

## A Christmas

## Agreement

"My dear, there's nothing in it." It was two weeks before Christmas. Dimpleton, sitting in his armchair after dinner, read the Christmas list that his wife had handed him.

"I suppose," he continued, "that the thing must be done. These people have given us presents and we must reciprocate. As for me, it takes all the sentiment out of it. I don't believe in any of it."

Mrs. Dimpleton straightened up decisively and looked at her husband.

"I sometimes wish," she observed, "that we could get along without it for one year."

Dimpleton sprang up. To have his wife say a thing like this was a sudden prospect of joy.

"We can!" he exclaimed. "Why not! Why not announce that we are giving no Christmas presents—not to a living soul—and stick to it? People won't think any the less of it—they will respect us all the more. Let's try it. I will if you will."

Mrs. Dimpleton looked the list over abstractedly.

"It's certainly worth trying for," she observed. "I dread all this shopping. Why, just think, my dear, what it would mean; no fuss, no wondering what to give, no expense."

"It's Heaven!" cried Dimpleton. "Why, it's all the difference between happiness and misery. We simply must do it. Come now, say you will—absolutely, you remember. No tips of any kind to the servants. Nothing to anybody—not even to Aunt Jane's children. Once establish a precedent and the world will be with us. My dear, just say you will," he added appealingly, "for once?"

Mrs. Dimpleton thought. Finally she made up her mind.

"All right," she said. "I will. We'll make no presents—not even to each other. I promise."

"And so do I. Isn't it a grand thought? Why, I feel like a boy again. The thing was already beginning to get on my nerves."

The next day and the next and the next Dimpleton went down to his office with a light heart. Little by little he and his wife contrived to let everybody know that they were not making any presents this year—positively.

A week passed by.

One evening Dimpleton was detained at his office for a short time—just long enough, however, to make it necessary for him to get his dinner alone.

He determined to have as good a dinner as the town could afford.

Emerging an hour later from the restaurant he sauntered along the street with that delightful feeling a man has after having dined well.

Christmas was in the air. The Christmas spirit was beginning to invade every heart. Crowds of shoppers hurried along laden with bundles. Windows were brilliant with good things.

It suddenly occurred to Dimpleton that something was the matter with him. Somehow he did not seem to be a part of the universal spirit. Then, all at once, like a shock, it came to him that he was an exception—he was different from the rest. He stopped short on the street corner.

"After all," he said to himself, "there ought to be a little Christmas spirit left in me. It's too bad to squelch it all. Besides, I don't know but it's really a good thing to let one's self loose once a year. It makes us more unselfish. But Irene! No—I will get her a present—conceal it for her when I tell her that just for her I have broken my promise. I am sure that she won't hold it up against me."

And so for the next hour Dimpleton searched the shops for something to give Mrs. Dimpleton.

This experience put him in a thoroughly bad way. Somehow, in the next few days he found himself becoming more and more infected with the Christmas spirit. Try as he would, it gradually got the best of him.

On Christmas morning, as he came downstairs, Dimpleton laid his hand on his wife's shoulder.

It happened to be in the hall, and as he looked he suddenly discovered on the chandelier a tiny spray of mistletoe. He stooped and kissed her.

"I see," he said, "that you have forgotten that we weren't to have any Christmas, and you have indulged in mistletoe. But, my dear, I have a worse confession to make."

Mrs. Dimpleton turned and faced him.

"What have you done?"

He slipped a small package into her hand.

"Don't say a word, dear," she said. "That's your present. I didn't expect any, of course, and it's all the more delightful to think that you did remember me in spite of what we said. And, of course, dear, I just couldn't forget you."

Dimpleton held his package delightedly.

"Well," he exclaimed, "it's simply great to think that you, too, thought so much of me. After all, darling, Christmas is certainly a great season, isn't it? I'm glad that I didn't let it go by—oh, so glad. Darling, I have another confession to make."

"Go on, dear. What is it?"

"I sent Aunt Jane's children each a present."

"So did I."

"And I sent Cousin Florence a re-

membrane—only about five dollars' worth."

"So did I."

"And I gave the cook five dollars."

"So did I. I guess I've done everything you have."

Dimpleton held his wife sternly at arm's length.

"My dear," he said, solemnly, "for Heaven's sake, don't ever let's make any more anti-Christmas promises again. Why, it's cost us almost twice as much this year as it did last!"

## Local and Diocesan News.

REV. MARTIN CALLAGHAN'S LECTURE.—Owing to great pressure on our columns this week we were obliged to hold over until next week the lecture on the "Study of Irish Music," delivered by the Rev. Martin Callaghan, in St. Ann's Hall on Tuesday evening.

