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By Henry Van Dyke. It is a good thing to observe Christmas Day. The mere marking of times and seasons when men agree to stop work and make merry together is a wise and wholesome custom. It helps one to feel the supremacy of the common life over the individual life. It reminds a man to set his own little watch, now and then, by the great clock of humanity.

But there is a better thing than the observance of Christmas Day, and that is, keeping Christmas.

mas Day, and that is, keeping Christmas.

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you and to think what you owe the world; to put your rights in the background and your duties in the middle distance and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow men are just as real as you are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of life, but what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe and look around you for a place where you can solve a for a gode. where you can sow a few seeds
of happiness—are you willing to
do these things even for a day?
Then you can keep Christmas.
Are you willing to stoop down

and consider the needs and the desires of little children; to remember the weakness and lone-liness of people who are growing old; to stop asking how much your friends love you and ask yourself whether you lead ask yourself whether you love them enough; to bear in mind the things that other people have to bear on their hearts; to to understand what those who live in the same house with you really want, without wait ing for them to tell you; to trim your lamp so that it will give more light and less smoke, and to carry it in front so that your shadow will fall behind you; to make a grave for your ugly thoughts and a garden for your kindly feelings, with the gate open—zre you willing to do these things even for a day?

Then you can keep Christmas.

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world—stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death—and that the blessed life which began in Betwehem nine-teen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the image and brightness of the standard Eternal Love?

Then you can keep Christmas And if you keep it for a day, why not always?
But you can never keep it alone.—Youth's Companion.



-Ram's Horn

Rich Boy's Christmas Stockings. A street urchin stood peering into the window of a toy shop one evening just before Christmas, watching a prosperous bigger the boy's eyes grew as the puron. Finally, when it was all over and the man left the store, the lad sidled up to him and with great diffidence said:

"Wuz all them things you bought fer one boy, mister?

"Why, yes, certainly," said the man, patiently, as he turned away with his bundles under his arms.

The street boy's eyes grew bigger yet. "Gee whiz!" he whispered under his "Rich men's boys must wear big stockings!"-Syracuse News.

Two Aspects of Christmas.

The approach of a set season of fes-tivity and merriment, like Christmas, is a promise of keener pain to the sorrow ing. It is at just such times that losses are most severely felt. The noise of the world's gayety sounds vorld's proclamation of indifference to bereavement. It grates harshly on an ear sensitized by sorrow. Yet the festivity must go on-this is its right. sorrow must be considered—this is its right. Neither festivity nor sorrow should rule, for each can be merciful and generous to the other .- S. S. Times.

The Christmas Flower of Mexico. In Mexico the red Poinsettia is the Christmas flower. It holds for the Mexican the same sentimental significance that the holly and mistletoe do in northern countries. The Mexican Indians have a legend to account for its brilliant bracts of blood-red leaves that a drop of blood, blown from the pierced side of Christ, touched the little plant, and ever since it has worn blood-red leaves. -N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

Identifying It.
Fair Shopper-What do you do when in doubt about the use to which an article is intended to be put?

Salesman-Oh, we just call it a Christmas present.-Town Topics.

ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS TREE.

It Is a Relie of the Sun-Worship of A Christmas Eve Chorus That Has Bethe Ancients and Is Older Than History.

Most of us know that the Christmas tree comes to us direct from Germany. And we know of the tree-worship of the Druids which obtained in England and France, and which probably had some influence on the later use of the tree in the Christian festival. But we do not all know that a similar festival with the free as a crowning feature is observed among many heathen nations, and that it comes from sun-worship, which older than history. The revival of the sun after the winter solstice has ever bration by ceremonies which represent tude the new light brought back to the world. bor. old festival in honor of the sun.

