



Conducted by "ISOHEL"

Yuletide in the Old Home

Looking Backward

As Christmas time approaches year by year, it seems to bring its own peculiar sense of responsibility in the revision and stimulation of family sentiment, and in refreshing old associations. There seems to be something in the very atmosphere of the Christmas season, that annually swings the pendulum of endeavor back from competitive strife, coercive finance, egoistic desire, alienated regard, to the kinder and more temperate zone of concern for kindred and human interest in old associations. Instinctively recollection returns to festive scenes and homely joys. Business and worldly solicitude retire to second place for a brief period making room for social enjoyment and friendly intercourse. The nearer this great annual festival looms up, the tender do the chords of sensibility strain between the present and the past, between the West and the East, between the North and the South—a regular tug of war of pleasurable duty either place, but the East and South win and then the great winter holiday migration begins.

All is rush and effort. The labor of three weeks is crowded into each separate week after the migratory decision is made, and still scores of well-laid plans remain unexecuted. The last day dawns all too soon; quite hopeless is any further attempt at completion. Unfinished schemes must remain unfinished all time reunites worker and work. One purpose predominates: to reach at least the last train, the last day in time. You are off at last. All else is chaos, a jumble of mere conjecture: Is the magazine in the bag, is the gift for Mary in, is the silk blouse so ardently desired, so carefully folded—can it have been missed, and if so whatever will you do for something to wear with that black skirt? The very last memory of those handkerchiefs shows them on the bureau in a snowy heap waiting to be packed—were they packed? Who knows! Can you hold out to the end of the journey without them?—you fall back upon your luck. "How fleet is a glance of its flight the tempest itself lags behind."

You are now landed at the railway station. The rapidity of the mind's action gives it ample time to con every article of apparel you possess, but fails miserably when you try to force it to locate anything definitely. As the eye travels anxiously over the suit case that could reply to all those anxious queries a horrible suspicion assails you that it is unfamiliar—some one, in the last hustle rushed off with the wrong one, you never saw those spots and those scratches before nor that color—yours was certainly much darker, you gather it up and examine it critically and are comforted by the feeling that it after all is yours, you cannot have forgotten everything because it really has a substantial weight—some very noisy man bawls out a list of names of places—you can't understand any of them—you strive for a place among the motley struggling mass of humanity to buy a ticket and find out about your train—"it goes in two minutes lady"—Some Samaritan offers to buy your ticket and carry it after you to car No. 3—Another snatches your bag and together you make a dash for car No. 3—no matter how about odds and ends packed or unpacked—two ideas possess you, car No. 3 and your railway ticket, and one other, but incidentally, the bag—you jostle into scores of idlers (?) wondering irritably what they are all doing there, this is your day, you achieve car No. 3 by a hair's breadth, your ticket is pushed into your hand and the Samaritans tumble off the moving train helter-skelter. Your feelings of gratitude follows them momentarily and you wonder who pays

Samaritans—You are really off—You are dejected—What's to hinder your being wrecked—or—robbed. That suit case obtrudes itself upon attention. It is not yours. It is a gold brick of the Samaritan. You'll open it—you wrench and tug and strain. It is a spring lock—You have no key, nobody has a key. You'll get the fire poker, the car is steam heated. You'll get the axe that once upon a time you saw hang in a frame on the car wall; your car is a sleeper, the axe is in the day coach, besides the law forbids the axe being touched except in case of wreck. You feel you could make a wreck if you only had the axe. Well surely you can go to bed. The porter upsets the suit case. It flies open and spills your much lamented attire into the car aisle—Yes, they're yours! Some gentlemen are passing. You wish it was the gold bricks. You feel that the law should prevent manufacturers making suit cases all the same size and color "you had such a turn." Order is restored curtains suspended and you crawl into a cocoon that has no ventilation whatever. Only a miracle can save you from asphyxiation. Who will perform it. The porter is opening the air panes in the roof, a nose is applied to a crack in the

