

# AYULETIDE REVERIE

The following poem is a most remarkable compilation of lines from the writings of various authors woven into a Christmas reverie. The author is said to be Mr. Anselm Everhard of London, England, who composed it many years ago. The name of each author is given.

## B. C. OUT OF DARKNESS

A passing gleam (called life) is o'er us thrown,  
It glimmers like a meteor and is gone.  
What do we mortals by existence gain?  
A drop of pleasure in a sea of pain?  
Who breathes must suffer and who thinks must mourn.  
The human race are sons of sorrow born.  
Born to be ploughed with years, and sown with cares.  
Nursed with vain hope, and fed with doubtful fears.  
Tired of beliefs, we dread to live without.  
Yet who knows most, the more he knows to doubt.  
Nor is a true soul ever born for naught.  
Yet millions never think a noble thought.  
'Tis not in mortals to command success,  
And endless toil brings naught but bitterness.  
To-morrow's sun to thee may never rise,  
The flower that smiles to-day to-morrow dies.  
Alas, what stay is there in human state?  
Man yields to custom as he bows to fate.  
Year chases year, decay pursues decay.  
Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day.  
Hail! Sacred dawn of glorious liberty,  
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee.  
This day is born a savior, Christ the Lord,  
And man redeemed to Paradise restored.  
Oh, holy trust! Oh, endless sense of rest!  
Transcendent born to weary hearts oppressed,  
Enriching all the common things of life,  
Our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife.  
Hope springs eternal in the human breast,  
And faith reveals a life divinely blest.  
Good actions crown themselves with lasting days,  
And God fulfills Himself in many ways.  
Time well employed is Satan's deadliest foe,  
And happiness oft comes from seeming woe.  
Life's mysteries deep hid, elude our sight,  
One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.  
Something remains for us to do or dare,  
Emboldened Faith will counteract despair.  
Life is not shadow but a promise given,  
Of change from woe to joy, from earth to Heaven.

# WHEN THE EMBER BLAZE AGAIN

By RON WILLIAM

BEFORE the fading embers of a grate fire, Parrish Morton sat alone. Outside, the snow was falling in nebulous, transcendent beauty, clinging to the coats of merry makers on their way to Christmas eve festivities and swathing all in a filmy scarf of white. Chimes of distant bells proclaiming "Peace on earth, good will to men," distilled their euphony across the glistening night—but Parrish, in the brooding shadows of his bachelor home, paid no heed. What did Christmas eve mean to him—to him whom the God of Plenty had given money and fame, the plaudits of his fellows, and all else loved by a man with but the frost-marks of time at his temple—and having given these, had passed to him the sparkling shell of the champagne of love only to dash it with a leer of derision at his feet? Of what use were the riches and the approval of the world? How could vain pomp and popular praise make up for the loss of that which every good man craves—love, a pure woman and the thousand incentives that have their awakening beside the towhead's crib and in that holy hour when tousled curls lay lightly on a father's breast?

And all the Christmas eves to come! How cheerless and how lonely they would be with Verona gone—Verona who had come to him from the death-bed of a strangely beautiful woman in New Mexico.

He was searching for color in the hills when he stumbled upon the scene—the stranded wagon in the foothills, the mother upon whose face was the pallor of death, the stunned, half-realizing child with the glorious golden hair and the lips like twin cherries. With her last breath the grief-stricken mother told brokenly of a husband who had died en route, of their efforts to make Los Vegas, how the son had gone on ahead for the doctor, and how in despair she had waited and waited his return. That night just as the great, pitiless black-

his return, she had written him that she had made plans for Christmas that might detain her at Sussex, but she wished him a very merry Christmas, wished that he might find his heart filled with joy at again being beneath the old roof-tree, wished that this Christmas might be the happiest of all the Christmases he had ever experienced, and lastly assured him that she was sending him a memento of the season, which she hoped he would cherish and love for her sake.

Parrish Morton repeated the words sadly: "For her sake! Ah, for her sake!" If she but knew what he would do for her sake, were it possible! But, no, she was not for him. The violet and the cosmos are incongruous. Youth and late summer are not born to trip hand in hand across the fields Elysian into Agapezone.