burning lights during Christmas night. The English yule-log is a faint survival of this festival. But it is beyond these that I wish to draw your attention, back further even than the Druid mysteries of the Gallic forests. It is to China, that home of all wonders and of all history. It has been shown that as long ago as 247 B. C. a tree with a hundred lamps and flowers was placed on the steps of the audience-hall. This appears again in the records of Princess Yang, who lived 713-755 A.D., and who caused a hundred-lamp tree 80 feet high to be erected on a mountain. It was lighted during New Year's night, and the illumination was seen for hundreds of miles, eclipsing the light of the moon. This candle-tree is no longer lighted in China, being replaced by an unusual number of lanterns, which are hung everywhere. A suggestion of the tree. however, still survives in Japan. the New Year two evergreen trees are placed without, on either side of the door. Their tops are tied together with the sacred band of straw, and various sound save wails and cries of terror objects, dried lobsters and oranges are fastened to their branches.-Stewart Culin, in Woman's Home Companion.

THOSE CHRISTMAS CIGARS.

Of Course Nobody Takes Stock in the Old Joke, But Martindale Didn't Smoke,

"These Christmas jokes are simply silly," said Tomlinson "Sure," said Martindale, as he

trudged along with Tomlinson down to the depot to catch the 7:55% train from North Dale View. "Why don't those alleged funny men get something new something really funny?"

"Give it up," said Tomlinson. "Now. the most venerable joke of all and one that is worn threadbare is that cld chestnut about the kind of cigars that a wife is supposed to buy for her husband at Christmas time."

'Yes; that's the most absurd of the whole lot." asserted Martindale. course, a woman is no judge of tobacco, but she can easily find out—in fact, she knows, anyhow—the kind of cigars her husband smokes, and she gets the same brand. Yet every Christmas there's yards of guff in the funny columns, socalled, about a wife giving cigars to her usband and about his dying in horrible agony after smoking them. It simply disgusts me.'

"Me, too," said Tomlinson. nere, this is a cigar out of the box that my wife gave me for Christmas. I don't remember the name of the thing, sort of queer name, but my wife knows a thing or two. I want you to smoke that cigar and tell me whether it isn't as good as any that you or I buy."
"Why," asked Martindale. "What do

you think of it yourself?"

"Ah, well. I'm not such a good judge as you are, don't you see. I would rather have your opinion first."

"Sorry, old man," said Martindale hastily, as he slid for the train. "But I'm going to give up smoking New Year's, you see, and I sort of want to get before Christmas, watching a prosperous in training, you know; so I guess I'll father buying presents. Bigger and quit now."—Chicago Tribune.

"Money said the thoughtfully, "is made in cheap things. Trifles have laid the foundations for most of the great fortunes of to-day Young men who want to get rich should remember that. There is always a field for the resourceful man who will consent to give his attention to something short of the gigantic undertakings of the A patent corkscrew retailing for a dime has made more than a fortune.

"Possibly," suggested the ambitious youth, "you can tell me of some trifling need of the public which will give wealth

to the man who fills it."
"Easily," returned the philosopher. 'Just at this time the greatest need of greatest number appears to be a suitable Christmas present for a young lady that will cost not to exceed \$1.18. and that will look as if its purchase had left little out of a \$20 bill."-Chicago Evening Post.

Method in His Action.

"Why do you tramp through the parlor in those bright red carpet slippers every time I have a caller?" demanded the minister's wife

"My dear," he replied, "Christmas is coming, and I desire to impress the fact upon the feminine members of my congregation that I am well provided for in this respect."—Chicago Post.

The Merry Christmas Time. This is the season when a father has a ring engraved "Mary" for his daughter, and finds on Christmas that she is of-fended because he didn't remember her name is "Mae."—Atchison Globe.

No Use.

Mrs. Thirdly—None of the girls have volunteered to trim the church this Christmas.

Rev. Mr. Thirdly—Why not? "They are all engaged."—Life.

POWER OF A SONG.

come Famous in the History

Mr. Louis C. Elson in his book on the music of America recalls the tradition of the Marienlied as for centuries it has been sung at two o'clock on Christmas morning in Goldberg, Germany.

