmhouse about 9 o'clock. As we drew up at the gate the sergeant said: 'If there's a Confederate in the house, we must capture him at any cost. You will station yourself so as to form a cordon, while I will advance to the door. Unless I call for assistance, you will all keep your places.' The sergeant spoke in loud tones, and we made a great deal of noise in reaching our places, and it was 10 minutes after our arrival ere he knocked at the door. It was opened at once by a woman. There was a rousing fire on the hearth, with two children popping corn in the blaze, and fair in sight in the chimney corner were a pair of army-made shoes, a butter-nut-colored overcoat and a soldier's slouch hat. The owner of them could not be 30 feet away, but we made a glance the sergeant said: 'We heard there was a Confederate soldier here, madame, but it must be a mistake. I don't see him anywhere. Good night, and a merry Christmas to you all.' I stood next to the door and heard the words, and, reading the sergeant's heart, I made free to tell him of the contents of my bundle. He reflected for a minute and then replied: 'Private Burns, to give sympathy and succor to the enemy is treason. Be careful what you do. You will scout on ahead to the next farmhouse alone. We will follow a quarter of an hour behind you. Should you discover a Confederate soldier in the house, fall back and wait for us to come up.' I understood, and I set out at once. The other house was only half a mile away. As I reached it I heard the song and laughter of the children, and guessed that some event beyond the advent of Christmas Eve had occurred to bring happiness. I had thought to leave my parcel on the steps, knock on the door and go away, but I changed the plan and lifted the latch and boldly walked in. In front of the fire sat the wife and mother, and beside her the husband and father, while the children were decorating the room with pine branches. The man was in Confederate uniform, and I somehow felt that it had been less than an hour since he had entered the house. As he sprang to his feet there was a sort of groan from the woman and a cry in chorus from the children. Before me was the table, just as the reunited family had finished their wretched supper, and, advancing to it, I deposited my bundle and opened it.

'My God! That I should be captured so soon!' groaned the man; but I did not turn my eyes in his direction. 'Oh! Richard! Richard!' moaned the wife, as she wrung her hands; but I gave her no attention. 'Something for the children,' I said, as I distributed the contents of the bundle on the table. 'I have children of my own in the North, and to night their stockings will hang on the wall and Santa Claus will come down the chimney to fill them. Come little ones, see what I have brought!' The children looked, but they were afraid. 'Yank, have you come to capture me?' asked the soldier. 'He would give the children presents and take their father away to be shot or hung?' said the wife in tones of bitterness. 'I am here as Santa Claus,' I said, looking anywhere but at the man. 'We were ordered to search farmhouses for Confederate soldiers home on furlough, but it was a false alarm. At least, I have found none so far. If there are any about, they must be well hidden.' 'Do you mean it, Yank—do you mean it?' hoarsely whispered the soldier as he moved a step nearer. 'But they should not tarry too long,' I said. 'There may be other parties sent out within a night or two, and they may not be accompanied by a Santa Claus. Children, come and look over your gifts. There is a pile for each of you.' 'There comes my comrades, but you need not fear.' The sergeant knocked on the door, and I opened it, and as he stepped in I said: 'Sergeant, I have searched the house, and no enemies are concealed here.' 'Good!' he replied. 'And you will be marching back to camp. Madame, permit me to wish you and your children a merry Christmas, and to hope that the war will soon be over and you will see your husband again. Come, Private Burns; let us go.' We went out, and between the door and the gate he halted me to say: 'Private Burns, did you leave a bundle of Christmas things for the children?' 'I did, sir,' I replied. 'And a haversack full of coffee, sugar, pork and hardtack?' 'The same, sir.' 'And you searched the house and found no enemies?' 'Not an enemy, sir.' 'Private Burns, I am inclined to think, on the one hand, that you could be court-martialed and shot full of holes; but, on the other, I am inclined to believe that it won't happen for the next ten years to come. Forward, march! and let's get back to camp!'

