A MERRIE CHRISTMASTIDE.

HOW THE HOLIDAY WAS SPENT IN TORONTO.

Crowds at the Musical Services—Also at the Playhouses and Musee—A Visit to the Prisoners—Feeding the Destitute—The Sick Wee Lambs—The Ministering Angels.

There was a slight improvement in the weather yesterday, though the sun never shone on the holy day. The fervent aspirations on all hands of "A Merry Christmas," were nevertheless realized. There was quiet enjoyment, legions of family parties, crowds at the places alike of worship and amusement, and a marked decrease in the boisterousness and dissipation—which in days gone by have marred the universal holiday.

A Backward Glance.

The old dining room, the happy faces, my old father cracking the old jokes, and mother, that dear diplomat, leading the chorus of laughter, our poor relations looking scared and glad, our own goose, our own potatoes, our own beef, and all eyes resting on me, the pride and hope of the family. My pretty girl cousins are proud of me and mother wears her old-fashioned jewelry, and in the evening we all go to service in the dear old church, and mother puts up her glasses and criticises the decorations, and rising just before the rector comes forth gives an artist's twist to the great wreath in the reading desk and then the familiar tones bring the whole congregation to their feet:

"When the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness that he hath committed and doeth that which is just and right he shall save his soul alive."

And here I am in a convict's cell.

There is gloom at home. "A Merry Christmas" sounds harshly. The old dog wants me, the colts miss me, the cattle wonder what is wrong, and in a little room a good girl is sobbing her heart out on the bed. "Well, have you got enough of it?"

Thank God!—The iron door swings open. Don't talk to me—let me out. The gates clang and bang one by one behind me and soon I stand panting beneath the free, free, blessed, blessed sky.

God help the convict and may he have a happy New Year in freedom.

THE KHAN.

GLADSOME MUSIC.

Christmas Appropriately Celebrated in the Metropolitan.

A large congregation assembled in the Metropolitan Church yesterday morning to observe the advent of the Nativity amid inspiring music, earnest exhortation and eloquent admonitions.

The text of Rev. Dr. Briggs' discourse was "His name shall be called wonderful."

The musical portion of the service was of the highest order. F.H. Torrington presided at the organ with his wonted ability. The choir had been well trained and did itself credit in several choruses. Miss Mortimer sang the solo "Cantique de Noel," while Miss Flinn and Mr. Curren each sang selections from the "Messiah."

Miss Ella Paterson's rendition of "Rejoice Greatly" produced a profound impression.

Mr. Robert Shaw sang the recitative "Comfort ye, my People," and followed it with an excellent rendering of the air "Every Valley Shall be Exalted."

Sherbourne-street Methodist Church.

A special musical service was held in the Sherbourne-street Methodist Church yesterday morning. Mr. Blakeley manipulated the organ, and at the close of the service played a pleasing composition of his own. F. Warrington and Mr. Chattoe were the soloists.

Elm-street Methodist Church.

This church was also the scene of an attractive Christmastide service. Rev. J. E. Starr preached an able sermon on a suitable theme. The choir, under the direction of Mr. Blight, sang selections from the works of Tours, Shelby, Gounod, Sullivan, Smart and Rodney in excellent style. Solos were sung by Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. Woodcock and Mr. Blight. A collection was taken up at the conclusion of the service in aid of the poor.

St. Mark's, Parkdale.

A large congregation attended this church yesterday. The decorations of flowers and evergreens were very choice. The large choir, under Mr. Warburton's direction, sang a fine collection of Christmastide music from the best composers. Mr. Kennedy presided at the organ. Best's anthem, "While Shepherds Watched," was beautifully rendered. The solos in it were sung by Mr. Warburton with splendid effect. The rector, Rev. C. L. Ingles, preached.

At the Catholic Churches.