It was at the time of the "Black Death," in 1353. One of the greatest pestilences recorded in history had swept over every country in the Old World, claiming its dead by scores of thousands. Men fled in terror from their fellow men, in awful fear of their breath or touch, and for weeks susbeen the subject of rejoicing and of cele- tained a strange, weird seige in solitude. Neighbor turned against neigh-Families shut themselves up in Our tree, with its small candles, its their own houses, and denied entrance gilded knicknacks and toys for the to all outsiders, and as the pestilence children, is a direct descendant of this spread, members of the same family turned against one another. In their Traces of it exist in Iceland, where the terrible fear men became like wild bearts, refusing even the cup of cold water and the simplest service through dread of contamination.

So it continued until Christmas eve, when one man in Goldberg, believing himself the only inhabitant of the cit left alive, and feeling, perhaps, that life was not worth saving at the cost of such isolation, unbarred his door at dead of night and went forth into the air. Alone he stood in the midst of desolation, but the memories of the past thronged upon him. He knew that it was Christmas, and as he recalled other Christmases, with their sacred joys and their festivity, he lifted up his voice in the song:

"To us this day is born a Child, God with us! His mother is a virgin mild.

God with us:
Is mother is a virgin mild,
God with us!
Od with us! Against us who dare be?"
Through a barred door came another voice in response to his own, and then the door was flung wide, and a man joined him in the street and sang with him. Together they marched through the town, giving it its first audible

The song woke strange echoes. From their living tombs men, women and children came forth to the number of -all that were left of the town-and marching through the death-stricken streets, they sang with new courage: "God with us! Against us who dare

Whether it was that the plague had spent its violence, or, which is more probable, that the minds of the survivors were more serene, none of this little band died of the Black Death. They returned to their homes, buried their dead, and the town began to awake

No wonder that the incident was remembered, and that for centuries the people of the town continued to meet each Christmas eve at midnight, and at two o'clock marched through the streets singing the same old hymn.

The sublime assurance breathed in that song is what men need to make them brave when earthly joys fade. It lifts them back to the living world, and the sight of Heaven, when they have buried themselves in despair. In the darkest and most helpless hour the sense of the presence of God will wake a song the echoes of which come back to us in the new hope awakened in other lives .- Youth's Companion.

ACCEPTABLE GIFTS.

Make Christmas Purchases with a Desire to Please Those for Whom They Are Intended.

Nothing pleases people more than to feel that their special wants are recognized and have been remembered, and whether we spend ten cents or ten dollars, provided it be spent to please the other person, it will be most graciously received. If gifts be the result of our own handiwork, they can just as easily be welcome ones. There are so many acceptable articles which we can make that there need be no mistakes. Such gifts, however, should be prepared at one's leisure and not rushed through carelessly at the last moment. No woman is the better for physical overdoing, and especially at Christmas time should we feel ready for the pleasures of holiphilosopher, day time, rather than worn-out in preparing it. We save of our money often, in sacrificing our strength, and this is not only an injustice to ourselves, but to our families. Do what you can comfortably, and let the rest take care of Plan your work in season, use itself. your best judgment in accomplishing it, and then be in readiness for the spirit of Christmas.-Prairie Farmer.



Salesman-Toy drums, sir? Yes, sir, of the best sheepskin, that will last a

The Boy's Father-Have you some of less robust constitution, that won't last over Christmas?—Chicago Daily News.

For British Royalty. The first Christmas tree in a British royal palace was in the reign of George IV. Lord J. Russell was present and speaks of the tree being covered with

Rude Molly-You remind me of a

Christmas tree.
Dude Cholly—What kind of a one? "A spruce evergreen."-I.ife.

colored candles.

UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

Maiden Aunt Played the Part of Villain.

