

Christmas Again.

Throw away cares, and all live in the present;
Youngsters are flirting with laughter and noise;
Christmas indoors is remarkably pleasant—
Dances and games for the girls and the boys.
Outside the shadows are colder—'tis snowing;
Soft flakes whirl downward and drift on the pane.
Round the warm hearth, where the fire is glowing,
Old folks draw closer at Christmas again!

The head of the house, in the glow of the embers,
Stands straight as an arrow, smiling, but grand.
There is his wife, and some fifty December
Leave her as lightly as waves on the sand.
She is to him still as fair as he thought her
When in her teens his allegiance he swore.
Many a son, now, and blossom-checked daughter
Gather about them for Christmas once more!

Then there are neighbors and cousins and lovers;
Bertie, from college, and strokes of his crew;
Sportsmen who come with an eye on the covers;
Maidens of beauty whose charms are not few—
Dainty Dianas, of favors quite chary;
Reginald, fresh from the ranch on the plain;
Learned girl graduates, Salina and Mary,
Meeting and greeting at Christmas again.

Still, to my fancy, the fairest of faces
Yonder is shining in silvery curls,
Framed in soft wispers and delicate lines,
Grandmother sits in a cluster of girls,
Watching the dancers with eyes growing tender,
Clearer and clearer for long ago pain;
Holding the loving hands near to defend her,
Safe with her children at Christmas again.

I can remember when beauty by the dawn
Toasted her beauty in wit and in wine;
I, too, adored her—though I was a cousin—
Many a sword tried its hostile with mine.
Ah, gallant company, vanished to hush!
Swept with the years till we only remain.
She is for me still the sweetest of ladies—
I, her old suitor, at Christmas again!

Madam, your hand! Though the dancers be plenty,
Let us, too, stand—not in walk or in reel.
This was "the mode," eighteen hundred and twenty,
When it was voted as "mighty genteel."
Ah, that was dancing, then "steps" were "de rigueur"
(Not a wild scumble, abashed and innocent.)
You will remember that elegant figure—
Let us walk through it at Christmas again!

Yes, that is well! Strike a statelier measure,
Fitting the snows and the honor of years.
Say, does it bring to you visions of pleasure,
Or has the music a treasure of tears?
Here let us stay. Why this laughter, young miss!
"Under the mistletoe!" Zounds! then, in plain,
Grandmother, blushing, must bring out those kisses
She has been keeping for Christmas again!

—Lawrence Lee.

Genuine Gems.

Kind words are the music of the world. They have a power which seems to be beyond natural causes, as if they were some angel's song, which had lost its way and come on earth, and sang on undyingly, smiting the hearts of men with sweetest wounds, and putting, for the while, an angel's nature into us.—[Faber.]

Now occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward who would keep abreast of truth.—[Lanier.]

Modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues.—[Goldsmith.]

It is success that colors all in life;
Success makes fools admired, makes villains honest;
All the proud virtues of this vanishing world
Fawns on success and power, however acquired.—[Thomson.]

There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough how them how we will.—[Shakespeare.]

Ingratitude is a crime so shameful that the man was never yet found who would acknowledge himself guilty of it.—[Anonymous.]

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.—[Gray.]

If you would be pungent, be brief; for it is with words as with sunbeams, the more they are condensed, the deeper they burn.—[Southey.]

The love that survives the tomb is one of the noblest tributes of the soul.—[Washington Irving.]

Virtue is bold and goodness never fearful.—[Shakespeare.]

Through the ages one unceasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.—[Tennyson.]

Lost! Yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever.—[Horace Mann.]

Beware of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee.—[Shakespeare.]

Men are but children of a larger growth.—[J. Dryden.]

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.—[Goldsmith.]

Visions.

Visions come and go again,
Leaving in their airy train
Just a rhythm, soft and low,
Of their movement to and fro—
Something like an old refrain.

'Tis the way with summer rain:
'Tis the way with joy and pain;
'Tis the way with all we see
Of lives of mortal men—
Just to come, then go again.

—From Harper's Weekly.

THE FACE.

What It is Popularly Supposed to Tell of Character.

Brown eyes are most kindly.