An Amused Fox. The proprietor of a small store in New York owns a black kitten that cultivates a habit of squatting on its haunches, like a bear or a kangaroo, and then sparring with its forepaws as if it had taken lessons from a pugilist. The Telegram tells how the kitten conquered a big dog. A gentleman took into the store an enormous black dog, half Newfoundland, half Collie, fat, good-natured and intelligent. The tiny kitten, instead of bolting at once for shelter, retreated a few paces erect on its hind legs and put its 'fists' in an attitude of defiance. The contrast in size between the two was intensely amusing. It reminded one of Jack the Giant-Killer preparing to demolish a giant. Slowly and without a sign of excitability the huge dog walked as far as his chain would allow him and gazed intently at the kitten and its odd posture. Then, as the comicality of the situation struck him, he turned his head and shoulders around to the spectators, and it animal ever laughed in the world that dog assuredly did so then and there. He neither barked nor growled, but indulged in a low chuckle, while mouth and eyes beamed with merriment.

Santa Claus, V. S. The big blond mechanic looked awkward and out of place in the crowd of women shoppers at the toy counter. He seemed painfully conscious of the sharp contrast between his old working clothes and the stylish dresses of the ladies who jostled him on either hand. One given to studying the faces of Christmas shoppers would easily have read the question in his honest eyes. It was that everlasting question which makes Christmas the most pathetic as well as the happiest holiday in the year—the question, 'Can I do it with the little money I have?' At length the man caught the eye of a salesgirl and leaning over the counter, said in a low voice: 'Say, miss, I've got a little feller at home that's been talking for months about Santy Claus bringing him a horse. I'd like to get him one if I can afford it. How much is this?' and he pointed to an equine paragon in front of him. 'That is three dollars,' said the salesgirl. 'Best grade we've carried. You see it's covered with real horse-hide and has a real hair tail and mane.' The mechanic shook his head hopelessly. 'Yes,' he said, 'it's a fine horse, all right, but I can't pay that much. I thought perhaps I could get something for a dollar—a smaller one, maybe.' 'I'm sorry,' said the girl, sympathetically, 'but we cleaned out every one of the cheaper kind this afternoon, and this is the

only one that's left of the three-dollar lot.' Then suddenly her face lighted up. 'Oh, say,' she exclaimed, 'wait a minute!' She dived under the table and came up with a counterpart of the horse they had been discussing; a counterpart, but with a broken leg and minus that very useful appendage, a tail. 'There,' she said, 'I just happened to think of this! Somebody knocked it off the counter yesterday and broke the leg. The tail kept coming out anyway, and I guess it's lost now. You could have this for a dollar. Maybe you could fix it all right.' The man examined the fracture seriously. 'Why, that's easy,' he said. 'All it needs is to peel the hide up a little and splice the leg and then put on some old Peter Cooper's salve. Make it as good as new.' 'And perhaps you can get some horse-hair and make a tail. They're just tied in a bunch and put in with a plug.' 'Oh, I'll fix that all right, miss. I've got an old bristle shaving-brush that I can use. It'll be real stylish—one of them bob-tailed coach horses, you know.' They both laughed. 'You're mighty good miss, and I'm obliged to you.' 'Oh, that's all right,' said the girl. 'I know how it is Christmas times myself, and she sighed as the customer turned happily away to play his part of Santa Claus, veterinary surgeon.