say, when it came to my head there were four or five gentlemen staring straight at me and I knew I was all feet and legs don't you know and its all perfectly maddening and I said to the porter what do you mean by not waking me earlier than this and he said "this is where you get equal rights" and the men all grinned I know they did oh its perfectly maddening and only look at my hair!" The porter slowed up for breath. She was on the verge of tears. Way was made for her. She was calmed and comforted as well as the hateful circumstance permitted. Fortunately she was due to leave the train at the next stop. Mile-posts flitted past; hours crept their lazy length across the day and soon familiar scenes arrived to stir up forgotten details of village architecture, woodland view and bridge and stream and valley. Have you seen all this before or is it but the remnant of a bygone and half remembered dream?

Home at Last

Home at last—Back to the old home! No uncertainty now, no doubt. First comes the old beech tree, sentinel still of the garden wall, in whose shady top you used to sit weaving leafy garlands, to adore your own vain youth. A new driveway semi-circles the lawn including the house—you would rather enter the old way by the straight front, but changes come as changes will and you follow the beaten track. It is years since your foot has passed the homestead threshold, you enter with hushed breath and hallowed recognition. No parents' voice now to welcome you, nor hand to clasp, only your own generation remain. You want to be alone, to find your own way about, to let the past roll up its opaque shade and leave you free to revel in the distant view. From point to point you stroll picking up dropped threads of thought in passing. The stairs, unchanged confront you. You climb its easy slope and turning at the top look back to wonder why any mortal should have preferred to cower down them touching only two; the third bounce always ended in the middle of the front hall; that small dent



Happy Family homesteading near Stormway, Sask.

drapery and—death is cheated—for a time. This concern relieved, attention is attracted elsewhere. A noisy rabble of young voices is swarming in the drawing-room section. An incisive penetrating order comes from an adjacent quarter: "Porter will you kindly preserve order in this car?" "You'll have to shut that door, a lady here wants to sleep," promptly urges the porter. "Tell the old lady to go to thunderation!" retorts a feminine voice. "You'll have to shut that door!" insists the porter and slams the door himself. Silence reigns. One can hear only an occasional whisper in the car. Suddenly it is morning. Forms are merging from the curtained crevasses and softly hurrying hither and thither. The ladies' dressing-room is thronging with animated dressers who "cannot find anything." Dismay is written large upon face after face as the crowd thickens. One importunate damsel who can only look over the shoulder of the one in front, ostrich-like, her body still in the aisle and her head only inside the dressing door curtain, urges to be allowed to dress her hair. "Don't you know I thought I was going to be first down here and now I can't even get in." "We all thought that," interjected several. "Oh it's perfectly maddening, don't you know I got on this car at 2 o'clock this morning and the porter couldn't give me another blessed place to sleep but that middle upper berth and don't you know I rang up the porter for that infernal ladder the moment my eyes were open and I thought I would be down before anybody else and its perfectly maddening, and I have to come out of it feet first don't you know and

in the hardwood floor was certainly made by your energetic heel; you remember trying to rub it out and failing, dragged a rug across to hide the damage done. There is the door through which you fled pursued by a just avenger; you had the lead. The door banged in the nick of time and the ready key whirled in the lock—saved for the time. Pursuer and pursued fell to their knees simultaneously to reconnoitre through the key-hole; each applied an eye to opposite sides of it. Breathless quiet reigned, and astonishment, wonder, even affright. What could that large, clear, luminous, intent object be so close to the keyhole? "Oh, the big bright eye" breathed the pursuer guardedly. Instantly the other seized the situation. Each had been looking through the close range of the key-hole and both had been scared by the other's eye. Vengeance gave place to merriment; peace negotiations were easily arranged. There is the airy pantry in which your culinary ambitions terminated so frequently in stolen visits to the pig sty bearing a pail or pan under your ample apron. Pigs had their uses. The old pear tree still stands, straight and tall and slim; at its foot now snow-laden you once knelt in childish, earnest prayer for Carlo's recovery, having over-fed him with cake and cream. Next in line is the big cherry tree divided now in twain by years and fruit and fungus, in your day 'twas the tri-daily rallying point, the feeding ground in season of a horde of reckless young Arabs who gorged their fill nor ever had a cramp or after-math of illness. (Stomachs have fallen off dreadfully in endurance since that day).

