Tuesday, December 25, 1906

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AN HOUR WITH THE EDITOR

The Colonist will greet its readers again on Christmas morning, but as good wishes are always timely, it takes this occasion also to extend them to every one, old and young, rich and poor, friends and opponents. Whatever we may have during the rest of the twelvemonth, we have no enemies today, tomorrow or next day. If any people think they are in that class, we can assure them that they are mistaken. It would be a good thing if that could be said always. But as it cannot, let us all unite this Sunday in saying:

From all uncharitableness, Good Lord deliver us.

CHRISTMAS.

A girdle of traditions, some of them little more than myths, encircles the globe, and they all point to the extreme north as the original home of man. To this idea science lends its countenance, not directly, of course, but in a round about way, for science does not attempt to deal directly with such matters. It demonstrates that in the cooling process to which the earth was at one time subjected, the polar regions would necessarily be the first part to become sufficiently cool to permit of the existence of life upon it, and this is to some extent an argument that man may first have appeared there. If he did we have an explanation for some things not so easily understood otherwise, and one of them is the origin of Yule Tide, which the Christian church has adopted as its great holiday. December 21st is the shortest day of the year. It is the winter solstice; that is, this is time when the sun reaches his furthest apparent southern point and pauses before beginning his northward journey. When he is fully on his way we have Yule Tide. It is very easy to believe that people living in high northern latitudes would have observed this period of the year as one of rejoicing. It would not be nearly as significant a period to people in a latitude, in which the sun is above the horizon every day in the year; but in the Far North, where he does not appear at all for several weeks, his return from his distant journey would be an occasion for rejoicing. The Yule Tide festival of the Norsemen was very probably a continuation of the celebrations of a still more northern race, whose very remote ancestors were a people who had been driven from their Circum-Polar home by that tremendous and very little understood event, known as the beginning of the Glacial period. If all this is true, then we may be today participating in festivities, which have had their origin in those far-off days, which geologists call the Tertiary Period, days long before the hairy mammoth roamed over the plains of Yukon and Siberia, days when there was no such thing as ice or snow on all this world, and when, if traditions do not altogether lie, a very high degree of civilization was reached—in short the days of the true Eden. The fact that the church in its wisdom has taken this festival of the coming of the sun and consecrated it to the memory of the coming of the Light of the World, adds to the interest of the occasion even from an historical point of view, and the connection of the holiday season with the traditions and myths of uncounted centuries does not detract in the slightest degree from the value of the religious associations which surround it.

Christianity is of Syrian origin, speaking historically; it found its most cordial recognition at first in Egypt. Long before Rome paid any more than slight passing attention to the new cult, it had devoted followers and very learned teachers in Alexandria. Oddly enough these first seats of its influence no longer recognize it, except under a sort of political compulsion. Christianity is tolerated in Syria and Egypt, because the Moslem authorities dare not drive it out. There is something quite remarkable about this. It is one of the extraordinary facts of history that races, which at the time of Christ were dwelling somewhere in the forests and mountains on the borders of the Roman Empire, are now bearing the banner of the religion, which was taught first in the lands around the Levant. Upon this fact some of those who love to speculate upon unfathomable things, hang one of their strongest arguments for the identity of the Anglo-Germanic people with the Lost Tribes of Israel. But be these this theory as it may, it is worthy of remark that Christmas is no acknowledged in the land where it originated. There are no carols sung on the hillside where the shepherds heard the song of "Glory to God in the Highest and on earth Peace."

The popularity of Christmas is very remarkable. It has had a hard struggle against heavy odds. Puritanism would have none of it and even the church was disposed to dispute its eminence in the popular mind. Once it was styled a relic of paganism; then, among Protestants, a relic of popery, and in days when a name was enough to condemn any thing this was all that it was necessary to say. Even now there is a disposition among some people to deprecate any special celebration of the day for one reason or another. But in spite of all this it gains in popular favor. More is made of it every year. It is as great a day from a religious point of view as ever it was, and it is a very much greater day from the family point of view. In the United States it has quite taken the first place in popular esteem from Thanksgiving, once the great semi-religious holiday of the Republic. There must be a reason for this and we are glad to be able to think that it is to be found in the general tendency of the age towards higher ideals, to a fuller recognition of the principles which are the base of the religion founded by Him to whose birth the day is consecrated.