Scene-A parlor in a fashionable home. Everything on stage that can be borrowed from the upholsterers on the strength of a line in the programme: "Accessories rented from Varnish & Stuffers, the popular upholsterers."

Dramatis personae: Mr. Van Tucker. Miss Edythe Smithers.

A maiden aunt. Crutain raises, disclosing Mr. Van Tucker and Miss Shithers ensconced on Varnish & Stuffers' finest sofa. Mr. Van Tucker-Nice old custom, this

Christmas business. Don' y' think so? Edythe—Yes, indeed I do, Mr. Van Fucker. I love every one of the dear old



customs, and there isn't one single one Mr. Van Tucker (softly)—Every single

Edythe-Yes, every one, Mr. Van Tucker. Why not?
Mr. Van Tucker (still more softly)-

Even the one about the mistletoe Edythe (blushing)-Why, Mr. Van

Mr. Van Tucker (relentlessly)-There's a sprig of mistletoe hanging over this No, don't go. Remember what you said. O, you must. [A kiss.] There, you've kept your word. Miss Smithers-Mr. Van Tucker, you're

Enter the maiden aunt-Well, Edythe, I did the best I could in fixing up the room. I put the mistletoe right over the safa, where you wanted it so particularly

Edythe-Why, aunt! Mr. Van Tucker-Um-m. Curtain. -Chicago Daily News.

EUYING HIS GIRL A GIFT. How Ideas of the Young Man Change

as the Holiday Season Two young men, both of them be-

trothed, discussed over their frugal din-ner the gifts that they would give their girls at Christmas time. The season was early in November and one young man decided on a Swiss watch, the other on a ring of sapphires. Then they smiled happily, thinking how pleased their fianwould be with those costly remem. brances.

month passed, and last week they met again. The first, who is an illustrater, resumed the conversation where they had left off. "Don't you think," he asked, "that the work of one's own hands makes a more poetical gift than anything you buy in a shop? Don't you think that such a gift means more and touches more nearly the heart of the recipient?" The other answered: "Maybe so, but what of it?" "Well," the first resumed, "instead of giving my girl a watch I am going to make her a beautiful drawing. I'll do it in brown ink. The subject will be a maiden playing a lute, with a little dove on a great chair beside her listening. That, I am sure, will please her more than a commonplace, bought gift. Don't you think so?" The other smiled and said: "Of course,

you have no other motive than this for giving her a drawing instead of a watch?" 'Of course not, of course not " replied the other, and winked and then laughed

The President's Christmas Wagon loads of gifts are received at the white house at Christmas time. They

feebly.

come from all parts of the country, the majority of them from persons unknown to the president and his wife miscellaneous articles are the private property of the recipients, and the numerous parcels are placed in one of the family rooms for examination. They generally contain the names of the donors, and to all these notes of thanks are sent. On Christmas eve all the employes of the house-the clerical staff, the ushers and the domestic servants-are given, through the established munificence of the president, a fine fat turkey. Fifty fowls, selected from the

best in the market, are purchased for

this event, so that everybody about the

famous mansion has reason for rejoic-

ing.-Mary Nimmo Balentine, in Wom-

an's Home Companion. An Exploded Myth "Do your little ones believe in Santa

"No. They did till last Christmas when their papa played the part. I had the children in the hall and he was to come from upstairs with a lot of presents for them."

"Yes? "Well, we had the lights turned low and he thought he was down when he wasn't. They recognized his language.'
-Chicago Herald.

Not Easily Appeased. Ethel-Papa, why didn't Santa Claus bring me a pearl necklace? Her Papa-I suppose he hadn't enough to go round.

"Then why didn't he come here first."—Jewelers' Weekly.

THE PASSING YEARS.

Little Comedy Act in Which the Each One Brings a Betterment of Some Kind to All Mankind.

> The fugitive years follow each other on their appointed rounds. To some they come in too rapid succession—life and time are evanescent. In the thoughts and experience of others they drag tediously along and seem as if the end was infinite distances away.