You speculate idly as to what the thin average stomach full of cherries would bring in a Western market.

On and on you go, alone, each day revealing some frayed end of memory which picked up leads back to some long buried incident of youth's bright day. Across the meadow on a quiet hill among the hedges of spire and linden trees gleam the white marble of the family private burial-ground. The drifting snow lies thick in patches here and there; flowers are dead long since and only add another touch of sadness to the scene; you kneel with reverent heart and gaze upon the low flat mounds, your parents' graves—no human ear may hear the spirit message from the parents' tomb, to the world worn heart of the transient prodigal. —This is the hardest of all—you cannot bear it—you will arise and return to your old haunts. Next day finds you on the backward track, next week the clatter of the world booms with familiar jar and memories of Christmastide are docketed and stowed away for another annual airing.

A CAUTION

Ev'n in the happiest choice, when favoring Heaven Has equal love and equal fortune given, Think not, the husband gained, that all is done;

The prize of happiness must still be won, And oft the careless find it to their cost. The lover in the husband may be lost. The graces alone, his heart afflures; They, and the virtues meeting ours secure.

Let ev'n your prudence wear the pleasing dress

Of care for him and anxious tenderness From kind concern about his weal or woe, Let each domestic duty seem to flow.

Endearing still the common acts of life, The mistress still shall charm him in the wife, And wrinkled face shall unobserved come on.

Before his eye perceives one beauty gone Lord George Lytton.

GLOVE PROTECTOR

Every one who carries a muff knows how quickly the lining becomes sufficiently to ruin the freshness of white or light colored gloves. An interlining may be made of light wash silk and slipped inside the muff for special occasions when light gloves are a necessity. Measure the silk just the length of the muff lining and allow for a hem, making the piece somewhat longer than is necessary to go around the inner circumference of the muff, and sew together. Make circles of hat wire just large enough to fit into each muff-opening. Hem each end of the silk tube around one of these, holding it tightly full. When not in use the protector may be slipped into a handkerchief box where it will be kept clean, and when it does begin to soil it can easily be washed.—Mrs. M. Y. N., Illinois.

PASTOR OR PREACHER?

We asked a friend, "How do you like your pastor?" and received this reply:

"We haven't one. Dr. X— is a good preacher and has no trouble in securing an audience, but he hasn't been in my house since he came, two years ago, except when we have formally invited him to dinner."

"Does he devote much of his time to study?"

"A fair amount, I think, and his sermons are, as I said, excellent, but visiting his parishioners seems a bore to him; their private affairs do not especially interest him."

"Is he faithful to the sick and those in affliction?"

"I have a neighbor, a patient Christian girl, who has been in bed for many years from spinal trouble, and she told me recently that she had not heard a prayer for five months. I asked her if Dr. X— never came in."

"Yes," she said, "he has been here twice. I sent for him the first time, but he tried to 'cheer me up' by telling me how becoming invalidism is to me, and how happy I must be in having such an accomplished and famous brother. The second visit was a similar waste of time. Is he ashamed of his discipleship?"

"But," we asked, "may not this neglect of opportunity be exceptional?"

"I fear not," the friend responded. "I have known of several families who sorely needed a minister in the transient sense of the word."

The same day we said to another

SEE

DRO

Pos

1911

SEE

CAT

A

WESTERN

acquaintan

pastor?"

"First r

a good fel

for he does

hasn't tim

meat whi

life;" but

die of the

in the habi

the whole

always see

will bring

Sabbath a

These

Alex, there

gospel who

to the thro

living bre

Theologi

furnish wi

themselves

Lord in w

both pupi

of the nob

subject jo

ed but for

a luncheon

or tongue

take both

vocate.

H

A little t

Had su

She came

"I just