Christmas brings many pleasures with it, but it also brings many duties. One of these is to remember those who are not as fortunately situated as we ourselves may be. It is true that in Victoria there is little poverty that is abject, but there must be many instances where a little kindness would not be displaced. This has been a good year for our city. Let us show our appreciation of it by seeking out those who may not have shared in its blessings as fully as could be wished and extending to them some little help that may make the season a joyous one to them. Christmas is a particularly delightful time, because it is the one time in the year when gifts can be freely given and accepted without any sense of obligation or patronage. No doubt much has been done already in Victoria along the lines now spoken of, but there remains yet another day in which those who have forgotten can remember to do something, and those who have been forgotten can be remembered.

HOPE.

Among the qualities of the human soul none is more wonderful than Hope. The dictionary makers tell us that the root of the word is unknown, in which respect it is something like the quality for which it is a name. If we seek to define it, we are conscious of our inability to discover any combination of words to convey the exact meaning. It is born with us; it enters beyond the veil of death with us. It serves to lighten us on our way all through life. Perhaps at times its flame is so dim that it seems about to expire, but it soon gains fresh strength, although its brightness may be subdued. What is this wonderful quality? Whence comes it? Will some wise materialist explain by what process of evolution Hope can have been developed from inorganic matter? In some vague way the source of Hope seems to be in memory, not the individual memory of any one, but in that of Humanity. In the story of Eden we are told that our first parents looked back to their lovely home, which the sword of fire guarded. We do not refer to this as the origin of Hope, but only by way of illustration; the story of Paradise and the Peri as told by Moore would serve as well. Humanity seems to have an innate recollection of something higher, nobler and purer than anything, which seems possible of attainment here, of a certain and unchangeable happiness, of an absolute freedom from all care or desire, and it is this that seems to be the foundation of Hope. We read that God created man in His own image. May not Hope be the memory of the divinity that is within us?

It need hardly be said that in suggesting this we are not thinking of mere expectancy or anticipation. We do an act and hope for good results. We learn of what others have done and expect certain results to follow. But this is hope in a minor sense only. It is not that sublime impulse of the soul, which "maketh us not ashamed" no matter how difficult and dreadful may be our surroundings, which makes us superior to all material circumstances, and tells us that in some way, which we may not hope to understand, we are greater than everything else but God Himself. May we not say that Hope is the spark, which, when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, will grow in increasing brightness until it becomes one with the Fountain of Light?

This theme is of special interest at Christmas time. The story of the watching shepherds and the song of the angels may or may not be veritable history; but it is true, nevertheless, that man has ever been looking for a voice from Heaven. "Art Thou he that shall come, or shall we look for another?" is a question as old as history, and probably as old as humanity itself, not always asked in the same form, not always asked of some person, but at all times, and in all lands, the spoken or unspoken question of mankind. For uncounted centuries human wisdom, that is, the wisdom that deals with weights and measures, the scalpel and the microscope, and such things only, has told us that we are of the earth earthy, and nothing more; yet there is something within us that refuses to assent to such a view, something that tells us that we have a right to look for that which is better than the material things with which we are surrounded, that tells us that there is somewhere some one who will vindicate us. "I know that my Redeemer liveth," said Job. Some translators made him say "Vindicator" and perhaps that is the better word; but that is quite immaterial What the patriarch meant was that he was absolutely certain that he was in alliance with the divine, and in due time he should be justified and stand face to face with the Eternal One. This declaration was the inspiration of Hope. And there has been no change in humanity since the remote day when the story of Job was written. Disabuse your mind of the notion that these things have changed any during the centries. What was true of Job may be true of each of us. We have only to let the spark of Hope glow in its own way, and there is no passage in life so dark that it will not illuminate it.

This holiday season ought to be a season of hope. Its lessons are full of ground for it. Dismiss all considerations of a religious character and simply let the spirit of Christmas fill your mind. Do not trouble yourself about doctrines or historical accuracy or anything of that uncertain nature. Take the simple plain facts of everyday life at this time of the year, the cordial greetings of friends, the new desire to do something to make others happy, the forbearance with each other's shortcomings, the consideration for other people's feelings, the pleasure in the happiness of other people that we all feel at this time. Just think these things over for a little while, and then ask yourself if, after all that can be said against poor human nature, there is not enough good in us all, if we only gave it a chance, to

"Make this earth an Eden
Like the Heaven above,"

to quote that old nursery hymn that most of us, thank God, had sung to us when we were children. Christmas is full of Hope for the world. It tells us that a millennium is not impossible, though it may be remote. It proves to us that there are ideals towards which we may strive and not vainly.

