lay, December 15th, 1919.

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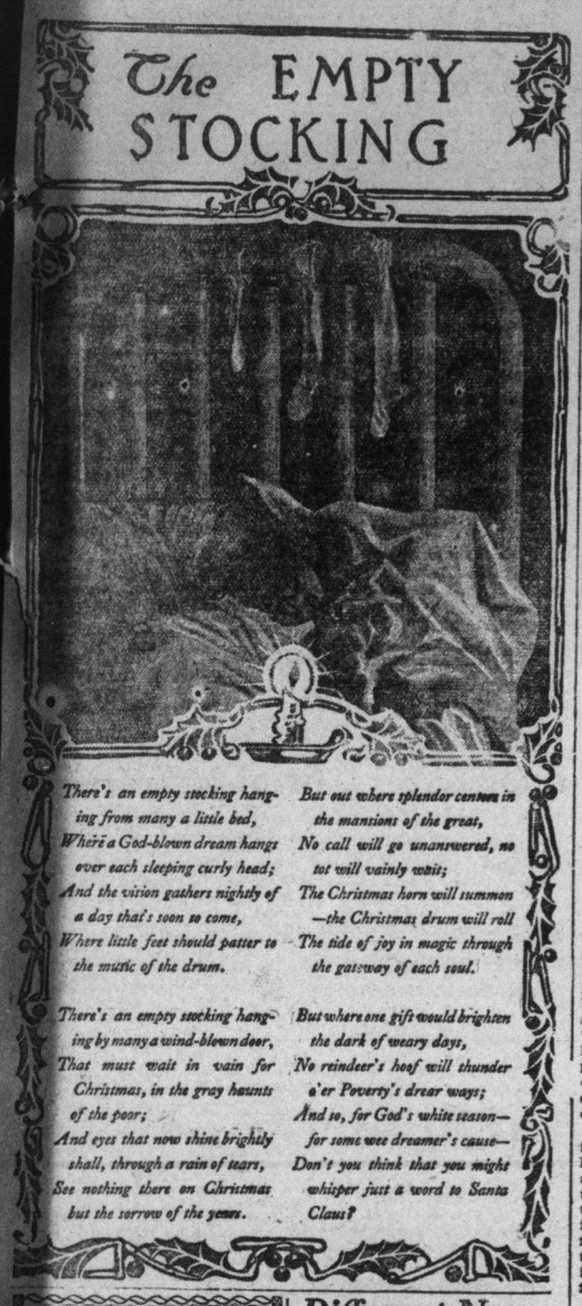

A Christmas Carol

"What means this glory round our feet,
The Magi mused, "more bright than morn?"
And voices chanted clear and sweet,
"Today the Prince of Peace is born!"
"What means that star," the Shepherds said,
"That brightens through the rocky glen?"
And angels answering overhead,
Sang, "Peace on earth, good-will to men!"
'Tis eighteen hundred years and more
Since those sweet oracles were dumb;
We wait for Him, like them of yore;
Alas, He seems so slow to come!
But it was said, in words of gold,
No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,
That little children might be bold
In perfect trust to come to Him.
All round about our feet shall shine
A light like that the wise men saw,
If we our loving wills incline
To that sweet Life which is the Law.
So shall we learn to understand
The simple faith of shepherds then;
And, clasping kindly hand in hand,
Sing, "Peace on earth, good-will to men!"
But they who do their souls no wrong,
But keep at eve the faith of morn,
Shall daily hear the angel-song,
"Today the Prince of Peace is born!"
—James Russell Lowell.

Different Now, But Christmas Just the Same

By DeLyle F. Cass

In olden days they used to bring a boar's head smoking into the feast and drag the holly-grown Yule-log to the great fireplace with special ceremonies.

And years afterwards the custom was for bands of sweet-voiced boys to go from house to house on Christmas morning, standing grouped in the street and singing carols of joy to the mellow resonance of bells.

And in grandfather's time folks made up jolly, boisterous sleighing parties, where all muffled up snugly and let out the horses, with the iron runners gliding swiftly over the hard-packed snow. . . .

But Mollie and I live in a little house in town, where the sanitary department keeps the streets swept clean of snow; where there are municipal rules against chopping down trees and no fireplaces in which to burn the logs, even if we had them; where the policeman on the beat probably would arrest the Christmas choristers if they came around and woke up the neighborhood by singing early in the morning. . . .

Mollie and I just wake up the kids and let them tumble downstairs to see the tree we trimmed the night before, and then let them litter up the parlor, while she sits quietly on the arm of my chair and I smoke, watching them most of the day afterwards. . . .

