

FOR THE CHRISTMAS FIRESIDE.

Merry Xmas.

O Christmas, merry Christmas!
Is it really come again?
With its memories and greetings,
With its joy and with its pain.
There's a minor in the carol,
And a shadow in the light,
And a spray of cypress twining
With the holly-wreath to-night.
And the hush is never broken
By laughter light and low.
As we listen in the starlight,
To the bells across the snow.

O Christmas, merry Christmas!
Tis not so very long
Since other voices blended
With the carol and the song;
If we could but hear them singing
As they are singing now,
If we could but see the radiance
Of the crown on each dear brow;
There would be no sigh to smother,
No hidden tear to flow,
As we listen in the starlight
To the bells across the snow.
—F. R. Havergal.

The New Xmas Regime.

It was just beginning to be Christmas morning as little Bobbie awoke with a start. It was still dark, and he was obliged to turn on the light for an instant to see what time it was.

One o'clock!
Suddenly he heard from the regions below a slight noise. He jumped softly out of bed.

Now, Bobbie, in spite of his sex, was a brave little boy. Determining not to disturb his sister, who lay calmly sleeping in the next room, he stealthily made his way downstairs. The light in the hall was turned low, but he could see the fireplace very plainly in the distance. He waited. The sound of bells overhead on the roof indicated that someone was coming.

Who could it be? His heart was in his mouth.
Fortunately, he had not long to wait. There was a sound of falling brick, and then—

A short, dumpy person stood in the fireplace, on her back a large-sized bag of toys. Bobbie, inspired by the fatal curiosity that his sex had suddenly developed, bounded forward.

"Who are you?" he exclaimed.
The fat lady bowed.
"Don't you see? I am Mrs. Santa Claus."

"But where's Mr. Santa Claus?"
"Oh, he has permanently retired. He found that he wasn't equal to the job. Being only a man, he was limited in his capabilities."

Bobbie was silent for a moment. Then his face brightened.
"Oh," he exclaimed, "now I know. You are a Suffragette, are you not? And, oh,—he clapped his hands in glee—"you are my mother!"

Mrs. Santa Claus regarded him for the first time with silent sympathy.
"Do I look like your mother?" she said at last.

And Bobbie, shaking his head, replied—
"I really couldn't tell, because I haven't seen her for a long time. She's a Suffragette like you. But if you are not my mother, won't you stay and be one?"

Mrs. Santa Claus brushed a tear from her eye as she placed a generous bag of toys on the floor and prepared to depart.

"I wish I might," she said, "but I must obey the voice of duty! Think of all the other little boys and girls. I must visit to-day whose mothers are Suffragettes!"

CHRISTMAS GIFTS.

She needed pots and a new floor broom.
And window-blinds for the children's room;
Her sheets were down to a threadbare three,
And her tablecloths were a sight to see.
She wanted clothes and a towel-rack,
And a good, plain, useful laundry sack.
Some kitchen spoons and a box for bread,
A pair of scissors and sewing thread.
She hoped some practical friend would stop
And happen to think that she'd like a mop,
Or a bathroom rug, or a lacquered tray,
Or a few plain plates for every day.
She hoped and hoped and she wished a lot,
But these, of course, were the things she got:

A cut-glass vase and a bonbonniere,
A china thing for receiving hair,
Some oyster forks, a manicure set,
A chafing-dish and a cellaret,
A letter-clip and a drawn-work mat,
And a sterling this and a sterling that;

A gift-edged book on a lofty theme,
And fancy bags till she longed to scream;
Some curling tongs and a powder puff,
And a bunch of other useless stuff.

But though she inwardly raged she wrote
To all of her friends the self-same note,
And said to each of the lavish hosts:
"How did you guess what I needed most?"

Around the Xmas Hearth.

YULETIDE LAUGHTER.

A certain small boy has already learned the saving of time that may be achieved by dealing with things in the mass instead of detail.

"Well," he said to his mother, shortly before Christmas, "I've written a letter to Santa Claus, and I think it covers everything I want."

"That's good," said his mother. "What did you ask for?"
"Two toy shops and a candy store," said Willie.

