



## The Editor's Christmas Dream

Tired by the labors of a rather strenuous week, and wearied from a tedious railway journey home, the Editor sat in his arm-chair by the fire of an open grate, picturing to himself all sorts of fantastic forms in the glowing coals before him. Somehow or other he was not feeling just as cheerful as usual; indeed, he was rather "blue," for several things had occurred that had somewhat dampened his spirits. He was disposed, for a wonder, to look on the dark side of things, and forebodings of failure pressed heavily upon his mind. Warmed by the welcome heat, he became drowsy and fell asleep. Scarcely a moment elapsed before he was all alert and interested, for right before him there glided almost noiselessly the chubby form of a fat and jolly old man, who rubbed his hands in glee and chuckled to himself with immense satisfaction as he sat in the vacant chair on the other side of the cozy fireplace.

"My, but this is real pleasant," he said, as he shook his fat sides with a subdued burst of merry laughter. "You must be very comfortable here, my son, with nothing to worry you and everything about you to make you happy."

"Why, Grandfather Christmas," said the Editor, "is that you? I am glad to see you, but you are mistaken in thinking me happy. I am very miserable, indeed."

"Dear me," said the little old man, "that is too bad; but, pray, what is the matter?"

"I feel badly," the Editor replied, "because it seems to me that the world is growing worse and worse. The young people are selfish and pleasure-loving, the church-members are indifferent or asleep, and very little is being done." But he got no further, for Grandfather Christmas lifted a warning finger and, with what sounded almost like a sigh, said, "Dear me, it's the same old story that I've been hearing for hundreds of years. Will people ever cease from complaining, I wonder?" And as the Editor was about to speak he shook his finger at him and continued, "I tell you, son, the trouble is with you, not with the whole world. Why don't you broaden your outlook, and not judge just by what you see right under your nose? 'The world growing worse and worse, the young people foolish and selfish, the Christians asleep or lazy.' I tell you, son, you are in error. It is not so. Not a bit of it; not a bit of it." And the old man settled down before the fire and stretched out his legs in the ruddy glow.

"Is that really your opinion, Grandfather Christmas?" asked the astonished Editor. "Tell me, for you go all over, and know more people than anybody else in the wide world. Don't you find the hearts of the people turned away from the right and the good more than they used to be?"

"Bless your heart, no!" was the cheery reply. "I remember your grandfather and grandmother used to think and say the very same things when you were only a bit of a baby, and their forebears said the same before them, too; but they were all wrong, and so are you."

The room seemed to be all aglow with light as the little man smiled in a very overflow of gladness, and added, "Why, child, there never were as many people who loved the beautiful and the true, who served God and their fellowmen with real and pure affection, as there are to-day. Just think, I have been all over this great, vast land, and from Labrador to Alaska I find everybody thinking about somebody else and asking what they can do to make them happy. Why, the whole country is fairly throbbing under the mighty heart-beat of Christian love, and here you sit and mope and mourn as if all were going to the bad."

"But, Grandfather, I haven't seen these things," interjected the Editor.

"And whose fault is that, pray?" asked the smiling old man. "If you were to look for the good in people you would find plenty of it, but if you persist in going around with a compound microscope to find out the evil, you will surely magnify it until it fairly frightens you. You may easily get into a very unhealthy habit if you pass judgment on all the world simply by what you see when you have the 'blues,' as you have them now."

"But I do not seem to be doing much in my work, and there appear to be a lot of indifferent young people with whom I have to do," persisted the Editor.

"Just so; and do you remember, please, that you were not always aflame with zeal yourself," said the little old sage, with a merry twinkle in his shining eyes. "Don't I remember when your father and mother were worrying about you and wishing they might see some signs of activity in Christian work? Just you recall your own boyhood, my son, and you will have more sympathy for the lads about you."

It was beginning to get pretty warm for the Editor, and he wriggled a bit in his chair, but the old man cheerily continued, "Now, I am not hard on you, but I want you to be fair; and I tell you for a fact that this is the very best age the world has ever seen; there are more good people than ever in the past, and more real work is being done for God than in any previous generation. Don't be discouraged; your toil is not all going for nothing, and you cannot labor in vain. Many are looking to you for counsel and are ready to follow your advice. If you become a pessimist you can never be a true leader. Look about you and see how the whole air is fairly electric with