INTERESTING CEREMONY.—On Sunday evening last a very large congregation assisted at the blessing of the new Way of the Cross at St. Michael's Church. These stations, which are a most valuable work, are the gift of Mrs. Douglas, a parishioner. Father Dunstan, O. F. M., was the preacher of the occasion.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.—The annual election of officers of St. Lawrence Court, No. 263, C. O. F., was held in Monument National Hall on Monday, Dec. 13th, and resulted in the following officers being elected: all unanimously: Chief Ranger, Bro. M. J. Cavanagh; Past Chief Ranger, Bro. M. M. J. Flanagan; Vice Chief Ranger, Bro. R. Bennett; Recording Secretary, Bro. T. W. Maguire; Financial Secretary, Bro. A. F. Demay; Treasurer, Bro. G. A. Orator; Bro. F. F. Rummens; Trustees, Bros. Flynn, O'Brien and Glennen; Auditors, Bros. Rummens, Flynn and O'Brien.

After elections a pleasant game of euchre was played with the members of St. Patrick's Court, No. 95, which brought to a close a very enjoyable evening for both courts.

C. O. F. HOLDS EUCHRE.—On Friday evening, December 17th, St. John's Court, No. 1423, Catholic Order of Foresters held a very successful stag euchre in their hall, corner of St. Lawrence and St. Louis streets.

The prizes were very fine turkeys, being quite appropriate for this time of year. After a few remarks by Fr. Monaghan, ex pro Court Dir. W. J. Cherry Pres. Pro. Court Dir., and Bro. M. J. O'Brien, the game commenced and at the end of 12 hotly contested but best humored games the winners were as follows, in the order named: L. Roe, D. Edmonson, Hagerson, J. Courchene, W. J. McAdams and E. Hoolaghan. There were 30 tables playing and every one thoroughly enjoyed a very pleasant evening.

RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE.—Dear Rev. Father, I have been instructed by Div. No. 2, B. of E., to forward you the following resolution passed at our last regular meeting.

Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God to remove from our midst the beloved father of our highly esteemed and revered pastor, the Rev. Father Kiernan;

Therefore be it resolved, That we, the members of Div. No. 2, A. O. H., do hereby tender our deep, sincere and heartfelt sympathy to the Rev. Father Kiernan, his rev. sister and relatives, realizing that by the death of their deeply lamented father, the Church has lost on earth a devoted and zealous son, the city a valued and trusted citizen and those who knew him, one who had endeared himself to everyone he came in contact with during the course of his long and honorable career;

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Rev. Father Kiernan, P. P., St. Michael's, The True Witness, and also spread in the Minute Book.

W. D. BURNS,

Rec. Sec. Div. No. 2, A. O. H., B. of E.

## Christmas and New Year. Special Train Service.

The Canadian Pacific will run special trains between Montreal and Calumet and St. Agathe on Friday, December 24 and 31st, leaving Place Viger at 3.30 p.m. for St. Agathe and 5.15 p.m. for Calumet. Returning trains will leave St. Agathe at 6.30 p.m., and arrive in Montreal at 9.30 p.m., and Calumet at 7.20 p.m., and arrive at Montreal, Place Viger Station, at 9.50 p.m., on Sundays, December 26th and January 2nd, 1910, stopping at intermediate stations.

For Frost Bites and Chills.—Chills come from undue exposure to cold and cold from frost bites from the icy winds of winter. In the treatment of either there is no better preparation than Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil, as it counteracts the inflammation and relieves the pain. The action of the oil is instantaneous and its application is extremely simple.

There is a claim being put forward on behalf of Barcelona as the birthplace of St. Patrick by no less an authority than the Very Rev. Dr. O'Brien, Vicar-General of Dublin. He has published a treatise advancing the theory.

## The Kindness of a Priest.

(A True Story.)

It was the noble Archbishop Corrigan, of New York, who said: "Like the waves of the ocean, ever forming, ever breaking, on the sandy shore, this principle of Christian charity, once divinely set in motion, never afterward knows rest or ending." Now, there is charity and charity, just as there is teaching and teaching. There is the kind that does its good work, and then refuses to tell the world of its doing, and the kind that sounds its own fulsome notes of praise. There is the sweet angelic charity of the gentle Sister at the bedside of the sick; and the Pharisaic, self-interested of the benefactor "with an axe to grind." Father B. is not a millionaire; yet his is the tender, mellowed heart of a priest; his was the deed of genuine neighbor-love and veritable soul-kindness. In fact, his is an Irish-Canadian love—and there is the key!

