

## IN THE DAYS OF '64.

The Last Christmas of the Southern Confederacy.

"We had some memorable Christmas days in the south during the war," said Mrs. Zebulon B. Vance, wife of the late United States senator from North Carolina. "That of 1861 was different from any that had preceded it because we were in arms against the Federal government, and many of the male guests at southern homes that day wore Confederate uniforms. Much of the talk at the Christmas dinner table was of sieges and battles and marches, but we were all full of hope and confidence.

"Christmas, 1862, found us but poorly prepared to celebrate it. Our supplies were few, and Confederate money was at a heavy discount. Then came the bitter year of 1863, with the fall of Vicksburg and the defeat at Gettysburg. With sad faces, harmonizing well with their dresses of coarse black stuff, the women of the south devoted themselves to picking lint and spinning and weaving for husbands, fathers, brothers and sweethearts in the field.

"Christmas, 1864—the last Christmas of the war—dawned, and what a gloomy festival it was for the people of the south! Of manufactured products we had practically none. Our hairpins were made of long black thorns, with a ball of sealing wax on the end. We had made into dresses every scrap of available material, while our feet were incased in homemade cloth shoes. The slaves, having heard of 'de emancipation proclamation,' knew that they were free and had all scattered away. Desolation seemed to reign over everything. Of all the Christmas days I have known that last Christmas in the south in wartime is the one of all others that I am most certain never to forget."—Pittsburg Dispatch.

## CANADA'S CHRISTMAS STAMP.

The Only Known Postal Memorial of the December Holiday.

Stamp collectors say that the greatest Christmas gift ever made was a postage stamp of the value of 2 cents. On Christmas, 1898, Great Britain presented to all her thirty-seven colonies a Christmas gift in the form of two cent letter postage in place of the rate of 5 cents, which for decades had existed.

In honor of this event Canada placed on sale on Christmas morning, 1898, a Christmas postage stamp, the only stamp of the kind ever issued by any country. In many respects it is unique among all postage stamps.

It was larger than our Columbian stamps and showed a map of the world with the possessions of the British empire printed in bright scarlet. The oceans appeared in a bluish green and the frame of the design in black.

Across the top was the inscription "Canada Postage," with a crown resting on laurel leaves tucked in between the words. At the extreme lower part of the design is the declaration, "We hold a vaster empire than has been," above this, "Xmas, 1898," and a figure "2" in each lower corner.

It is worthy of note that this Canadian stamp was printed by a bank note company in the United States. It marked a new epoch in stamp production, having three colors. Bicolor stamps are not uncommon, but up to that time no country had ever attempted a three color stamp.

This Christmas stamp was probably the most expensive ever issued, costing the Canadian government four times as much as the ordinary single color stamp. Although issued on Christmas, 1898, the stamp's availability for postage uses is unlimited.—New York Herald.

## Her Little Prayer.

Former Comptroller Edward M. Grout of New York city tells a pretty little Christmas story.

He said that a little girl relative of his was visiting her grandmother on Thanksgiving day. Already the child had begun to speculate on what Santa Claus was to bring her at Christmas time, and, as children—especially girls—will do when they are at the home of an indulgent friend, she began to rummage through closets and drawers.

In the course of her investigation she came upon a brand new white muff. It was the very thing she had wanted, and she knew that Santa Claus' chief purchasing agent—grandma—had obtained it for her.

Taxed with it, grandma admitted the truth.

"But," she said, "you must forget all about it until Christmas day."

That night as she was being put to bed the child astonished her mother by adding this to her evening prayer:

"Please, God, make me forget all about the little white muff Santa Claus is to bring."—New York Times.