In youth the years are too long. In age they are too short. At the beginning of the journey of life it seems as if it never would come to an end. Toward its close it seems as if the end would be reached far in advance of its established period.

But in reality time does not fly more rapidly for the old than it does for the your". Youth sees the end in the far distant r ve. Age sees it within a narrow vision. That is the sole difference of view in which the lapse of time is contemplated. These are obvious thoughts as we pass

the milestones of life. Each monument measuring the distance which we have traveled is also a monitor with its lessons and warnings—having a message of reproof or of consolation and hope as the judgment of time and events may distribute its awards.

They are timely thoughts as we pass from the jurisdiction of the old year to that of the new. As the closing year passes by to-

Join the years before the flood-its successor comes with its new tasks and trials, its missions of duty and its hopes of accomplishment. It is all before us. It has its labors and its rewards awaiting every day and every hour.

It is not necessary in order to gain the rewards of conscientious endeavor that the activities of life should be wearing and unintermittent. Readiness, willingness, the spirit to do and to suffer if necessary fulfill the demands of duty. As Mil-

They also serve who stand and wait. It is a subject for universal congratulation that each passing year brings bet-terment to mankind. The improvements which science and experiment have made the common property of the world are evidence that an ever-loving and benevolent Providence controls the events of our existence. Each passage of the earth hrough its orbit brings countless blessngs in human amelioration. The benefits of nature and progress descend ultimately upon all, like vernal showers and summer dews.

For every gift which the times and seasons bring we owe a constantly ac-jumulating debt of gratitude to the source whence all blessings flow. We may best pay our debt by the exercise of charity-by dividing with others more needy the bounty which we possess. This is the highest form of worship-

With soul as strong as a mountain river Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver. -Chicago Daily Chronicle.

RESOLUTIONS.

If We Keep All These We May Hope for the Coming of the Millennium.

Fellow-Citizens: Upon this, the birth of a new year, let us resolve: Never again to ask our wife what she did "with all that five dollars" we gave

her three months before; To own up, without equivocation, that

e were asleep in church; Not to attempt to eat the things that

we know do not agree with us;
To stop reading a paper that we do not like, instead of forever grumbling over

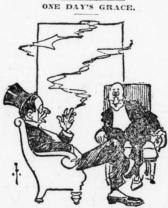
it; Not to complain about our neighbor's chickens, when our own dog runs loose; To respect our wife's opinion when it is contrary to ours;

To refrain from demanding, "What is

the matter with the dinner?" when, if we looked at the clock, we would see that it is not yet time for it: Not to deride ping-pong-and then adopt it:

Not to tell the president what he ought to do; To admit that other persons' motives are as good as ours:

Then to die right away quick, ere our



Dearborn-Going to receive callers on New Year's day at your house? -No; the bill collectors don't begin to get around till the 2d.—Chicago Daily News

Unalloyed Bliss.

"Aren't you going to wear that neck-tie I gave you on Christmas?" inquired Mr. Meekton's wife. "Of course, I am, Henrietta. I was

saving it up. I'm going to wear that red necktie and my nile green smoking jacket and my purple and yellow socks and smoke one of those birthday cigars you gave me, all at once."-Washington Star.

Hail and Farewell.

Good-by, old year, good-by-good-by!
For thee a tear and heartfelt sigh—
Howe'er the New Year work his will.
Thy gifts were good—we love thee still.
—Detroit Free Fress.

First Christmas Celebration. Christmas was first celebrated as feast of the Christian church about the

****** CHRISTMAS SENTIMENTS

By Charles Dickens.