The interior of the Catholic churches presented a magnificent appearance yesterday. The altars were draped in their brightest cloths and nothing was absent which would aid in the brilliant effect. Scenes commemorative of the festival were arranged in every church, and in some of them the scene of the child Jesus in the manger was strikingly natural. Grand high mass was celebrated in all the churches and the vespers were sung in the evening. Archbishop Walsh preached in the cathedral in the morning and the choir, assisted by several members of the Huntington Opera Co., sang the "Messe Sololle" of Gounod.

The Sick Children's Hospital.

On Christmas Eve and yesterday there was special food and fruit for the 60 little sufferers in the Victoria Hospital for Sick Children. This was the first Christmas in their comfortable palatial home in College-street, and many were the visitors who looked in to wish the little ones a merry Christmas.

But the day of days to the children is to-day. Santa Claus sent a letter to the expectant ones on Christmas Eve, stating that as he had so many other places to call at he should postpone his visit to the hospital till 3 o'clock this afternoon. Then he will have hosts of good things for each and all. Mr. J. Ross Robertson and other prominent supporters of the hospital will take part in the proceedings.

Yesterday one of The World's Young Men looked round the spotlessly clean wards and saw the little patients playing with dolls and toys and as happy as their physical ailments would allow. Mr. Robertson was there and was recognized by all as an old friend. After a good Christmas tea sweetly the little ones sang their grace and bade visitors and nurses good-night.

In another column will be found particulars of the cost of a cot in the hospital for a year. It is gratifying to know that during the past fortnight the cost of 20 of these cots has been promised. At present there are 60 cots, but there is accommodation for double that number. No more worthy Christmas gift could be made than the $50 to support a cot for a year.

The Nurses' Day.

Christmas Eve belonged to the patients at the General Hospital; and yesterday it was the turn of the 62 nurses of that institution. It was the Ancient Order of Foresters who deserve the credit this time, and they turned out in force to do honor to the occasion. The theatre was once more filled, this time the nurses' pretty little caps predominating, while on the table was an excellent collection of books, and Mr. James Ford, chief ranger of the Foresters, had ready a tastefully illuminated address. Dr. O'Reilly introduced him with a cheery "Merry Christmas," and the chief ranger proceeded to deliver to the nurses the address and the nucleus of a future library. Miss Snively, the superintendent of the nurses, accepted the gift in their name, and Mr. Walter S. Lee, chairman of the Trustee Board, replied in fitting terms. Then several of the Foresters were given the enviable task of presenting the nurses with bouquets and Christmas cards—a distribution in which the doctors were not forgotten. Then the visitors were escorted over the place, and were shown the wards, the nurses' quarters and the lower regions, where turkey reigned supreme. Then they reassembled in the hall and departed, feeling that if they had not been at church they had at least spent their morning well.

None Were Forgotten.

At the Home for Incurables and the Asylum for the Insane there was abundance of Christmas fare for all who could enjoy it. Many friends were present, and all that kindliness and the charms of sacred song could do to render a pleasant Christmas was done. Special decorations enlivened the aspect of the buildings.

Not His Equal.

After all one is loth to discredit Santa-Claus. He is not a patch on the party who finds the baby in the cabbage garden. Once we were young and now we are old, but we implicitly believe in the cabbage garden theory.

We remember when a little sister came and the old Granny explained her presence by the tale that the doctor had found her among the cabbages. The rows were searched thereafter for weeks. Boyish hands lifted the great wide leaves and peered earnestly 'neath them for the baby.

The baby was not found, but to this day one never sees an infant but it is associated with a garden and in riper years that garden is the garden of God.

AN HOUR IN A CELL.

A World Man Immured and Then Has Some Lively Imaginings.

As the great iron gate of the Central Prison swung behind me with a sonorous clang and I entered the great vestibule, the perfume of dinner drifted across my face as pleasant and welcome as a breeze from a clover field. The stately and dignified figure of the Warden preceded me, and soon I was in the midst of a marvelous scene. A great table loaded with bright dishes full of roast beef and mashed potatoes (drenched with gravy), plum pudding and sauce and great hunks of bread. Hundreds of them full to the brim and smoking hot, but where were the diners?