The bell rang sharply. He heard Phipps' soft tread upon the stairs, and listened. Yes, it was she. There was no mistaking the rippling cadence of that sweet-throated bird of passage. Turning, he pressed a button and the room was sparkling with light. At the top of the stair he stood hesitating, striving to gain control of himself. At the foot, she paused, made him a mock "courtesy" and held out her arms: "Oh, Par., dear old Par., I have brought you your Christmas present instead!"

The attitude, the look in her eyes, the irresistible enchantment of her beauty flooded him with impelling power. What did she mean? Was it herself she was offering? For a brief moment he stood swaying to the mighty impulse within him. Standing stupefied there, he remembered, as she bounded toward him! He must not—he could not—

And then, as he was about to sweep aside all the positiveness of his duty, all the negatives and forbearances and give free impulse to his heart, there came a step behind her. She heard and turning as she was about to enter the yearning haven of his eager arms, cried:

"Oh, pardon me, Mr. Morton, let me introduce Marshall Marriott. He—"

Suddenly the stairs went black before him. He realized now! She was bringing him a Christmas surprise, the man she loved, the— Somehow he managed to greet the stalwart young fellow with the frank eyes. In a maze of conflicting pain and surprise he did the duties of a host, and when Verona and her escort had been shown to their rooms to dress, he slipped into the den and cast himself into the great arm chair before the pulseless coals of the fireplace.

"Lost! Lost!" kept ringing in his ears, and with a groan of anguish he once more buried his face in his hands and gave way to a man's grief. In vain he tried to reason with himself that it were better so. He should not have expected or even dared to think it might have been otherwise. He was too old for her. She was sunshine, he was the somber cloud—but, oh, how he loved her! And for the moment he had thought she meant to give herself. The misery of it all! The heartache of it!

Suddenly, behind him he heard a rustle, the frou-frou of a woman's gown, and over the side of his great chair a warm arm stole softly against his neck.

"Oh, Par., what is it, dear? What have I done? What—"

Instinctively in the darkness he felt the frightened rabbit look, the appealing gaze. Summoning all his reserve strength, he said, with scarcely a tremor in his voice:

"Nothing dear, nothing to offend. I am glad—glad—for you, if he is worthy. If—"

"If—if—he is worthy—oh, you goose, I see it all now!" In a flash she threw her arms about his neck. Her face was close to his. How soft and warm and soothing her flesh was! "He—he is my brother, lost that day in the foothills of New Mexico. I—I have just found him. I—thought you would be glad—I wanted to surprise you—I—I—don't you want your Christmas present?" in desperation.

With a mighty heart throb he reached about and drew her to him. Tenderly, tremblingly he clasped his arms about her and as their lips met in a plighting kiss, a tiny flame springing as from the heart of an ash-covered sapphire, flamed up from the grate and sent the shadows scurrying. Phipps coming to announce dinner, stood transfixed. Then, a broad grin upon his face, he slipped softly away chortling to his inmost self:

"Lawd! Lawd! Dere sure am gwine t' be a weddin' in this yeah house afore another Christmas eve! Yas'ir!"

### A Quickly-Made Present.

Most women know what it is to be short of a present on the last day or so before Christmas. If one has plenty of money to go out and buy a gift this need cause little worry, otherwise quickly-made gifts are in order.

One that can be turned out in a few minutes is one of the new hairpin cases. This is made of the fiber that is used in women's artificial pompadours, only of a silvery white color.

### The Rose of Jericho.

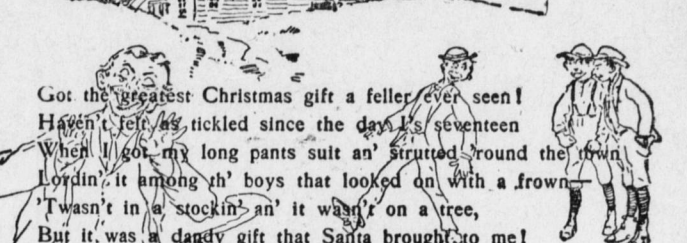
We are told that the rose of Jericho, which is also called Mary's rose, sprang up along the path of the Holy Family after they left Bethlehem, and blossomed brightly wherever they rested. This flower which bloomed at the birth of Christ showed its sympathy by closing at his crucifixion, only to open again at his resurrection.

