

DECEMBER 22, 1917

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

GOING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

He little knew the sorrow that was in his vacant chair. He never guessed they'd miss him; he'd surely have been there; He couldn't see his mother or the lump that filled her throat, Or the tears that started falling as she read his hasty note; And he couldn't see his father, sitting sorrowful and dumb, Or he never would have written that he thought he couldn't come.

STAMINA AND STABILITY

Christmas appeals to young men for stamina and stability. Christ was faithful to the end in poverty, privation and pain. He deliberately chose self denial and suffering for His portion. He persevered in this narrow way all His life. He died as a martyr for a cross. And with a great longing He had desired the day of His agony. He expected that, when He was lifted up, He would draw all hearts to Him.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

"GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE"

"God bless us every one," prayed Tiny Tim, Crippled and dwarfed of body, yet so tall Of soul, we tiptoe earth to look at him, High towering over all. He loved the loveless world, nor dreamed indeed, That it at best could give to him the while, But pitying glances, when his only need Was but a cheery smile!

GOING HOME FOR XMAS

"So you're going home for Christmas," remarked the elderly gentleman to a young man who sat with him in a Pullman parlor car, rushing along at the rate of forty miles an hour. "Yes, sir," answered the young man, "I am. It was hard to get off just now and I could not well spare the expense of the long journey; but mother looks for me at this time and I just had to come for her sake."

to her face one Christmas morn when there was no present to speak of for her but there was a costly one for some one else, who proved unworthy of affection, and when I announced that I was to take my Christmas dinner away from home. He turned away hastily, drew a long breath, and pretended to be intently regarding the flying scenery. "Another poignant regret of mine, that comes back every year at this season, is that, when I finally left home to make my way in the world, I did not write to the home folk regularly, not even at Christmas. I excused myself to my conscience by saying that I was too busy. But I was never too busy to do anything that I wanted to do with all my heart. My neglect hastened my mother's end. She did not die suddenly, but drooped, and faded, and pined away like a flower.

"Dear heart, how many things have I done to atone for my ill-treatment of you," the old man almost whispered, as if talking to some unseen one. "How many letters have I written, how many visits have I made, how many presents have I sent, out of memory of you?" He turned to the window again and looked out a long time. The young man beside him was silent, respecting the sacred feelings of his fellow-traveler, who was unknown to him but who was yet a brother to him by the bond of common ties and common memories.

LOOKING FOR SANTA CLAUS

On Christmas eve towards night-fall, Johnnie Graham and his sister Minnie were curled up on the floor near the kitchen stove, looking over the pictures in an old magazine. Little Minnie was explaining the pictures to her brother. The Kansas wind was howling about the house, and driving the snow against the window-panes. Without all was darkness, save for the few lights to the west, where lay the village of St. Maure's. At a table beside the children Mrs. Graham was washing the dishes.

"It's for your father, and immediately." And with these words the messenger disappeared into the darkness. "I hope it is not bad news," said Mrs. Graham. "May I run to the stable, and bring it to papa?" cries Johnnie. "Yes, dear." "And may I go too, mamma?" asked Minnie. "Forthwith at the mother's nod the two go tripping through the snow, and soon reach the stable, a stout structure distant a stone's throw from the house.

There are four horses in it—one of them, Witch Winnie, is the finest horse in the West. Mr. Graham is a lover of horses. "Papa, here's a telegram," cries Johnnie. "And it's marked immediate," adds Minnie. Mr. Graham, who had been fondly stroking his favorite racer, hurried from the stall, and tore open the enclosure. His face changed as he read these words: "Topeka, Kansas. Your sister is dying and calls for you—not an hour to spare. JOHN TALBOT."

CHRISTMAS LEGENDS

All around the season of the Coming of Love as a little Child there have sprung legends and beliefs, like blossoms in a gracious clime, which testify with subtlety to the depth of the appeal of the birth of Christ. Here divinely spiritual symbolism and there sweet human tenderness and pathos appear and, blended, they evidence the world's belief that He was both Son of Man and Son of God.

THE CHURCH AND THE CRADLE

Principle Ritchie of Nottingham College, speaking at a Nonconformist gathering some time ago, at Norwich Conn., says the Catholic Times, paid a high tribute to Catholic teaching and practice. Discussing the question of child life, the problem of the empty cradle, and the retention of the young in Church membership and service, this leading Free Church minister confessed that Protestantism had a great deal of leeway to make up in comparison with Catholicism.

"Sh!" hissed Minnie. For a minute or two there was a fumbling at the lock. "I think I'll go and help Santa," whispered Johnnie. "Maybe he's not used to that kind of a lock." He was about to leap from the manger to carry out his purpose when the lock turned, the door opened, and in the light afforded by a lantern in his hand they saw a man standing in the doorway. He was wrapped in a heavy coat encrusted with snow—and so far resembled the pictures of Santa Claus. He wore a beard, too—but it was black. There was no pack upon his shoulders, no smile on his face. In one hand was a lantern, in the other a pistol. He was frowning, too, and did not look at all jolly.