But, let me tell you, friends, it's Christmas, just the same!

A CHRISTMAS SUPERSTITION.

In the west of England it was once firmly believed that anyone who visited a cattle shed on Christmas eve would hear the beasts conversing. But such a visit was considered perilous—the irreverent eavesdropper being likely to hear words of ill omen, as in the legend of the farmer who heard his oxen comparing mournful notes of a certain hard day's work that lay before them in the future: "It is a long way up the hill to the churchyard, and our master is heavy." Brand speaks of a west country peasant who told him that he had himself seen cattle fall on their knees at the Holy Hour, and heard them utter a groan "like Christian creatures."

Christmas Classic in Author's Hand

"A Visit From St. Nicholas," Written by Clement C. Moore 100 Year Ago ana Known to Every Child

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap;
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon, on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below.
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny rein-deer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;
"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

A LITTLE book bound in red morocco holds the kernel of the children's celebration the world over of Christmas. To look at it no one would dream its hidden words are even now vibrating in the hearts of countless children, yet the charm its bright covers embrace is perennial. It is the manuscript of the famous children's classic, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," written by Clement C. Moore almost a hundred years ago, and dedicated to his own children in particular, and, as it has since proved, to childhood the world over.

This season it has as its companion in the library of the New York County Historical society in Central Park West a photographic copy of the original text enlarged sufficiently to enable it to be easily read, for though the original chirography is quite remarkable for a man of Dr. Moore's years—eighty-two when he indited the poem—it is fine and old-fashioned, and therefore somewhat difficult to read.

The innovation has proved a rare treat to the library patrons, and it is interesting to note with what reverence it is handled by men and women whose childhood days are long past, yet whose holiday memories are still bright. Two pages and a half are consumed in committing the poem to paper, and the repetition of the old familiar lines brings to mind pleasant thoughts of the season, for no one has ever visualized our American Christmas from the children's viewpoint as has Clement C. Moore in his rare little poem.

The lines were written as a Christmas gift for the author's two young daughters nearly a century ago, but it has since become a progressive gift to countless other girls and boys. Accompanying the original manuscript when it was presented to the society by T. W. Moore, a relative, some fifty years ago, is a letter in which the writer tells how the verses came to be written and how it happened that they were eventually published.

Mr. Moore lived at the time in a handsome house overlooking the Hudson, at Ninth avenue and Twenty-third street. Then Chelsea, like Greenwich village, further south, was quite remote from the city. Each was largely populated by the Dutch settlers from Nieuw Amsterdam. Living near his country seat was a portly, rubicund Dutchman, who suggested to him the idea of making St. Nicholas the hero of a Christmas piece for his children.

It was, however, with no thought of its ever being published that Mr Moore wrote the poem, but the lines were copied by a relative of the author in her album. From it another copy was made by a friend of hers from Troy. Some time later, much to the surprise of Dr. Moore, it was for the first time published in a newspaper. By such small chance was this voice little poem saved for posterity. In those days there was no such celebration of Christmas as is now the use, but Dr. Moore, having absorbed the ancient traditions of his Dutch neighbors, wove them into the poem for his children. He did more than it, for he built up around the central thought an interpretation which has gradually come to be our own. As some one has so aptly said, it has become so much part and parcel of our literature that it seldom occurs to people it ever had an author. Since for nearly a hundred years American children have been fed on it, it has now become theirs in very truth.

A Christmas Kiss

The Christmas Gift.

by Merrill Walrath Burton

THE day before Christmas. Why don't you make it one of rest, Joel, and begin the new one fresh and ready and bright for the work before you?"

The Rev. Joel Brierly regarded his estimable better half with smiling thoughtfulness. "It happens to be a day when both of us must live up to imperative duty, dear," he replied. "There are the Mason children. I have placed the two older ones with some very good people. The little girl of four and the boy of six, however, are still in need of a home. I have been thinking; suppose you see if you cannot find some one to adopt the girl and I will do the same for the boy."

"Who are we ever going to get to take them?" inquired Mrs. Brierly, growing fussy and excited.

"I shall trust your busy and sensible mind to enlist the interest of some of your charitably inclined lady friends," answered Mr. Brierly gallantly. "I will undertake trying to influence some benevolent husband or father."

So, with holiday cheer warming his honest heart, the best liked minister Paxton ever had started forth on his misson. Before doing so, however, he sat down on the porch for a quarter of an hour compiling a list of possible "prospects." Thomas Dalrymple, the village magnate, was among them, and he listened with apparent interest to the minister's story of how four children had been left homeless and penniless through the death of their mother, a poor widow.