Clang!!!

A gong sounded and five hundred doors were opened, five hundred convicts came forth, five hundred eager ones ran down the iron stairways, and soon I stood among five hundred men who were doomed to eat their Christmas dinner in hell.

Each took his basin of roast beef and potatoes and his platter loaded with plum pudding and marched back to his cell, and I looked at my watch.

In an hour I was due for Christmas dinner at home. The family reunion with the sacred face of mother at the head of the table. Loving sisters and tried friends all around me.

Locked in a Cell.

I resisted and, turning to the warden, said:

"Give me a convict's rations and lock me in a cell."

The Warden stared for a moment in surprise, then grasped my meaning, handed me my rations, delivered me to a guard and in another moment the barred door had clicked and I was locked in a cell.

So long as I live I will never forget how I hung on the receding footsteps of that man, and when they had died away the awful silence crept on me like a loathsome insect and suddenly my skin grew hot and clammy.

In a moment I was the victim of strange illusions. I took my beef and potatoes on my knee and tried to eat, but my guilty throat choked at the food and I thought of the dinner at home. I saw the empty chair at the table and saw my poor old mother try to smile through her tears. I saw my sisters pretend that they were gay, but a cloud was on that household, for the best and the dearest of them all had gone wrong.

The Central Prison.

I have been a convict for how long—let me see, just about three months, but it seems to me that mother's hair is whiter than it was, that my proud and spirited sister looks humbled and hurt, that the girl I can never claim looks broken and dull.

Out of a tin dish I eat my Christmas dinner, and I know that outside, perched on the opposite wall, sits a man who would shoot me like a dog if I opened that door.

And last Christmas rushes over me and I cry, Oh God dull my recollection so that I may not remember that day.

At the Jail.

The unfortunate ones who spent their Christmas in the jail were not forgotten yesterday. Their customary meagre fare was much improved by the addition of meats, cakes and fruits. Only those whose appetites have been sharpened by a stinted regimen can have any idea of the gustatory pleasures enjoyed by the men yesterday who sat in prison cells. Even in the most abandoned hearts the day must have conjured up recollections of Christmas days spent under more decent and more hopeful auspices. In the proceedings in the chapel this theme was adverted to by more than one of the speakers, and the hope was expressed that more than one man or woman would date his change of life from Christmas, 1891.

At the Play Houses.

The theatres were very liberally patronized. The matinee performance of Agnes Huntington's company at the Grand and "The Tar and Tartar" at the Academy were both well attended. In the evening every seat was sold. There were numerous theatre parties at both houses, and the brilliant audiences of fair women and handsome men in evening dress was a pleasing sight. Jacobs & Sparrow's did a "land office" business with "Dear Irish Boy." Manager Frank claims the honor of being the only manager in town who turned people away at both performances.

The Musee was in it too. This popular place of amusement was packed all day long. It kept Manager Young and his large staff busy looking after the crowds that thronged the place.

To-day the four establishments give their matinee and evening performances. Lovers of the lyrical drama should not miss the last two opportunities of hearing Miss Huntington, one of the greatest ornaments of the American stage.

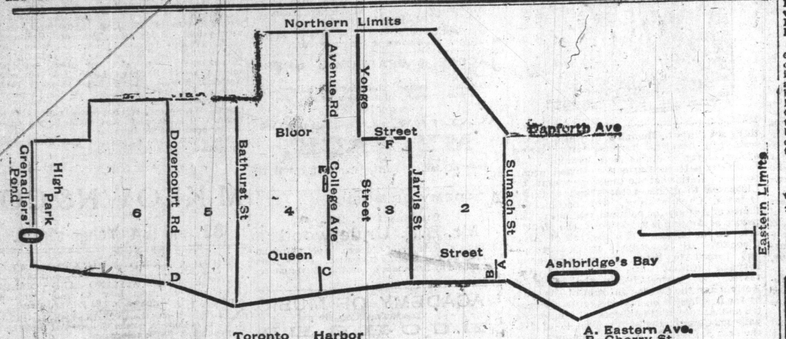
Reaching Body and Soul.