Black eyes are the most rash and impetuous.

A pouting upper lip indicates timidity.

An insignificant nose indicates an insignificant man.

An open mouth is a sign of an empty head.

Coarse hair always indicates coarse organization.

Large ears are found on the heads of coarse people.

A projecting upper lip shows malignity and avarice.

Pointed noses generally indicate meddling people.

Very full cheeks indicate great digestive powers.

A retreating chin is always bad; it shows lack of resolution.

If the forehead be shorter than the nose the sign is stupidity.

Large eyes in a small face always betoken maliciousness.

Narrow, thin nostrils indicate small lungs and low vitality.

Blue eyes belong to people of an enthusiastic turn of mind.

Power of language is indicated by fullness beneath the eyes.

Oblique eyes are unfavorable; they show cunning and deceit.

Short, thick, curly hair is an indication of great natural strength.

Freckles, like red hair, are an indication of an ardent temperament.

A long forehead indicates intelligence; a short forehead, activity.

Irregular teeth generally indicate a lack of culture and refinement.

Gray eyes are generally found associated with prudence and foresight.

Large, wide-spreading nostrils show ample lungs and good health.

Very tightly closed lips are usually found in secretive characters.

An irregular, knotty forehead is a sure sign of a bold, original and investigating mind.

Eyes which, when viewed from the side, seem almost parallel with the nose, denote a weak mental and physical organization.

Prominent, arched eyebrows show great power of perception in regard to form and color. All great painters have such brows.

Large, clear blue eyes generally denote persons of great capacity, but sensitive, suspicious, and often unreasonably jealous.

Horizontal eyebrows, full and regular, show great understanding, deliberation and capacity for planning and execution.

The typical religious enthusiast has a thin, pale face, retreating forehead, small, keen eyes, pointed nose and retreating chin.

A perpendicular, a very high, or a very short forehead is always bad; either invariably indicates lack of sympathy.

A face which does not change expression in conversation either indicates caution or stupidity.

A flat forehead or an abrupt descent at the back of the head are both unfavorable, either indicating limited understanding.

Black, sparkling eyes, with a steady, grave mouth, show taste, elegance, sound judgment, and often an ungenerous disposition.

Christmas Eve.

God bless the little stockings,
All over the land to-night,
Hanging in the choicest corners,
In the glow of crimson light,
The tiny scarlet stockings,
With a hole in the heel and toe,
Worn by wonderful journeys,
The darlings have had to go.

And heaven pity the children,
Wherever their home may be,
Who wake at the first gray dawning,
An empty stocking to see!
Left in the faith of childhood,
Hanging against the wall,
Just where the dazzling glory
Of Santa's light will fall!

Ah! for the lonely mother
Whose home is empty and still,
Who has no scarlet stockings
With childish toys to fill!
Who sits in the godly twilight,
With her face against the pane,
And grieves for the little baby
Whose grave is out in the rain!

Oh, the empty shoes and stockings
Forever laid aside;
Oh, the tangled, broken shoe-string
That will never more be tied!
Oh, the little graves at the mercy
Of the cold December rain!
Oh, the feet in the snow-white sandal,
That never can trip again!

But happier they who slumber,
With marble at foot and head,
Than the child who has no shelter,
No raiment, nor food, nor bed.
Yes! heaven help the living,
Children of want and pain,
Knowing no food nor pasture—
Out to-night in the rain.

THE QUIET HOUR.

"Christ With Us."

"Had we in Bethlehem been, when Mary came
For shelter from the storm," we muse in pity,
"Our homes had not been shut to her in shame,
She had not been an outcast from the city.
She had not passed, forsaken and forlorn,
From kindred doors, an exile and a stranger.
Her babe in royal purple had been born,
Nor lain, among the oxen, in a manger.
On bended knees had many a worshipper,
On Christ, the king, in royal love attended,
And subject hands had offered gifts of myrrh,
And frankincense and gold and jewels splendid."