## Strange Christmas Superstition.

In north Germany a person must not spin during the twelve nights of Christmas lest he or she should walk after death, nor after sunset on Saturday, for then mice will eat the work. If it is desired to have money and luck all the year round, one must not fall to eat herrings on New Year's day, nor if you wish to be lucky must you rock an empty cradle or spill salt wantonly or cross knives or point at the stars. If a dirty cloth is left on the table over Christmas night it will make the angels weep, if you point upward to the rainbow it will make the angels' feet bleed, and if you talk of cabbages while looking at the moon you will hurt the feelings of the man in it.—Tit-Bits.

## In Saxon Times.

In Norman and Saxon times an ox was always roasted whole over the Yule log at Christmas.

## Miss Ackermann's Christmas.

By Mrs. MOSES P. HANDY.

MISS ACKERMANN opened her eyes to the sunshine with a startled feeling of having overslept herself, then closed them again at the sound of the chimes from the church around the corner, for it was Christmas day, the one day, barring Sundays, in the year which she could really and truly call her own. She was that overworked individual, a popular dressmaker, going out by the day, and she sometimes wished, with E. P. Roe's old doctor, that people would send for somebody else sometimes and let her rest. On the last Fourth of July she had been in the country sewing for dear life in order to finish a belated bridal trousseau, and on Thanksgiving she had worked until dark to accommodate a customer who wished to outshine her sisters-in-law at a family gathering at the house of her husband's father, but on Christmas day not even the most exacting customer could ask her services.

And yet—was she glad it was Christmas? The associations which cluster around the season make it a sorrowful one to those who have nothing left of some of their memories, and, saving for one brother, Miss Ackermann was alone in the world.

Really, Miss Ackermann told herself, she had no business to be low spirited; she was a very fortunate person; think how many people were starving for lack of work, and all that, she concluded vaguely as she finished her breakfast, heating the water on a small gas stove, was excellent. She was finicky



SHE FOUND HERSELF FACE TO FACE WITH A BRONZED AND BEARDED MAN.

about tea, and she felt better after drinking it. Altogether she was in quite a cheerful mood when the little daughter of her landlord came to wish her a merry Christmas and bring an invitation from her mother to eat her Christmas dinner with them. Dinner would be at half past 2. Miss Ackermann thanked them very much and would dine with them with pleasure. Then she gave the little girl the present she had ready for her, a stylish young lady doll dressed in the latest fashion, with coat and hat complete, a gift which made its recipient radiant, and sent her off to exhibit it at once.

The sermon "God's Christmas Gifts," from the text "Wait upon the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart," made her homesick again, the desire of her heart seemed so exceedingly far off. Miss Ackermann was not one of those who forget, hard as she had tried not to remember. She found her thought straying back ten years to the seaside, to her old home and Jack. Their parents were neighbors. Her father and mother lived in the little fishing town and took boarders in the season. His father was the farmer who supplied them with vegetables and fruit. Jack drove the wagon which brought the daily supply to the cottages. They would have known each other in any case, but the morning interviews over lettuce and strawberries, melons and tomatoes brought them closer together.

Every one approved of their engagement, and the day was set, when a great misfortune happened—her mother and oldest sister were killed in a buggy which they were driving by a train at a railroad crossing. This was bad enough surely, but "troubles hunt in couples," and the blow seemed to affect her father's mind. He became almost childish, took to his bed and would have no one but her wait upon him. To complete the roll of disaster her brother suddenly brought home as his wife a girl whom none of his friends would have chosen, and the old man would not let his daughter-in-law come near him. To tell the truth, she had no desire to help Miss Ackermann in her duties. She had married for a step up and said plainly that she did not mean to slave to please anybody.

"You see how it is, Jack," Miss Ackermann said, with streaming eyes. "I cannot leave father, even for you."

"Bring him to our house with you," replied Jack. "There is plenty of room, and father and mother won't mind."

"No, Jack; thanks ever so much, but that wouldn't do any good. Father

wouldn't be satisfied. Besides, he takes up so much of my time that I couldn't do my duty by you." And Jack had to submit with the best grace he could muster.