From this thought to Him whose name Christmas bears the transition is both easy and natural. His simple and beautiful life, His wise teachings, His inspiring promises are all in keeping with the Hope that dwells within us all. We would all of us like the story of Jesus to be true. Our very nature makes us long for just such a story. The Hope that is within us can find what it needs most only in such a story. Then why not accept it? Why trouble our heads about what other people say? The song which the shepherds heard will, if we will only listen to it, set out heartstrings vibrating in unison with it. This is better than libraries of theology. A child can understand it; a philosopher can do no more. The message of Jesus is a message of Hope, and Christmas Day is the festival of Hope.

FAIRY TALES.

A new cult has arisen, which declares that fairy tales, nursery rhymes and all those other classics that you and we were brought up on are pernicious and must no longer be told to children. We have reached, so they tell us, an age when the mind of infants should be trained up to deal with things of real value, and that the imagination should be curbed at all cost. Up-to-date nurseries will have wall paper showing Wall Street, with borders of dollar marks, and instead of picture books representing creatures, that common sense will tell us do not exist, the suckling financier will be given neatly bound volumes, made of linen, and the pictures will be of bonds and stock certificates and the baby will be accustomed from earliest infancy to cutting off coupons. As soon as it gets old enough it will be educated, so that it will not cry for its bread and milk, but will cut off a coupon and present it to its nurse. When it is sleepy nurse will sing:

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went,
The lamb was sure to go.
One day the girl got tired
Of seeing it around
And sold it to the butcher
For fifteen cents a pound.

No longer will the restless infant be lulled to slumber with Scott's lovely, but utterly anachronistic song which informs the baby that his sire is a knight, when in point of fact he may only be an editor, or a broker or a shoemaker or one of those gentry, who in gown and bands are alleged to devote all their talents to making the worse appear the better reason, but something like the following will take its place:

O hush thee, my baby, thy father's down town,
Thy mother is trying her new Paris gown.

And instead of that utterly impossible ballad of the four and twenty blackbirds, we will have this:

Sing a song of sixpence,
Pocket full of "dough,"
Four and twenty town lots
Lying in a row.
When the Boom was opened,
Listen, baby, dear,
Daddy caught a sucker
And made fifty thousand clear.

Of course there will be a foot note explaining that "sixpence" is an obsolete piece of money, and that "dough" is a profane word used to express the source of all good, or the root of evil as the case may be. No longer will any one entertain the "Baby's Creed," which runs as follows:

I believe in my papa,
Who loves me very dearly;
I believe in Santa Claus,
Who comes to see me yearly;
I believe the fairies dance
O'er the fields of heather;
I believe the birdies talk
On the bough together;
I believe my dolly knows
Every world that's spoken;
I believe it hurts her, too,
When her nose is broken;
O, I believe in lots of things,
I can't tell half the rest;
But I believe in your, Mamma,
First and last and best.

All such things are to be abolished. The little tot, who tells you that she was quite sure she heard a fairy singing just as she was going to sleep, will be sternly corrected and informed that it was probably a mosquito, and be given a lecture on typhoid germs. The little boy, who persists in getting behind the sofa and being an ogre, will be given a course in comparative mythology to show him how impossible it is that there can be such things as ogres. The foolish mother who persists in rocking baby and crooning:

Sleep, baby, sleep.
Thy father watches the sheep;
Thy mother is shaking the dreamland tree,
And down falls a little dream on Thee.

will be disciplined by the nearest Mothers' Club. No child can be taught too early that sleep is the domination of the sub-conscious Ego over the Objective Mind, whatever that all may mean. No well brought up child should be allowed to go to sleep without being set right in its ideas of such matters.