### A Christmas Thought.

So may each year be happier than the last, and not one meanest brother or sister debarred of his share of the great Creator's good gifts!—Charles Dickens.

# What Santa Brought

By W. D. Nesbit



Got the greatest Christmas gift a feller ever seen!  
Haven't felt as tickled since the day I was seventeen  
When I got my long pants suit an' strutted round the town  
Lordin' it among th' boys that looked on with a frown—  
'Twasn't in a stockin' an' it wasn't on a tree,  
But it was a dandy gift that Santa brought to me!

Give you twenty guesses, an' you couldn't guess it right—  
Bet you couldn't guess it if you tried from now to night!  
Come on Christmas mornin', I was waitin' in the hall—  
Couldn't shet my eyes in sleep since Christmas Eve at all.  
Lord! I had the fidgets like I use to long ago  
When I'd watch for Santa in the boy-days, don't you know!

No, it wasn't slippers, nor an auto, nor a tie—  
'Tisn't any jimcrack thing that you can go an' buy!  
Ain't another like it in the whole endurin' earth.  
What? Why, I can't tell you how much money it is worth!  
Just the thing I wanted, an' I simply want to say  
It's the finest present ever come on Christmas day.

Doctor tipped to me, an' he says: "I wish you joy  
It's a Christmas baby—you're the daddy of a boy!"  
Now ain't that a present! Can you beat it in your life?  
Isn't this a Christmas Day for me an' boy an' wife?  
Bet the angels left him when they come to sing again  
In their joyful chorus tellin' of good will to men.

Pudgy-wudgy baby, just a roly-poly tike  
With a way of lookin' right straight at you, lovin' like  
Say! He held my finger in his little velvet hand  
With a grip o' goodness—But how can you understand  
If you ain't been through it you can't know just what I mean—  
Got the greatest Christmas gift a feller ever seen!



# The Charm of Christmas

By Washington Irving

IF all the old festivals that of Christmas awakens the strongest and most heartfelt associations. There is a tone of solemn and sacred feeling that blends with our conviviality, and lifts the spirit to a state of hallowed and elevated enjoyment. The services of the church about this season are extremely tender and inspiring; they dwell on the beautiful story of the origin of our faith, and the pastoral scenes that accompanied its announcement; they gradually increase in fervor and pathos during the season of Advent, until they break forth in full jubilee on the morning that brought peace and good will to men. I do not know a grander effect of music on the moral feelings than to hear the full choir and the pealing organ performing a Christmas anthem in a cathedral, and filling every part of the vast pile with triumphant harmony.

It is a beautiful arrangement, also, derived from the days of yore, that this festival, which commemorates the announcement of the religion of peace and love, has been made the season for gathering together closer again those bands of kindred hearts, which the cares and pleasures and sorrows of the world are continually operating to cast loose; of calling back the children of a family, who have launched forth in life and wandered widely asunder, once more to assemble about the paternal hearth—that rallying place of the affections, there to grow young and loving again among mementos of childhood.

There is something in the very season of the year that gives a charm to the festivity of Christmas. At other times we derive a great portion of our pleasures from the mere beauties of nature. Our feelings sally forth and dissipate themselves over the sunny landscape, and we "live abroad and everywhere." The song of the bird, the murmur of the stream, the breathing fragrance of spring, the soft voluptuousness of summer, the golden pomp of autumn; earth, with its mantle of refreshing green, and heaven, with its deep, delicious blue and its cloudy magnificence, all fill us with mute but exquisite delight, and we revel in the luxury of mere sensation. But in the depth of winter, when nature lies despoiled of every charm and wrapped in her shroud of

sheeted snow, we turn for our gratifications to moral sources. The dreariness and desolation of our landscape; the short, gloomy days and darksome nights, while they circumscribe our wanderings, shut in our feelings also from rambling abroad, and make us more keenly disposed for the pleasures of the social circle. Our thoughts are more concentrated; our friendly sympathies more aroused. We feel more sensibly the charm of each other's society, and are brought more closely together by dependence on each other for enjoyment. A season when heart calling unto heart. The pitchy gloom without makes the heart dilate on entering the room filled with the glow and warmth of the evening fire. The ruddy blaze diffuses an artificial summer and sunshine through the room, and light up each countenance with a kindlier welcome. Where does the honest face of hospitality expand into a broader and more cordial smile—where is the shy glance of love more sweetly eloquent—than by the winter fireside? And, as the hollow blast of wintry wind rushes through the hall, claps the distant door, whistles about the casement, and rumbles down the chimney, what can be more grateful than that feeling of sober and sheltered security with which we look around upon the comfortable chamber and the scene of domestic hilarity?