Corns. A corn is an overgrowth of the horny layer of some portion of the skin of the foot, induced by friction or undue pressure in one spot by the shoe. It is situated generally on a prominent portion of one of the toes, more commonly the little toe, but may be on the sole of the foot or even on the ankle-bone. It begins by an increase in size of the papillae in the deeper part of the skin, and this induces an increase in the production of the scurf-skin, or horny layer. The scurf-skin soon becomes inordinately thick, and the pressure from the shoe continuing is pushed back against the enlarged papillae, causing their final atrophy. This formation of a corn affords a curious illustration of the defeat of nature's well-meant efforts to prevent trouble; for the increased thickness of the horny layer is intended to afford protection to the enlarged and tender papillae, a purpose which would be well accomplished did the process stop there. But the friction by the shoe keeps up the irritation, and more and more of the horny covering is manufactured, until, instead of affording protection, it is actually the cause of all the pain. After a time the spot where the corn is seems to acquire a bad habit, and the formation of the corn will go on even after the offending shoe has been discarded. The first thing to do for a corn is to get new shoes that are so snug as not to rub the feet anywhere, and so loose as not to make pressure in one spot more than in another. The top of the corn may be pared with a sharp knife, extreme care being taken—especially in the case of the aged—not to cut the sound skin; or it may be filed down to the level of the surrounding skin; or the entire corn may sometimes be loosened with a dull knife-blade or by the finger nail, and extracted from its bed. When this cannot be done, removal may be facilitated by moistening the corn every other day with glacial acetic acid, the softened part being subsequently scraped away with a dull knife or a small file. A salve containing salicylic acid, applied every night, will also frequently loosen the corn so that it can be pulled out. This is the basis of many of the popular corn plasters. A soft corn, which is merely a corn that is always moist on account of its location on the inner surface of one of the toes, should be treated by keeping a piece of absorbent cotton between the toes so as to prevent maceration and by bathing it frequently with strong alum water.

Regulating Childhood. When my little son could scarcely walk, says Rev. C. T. Brady, a western missionary, I took him to the cathedral one day, when I returned for something I had for gotten after morning service. I left the child in the nave, and when I went back to him he had advanced halfway up the middle aisle, and was standing where the sun threw a golden light about his curly head. A tiny object he was in that great church. It was very still. He was looking about in every direction in the most curious and eager way. To my fancy he seemed like a little angel when he said in his sweet, childish treble, which echoed and re-echoed beneath the vaulted roof: 'Papa, where's Jesus? Where's Jesus?' He had been told that the church was the house of the Saviour, and on this, his

first visit, he expected to see his Lord. That baby is quite grown up now. Not in the faintest particular does he resemble an angel. The other day, when I rode off to the wars, he astonished even me with this request: 'Papa, if you get wounded, don't forget to bring me the bullet that knocks you out. I want it for a souvenir for my collection.' For unately for me, if unfortunately for him, I brought him no bullet. 'Verbal,'—H Round. Here is a story which a theatrical manager tells against himself. An actor came to him and applied for an engagement. There did not seem to be much need of him, but his demands in the way of salary were very modest, and the manager said to him: 'Well, you may consider yourself engaged. I fancy I can find something for you to do.' The newly engaged man looked at the manager questionably. 'How about a contract?' he asked. 'Oh, never mind a contract! We'll have a verbal contract.' There was a look of mild reproach in the eyes of the man as he answered sorrowfully: 'Sir, the last time I made a verbal contract I drew a verbal salary.'

A Severe Lesson. 'I suppose that when you are facing the audience across the footlights you forget everything except your art?' 'Well,' answered Mr. Stormington Barnes, 'I used to talk that way about it. But I once had a treasurer who tried to take advantage of my forgetfulness, so I endeavor to express my artistic enthusiasm, as it were, a little more conservatively.' Bachelor—What are you going to put in your children's stockings this Christmas? Phamilan—Hub! It takes all my money to keep the children in them.

BORN. Halifax, Dec 3, to the wife of Alex Fraser, a son. Amherst, Dec 18, to the wife of Edward White, a son. River du Loup, Dec 12, to the wife of John Doyle, a son. Amherst, Dec 12, to the wife of Edward Brown, a daughter. Aradita, Dec 14, to the wife of Ransom Allen, a daughter. Kenville, Dec 18, to the wife of W A Smith, a daughter. Chatham, Dec 14, to the wife of Fred Tracer, a daughter. Moncton, Dec 21, to the wife of W H Edgett, a daughter. Lunenburg, Dec 12, to the wife of R A Rafuse, a daughter. Halifax, Dec 19, to the wife of J Sinclair Combes, a daughter. Folly Village, Dec 4, to the wife of Samuel Johnson, a son. Bridgetown, Dec 13, to the wife of Robert Barnes, a daughter. East Mine Station, Dec 4, to the wife of George Gray, a son. Lake View, N. B., Dec 13, to the wife of John Hodford, a son. Attleboro, Mass., Dec 11, to the wife of Haden Stevens, a daughter. New Ross Road, Dec 3, to the wife of Freeman Kynock, a son.