It happened Christmas, only three or four years ago—not in the imagination of a writer of legends, but truly and really in a city of Ontario. The hero is still alive, hale and hearty, an exceedingly zealous pastor of souls. But it was not he that told us the story; nor did his housekeeper, as gentle an old woman as she is, God bless her!

The winter, that year, had begun with fury, and many a poor home had already felt its cruel bite. While many, the very many, rejoiced in warm, well-lighted, comfortable homes, others, alas! suffered, yet blessed the will of God. Christmas day had come; indeed, the day was half spent. It was at the noon-hour, and the priest was very tired. The whole previous day he had been employed in the sacred works of the ministry—hearing confessions, visiting the sick, seeing his darling school children, cheering the ill-favored of earthly fortune. He had read the three Masses of the day of days, had preached twice to his parishioners; had broken the bread of eternal salvation with them; had met hundreds of them, with a fatherly word for each, perhaps more fatherly in the case of the wayward, cheering the burdened with sorrow, and urging the luckier unto thankfulness to God.

Christmas carols, centuries older than religious upheavals, had been sung, and old men and young, and pure little girls, with their good mothers and chaste sisters, had knelt before the Crib of Bethlehem's Holy Babe. In many a warm and gorgeous home, the favored of fortune were in rapture over their choice of presents, and richly clad children were climbing the knees of wealthy grandfathers, the while softening strains of gentle music filled the household, to the obligato of light-hearted chat and laughter.

Ah! but not far from the parish church, in a poor, if neat, old dwelling, lived a God-fearing, God-loving aged Irishman, sick and palsied; and yet, as is the wont of our Irish kind and kin, mindful of God, even in trial, of God whose only Son had not a stone whereupon to lay His adorable head; blessing the name of his Maker, like Holy Job, though he wanted and suffered; with no other earthly helper but his venerable old wife, and nothing but the scantiest for a meal of the holiday. And yet could they have spoken to you and to me, dear reader, in the words of Jesus: "O ye of little faith!"

The Church bells were now pealing forth their joyous notes upon the air, while chattering voices at the church door spoke but mirth and pleasure and freedom from care. Father B. had met his parishioners, and, although he smiled and sang a snatch of Christmas song, his heart was elsewhere, by the old fire-side, at the sick-bed of his faithful, if poor, old Irish friend and admirer. The priest's heart! The priest's heart!

But dinner was ready, in the presbytery; a well-roasted turkey, the gift of a friend, lay upon the table inviting the carving knife—and the priest, after the long fast and the hard work. Now, Father B. is not of those who live to eat; he took the knife, cut the turkey in two, rolling the lion's share in a napkin; and, before his housekeeper—it was safer, perhaps!—could grasp the situation, he had bounded through the back door, hurriedly crossing the lawn at the side of the house, and was soon in the sick man's dwelling with his Christmas box. Having placed that "better half" of his turkey upon a plate on the kitchen table, he wished his true old Irish friends a Merry Christmas, speaking words of soothing consolation to the poor old couple, while tears stole from his frank, big eyes. The priest is another Christ! It was as Jesus in the days of His flesh.

## The Christmas Stocking

How dear to this heart is the stocking of childhood when fond recollection presents it to view! On Christmas St. Nick came from frost whitened wildwood with every loved toy which my infancy knew. The wide spreading chimney, the shed which stood by it, a horse and some books—I remember them all—a doll for my sister, and baby house nigh it, and then the full stocking which hung on the wall—the Santa Claus stocking the bountiful stocking the Christmas morn stocking which hung the wall! The well stuffed envelope I hailed as a treasure as early that morning I opened my eyes and found there the source of an exquisite pleasure, the purest and sweetest that nature supplies. How ardent I seized it with hands that were glowing and back to my white sheeted bed went with all, then soon, with the emblems of love overflowing, was happy in what to my lot did befall—the Santa Claus stocking, the generous stocking, the Christmas morn stocking which hung on the wall! How sweet through its round open top to explore it as poised on my knee it inclined to my view! Not a hot, tempting breakfast could make me ignore it for longer at most than a minute or two. And now, far removed from the loved situation, the tear of regret will intrusively fall as fancy reverts to my youth's habitation and sighs o'er the stocking which hung on the wall—the Santa Claus stocking, the plethoric stocking, the Christmas morn stocking which hung on the wall! But grown people find there's a later sensation as grateful as any they felt long ago. It comes when they witness the glad exultation which on Christmas morning their own off-spring show. And now, dear old Santa Claus, let me petition your favour for children, both large ones and small. Bring all the bright hopes to the fullest fruition that rest in each stocking which hangs on the wall—the wealthy child's stocking, the poor urchin's stocking; yes, fill every stocking which hangs on the wall!



