

actual hindrance to the devotion of others, and give pain and disgust not only to the initiated, but to those who, with perhaps less technical knowledge, at least endeavor to worship with reverence in the House of God.

As 'singers of the Lord' there ought to be nothing of that inordinate conceit, unwillingness to learn, love of self-display, petty jealousy, impatience of rebuke and hard rebellion, which are certainly destructive of all spiritual progress, and of that generous feeling of true brotherhood which should exist mutually in and between every member and official of the choir, the absence of which forms a barrier to any musical proficiency.

If we could but banish entirely all these things from our midst, we might one and all be inspired with greater love and loyalty to the God Whom we serve, the church and choir to which we belong, and to those who are placed over us for our instruction and edification, and be further actuated by a mutual desire to set forth God's most worthy praise in a most efficient, reverent manner.

As we separate to-day, each one of us to our several destinations, most of us probably to the more or less remote country charges, where, in addition to the trials of complete isolation, we have to encounter the hard, monotonous and often disheartening work of contending against odds and difficulties unknown perhaps to our brethren in towns,—in the utter lack of interest, sympathy and support shown in our efforts at improvement or still greater efficiency, by any of the members of the congregation—in the adverse criticisms upon all our work by those who, worse than incompetent, are utterly incapable of passing anything but a vicious perverted judgment upon our earnest, best and most praiseworthy efforts—in the dismay and ruin which fall upon every choir by the loss of voice in our most efficient boys, or by the transfer of our most regular and competent men to larger centres for employment, and in the extreme difficulty of filling up vacancies in our ranks—all of which, and other things, involve much care and labor in the work of maintaining and training a country choir for their Sunday and festival work—let us all carry away this thought, let it encourage and nerve us against discouragement, let it spur us on to greater effort—however excellent and artistic, or however humble and simple our choir-boy may be—that it is possible for the earnest, devout Christian chorister to sing with grace in his heart to the Lord.

May every service in the sanctuary find us more and more meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, until at length, by the mercy and merits of the Saviour, numbered among those blessed ones who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,

And added to the heavenly choir,  
We sing our songs of triumph higher,  
And praise Him in a nobler strain.  
Outsoar the first-born seraph's flight,  
And sing with all the saints in light,  
God's everlasting love to man.

## Christmas Gifts.

The holidays are upon us again, and the people of every condition are thronging the tempting stores to gather gifts for the household, for valued friends and for the children of sorrow. It is the most blessed season of the whole year, cleanses the rust of selfishness from the better impulses of our nature and halts the restless race for fortune or fame to enjoy a sunny rest in the too often forgotten substantial comfort and content of home. Let us all welcome the Christmas holidays; they always leave the world better than they found it.

And let holiday shopping be generous. It should not be wasteful and profligate, but all who are blessed with abundance should scatter happiness in liberal profusion. To the children of every household, the holiday season is the happiness of their often fretted lives. They look forward to Christmas and cherish the beautiful dream of Santa Claus with boundless pleasure and who would destroy the happy illusion? It is the most innocent of all the pleasures of childhood; it is inseparably associated with holy things; it mingles reverence and refinement with the brightest baby faces, and the father or mother who tires of the joys of Christmas among their little ones is to be pitied as strangers to the pleasures which come in profusion to every well-ordered home.

But the pleasures of the Christmas holidays are not confined to the little prattlers who worship Santa Claus. When the light of years dispels that source of happiness, the interest in the holidays which commemorate the birth of the Christian era is not sensibly abated. The boys and girls up in their teens still love the merry season when the world seems to wear its brightest smiles and home is made the altar of harmless pleasures. The more advanced book, the instrument of music, the decorative vase or statuette, or any of the countless thousands of things for mingled ornament and use which the budding man and woman enjoy, are ever fountains of happiness. To these may be added the valued friendship that welcomes the holiday tribute, and not the least in the list of those who made their children glad in the long, long ago, and now have completed the circles to the second childhood that gropes along in the evening shadows.

Then in the profusion of bountiful dinners and grateful gifts to those who are not in want, let not the dinnerless and giftless be forgotten. The poor are always with us; the children of sorrow are about us on every side. Those to whom the plainest food and raiment are luxuries, should be generously remembered in the happy commemoration of the birth of Him, who loved the lowly and ever pleaded for the sorrowing. The Christmas stores which take no note to those who struggle with hunger and misfortune make a mockery of a holiday happiness; and let every man woman or child who has little or much to spare, give as they can spare to those who need food, raiment and shel-