"Tell you," said Mr. Dalrymple, "my wife is an invalid and any variation in our regular life would greatly disturb her. I shall be only too glad to join in a fund to provide for the care of one of the children at some school or institution."

"We have none here adaptable locally," demurred Mr. Brierly, "and I promised Mrs. Mason that I would exert supervision and care over her little ones until they were able to take care of themselves."

Levi Brodie, a well-to-do merchant turned out also a disappointment.

Two more calls, further excuses and Mr. Brierly entered the office

"Poorly, Poorly, Sir," Replied Dallas Dejectedly.

block of the town in quest of No. 5 on his list, to find the object of his visit absent for the holidays. He was somewhat weary from his useless tramp, and as he passed the office of John Dallas, who dabbled in real estate, he saw its tenant staring gloomily out of the window. Now the thought never occurred to Mr. Brierly that here might be a possible benefactor. John Dallas was gray and grizzled. He had changed a good deal of late years, and all his old-time cheeriness seemed to have vanished after his children had grown up and married and went away. The clergyman had heard that Dallas and his wife lived a lonely and, it was said, rather unhappy life. Dallas looked it as he greeted his chance visitor.

"Just dropped in to rest for a minute or so," announced the latter. "How are you getting along, Mr. Dallas?"

"Poorly, poorly, sir," replied Dallas dejectedly. He had left home that morning wretchedly dissatisfied. Inexcusibly since the youngest and last of the family brood had chosen a wife and had settled in another section of the country, like himself. Mrs. Dallas had changed greatly, and the holiday season as it came around seemed almost unbearable.

The two would sit evenings amid a loneliness that really placed them as far apart as if they were separated by illumitable space.

John Dallas opened his soul to the broad-minded, genial souled minister who had looked to the spiritual welfare of his family for over a quarter of century. He had not one word of blame, of censure, for Mary, but he pathetically described the forlornness of the dull, uneventful life they led.

"Maybe it's because we are growing old," he sighed. "We don't seem to have any mutual interests any more. The house is as grim and silent as a jail, with the children all gone. I find Mary sitting alone crying, and I'd like to myself when she forgets to kiss me good-by as she used to do mornings, when I would start out for the day."

"Why, you persistent pessimist!" rallied Mr. Brierly, "you two people are in the very prime of life and ought to be happy as the day is long. You talk about there being no more Christmas or New Years for you!

"Rouse up, John Dallas! what you want is something to interest you, to break the dull monotony in your quiet life, and, happily, I am the very man who can suggest to you how you are going to do it."

John Dallas regarded his visitor hopefully, almost pleadingly. "If you will follow my advice," continued Mr. Brierly, "you will bring into your home tonight a gift for your dear wife that will wake up in her all the old-time interest in the world and you."

"I hope it—I long for it," declared Dallas eagerly.

"Very well," resumed Mr. Brierly, "I am looking for some one to adopt little Benny Mason, whose mother died last week. Come, old friend,

"There is the Present I Have Brought You."

brighten up heart and home with a loving, grateful little guest, who will surely bring a blessing to your threshold. Go home then every night to find your wife happy, because she has had some one to cling to her and love her all the day long, and the happy little fellow will twine himself close about your longing hearts."

John Dallas arose from his chair and fervently grasped the hand of his friend and adviser. There was a new-born light in his rugged face.

"Bring along the lad as soon as you like," he said. "It won't be my fault that he doesn't have a pleasant home, and I hope Mary will say the same," and just after noon Mr. Brierly appeared with the little outcast.

"Mr. Brierly says you are to be my new father," prattled the bright faced little fellow, running up to Mr. Dallas, "and won't you please take me to my new mamma?"

Not within five years had the old-time cheering, winning smile deepened on the face of John Dallas as now. He took his little charge around the stores and fitted him out newly. Somehow he was thrilled, as, clasping his hand lovingly, Benny ran by his side as late in the afternoon he started for home. As he went up its steps he told Benny to go to the end of the porch and stay there till he came back. His wife met him in the hallway.

"Mary," he said, and his voice showed deep emotion, "I've got something to tell you. You know tomorrow is Christmas. Well, I'm going to turn over a new leaf."

"How strangely you talk!" spoke Mrs. Dallas. "Aren't you a pretty good man as it is?"

"Why, you think that?" floundered John, all taken aback by the sudden and inexplicable change in his wife, who seemed bubbling over with extraordinary animation. "Anyhow, Mary, I'm going to think more after this of your needs and wishes, and I have a present for you which I hope will give you very much pleasure."