But we have a sort of notion that the new cult will prove a failure. While the sunbeams dance through the leafy woods, the imagination of children, and perhaps of some of larger growth, will people the glens with fairies. As long as Night spreads her dark mantle over us, so long will thoughts of ogres and angels find a place in young souls. The good old ditties, which our grandmothers sang to our mothers, and their grandmothers sang to them, the ditties that have come down through the centuries, the only real classics, will never die. About twenty years ago there was a determined effort to kill Santa Claus, in America at least. None of the children's papers would print anything about him. But they did not kill him by any means. He simply arose in his majesty and swept his enemies to the winds. And why? Because he represents the essential good that is in the whole of us. He is more honored today in America than ever since Christopher Columbus discovered it. And so it will be with fairy tales. They will live, long after the serious productions of the day are forgotten.

SOME COMMON MYSTERIES.

Did you ever think of the mysteries which surround us? We do not mean the greater mysteries, if there can be any gradation of things which are absolutely inexplicable, but of what may be called the common mysteries of animate and inanimate nature. Take a pansy, for example: Observe its coloring. A chemist may take the sap of a pansy and analyze it, and may be able to tell you of the ingredients of which it is composed; but he cannot tell you why this life-giving fluid of the plant, when it gets to a certain point, ceases to make stalk or leaves and begins to make flowers, nor why it is that after it has begun to make flowers, it deposits a certain kind of coloring matter in one place and another kind in another place, and does it with a beauty of arrangement that art cannot rival. Pick up a rose and breathe into your nostrils its delicate odor. Then ask your chemical friend what the odor is, and why one rose has a different odor from another. He cannot tell you. Of course neither he nor any one else can tell you why you are able to smell the perfume, but that is getting into the higher realm of the mysterious. Dissolve sugar in hot water and let the solution cool. It will form cubical crystals. Some of them may be imperfect, but all will show the cubical structure. Examine granulated sugar under a glass and note the shape of the crystals of which it is composed. They are always the same. But why they are the same no one knows, any more than any one knows what becomes of the sugar which the water has dissolved. What sort of a material is water that it makes many other things disappear, when they are put in it? They are there just the same, but you cannot see them. Ask your chemist again why hot water will dissolve more of some things than cold water will, and why of other substances it makes no difference whether the water is hot or cold. He cannot tell you anything about it. He only knows what you do, and that is the simple fact. It is all as great a mystery to him as it is to you.

This sort of questioning might be repeated ad infinitum. The limitations of human knowledge are very narrow. We only know superficial things and are not very sure about many of them. Thrust a stick into water. It appears to be bent at the point of contact with the water The stick is not where it appears to be, and there is a stick where you can see none. What sort of a trick is this that Nature plays upon us? Go into a darkened room. Make an aperture through which the sunlight from out of doors can come; then hold at a short distance from the aperture a piece of white paper and you will get an inverted picture of the landscape. This pretty little experiment any one can try, but no one can tell you in what way the landscape paints itself upon the paper. Place a little fine, dry sand upon a piece of glass, and draw the bow of a violin, or something else that will give rapid vibrations down the edge of the glass; the sand will take different symmetrical shapes according to the place where you draw the bow. All that scientific men know about this is that it is the case. They do not even know whether the knowledge is of any value or not.

And so we might go on, taking up one aspect of common things after another, and showing by what a cloud of mysteries we are surrounded. But notwithstanding all this, there are some people who must have what are called the higher mysteries explained to them, so that there will not be the least necessity for relying upon that innate sense, which some people call faith, but which is probably only the operation of a sub-conscious mind, which is able to learn the truth of things intuitively.

HOW TO BE A CRITIC.

There was, and perhaps is at present—for he was an active enough fellow twenty years ago, back in an eastern province a man, who had a great reputation as an art critic. His opinion was asked upon every picture at which he looked, and, just as people came for miles and miles to see Katishaw's elbow, so they used to journey to his shrine for his opinion. One day in an unwonted fit of candor he admitted that he did not know any more about pictures than any one else. He could tell when he liked a picture, but so, he said, can any one else. This was not all, however. He knew a lot of expressions. He could say "chiaro oscuro" in a way that made you feel like calling for your mother. He could talk of "atmosphere" in a tone that would almost make the canvas curl up with shame, when he said the picture hadn't any; and when he talked of "breadth of treatment" and things like that, you began to wonder whether you were an intelligent being or only something that happened along. And he looked exceedingly wise all the time. He would walk up to a picture, as though he was going to smell it; then he would walk back from it as though it were a poor relation. Then he would put his head sideways, just like a little cock-sparrow. Then he would look very stern, and with great deliberation emit some of the above-mentioned expressions. He was careful never by any chance to say whether the picture was good, bad or indifferent, and he had a splendid reputation.