The man stood still for a moment, and then whistled as before. "Witch Winnie answered by a low, joyful neigh. "Ah, there she is," muttered the man under his breath. "Johnnie could stand it no longer. "Halloo, Santa Claus!" he cried in nervous tones. The man gave a start, and then, raising his pistol to full cock, threw the glare of the lantern full upon Witch Winnie and the two little ones. It was a pretty picture; the mare standing with her superb head turned eagerly towards the newcomer, Minnie clasping her on one side, and Johnnie on the other, both of them looking fearlessly at the man with the cocked pistol.

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distance as of a horse galloping at full speed. "God bless you—you—you—darlings; God bless you, and forgive me." With the last words he was rushing for the door, where he disappeared as though he had not been, while nearer, louder, clearer came the tramping of the horse. The children hurried to the door, and looked in vain for a sight of Santa Claus. Even as they were straining their eyes into the darkness there dashed up a horseman upon a foaming charger. "Why it's papa!" cried Minnie. "Merry Christmas, papa, and we've seen Santa Claus, and he ran away when he heard you coming." "Is Witch Winnie all right?" cried Mr. Graham jumping from the horse.

"Sure!" answered Johnnie, and supplemented by Minnie, he proceeded to tell of their night's adventures. Mr. Graham listened with his feet under a forced restraint, the story runs that once, where there is now but a valley, there was a village which, with every trace of life and habitation, had been swallowed by an earthquake; but ever since, at Christmas the bells of the old buried church are heard to ring as of old. A similar legend comes from the Netherlands. It is said that the city of Beem was notorious for its black and shameless sins, as well as renowned for its beauty and magnificence. To the Sodom of the middle ages came our Saviour on one anniversary of His birth, and went as a beggar from door to door, but not one in all that Christmas keeping city gave the Master of their abundance. Sin he saw rampant on every side, but not a trace of Christmas bounty and good will, and he called to the sea, which, as of old, obeyed His voice, and Beem, the city of sin, was buried deep, clean out of sight beneath the waves. But ever as Christmas up from beneath the covering waters comes the sweet calling of church bells buried in Beem. It is a legend which appears to tell in parable that nothing which ever belonged to the Christ, and was dedicated to His Service, is ever wholly lost from Him and alienated from service; that ever and again something of their inherent beauty and compelling sweetness rises from the depths through all seeming ruin.

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and, indeed, its half-opened cups are like chalices of love, and its fully spread petals are like a happy innocence, fit symbols for the gifts for the Babe of spotless innocence, Whose heart was the vessel of love. There are several exceedingly touching legends concerning bells, which are heard ringing from buried cities and villages at this season. One belongs to a city near Raleigh, in North Carolina. England, and the story runs that once, where there is now but a valley, there was a village which, with every trace of life and habitation, had been swallowed by an earthquake; but ever since, at Christmas the bells of the old buried church are heard to ring as of old. A similar legend comes from the Netherlands. It is said that the city of Beem was notorious for its black and shameless sins, as well as renowned for its beauty and magnificence. To the Sodom of the middle ages came our Saviour on one anniversary of His birth, and went as a beggar from door to door, but not one in all that Christmas keeping city gave the Master of their abundance. Sin he saw rampant on every side, but not a trace of Christmas bounty and good will, and he called to the sea, which, as of old, obeyed His voice, and Beem, the city of sin, was buried deep, clean out of sight beneath the waves. But ever as Christmas up from beneath the covering waters comes the sweet calling of church bells buried in Beem. It is a legend which appears to tell in parable that nothing which ever belonged to the Christ, and was dedicated to His Service, is ever wholly lost from Him and alienated from service; that ever and again something of their inherent beauty and compelling sweetness rises from the depths through all seeming ruin.

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was being done through the cradle. Here was a great and grave matter. They knew how the Catholic Church faced it. The question was, how were the Protestant churches to face it and face it wisely? It was a question that could not be discussed except incidentally in pulpits, because then more mischief would be done than good. He was not unmindful that in part this was an economic problem, a problem even of housing and landlords. In only too many districts parents with more than three children "need not apply." But at the bottom it was a moral problem. It was a big question, the sure sign of a decadent civilization: In his reply on the discussion, Principal Ritchie made another admission. In regard to religious teaching, he said he feared the Free churches had been frightened by the word "dogmatic." Why should they not teach a truth they believed to be true? When he taught mathematics he was not afraid to teach the axioms. In every department of secular knowledge they did not hesitate to begin dogmatically. In this case of religion why should they not, under fitting forms, teach to the child what they hold to be true?

IRISH LASS LOST HER LEG, BUT NOT HER WIT

"Irish wit cannot be quenched even by misfortune," said Col. William Crawford Gorgas, assistant surgeon general of the United States army, and a case that particularly impressed me is the following: "One morning at the hospital I took off an Irish lassie's leg above the knee. She had been in a street car accident. It was, of course, a very great loss to her, for she was a factory girl and it meant that she would be laid up for a long time, and a crutch for all time. "After she came out of the ether and was herself, she asked what had been done to her. The young nurse turned and looked at me, waiting for me to tell the girl. I broke the news as gently as I could, and added: "You're all right, only there won't be any more dancing for you, my girl!" "Shure, dother," she replied, gaily and quickly, although her blue eyes were filled with tears, "but I'll be just right now to take in all the 'hops.'"—Malott's Magazine.

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