Emma sent her plate back three times to be filled with turkey, and was helped bountifully each time. Finally, she was observed to look regretfully at the unfinished portion of her dinner.

"What's the trouble, Emma?" asked Uncle John. "You look mournful."
"That's just the trouble," said Emma. "I am more'n full," and then she wondered why all the others laughed.

And this is one from Puck:—
Teacher—"Waldo, name one of the best known characters of fiction."
Waldo (aged 5, superciliously)—
"Santa Claus!"

DIDN'T HAVE TIME.

A veterinary surgeon one day prepared a powder for a sick horse and gave it to his young assistant to administer. The assistant asked how it was to be done, and the doctor gave him a large glass tube and told him to put the tube into the horse's mouth and blow the powder down his throat. A short time afterwards there was a great commotion, and the doctor rushed to find his assistant in trouble.

"Where is that medicine?" he shouted. "What's the matter?"
The assistant coughed several times severely and then spluttered: "The horse blew first!"

THE RETORT COURTEOUS.

An ambitious woman once wrote to Abraham Lincoln asking for a sentiment and his autograph.
He answered promptly:—
"Dear Madam,—When you write to a stranger asking the favor of a letter always enclose a postage stamp. There's the sentiment."
Here's the autograph, A. Lincoln.

CHRISTMAS TIME AGAIN.

There's a spray of berries white as snow.
For it's Christmas time again;
For it's Christmas time again,
And here's a wish that our love endures,
And here's a prayer that our faith be sure,
And here's a kiss that is fond and pure,
For it's Christmas time again.

AT CHRISTMAS TIME.

At Christmas time we deck the hall
With holly branches brave and tall
With sturdy pine and hemlock bright
And in the Yule-log's dancing light
We tell old tales of field and fight
At Christmas time.

THE FAIREST GIFT.

If I were Santa Claus I know
What I would give to every boy
And every little maiden. O
It would not be a painted toy.
It would not be a blushing doll,
Nor any sugared thing to eat.
The same gift I would give to all
And deem the giving sweet.

A BABY IN BETHLEHEM.

There was a baby born in Bethlehem:
I know they say
That this and that's in doubt; and for the rest,
That learned men who surely should know best
Expound how myths crept in, and folk-lore's tales confused the truth.
I know; but any way
There was a baby born in Bethlehem
Who lived and grew and loved and healed and taught.
And died; but not to me.
When Christmas comes I see him still arise.
The gentle, the compassionate, the wise,
Wiping Earth's tears away, stilling her strife:
Calling, "My path is peace, my way is life."

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THINGS THAT WORRY SANTA CLAUS.

Santa Claus was hitching his pack on his back as I entered, and I was grieved to note that he had a sad and troubled look that did not seem in keeping with his jolly old character.
"Hallo, what's the trouble?" inquired cheerily.
"It's chimneys," he replied.
"Chimneys!" I exclaimed, looking mystified.
"Yes, chimneys," he repeated.
"When I first started, fireplaces were as big as a room, and chimneys as wide as an elevator shaft. Little by little the chimneys have been getting narrower and now I am puzzled how to work my way down some of them. I don't mind that so very much. At a pinch I can reduce weight, and it's all in the day's work. Fashions, I suppose, must change, and engine chimneys have to make place for Directoire flues. But when there are no chimneys at all—"
"How?" I said. "No chimneys?"
"Practically no chimneys," he declared. "Say I light on the roof of a twelve-story apartment house, somewhere in one of your big cities. I find a solitary chimney, or perhaps a mere iron sm. stack. Naturally, before I clamber inside, I investigate. Where does this tube lead to? I ask the janitor. 'Furnace in the cellar,' he replies. Very shortly. But how can I get from the roof into the different apartments?' I ask. 'You can't,' he says. 'But look here, I argue with him; here are all these children waiting for their gifts. How am I to distribute these, if I can't go down the chimney? and out by the fireplace?' 'There ain't no fireplaces,' he says. At first I refused to believe that. 'No fireplaces? Where do they hang up their stockings, then?' 'I don't know,' he says, 'unless they hang 'em on the radiator.' Now, I leave it to you, on the radiator!" and

Xmas 1913.