Unfortunately he consulted the doctor who attended Mr. Ackermann as to the probable duration of the old man's illness.

The doctor assured him that the trouble was chiefly hypochondria and that he might live for years in the same state or might possibly recover as suddenly as he had collapsed. At all events the patient was in no immediate danger.

The inquiry would have done no harm had it not been that the doctor had a talking wife, to whom he told everything, so before long the whole neighborhood was saying that Jack Ralston had been asking how long old man Ackermann could live. Of course the story came to Miss Ackermann's ears, to her intense indignation and still greater grief. Jack could not deny it in toto, and short of positive denial she would listen to no explanation. There was a quarrel, a broken engagement, and Jack Ralston went west, leaving his sweetheart well nigh broken hearted, with only duty to console her, and sometimes duty is the best consolation one can have.

If he had been less impatient there would have been no trouble. Dr. Bland did not understand the effect which a broken heart sometimes produces upon the body. Mr. Ackermann died before the winter was over. Jack Ralston came home as soon as he heard the news, but Miss Ackermann had gone to the city with a cousin of her mother and was obdurate. Her filial affection found satisfaction in refusing to forgive the lover who had desired her father's death. She would not even see him, and so the affair ended.

Well, it was too late now, and she was a fool to be dreaming of it. The sermon was ended, and the music of the organ roused her to the consciousness of things present and to come. She took part with the congregation in the rest of the service and then hurried home to make a hasty toilet for dinner.

There was only a quiet family gathering. The fiancée of the oldest daughter, a traveling salesman in the employ of a wholesale house, was the life of the party. He was considered a very bright young man and a good talker. He was at his best today and kept them all amused with stories of his travels, so that Miss Ackermann had only to listen with a semblance of interest.

"By the way, Miss Ackermann," he said presently, "I met an old friend of yours on this last trip. Ralston was the name—J. W. Ralston. It was in Idaho, Boise City. He is doing well in mines out there and is quite chummy with one of my best customers, who has some money in his business. The two were together at my rooms in the hotel, and he saw Min's picture on the bureau. I always carry it around to keep me out of temptation—guardian angel business, you know, Min—and he saw it. You know people say you two look alike, and the likeness comes out strong in that photo. It struck him all of a heap. 'Excuse me,' he said, 'but will you tell me whose picture that is? It looks very much like some one I knew ten years ago.'"

"Certainly," said I. "That is my best girl. She is thought very much like a lady who lives in the same house, Miss Ackermann, from New Jersey." Well, it turned out to be the very same. He asked lots of questions about you, especially whether you were married. I gave you a good character, and I guess you'll be hearing from him before long. Ross says he is a bachelor."

Miss Ackermann controlled herself sufficiently to smile. "Thank you, we were friends and neighbors when I was a girl," she replied, and in a moment more they were all laughing at a comical anecdote which the drummer was telling in his best style. It was no wonder he sold goods.

When the dinner was over the hostess excused herself soon upon the plea of domestic duties, leaving Miss Ackermann with the young people. So, knowing herself in the way, she lingered but a few minutes. Back in her room she gave way and took refuge in that last solace of her sex, a good cry. Her overworked nerves demanded relief and would not be denied.

She was still huddled, a disconsolate heap, on the lounge when there came a tap at the door which she recognized as that of her little friend. She sat up and hurriedly straightened her hair, trusting that in the dim light of the fast falling twilight the child would notice nothing amiss, sharp as she was. "Come in," she called as the knock was repeated.

"Here's a gentleman to see you," the child said, with the air of a person who confers a favor. "He says he is an old friend, so I brought him right up." Miss Ackermann remembered that, it being Christmas day, the maid would be out and that consequently the little girl would answer the door.

"Thank you," she said, "you may go." Then she found herself face to face with a bronzed and bearded man whose eyes only were familiar.

"Well, Annie," he said in a voice she knew so well, "here I am once more." She held out both hands with an eager gesture. "Oh, Jack, Jack!" she cried.