MARRIED. Moncton, Dec 21, John W. Wire to Annie Ward. Halifax, Dec 12, Gilbert Gates to Lucy Young. Truro, Dec 11, John Chis to Abbie Reynolds. Bath Boston, Nov 28, Harry Banks to Mrs. Long. Sussex, Dec 18, Leslie M. Singer to Alice Garvin. Halifax, Dec 19, Benjamin Jones to Anna Webb. Yarmouth, Dec 16, Harry R. Norton to Mary E. Nye. Central Economy, Oct. 30, Purdy Bliss to Josie Lank. Truro, Dec 12, Walter Brown and Annie B. McLean. Clinton, N. B., Dec 18, Burton R. Fisher to Louise Darrt. Truro, Dec 12, Makeney Creelman to Gertrude Cunniff. Halifax, Dec 11, Lou Nettleton to Minnie G. Dixon. Newcastle, Dec 5, John McKean to Miss Ella Keating. Pictou, Dec 12, Stephen W. Baker to Teresa J. Cooper. Halifax, Dec 12, Walter M. Goudge to Mary E. Keating. Lynn, Mass., Dec 12, William F. Moses to Bertha Martin. Sydney, Dec 10, Alfred E. Stuart to Frances Mary McIvor. Kentville, Dec 12, Clifford A. Rand to Emma J. Weidoss. Springhaven, Dec 8, Minnie B. Hurlbert to Henry Hurlbert. Clementsport, Dec 18, Charles Merritt to Eliza W. Weiland. Roxbury, Mass., Dec 1, William Dunn to Jane Maxwell. Upper Economy, Seidon F. Fletcher to Maud Faulkner. Upper Port LaTour, Dec 4, Dora Slate to David Fitzmum. Bridgewater, Dec 12, Arthur J. Wagener to Mary J. Bannsey. Fort Moncton, Dec 11, Lewis S. Nickerson to Ada B. Busben. Hampton, Dec 21, Lillian H. Brown to Victor W. Barnes. Grandville, Dec 20, J. Irvine Blakney to Miss E. Pearl Boyd. Milton, Queen Co., Jason Eisenhar to Amanda Cunningham. North Sydney, Dec 12, Pierre Malard to Zenaida Beasparthy. Harriville, Dec 17, Millage Rogers to Miss Addie E. Melvin. Barrington Passage, Dec 10, Joseph E. Tretry to Mrs. Ada Smith. Victoria Beach, Dec 12, Mr. Ernest McGrath to Ella Anthony Ellis. Port Matland, Dec 18, Mrs. Mary Bowers to Mr. Israel McOrmsack. Windsor Junction, Dec 15, Wilson M. Slocumb to Marian Simonsen. South Boston, Mass., Nov. 28, John C. Munro to Catherine Ferguson. Lower Arville, Dec 12, Herbert D. McLaren to Mrs. Sadie Goodwin.