Christmas time! That man must be a misanthrope, indeed, in whose breast something like a jovial feeling is not roused—in whose mind some pleasant associations are not awakened—by the recurrence of Christmas. by the recurrence of Christmas. by the recurrence of Christmas. There are few people who will tell you that Christmas is not to them what it used to be; that each succeeding Christmas has found some cherished hope or happy prospect of the year before, dimmed or passed away; that the present only serves to remind them of reduced circumstances and straitened incomes —of the feasts they once bestowed on hollow friends, and of the cold looks that meet them of the cold looks that meet them now, in adversity and misfor-tune.

Never heed such dismal rem-Never need such dismal rem-iniscences. There are few men who have lived long enough in the world, who cannot call up such thoughts any day in the year. Then do not select the merriest of the three hundred and sixthere and sixty-five, but draw your chair nearer the blazing fire, and thank God it's no worse. Our life on it, but your Christmas shall be merry, and your mas shall be merry, and your New Year a happy one.

By Charles Dudley Warner. It is impossible to conceive of place of Christmas, nor, indeed, would it seem that human wit could invent another so adapted to humanity. The obvious intention of it is to bring together, for a season at least, all men in the exercise. er, for a season at least, all men in the exercise of a common charity and a feeling of good will, the poor and the rich, the successful and the unfortunate, that all the world may feel that in the time called the truce of God the thing common to all men is the best thing in life.

By Hamilton W. Mabie. He who does not see in the legend of Santa Claus a beautiful faith on one side and the naive embodiment of a divine fact on the other is no: fit to have a place at the Christmas board. For him there should be neither carol nor holly nor mis-tletoe; they only shall keep the feast to whom all those things are but the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual

By Matthew Henry.

We put ourselves in the way of divine visits, when we employ ourselves in honest business. Tidings of Christ's birth were brought to the shepherds. when they were keeping their

By Margaret Fuller Ossili. If ever there was an occasion when the arts could become all but omnipotent in the service of but omnipotent in the service of a holy thought it is this of the birth of the child Jesus.

By Edward Everett. May this hallowed and gra-cious time diffuse its innocent cheer through every family cir-

and scatter its bounties largely among the children of By George Macdonald,

My heart was glad that Christ-mas eve—just as if the Babe as eve—just is it the bane of been coming again to us the same night. And is He not always coming to us afresh in every chamine feeling that awakes in the hearts of His peo

\$000**000000000000000000000** A NEW ORLEANS CHRISTMAS.

It Is a Veritable Fourth of July Celes bration in That City of the South.

"The days preceding Christmas are punctuated at intervals with the sharp tones of firecrackers, merely to keep the world from forgetting that Christmas is almost at hand," writes Julia Truitt Bishop of "Where Christmas is Like halo becomes tarnished.—Edwin L. Sa-bin, in Puck.

Bishop of Unity descriptive of Christ-mas scenes and customs in New Orleans, in the Ladies' Home Journal. "One firecracker at a time is set off, for it is sinfub to waste a whole bunch at once until Christmas eve. Every night the tumult increases, a kind of jubilant applause in mild explosives, a mere intimation of what is coming later. Every, business house which can under pretense 'handle' fireworks, handles them by the ton. Even the windows of the grocery stores are filled with them, for the grocer has recognized that there are people in New Orleans who may dispense with roast turkey stuffed with truffles, but nobody can do without fireworks. There are hundreds of children who never hang up a stocking, but every one of them would think the world was coming to an end if there were no fireworks for him on the one night of all the

Friendly Advice. "Yes," said the fairy prince, "you may have whatever you want for a

Christmas present.' "I will choose," said the fortunate person, "either a wife or an automo-

"How foolish!" exclaimed the fairy prince. "Why do you not selec thing that you can manage?"-Baltimore American.

Aunt Mae-What are you crying for,

Little Johnny-I belong to two Sunday schools and they are both going to have their Christmas trees on the same night .- N. Y. Truth

The Christmas Turkey

Never buy a yellow-fleshed turkey. It is a sign of poor feeding. A fine turkey, should have firm, white flesh. Purchasers should also notice that redness and coarseness about the legs are the sign of an old bird.