Nay, Nay, for Christ is ever at our door,
For shelter sweet, and kindly pity pleading,
And we—we only, like the blind of yore,
Discern him not, hard-hearted and unheeding.
With beggar hands He asketh us for alms,
He pines upon the threshold of the palace;
We know Him not, but scorn His outstretched palms,
And, while He hungers, drink of plenty's chalice.
Daily we meet Him seeking mercy sweet;
With tender eyes of orphans, wan and wistful,
He haunts us in the starveling of the street;
Among the sad, the tearful, and the triteful.
For still he loves the lowly and the poor,
And he who scorns in pride his outcast brother,
Had turned of old the Saviour from his door,
And barred the gates against His maiden mother.
But, ah! the crust, the cup of water cold,
For Christ's sweet sake to whose needeth given,
Will yield us gain of grace a million-fold,
With rich requital in the courts of heaven.

Christmas.

Great cities are illuminated at birth of princes,
but at the birth of the Prince of Peace an illumination was hung out in the vault of heaven, the midnight sky blazing suddenly with the glory of the Lord, and echoing with voices and ministrals of angels before the eyes of simple shepherds. Men of science, who had long studied the heavens, saw bright signal lamps, hitherto strange to them, and quite unrecorded in the register of their researches, which led them to believe that the long-expected King of the Jews had been born.—Goulburn.

The Good Shepherd.

Ye shepherds of the midnight flock,
Why start ye as with sudden shock,
Outstretched beneath the moonlit rock?
A mightier shepherd from on high
Descends to share your ministry—
Straight stripping off Heaven's shining dress
For sin and shame and nakedness,
Bloodstained, along the lost sheep's track—
Though angels could not bring them back—
The Son himself, in mortal guise,
Climbs peak on peak 'mid thundering skies!
And, dying, wins from Death the prize!—C. A. Fox.

The chief joy of the Christmas festival is connected with the children. May we, who are growing up into Christ, cultivate the sweet, happy mind of a loving child, and placing our hand in our Father's, tread bravely through the mists and shadows here: "careful for nothing" but that He may be glorified in us—in our lives. That was the one desire of the Holy child Jesus. May it be ours in a greater measure than it has been hitherto; so shall we spend in deed and in truth a holy, happy Christmas.

When, in the pathway of God's will,
Thou seemest at a stand,
Fretting for wings to scale the hill,
And tired of foot and hand;
At blessed Bethlehem leave thy gloom,
And learn Divine content,
By manger, workshop, cross and tomb,
Thy Lord to triumph went.

A Christmas Resolve.

BY F. L. N.

One Christmas eve, long time ago
Three children stood in the frelight glow,
Dorothy, Ellen, and sturdy Ted,
Waiting, before good nights were said,
To send a message of childish haste
To the children's saint o'er the wintry waste.

Dangling down from the mantel awayed
Curious forms where the firelight played,
Stockings the longest that they could find,
"Santa can't miss them unless he's blind,
Hurry, St. Nicholas, over the snow
As fast as the reindeer fleet can go!"

Above, in the low-roofed chamber wide,
Dorothy drew the curtain aside:
The full moon rode in the sky a queen,
Flooding the earth with a silver sheen.
"See! the stars gleam out from the blue depths high
As they must have gleamed from the Bethlehem sky."

The silent beauty and peace of earth
Touched the children and hushed their mirth;
Then Teddy said, "Did the Bethlehem star
Feel glad to be sent on that errand far?
I should like to have been such a shining light
To guide wise men to the Christ that night."

Dorothy smiled. "Mother says, you know,
That thousands now to our Christ would go
If only they understood the way;
And they live in our own good land to-day.
Then there are the heathen who've never heard
Of God and of Jesus—not a word."

"Perhaps we try we can be to them
Lights like the star of Bethlehem."
"Why, so I will," was the quick reply;
And Ellen echoed, "So will I."
Good words and brave, which an angel kept
And wrote in God's book while the children slept.

Years have passed: at this Christmas-tide
The three are scattered. The home fire-side
Claims good Dorothy, "mother's right hand";
Ted works for Christ in a foreign land,
And little Ellen away at the West,
Each guiding to Jesus as each can best.

Three bright stars pointing the way above,
Three warm hearts, filled with a heavenly love,
Telling the story again and again
Of Christ and His love to sinful men.
But the work is great and the workers few;
Christ needs more laborers: Christ needs you!