public, Dec 8, Mrs. Blaine. Sidney, Nov. Louis Madrin. Halifax, Dec 8, Martha Irving. Pictou, Dec 7, Ellen Gunn, 61. Kings, Dec 13, Matthew Cain, 60. R. Verdale, Dec 20, John Earle, 88. Ferrons, Dec 8, George Elliott, 6. Queens, Dec 7, Virginia Everett. Carleton, Dec 23, John B. Quilley. Chester, Dec 12, Edward Smith, 42. Yarmouth, Dec 7, Sarah Allen, 23. Wolfville, Dec 14, Joseph Reid, 76. Queens, Dec 7, Fanny Freeman, 42. Queens, Dec 8, Alice D. Keahro, 24. Queens, Dec 6, Elizabeth Warren. Port Hood, Dec 2, Sarah Watta, 40. Sanbury, Co., Dec 1, Mark Carr, 97. Digby, Dec 18, Mary Woodman, 66. Springhill, Dec 12, J. H. Holmes, 16. Ferron, Nov. 21, Duncan Stewart, 61. L. Chabot, Dec 7, John Ferguson, 52. Yarmouth, Dec 9, Sarah McKenzie, 59. Kentville Nov 8, Emma Robinson, 51. St. John, Dec 22, Robert Roberts, 57. Granville, Nov. 6, Wm. Winchester, 62. Yarmouth, Dec 19, Margaret Findley, 63. Beaver Back, Dec 14, Lillian Lively, 38. Dartmouth, Dec 12, George Jackson, 58. Lunenburg, Dec 16, Robert Allison, 55. Belleville, Dec 19, Madeline B. Bine, 83. Westfield, Dec 10, Eleanor Williams, 74. British Columbia, Dec 12, Eliza Case, 40. Sanbury, Co., Nov. 25, Susanna Mills, 90. Moncton, Dec 20, William Davidson, 82. St. Mary's, Nov. 30, James McKenzie, 49. Lower Onslow, Dec 7, Daniel Hamilton, 87. East Mine Station, Dec 6, Laura Gray, 31. DeBert Village, Dec 14, Agnes Murray, 76. Stewiacke, Dec 12, Winnie McNeil, 63. Highland Village, Oct. 20, Wm. Urquhart, 84. Halifax, Dec 29, Harold Schrage, 3 months. Clark's Harbor, Dec 18, Lovitt Nickerson, 58. Jacksonville, Dec 10, Stella Wilmot, 3 months. Newburg Junction, Dec 10, Leonard Brooks, 45. Black River Road, Dec 24, Cornelius Callaghan, 70.

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GENERAL PUBLIC. Going on December 21st to January 1st, 1901. Return good until Jan. 4th, 1901. SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. On presentation of certificates going Dec. 8th to 31st, 1900. Return good until Jan. 4th, 1901. For rates dates and limits to points West of Montreal, see agents, or write A. J. Heath, D. P. A., C. P. R., St. John, N. B. TO BOSTON AND RETURN \$10.00 via All Rail from St. John. Going Dec. 29th, to 31st, 1900. Return thirty days from starting day. A. J. HEATH, D. P. A., C. P. R., St. John, N. B.

INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY. CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS. School and college vacation—Local excursion tickets at single fare, Dec. 8 to 31, good for return until Jan. 31. Through tickets at single fare to Montreal added to one and one third fare beyond Montreal, good for return until Jan. 20. Commercial Travellers' tickets at single fare, issued Dec. 14 to Dec. 20, good for return until Jan. 4. General Public—Local excursion tickets at single fare Dec. 21 to Jan. 1, good for return until Jan. 4. For through excursion tickets see posters. D. FOTTINGER, General Manager. Railway Office, Moncton, N. B., December 16th, 1900.

Intercolonial Railway. On and after MONDAY Nov. 26th, 1900, trains will run daily (Sundays excepted) as follows: TRAIN WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN. Express for Point du Chene, Campbellton and Halifax, 7.30. Express for Halifax and Pictou, 12.15. Express for Sussex, 12.45. Express for Quebec and Montreal, 17.05. Accommodation for Halifax and Sydney, 22.15. A sleeping car will be attached to the train leaving St. John at 17.05 o'clock for Quebec and Montreal. Passengers transfer at Moncton. A sleeping car will be attached to the train leaving St. John at 22.15 o'clock for Halifax. Vestibule, Dining and Sleeping cars on the Quebec and Montreal express.

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN. Express from Sussex, 8.30. Express from Quebec and Montreal, 12.40. Express from Halifax, Pictou and Point du Chene, 18.05. Express from Halifax and Campbellton, 18.05. Accommodation from Pt. du Chene and Moncton, 21.45. Daily, except Monday. All trains are run by Eastern Standard time. Twenty-four hours notation. D. FOTTINGER, Gen. Manager. CITY TICKET OFFICE, 7 King Street, St. John, N. B.