A PARTING CHRISTMAS RHYME.

(By William Makepeace Thackeray.)
One word ere yet the evening ends:
Let's close it with a parting rhyme
And pledge a hand to all young friends.
As fits the merry Christmas time,
On life's wide scene you, too, have parts
That Fate ere long shall bid you play;
Good-night! with honest, gentle hearts
A kindly greeting go away.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part
And bow before the Awful Will.
And bear it with an honest heart
Who misses or who aims the prize
Go lose or conquer as you can;
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

When Mercy stretches forth its hand,
When Charity walks throughout the land,
When Faith and Truth mankind command,
The Christ is born.

Could we but be sincere and kind,
Be just in deed and pure in mind,
Each day and hour we should find
The Christ is born.

Not mid ambition's noisy goals,
Nor where the sea of pleasure rolls,
But in the quiet of our souls
The Christ is born.

"The children, you mean?" I said.
"Yes. They have no faith in anything. I assure you, it's extremely unpleasant to be caught by a spying youngster in the act of filling his stocking and be greeted as 'Papa!' I am not your papa," I tell them, trying to be as angry as I can. 'I am Santa Claus.' But they only laugh.
With that Santa Claus gave his pack a shrug on his shoulder and started off to complete his calls. I have no doubt that by this time he has mastered the difficulties of half-houses and chimneyless apartments, and convinced you by his gifts that he really exists and that he is a fine old fellow well worth having for a friend.

A DELIVER IN FIGURE.

A book has just been printed at Lindsay prepared by the town auditor, H. J. Lytle, that represents many months, or even years, of tedious, exacting labor. The copy contained over two hundred thousand calculations, only one-half, however, being used in the published work. It is somewhat difficult for one not versed in municipal lore to understand the magnitude of the work, but Mr. Lytle can be formed by a council which can be expressed by one or any possible combinations of two or three figures, on amounts from \$100 increasing by sums of \$100 until \$9,000 is reached are to be found on its pages, or, in other words, every rate from one mill to nine and ninety-nine-hundredth mills is furnished. In order to make it work as nearly perfect as possible after reading the proofs with the copy, Mr. Lytle again proved the calculations mentally without the typewriter. He disclaims any credit for his work further than a little stick-to-it-iveness.

Mr. Lytle's book will never figure among the best sellers, nor will he ever be a millionaire. Only one copy will probably be sold in any municipality and possibly not that many in some of the smaller communities.

"Here's something for Burbank to try his hand on," said a man to his neighbor.
"What's that?"
"Training a Christmas-tree to sprout its own Christmas presents."

I've been ranting, I've been preaching,
I've been knocking at your door. I've been busy telling others when to do their shopping chores, to relieve their weary brothers clerking in the village stores; oh, I kept my larynx popping, got such action on my tongue; I forgot to do my shopping till the last blamed dog was hung. Now Remorse comes forth to cinch me for my delinquent stand; if the Weary Clerks would lynch me, they won't need a reprint. When a fellow tears his jacket telling others what to do, when he kicks up such a racket that the atmosphere is blue, when he roasts us for our botching, our neglect of sundry chores, you may bet he'll bear some watching, like most other noisy bobs.

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Orestes

Our Store and Windows

are now one big display of desirable goods suitable for Xmas Gifts. Gloves, Mufflers, Scarves, Handkerchiefs, Belts, Aprons, Tea Cloths, etc.

Our stock of DOLLS, TOYS, GAMES, FANCY GOODS, etc., is the newest and largest variety we have ever offered. We are running all our stock of Furs and some other stock of winter goods at a fraction over cost to clear. We can save you money on all these lines.

STEER BROS.

Holiday Furniture.

Our Store is devoting most of its space to the display of Fancy Pieces that make such handsome and valued Holiday Gifts.

We are ready with the largest and finest stock of Holiday Furniture that we have ever shown.

The Furniture has been selected with a view of having as many exclusive designs as possible, and the finish is the best that can be made.

There is assurance of satisfaction if you choose your Christmas Gifts from us.

U. S. Picture & Portrait Co.,
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Advertise in The Evening Telegram



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