A moment more and she was sobbing on his shoulder while his arms held her as though they would never let go.

## An English Superstition.

The most popular superstition in many parts of England is that every remnant of Christmas decoration must be removed before Candlemas day. Should a sprig of holly or other evergreen be left in any house one of its occupants will die within the year.

## What Grandpa Knows.

SOME folks say 'at Red Riding Hood She didn't live at all nor go Down where th' wolf was in 'at wood. But grampa says 'at it is so! An' some folks say 'at Goldilocks Don't meet th' bears an' run away, A-bumpin' into trees an' rocks, But grampa's seen her many a day.

My grampa takes me on his knee An' tells me all 'bout Puss in Boots 'bout th' fairies you can't see For their in-vis—their funny suits. An' he knows where the beanstalk is 'At Jack th' Giant Killer climb To get 'at gold an' things o' his, 'Cause grampa's seen it many a time.

An' Cinderella, too, my pa 'st laugh an' say 'at he don't know, But grampa—w-y, my grampa saw Her slip 'at slipper on her toe! An' Simple Simon—would you think He never was like some folks say? But grampa only laugh an' wink, 'Cause he has seen him many a day.



CAUSE GRAMPA'S SEEN IT MANY A TIME.

'At Alferd Brown, 'at lives nex' door To us, I don't like him, 'hcause He say 'at he don't think no more 'At there can be a Santa Claus, But grampa whisper in my ear 'At Santa will find me all right, 'Cause he has seen his sleigh an' deer An' pack o' playthings many a night.

My grampa know Boy Blue an' all Th' children 'at live in th' shoe. When Humpty Dumpty had 'at fall He's standin' close as me an' you! An he say ist to don't believe Th' folks 'at say there ain't no chime O' reindeer bells on Christmas eve, 'Cause he has heard 'em many a time. —Chicago Tribune.

## THE PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS

How the Big and Little Roosevelts Celebrated Last Year.

President and Mrs. Roosevelt had only the immediate members of their family to celebrate Christmas. Just before going to bed on Christmas eve the children hung their stockings in the president's room, and bright and early the next morning they were up to claim their prizes. Everything that was ever designed for a Christmas stocking found a place in the line that hung from the mantel, and when the boys awakened there was a merry scramble to see just what was inside.

After breakfast the president, Mrs. Roosevelt and the children went to the library to exchange presents too big for the stocking.

Each member of the family had a special corner for his or her gifts, and there were any number of mysterious little parcels to be opened. This very pleasant little ceremony took the entire morning.

After this the president walked to his church, Grace Reformed, and the rest of the family went to St. John's Episcopal church.

In the afternoon the president, Mrs. Roosevelt and the children went over to the home of Captain and Mrs. William Sheffield Cowles, where they always spend Christmas afternoon and where there is always a tree for the Roosevelt and Cowles children. They were joined there by Representative and Mrs. Nicholas Longworth, and a little family reunion was held.

After the visit to the Cowles' the president played tennis with his sons. At night was given the Christmas dinner in the private dining room. Among the few invited guests were Senator Lodge, Dr. Rixey and family and Mr. and Mrs. Longworth. The string section of the Marine band furnished the music for the evening.

## From the Yuletide Cynic.

Thank heaven, it isn't only the aristocrat who can have a family tree at Christmas.

Be Christmas white or Christmas green, It's all the same to you If Christmas finds you all serene And doesn't make you blue.

It doesn't take a magician to transform a small boy into a turkey gobler.

When Santa Claus comes down the chimney he chases many a man up the spout.

It's the vanity of the sex that prompts the female turkey to wonder how she is going to be dressed for the Christmas dinner.

## QUEER CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

Some of the Things Found by the British Dead Letter Office.

During the ten days preceding Christmas about 190,000 parcels are handled every twenty-four hours by British postoffice officials, or approximately 1,750,000 for the entire ten days during which the rush lasts.