There, we should judge, was charity. Were the world made up of men like that good shepherd of souls, would it be so dreary an exile? For us the best: "Go thou and do likewise." Christmas will soon be here. Let us remember some poor sick sufferer we know, when thinking over the presents we are going to make. Let us not be like the people Sydney Smith describes as "ever ready enough to act the part of the Good Samaritan, without being disposed to provide the wine and the twopenny." We are Christians; ours to follow in the blood-stained footsteps of our sweet Saviour!

(Rev.) R. H. FITZ-HENRY.

A Cure for Fever and Ague.—Disturbance of the stomach and liver always precede attacks of fever and ague, showing derangement of the digestive organs and deterioration in the quality of the blood. In these ailments Parmelee's Vegetable Pills have been found most effective, abating the fever and subduing the ague in a few days. There are many who are subject to these distressing disturbances and to these there is no better preparation procurable as a means of relief.

## A Little Child Shall Lead Them.

The wheels of industry will be stilled to-day. A thousand mills will be as silent as the star above the Bethlehem manger. The workmen will be by their own firesides, rejoicing in fellowship of domestic love. Industry halts before the manger and listens to carols from celestial lips. Labor lays down its tools takes up the song and forgets the hum and crash of mighty machinery. Wealth bends with a gift for the needy and a word of cheer for the lowly. Nations forget their animosities and

"Battle flags are furled In the parliaments of man, the federation of the world."

It is not science that brings humanity together to-day. It is not the floating arsenals of the sea; it is not conferences at The Hague, nor the "parliament of man." A "Little Child" has led them.

It is a Liver Pill.—Many of the ailments that man has to contend with have their origin, peculiarly susceptible to the disturbances that come from irregular habits or lack of care in eating and drinking. This accounts for the great many liver regulators now pressed upon the attention of sufferers. Of these there is none superior to Parmelee's Vegetable Pills. Their operation though gentle is effective, and the most delicate can use them.

An inquiry under the Laborers Acts was held at Lisnaskea recently into an application by the District Council for a loan of £26,161 for the erection of 145 cottages. The loan means an annual outlay of £540, or 2-1-2d per £ on the rates. Forty-two houses have been erected already, and 58 are still further contemplated.

## British Flag Their Talisman.

The following is from the London Tablet and speaks for itself: At one point in his speech, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in order to illustrate an allusion to the British flag, "the talisman of Canadian liberties," mentioned a little incident in the Roman history of a few weeks back. Sir Wilfrid quoted from a letter written by the Rector of the Canadian College, who said in answer to a query whether the College would be in danger of attack: "No, I will hoist the British flag." The British flag accordingly floated over the Canadian College during the inexplicable Ferrer demonstrations, and it was respected.

## Death of a Zealous Jesuit.

When Father Aloysius M. Felch, S. J., of Gonzaga College, Spokane, Wash., passed to his final reward at the break of dawn, on December 11, there died a son of one of the noblest families in Italy, a true apostle of the Catholic Church, and a man beloved by all. He was 75 years of age, born in Rome on November 25, 1834, and had been a priest more than 40 years. He joined the Society of Jesus on January 1, 1878. For more than a quarter of a century he was engaged in missionary work in Washington, Montana and Idaho, travelling during the pioneer days over the sparsely settled country, bringing the consolations of religion to those who had no other means of receiving them than what his visits furnished.

The amount of good done in this way by the zealous priest can never be fully estimated. It was at the cost of great hardships and suffering that he accomplished his work. He was obliged to share in the privations of those whom he visited. Indians as well as whites, the poor and the outcast, railroad men and miners, farm hands and toilers in the woods, people of all classes and conditions came in for a share of his fatherly solicitude, and the little children loved and revered him.

Social courtesies were extended to him by the railroad officials who had come to know the value of his work among the employees, many of whom he kept in the path of duty by his exhortation and example.

When it is known that during all these years Father Felch labored under infirmities that rendered him practically an invalid, his courage and patience must have been heroic. Only a few weeks previous to the final illness he completed the beautiful parish church in Newport, Wash., one of the many that he built up and sustained in the great Northwest. Nor had all his labors been confined to the Pacific region. Long before the civil war he labored in the Carolinas, where he built the first Catholic church for negroes in the United States.

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Lv. Ottawa, 11.45 a.m., 1.45 p.m., 4.15 p.m., 7.15 p.m., 10.15 p.m.

Ar. Montreal, 8.30 a.m., 12.15 p.m., 3.15 p.m., 6.15 p.m., 9.15 p.m.

Note—Train leaving Montreal at 8.00 p.m. after adult of a night rest at the Capital.

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