It is just the same in music, and it is not a little interesting to hear a lot of people talk learnedly about that delightful art. They throw language around in a way that is perfectly astonishing, and the poor soul, who simply knows good music when he hears it, realizes that he is many stages lower than the angels than he thought he was. If you want to be a successful musical critic, lay in a good stock of words. It is not absolutely necessary that you should understand them. If you happen to use them in the wrong place, the other party to the conversation is quite likely to conclude that he or she is ignorant of their proper application, and thus your very blunders may gain you a reputation for exalted wisdom.

Criticism is a wonderful thing. More so-called learning is expended upon it than upon making the laws of the nation, and the funny part of the whole business is that, if the opinion of the public and the verdict of the years are worth anything at all, the critics are nearly always wrong.

We are not sure that what has been said above has any special value, but perhaps it may have. There are a lot of people who are afraid to like things, or at least to admit that they like them, for fear that they may be displaying ignorance. Of course there is an exception in the case of very rich people. They can like anything they choose, just as they can spell anyway they like. What would be ignorance in you or us, gentle reader, is only pardonable eccentricity and delightful simplicity in them. You have perhaps heard the following story: "'Mama', whispered the small boy, "Uncle George is eating with his knife." And the mother answered: "Hush, Johnny, Uncle George is rich enough to eat with the fire shovel, if he wants to." But the rest of us are not so, and many of us are ashamed to say that we like things, for fear of the people who talk of chiaro oscuro, fugues, realism and other things. But let us not worry. If you like a thing say so. Have'nt you noticed sometimes at a musical performance how some of the learned people will sit enraptured while some artist executes something so elaborate that we wonder what it is all about, and how they sigh when it is over. Perhaps you think the sigh is prompted by exquisite pleasure. It may be in one case out of a hundred, but in the other ninety-nine it is due to relief. "What a wonderful strain that was," exclaimed the critic; and the common man replied: "If he strains that way much longer he'll bust." This article is not intended to imply that there is not such a thing as high art, but only that much that poses as art is simply artificial.

Our correspondent "Lux" is informed that the Colonist does not intend to open its columns to polemics. He takes exception to the statement that belief is a mental process and proceeds to analyze the Athanasian Creed. This creed, like every other creed, is not belief, but simply an attempt to state something. It may be in a collogical sense "a belief." The articles printed on this page are not in any sense controversial, and we do not propose that they shall become the subject of controversy, so far as the columns of this paper are concerned. This may seem at first thought to some people an unreasonable position to take, but on consideration they will see that it is not. Nothing is more profitless than a discussion over the words in which the church has endeavored to express ideas, which effort, as we pointed out in an article on "Creeds" must in the very nature of the case be unsatisfactory. A long experience has taught the writer of this paragraph that much of the indifference exhibited towards religious instruction arises from the stress laid by many religious teachers upon certain words.

THE STORY TELLER

The New Generation.

Weekly Mail and Empire.

Scene—A' nursery.

Time—The future.

Aunt (looking after three-year-old niece for the day): Did uns fall on the nasty floor? Let auntie kissum's head.

Infant of the Future: I can assure you that a kiss can do no good. That is a worn out superstition among children.

Aunt: Den don't let us think about it any more. We can play with the nice toot-toot.

Infant of the Future: The way in which you call a locomotive a toot-toot is too ridiculous. And now that I think of it, I may tell you that father's dog is a St. Bernard and not a bow-wow.

Aunt: Don't be cross with auntie. We shall have a lovely time all day, and I have asked a little girl in for this afternoon.

Infant of the Future: Dear me, aunt, I wish you had consulted me regarding the matter. I do not feel in the humor for entertaining today.

A SOUTH AFRICAN BATTLE-CRY.

Exchange.