The contents of many of the parcels are, to say the least, somewhat curious, says the Pictorial Magazine. A hamper of live leeches, for instance, seems a strange sort of Christmas gift. So does an artificial leg. Yet both of these were among the parcels "treated" last Christmas. Another long coffin shaped box excited suspicion on account of the odor emanating therefrom. On opening it, however, nothing more dreadful was found than a young alligator in a dormant condition. Another evil smelling hamper was found to contain no fewer than 300 dead mice, while yet a third inclosed a defunct puppy consigned for postmortem purposes to an eminent surgeon.

Christmas presents of live animals are constantly being sent through the post notwithstanding the fact that the practice is strictly prohibited. Pigeons, rabbits, white mice, rats, ferrets, silk-worms, lizards, snakes, guinea pigs and even on one occasion a pet lamb have all been dealt with at some period or other.

No longer ago than last Christmas eve a box was intercepted containing 150 live frogs, and a short time before twelve healthy young adders were discovered in an innocent looking hamper which was supposed to contain poultry.

Some of the inclosures are decidedly sarcastic. Of this class was a two foot long cane bearing the indorsement: "A Christmas present for Johnny. For outward application only. To be well rubbed in."

## KING HEROD'S ROOSTER.

The Legend of St. Stephen, First of the Noble Army of Martyrs.

Ever since that first Christmas eve the cock has crowed all night long on the anniversary to keep away evil spirits, for the cock is a holy bird and a knowing one. There is a pleasant tale of him and St. Stephen, the first martyr, whose day is Dec. 26, close by his dear Lord's.

St. Stephen was King Herod's steward, it seems, who served him in the kitchen and at table. One night as he was bringing in the boar's head for his master's dinner he saw the star shining over Bethlehem. Immediately he set down the huge platter and exclaimed:

"No longer, Herod, will I be thy servant, for a greater King than thou is born."

"What aileth thee?" cried the king wrathfully. "Do you lack meat or drink that you would desert my service for another's?"

"Nay," answered Stephen; "I lack neither meat nor drink, but the Child that is born this night is greater than all of us, and him only will I serve."

"That is as true," quoth Herod, smiting the table with his fist, "as that this roast cock on the platter shall crow before us."

Hardly were the words out of his mouth when the cock stretched his neck and crowed lustily, "Christus natus est!" At this proof that Stephen's words were true Herod was so angry that he made his soldiers take Stephen outside the walls of Jerusalem and reason him to death. And this is the reason why unto this day St. Stephen is the patron of stonecutters.—Abbie Farwell Brown in Lippincott's Magazine.

## THE NEWSBOYS' PIE.

It Took Man Who Looked Like Bingham to Find It.

Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! Two hundred and fifty pairs of little feet, keeping step, are marching to dinner in the New York newsboys' lodging house. Five hundred pairs more are restlessly awaiting their turn upstairs. In prison, hospital and almshouse the great city is host and gives of her plenty. Here an unknown friend has spread a generous repast for the waifs who all the rest of the days shift for themselves as best they can—turkey, coffee and pie, with vegetables to fill in. As the file of eagle eyed youngsters passes down the long tables there are swift movements of grimy hands, and shirt waists bulge, ragged coats sag at the pockets. Hardly is the file seated when the plaint rises: "I ain't got no pie! It got swiped on me!" Seven despoiled ones hold up their hands.

The superintendent laughs—it is Christmas eve. He taps one tentatively on the bulging shirt. "What have you here, my lad?"

"Me pie," responds he, with an innocent look. "I was scart it would get stole."

A little fellow who has been eying one of the visitors attentively takes his knife out of his mouth and points it at him with conviction.

"I know you," he pipes. "You're a p'lice commissioner. I seen yer picture in the papers. You're Bingham!"