The Union Mission Hall has been doing good in St. John's Ward in its quiet way—good that has truly been of the sort in which the right hand knows not what the left hand does. But on Christmas night there was a festival of an unusual sort. Some 250 people of the neighborhood were made the happier by plenty of Christmas fare, roast turkey and all complete. Three times did the indefatigable workers conduct large detachments to the tables, and three times were the tables cleared. Finally all were satisfied and an adjournment was made to the upper hall, where an earnest evangelistic service was held.

The mission has been working on quietly, a meeting of some kind being held every evening. Scarcely a meeting is held without results of the most gratifying kind.

Happy Buglers.

The Queen's Own buglers celebrated the joyous festival of Christmas by holding their second at home of the season in their cosy quarters, corner of Church and Colborne-streets. Despite the miserable weather, and it was indeed miserable, fifty merry couples "chased the glowing hours with flying feet." Gliona's orchestra furnished excellent music, and Mr. Tasker catered to the satisfaction of everyone.



THE NEW WARDS.

Annual Concert and Entertainment.

A grand drawing room entertainment and ballad concert will be given on New Year's night at the Auditorium by W. Barker of The English-Canadian with the following talented artists: Mrs. Helen Wright, Harry W. Rich, W. E. Ramsay, H. K. Cockin, Fred Warrington, Signor Napolitano and T. A. Blakeley, pianist. This being a popular entertainment all seats reserved without extra charge. The plan is now open at the Auditorium.

Oh, What a Cough! 246

Will you heed the warning? The signal perhaps of the sure approach of that more terrible disease consumption. Ask yourselves if you can afford for the sake of saving 50c, to run the risk and do nothing for it. We know from experience that Shiloh's Cure will cure your cough. It never fails.

We Are Not Agitating.

Editor World: Please don't agitate for eight for a quarter tickets as against transfers. The arrangements are best as they are.

SATISFIED.

True Economy.

No matter how many hundred doses of any other medicine are offered for a dollar Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is the cheapest blood purifier sold, through druggists, because it's *guaranteed* and your money is returned if it doesn't benefit or cure.

With its use you only pay for *the good* you get. Can you ask more?

Personal.

S. C. W. Roper, Ottawa, registered at the Queen's yesterday.

Gus Moore and Andy Davidson, Ottawa, are at the Rossin.

D. O. Arthur, agent "My Colleen," is at the Rossin.

Carl Durfeld, jr., Chemnitz, Germany, is at the Rossin.

W. H. Graham, Kingston, is at the Walker.

Miss Gertrude Lawler, B.A., who was recently appointed to the English mastership in the Harbord-street Collegiate Institute, was presented with an address and a magnificent cabinet by the teachers and pupils of the Stratford Collegiate Institute, where Miss Lawler had held the English mastership.

On Thursday afternoon Manager George Darby of The Evening News was summoned to the reporters' room, where he found all the staff assembled. Mr. Darby thought at first that a strike was on, but his mind was quickly set at rest by Mr. Jack Garvin, who, on behalf of his fellow reporters, in a happy little speech, presented Mr. Darby with a handsome easy chair. Mr. Darby responded in suitable terms and an adjournment was made to the little church around the corner.

A Change for the Better.

SIRS,—I have taken three bottles of Burdock Blood Bitters and find it a splendid medicine for constipation and poor appetite. I will continue taking it as a great blessing, and I feel a great change in my health since taking it.

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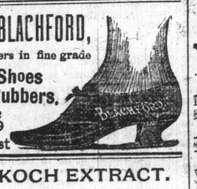

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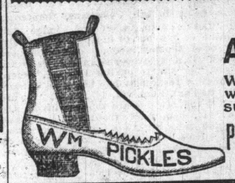

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