South African football players, recently in London, have been exciting a good deal of curiosity in that city by their Zulu war cry. A writer in Notes and Queries says of it: "The cry really consists of two words and should be written 'Igama layo.' 'Igama' is Zulu for 'name,' and 'layo' is a possessive pronoun, meaning either 'his' or 'their.' It merely means 'That in his name.' The explanation is that Zulu etiquette does not allow warriors, when they rush into battle, to mention the names of their enemies, but the leaders shout, 'That is his name!' pointing to the victim with their spears."

TAY-PAY'S NERVES.

New York Times.

T. P. O'Connor, the Irish politician, began an after-dinner speech in Philadelphia in this way:

"I must confess that I dread to make after-dinner speeches. At the most sumptuous dinners, even at such a dinner as this one, if I know that at the end I must make a speech, I am nervous. I have no appetite, I find little to admire in the best efforts of the chef. In truth, gentlemen, I can readily imagine Daniel, if he was at all of my mind, heaving a sigh of relief as the lions drew near to devour him—heaving a sigh of relief and murmuring:

"'Well, if there's any after-dinner speaking to be done on this occasion, at least it won't be done by me.'"

THE GREAT WALLACE.

Saturday Night.

A Canadian traveling in Scotland was greatly amused by an incident that he witnessed at Stirling, and is telling his friends about it. One of the objects of interest at Stirling is the monument to William Wallace, the national hero. On the train was an American, and when he heard of the monument he became interested at once, but it soon became apparent that he did not understand.

"Wallace!" he exclaimed. "A monument to Wallace over here! Why do they take so much interest in him over here?"

It was evident that he knew only of Gen. Lew Wallace. The Canadian decided not to undeceive him, and at Stirling got his reward. The American accosted the Scot who guarded the gate at the railway station.

"Tell me," he said, "about this Wallace—there's a monument to him up there."

The gateman glared. "Dinna ye ken aboot him?" he demanded. "Have ye no heard o' Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled?" and he slammed the gate in the face of the offender. Then the Canadian explained to his fellow traveler that there was another Wallace than Lew.

ACCURATE GOOD WISHES.

Washington Star.

Secretary Taft tells an amusing story of a short colloquy which he heard in Havana.

An American "soldier of fortune" hastened to Cuba at the outbreak of the insurrection, and offered his services to the republic. As he had served in the Spanish war, and had commanded a militia organization, he was welcomed and given the command of a detachment of rural guards. Shortly after, he was despatched in pursuit of a band of insurrectionists reported in the neighborhood, only to allow them to slip through his fingers. With many apologies he reported to his Cuban superior.

"'Make no apologies whatever, Senor Lieutenant,' the Cuban said, graciously. 'True, you inflicted no loss upon the enemy, but it was an exquisitely conducted campaign! It is a great waste of talent, senor, that you should be employed in these minor, even insignificant, disturbances; your field of operation should be much, oh, vastly, greater! You deserve to be with one of your own great generals—Grant, or Sheridan, or Lee!'

"But—but they are dead, general!" the American said, his self-satisfaction beginning to be troubled with doubts.

"'Ah, I am fully aware of that fact, Senor Lieutenant!' the other replied, pleasantly.

TIME TO "GET."

Harper's Weekly.

In South Africa candles are used for lighting purposes in the homes, and when a young Boer maiden has gentleman visitors the mother sticks a pin in the candle, and when it has burned to the pin the callers understand that it is time for their departure.

Mrs. Early, a society matron of Washington, recently made a visit to the Transvaal, and was so impressed with the custom of the Boers that she determined to introduce it into her own home. Consequently the electric lights were removed and candles substituted in the drawing-room.

Mr. Staylate, a frequent though not always welcome caller, was one of the first visitors to call after the inauguration of the new custom. He witnessed the placing of the pin in the candle by Mrs. Early, and after she had gone ventured to inquire:

"Why, Miss Early, does your mother stick a pin in the candle?"

"Oh," responded the young woman with an air of apparent innocence, mother learned that in South Africa as a way of sending home the Boers."

CURRENT VERSE

THE GARDEN OF TOYS.

By the boreal pole where old Santa Claus lives
In his cottage of taffy and glass,
In the summer his sleigh is well packed away
And his reindeer are pastured on grass.
There the Saint reads his books and the Saint smokes his pipe
And leisurely hours he enjoys;
But of mornings he goes with his rakes and his hoes
To the beautiful Garden of Toys.

