

**KEEPING CHRISTMAS**

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.



**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 father buying presents. Bigger and bigger the boy's eyes grew as the purchasing went on. Finally, when it was all over and the man left the store, the lad sidled up to him and with great diffidence said:

**ORIGIN OF CHRISTMAS TREE.**

It is a Belle of the Sun-Worship of the 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 tree as a crowning feature is observed among many heathen nations, and that it comes from sun-worship, which is older than history.

**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 and something really funny?"

**POWER OF A SONG.**

A Christmas Eve Chorus That Has Become Famous in the History of the World.

Mr. Louis C. Elson in his book on the music of America recalls the tradition of the Marienlied for as 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.

**UNDER THE MISTLETOE.**

A Little Comedy Act in Which the 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."

**THE PASSING YEARS.**

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 were infinite distances away.



Edythe—Yes, indeed I do, Mr. Van Tucker. I love every one of the dear old customs, and there isn't one single one that I do not religiously obey. Mr. Van Tucker (softly)—Every single one? 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 Tucker!

**BUYING HIS GIRL A GIFT.**

How Ideas of the Young Man Change as the Holiday Season Approaches.

Two young men, both of them betrothed, discussed over their frugal dinner 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 fiancées would be with those costly remembrances.

**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 is 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.

**KIND HE WANTED.**

Salesman—Toy drums, sir? Yes, sir, of the best sheepskin, that will last a year. The Boy's Father—Have you some of less robust constitution, that won't last over Christmas?—Chicago Daily News.

**THE PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS.**

Wagon loads of gifts are received at the white house at Christmas time. They come from all parts of the country, the majority of them from persons unknown to the president and his wife. These 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 rejoicing.—Mary Nimmo Balentine, in Woman's Home Companion.

**AN EXPLODED MYTH.**

"Do your little ones believe in Santa Claus?" "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."

**NOT EASILY APPEALED.**

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.

**CHRISTMAS SENTIMENTS.**

By Charles Dickens.

Christmas time! That man must be a misanthrope, indeed, in whose breast is not roused a jovial feeling is not roused—in whose mind some pleasant associations are not awakened—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 now, in adversity and misfortune.

**By Charles Dudley Warner.**

It is impossible to conceive of any holiday that could take the 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 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 tree 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 emodiment of a divine fact on the other is not fit to have a place at the Christmas board. For him there should be neither carol nor holly nor mistletoe; they only shall keep the feast to whom all these things are but the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace.

**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 flocks.

**By Margaret Fuller Ossoli.**

If ever there was an occasion when the arts could become all 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 gracious time diffuse its innocent cheer through every family circle, and scatter its bounties largely among the children of want!

**By George Macdonald.**

My heart was glad that Christmas eve—just as if the Babe had been coming again to us the same night. And is He not always coming to us afresh in every change of feeling that awakes in the hearts of His people?

**A NEW ORLEANS CHRISTMAS.**

It is a Veritable Fourth of July Celebration 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 Tritt Bishop of "Where Christmas is Like Fourth of July," descriptive of Christmas scenes and customs in New Orleans, in the Ladies' Home Journal. "One firecracker at a time is set off, for it is sinful 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 any 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 year."

**ONE DAY'S GRACE.**

Dearborn—Going to receive callers on New Year's day at your house? La Salle—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 necktie 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 blue and yellow socks, and smoke one of those birthday cigars you gave me, all at once."—Washington Star.

**HALL AND FAREWELL.**

Good-by, old year, good-by—good-by! For thee a tear and heart-felt sigh— However the New Year work his will, Thy gifts were good—we love thee still. —Detroit Free Press.

**FIRST CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION.**

Christmas was first celebrated as a feast of the Christian church about the year 190 A. D.



**HE WAS.**

Rude Molly—You remind me of a Christmas tree. Dude Cholly—What kind of a one? "A spruce evergreen."—Life.

**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 colored candles.

**NO USE.**

Mrs. Thrdly—None of the girls have volunteered to trim the church this Christmas. Rev. Mr. Thrdly—Why not? "They are all engaged."—Life.

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 we 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 halo becomes tarnished.—Edwin L. Sabin, in Puck.