"Oh, John!" interrupted Mary tumultuously, "it seems as if everything good and grand is happening all at once. Come in, I want to show you something," and she seized his arm, hurried him into the sitting room, and there, lying asleep on the couch, was a lovely little girl of four—Benny's sister.

"It was that kind hearted Mrs. Brierly, the minister's wife, who came to see me this morning," explained Mary. "She's given us the dear little child for all our own. Oh! think of it, John, and—what was that?"

It was the little lad left on the porch, who had discovered the family cat and was talking to and petting it.

"Mary," said John, as they went outside, "it seems a double gift day, all around. There is the present I have brought you—if two ain't too much. I say, the more the merrier."

"Are you my new mamma?" prattled Benny, running up to Mrs. Dallas, who gathered him up in her arms.

"Yes, you sweet dear!" she cried, and, the tears rolling down her face, she kissed her husband first on one cheek and then on the other. "Oh, John!" she sobbed, "I am a happy, happy woman, indeed, upon this glad Christmas eve!"

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A Yuletide Romance

By T. B. ALDERSON

(Copyright.)

POVERTY and pathos, gentility and blighted hopes, aspirations and hidden emotions — all these played a part in the dull experience of the odd ten people who had lived year in and year out at Mrs. Rhoda Markham's city boarding house.

Its proprietress was a good-hearted woman, but the constant grind had worn her out. As Christmas approached, however, the faded, but faithful old eyes brightened, for, though poor and humble, her little coterie were generous souls and a special purse was her reward when the Christmas tree gave up its treasure.

Miss Myrtle Deane had occupied the best room in the house for over three years. She lived on an annuity of limited volume, and although twenty-eight, retained much of the freshness and charm of girlhood.

Reuben Willis, thirty, and a bachelor, a silent, retiring man, filled a subordinate position in a bank, and, it was said, came of a once wealthy family and his actions showed his good breeding.

"It's bound to be a match," prophesied Mrs. Mayhew, a widow boarder.

"If they only weren't too poor to think of it," suggested Mr. Bascom, who was coarse and practical.

Everybody in the boarding house took part in the preparations for and the celebration of Christmas. The tree was trimmed and the packages of mutual presents piled about its base. Then Bascom started a vigorous propaganda in favor of each person hanging their stocking in front of the fireplace. Miss Deane grew rosy at the suggestion and Willis tried to escape to his room, but it was of no avail.

There was vast chattering and jollity as after breakfast next morning there was an adjournment to the sitting room. The master of ceremonies, Bascom's eyes twinkled as one after another the stockings were apportioned, for he was a practical joker. Willis noted that his stocking was bulging and heavy. He peered within it, then showed a lump of coal and a raw potato.

Somehow his heart was chilled. Trivial as was the incident, it came like a direct blow in the face. Was the erratic donation a slurring reminder of his poverty? All at once the barrenness of his lonely life overcame him in full force. He went up to his room gloomily.

A servant knocked at the door and handed him a letter. Mechanically he opened it and then sprang to his feet, white to the lips and quivering all over. He stood like one in a maze. There was a second timid summons at the door. Willis opened it to face Miss Deane, a parcel in her hand.

"Will you please step into the hall," she fluttered, and he thought how lovely she looked in her fresh, dainty morning dress.

"Mr. Willis, I hope the practical jokes of Mr. Bascom have not been taken by you as an affront. He did the same thoughtless thing with all of us. And you ran away before we could give out the presents. Here is yours, a trifling gift, but I hope it will please you, because I made it myself."

Willis parted the tissue paper to disclose a pair of knit house slippers. His heart warmed toward this modest, lonely gentlewoman, who had devoted so many hours to show her friendly esteem.

"I cannot express how I appreciate them," he said, and then a quick impulse swayed him. The letter in his pocket reminded him of a vast change in circumstances and fortune. "They make me think of home," he added in a tone of pathetic reminiscence. "Miss Deane, we would know how to appreciate a home, you and I, wouldn't we now?"

The fair lady sighed. A dim blur of tears crossed her eyes.

"If I had one," continued Willis, coming closer to her, "would you share it with me?"

There was a sob and Miss Deane wavered. Willis tenderly clasped her waist. He knew she had given assent in her shrinking way.

"I have just received a letter from the lawyer of a near relative apprising me of the fact that I have been made his legatee," announced Willis. "It is a fine present, isn't it? But the best gift Christmas can give me is your own dear self!"

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