Oh, the Garden of Toys is well planted with seeds
Of every plaything that's out;
Long rows of tin whistles and horns thick as thistles
And popguns beginning to sprout.
The marble plant, too, is just bringing to view
A crop of delight for the boys
As the Saint showers the lot from his watering-pot
In the beautiful Garden of Toys.
—Wallace Irwin, in Woman's Home Companion for December.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

What is success? To gain a share of gold?
To see one's picture flaunted in the press
Ah, there be those who label this success.

What is success? To win a little fame?
To hear a fickle world applaud your name?
To be accounted as a genius? Yes.
And there be those who label this success.

But have we not another standard still
To judge a man of character and will?
Are gold and fame the only measures tried?
In all the world is there no test beside?

Ah, yes. The man who meets, with courage grim,
The daily duties that devolve on him,
The petty, mean, heart-breaking cares that tire
The patient soul that never may aspire—

Howe'er so cramped the field wherein he works,
He has not failed—the man who never shirks,
The man who toils for years without a break,
And treads the path of pain for other's sake.

There are a myriad of such men today,
Who, all unnoted walk the dolorous way—
Upon their shoulders still the cross may press,
But who will say they have not won success?

A CANADIAN FOLK SONG.

The doors are shut, the windows fast
Outside the gust is driving past,
Outside the shivering ivy clings,
While on the hob the kettle sings—
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The streams are hushed up where they flowed,
The ponds are frozen along the road;
The cattle are housed in shed and byre,
While singeth the kettle on the fire;
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The fisherman on the bay in his boat
Shivers and buttons up his coat;
The traveler stops at the tavern door
And the kettle answers the chimney's roar,
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.

The firelight dances upon the wall,
Footsteps are heard in the outer hall,
And a kiss and a welcome that fill the room,
And the kettle sings in the glimmer and gloom,—
Margery, Margery, make the tea,
Singeth the kettle merrily.
—William Wilfrid Campbell.

THE ETERNAL WORLD.

O beautiful eternal world!
My soul absorbs thy wondrous light,
As one by one the friends I know
Pass outward through thy portals bright.
I dream of glad unclouded days,
Of rapturous flights to worlds afar
And visions of the Lord of Life,
In realms where all His angels are.

O wonderful eternal world!
Already in thy peace I dwell;
The petty things of earth depart,
And angels whisper, "All is well."
My faith enlarges with the years,
New visions come to cheer my way,
And brighter grows the pilgrim path
That leads to everlasting day.
—Bessie Bland, in the Living Church

THE DRUM.

Roll! Roll!
'Tis a sound that thrills sheer to the soul;
When I hear it,
It is not to fear it,
But rather to cheer it!
Now plangent, now pleading;
Receding,
Or swelling
Sonorous, and telling
With ominous rattle
Of battle.

Lo, squadrons are forming
For storming!
Roll! Roll!
Not the shrill of the fife,
Insistent with glorious life,
Can clutch at the spirit, control,
Like that dominant throbbing: Away
They have plunged to the fray
With the light of emprise
In their eyes.

Roll! Roll!
What leads over valley and slope
Through the roar and the hum?
'Tis the voice of Hope—
'Tis the drum!
Hark! piercing through darkness and dole;
Inspiring to valor
White pallor,
It carries the crest to the gates
Where red sacrifice waits—
Waits with its chrism for the soul!
Roll! Roll! CLINTON SCOLLARD.

THE WATER HOLE.

From the Denver Republican.

The buzzard floats above it, wings aslant—
His feasts are those who perish at the brink—
And, far off where the dying cattle pant,
Like shadows do the desert skulkers slink.

Like burnished copper in a molten sky,
The sun has shone upon it through the day,
And toward it, o'er the reaches hot and dry,
The creatures of the wild have dragged their way.

Upon its edge, among the foot prints there,
One reads with ease, upon the whitened slope,
The story of each fight against despair,
And how, at last, have man and beast found hope!

PICTURE AND LAMP.

From the New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Once on a time I came upon a picture,
The Virgin's face,
And there in front a lamp was ever burning,
Fixed in its place.

Where'er I go, dear one, your face abideth,
And all of me
Is as a lamp before, foreves burning
With love of thee.

Flatter—Do you have any trouble with the heat?

Kicker—None whatever; but we have considerable with the cold.—New York Sun.