The clatter of knives and forks ceases suddenly. Seven pies creep stealthily over the edge of the table and are replaced on as many plates. The visitors laugh. It was a case of mistaken identity.—Century.

## Where Bells Ring Underground.

Near Raleigh, in Nottinghamshire, England, there is a valley said to have been caused by an earthquake several hundreds of years ago, and it is now usual on Christmas morning for old men and women to tell their children and young friends to go to the valley, stoop down and hear the bells ringing merrily in the ruins of the church under the ground.—Tit-Bits.

## Christmas on Taft's Ranch.

SECRETARY OF WAR TAFT is part owner of one of the largest ranches in Texas, the Coleman-Fulton ranch, so called, a 175,000-acre "farm" eleven miles from Corpus Christi on the San Antonio and Aransas Pass railroad. One hundred men are always and 250 men sometimes employed on it.

"I was so fortunate as to have the pleasure of seeing a unique Christmas tree on this ranch," writes Mary Ellice Muncey in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. "Christmas morning, though warm, was foggy, and a slow rain fell, but by 12 o'clock the sun came out, and the people at the ranch house began to make their preparations. Ever since early morning the employees from the different farms had been coming in. All kinds of vehicles were pressed into service. Some came on horseback and some on foot. There were many children.

"I saw what I had never seen before, a growing Christmas tree. Just in front of the house was a large mul-



"I SAW WHAT I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE, A GROWING CHRISTMAS TREE."

berry tree. The ladies of the house came out about 2 o'clock and decorated the tree, with the assistance of some of the men. Even the men required stepladders to reach the topmost boughs. First, the ladies gave them some artificial icicles, which they hung on the branches in great profusion. As the sun was shining brightly by this time, it gave the icicles a very glittering appearance, and the wind commencing to blow, shook them gently, making the illusion more perfect. Then long bright ribbons of many colors were suspended from the topmost limbs and fruit and candies tied on with ribbons of the same color—oranges with orange ribbon, apples with red ribbon, limes with green ribbon, etc. Small toys were suspended from the tree; large ones were at the base. It presented a very gorgeous spectacle and the sight of the happy children that surrounded it made one wish to be a child again to enjoy it to the utmost. But the best was yet to come.

"In the front yard were the presents intended for the grown people, and each man received one. One was a fine surrey. Five were each given fifty and seventy-five dollar saddles. Several married men got handsome metal beds, with springs and mattresses. Twenty or thirty fine hats, costing \$7 apiece, were distributed and many other articles, all the best of their kind. I saw a young man who received an all leather suit case. This last item may seem strange on a ranch but there are many polished gentlemen among the employees who would consider suit cases very necessary should they have occasion to visit the city.

"All this while music was to be heard from a band stationed on the front porch, where many of the visitors were seated. After the Santa Claus of the Christmas tree had retired and the presents to the grownups had been distributed all repaired to the porch and front yard to see again the gleeful children and the tree, and surely it was a thing of beauty and, with its fruits and flowers, looked as though it had been transplanted from fairyland.

"The people that came from a distance departed before nightfall, but those that lived near by remained for an evening of music and good cheer and thus ended a happy Christmas day."

## "The Queen's Christmas Card."

Queen Alexandra has not given up her interest in behalf of the unemployed. Last Christmas she sanctioned a unique plan to raise more funds for them. This was in the shape of the issue of a Christmas book, consisting of poems, stories, sketches, drawings and music, which was entitled "The Queen's Christmas Card." Algernon Charles Swinburne, Alfred Austin, the poet laureate; Thomas Hardy, Marie Corelli, Hall Caine, George Meredith, Arthur Wing Pinero, Sir Laurence Alma-Tadema, Edwin A. Abbey, William Holman Hunt, Sir Edward John Poynter and Sir Edward Elgar are among the host of those who contributed. The production of the book was practically gratuitous. It sold for half a crown, and the proceeds were devoted to the queen's unemployed fund.