Amidst the general call to happiness, the bustle of the spirits, and stir of the affections, which prevail at this period, what bosom can remain insensible? It is, indeed, the season of regenerated feeling—the season for kindling not merely the fire of hospitality in the hall, but the genial flame of charity in the heart. Surely happiness is reflective, like the light of heaven; and every countenance, bright with smiles and glowing with innocent enjoyment, is a mirror transmitting to others the rays of a supreme and ever-shining benevolence. He who can turn cheerfully away from contemplating the felicity of his fellow-beings, and can sit down darkling and repining in his loneliness when all around is joyful, may have his moments of strong excitement and selfish gratification, but he wants the genial and social sympathies which constitute the charm of a merry Christmas.

boy displays when he lights the candles on his Christmas tree.

"Then comes the opening of the Christmas packages. This is always a gala occasion. Not a man on board would dare ignore the instruction any more than he would think of disobeying his superior officer. It has become custom through years of faithful observance. Always a bottle of wine is broken in christening these tokens from the loved ones at home.

"If I hadn't been a lieutenant myself I wouldn't dare give away official secrets.

"Last year we practically had two Christmases. We received our first mail at Trinidad, West Indies, some time Christmas week and delayed Christmas mail reached us at Callao, when the vessels were approaching their own country on the western side.

"No nation provides more plentifully for the Christmas cheer of its sailors than does Uncle Sam. Each of the battleship crews has a dinner of roast turkey, plum pudding, pumpkin pie and all the trimmings which go with it. The men are served in messes of 20 at 12 o'clock and each man is allowed one snifter of grog as an appetizer, in celebration of the occasion.

"The officers dine at six o'clock, and, as is the custom when spending the holiday at sea, are guests of the commanding officer."

### Christmas Musings.

There are warmer hand-shakings on this night, wrote Alexander Smith, than during the bypast 12 months. Friend lives in the mind of friend. There is more charity at this time than at any other. Poverty and scanty clothing, and fireless grates come home to the bosoms of the rich and they give of their abundance. The very rebreast of the woods enjoys his Christmas feast. Good feeling incarnates itself in plum pudding. The Master's word, "The poor ye have always with you," wear at this time a deep significance. For at least one night on each year over all Christendom there is brotherhood. And good men, sitting amongst their families, or by a solitary fire like me, when they remember the light that shone over the poor clowns huddling on the Bethlehem plains 1,800 years ago, the apparition of shining angels overhead, the song, "Peace on earth and good-will towards men," which for the first time hallowed the midnight air—pray for that strain's fulfillment, that battle and strife may vex the nations no more, that not only on Christmas eve, but the year round men shall be brethren, owning one Father in heaven.



Their Lips Met in a Plighting Kiss.

ness threw its mourning robe across the canyon, the woman died!

How vividly it all came back to Parrish Morton now as he buried his face in his hands before the crackling embers of the lingering fire! How Verona clung to him in her terror and sobbed for her mother, sobbed for her father and her brother! Was ever a child so bereft, so desolate?

And he had taken her home with him and placed her in the hands of his capable housekeeper and as time passed and no record of her kin could be found, he had advanced her into his heart—into the most sacred corner of his great heart—and watched her grow into a beautiful maturity, a full blown rose of womanhood with eyes like the depths of quiet brooks and the face of an angel, with red lips ruddier still and tantalizingly sweet!

And then the blow fell! The realization that he loved her and that he, her protector, must preserve her against that love, for she was but 17 and he was 33, then—and he had promised her mother out in the New Mexican foothills that he would care for her and keep her from the pitfalls as best he could!

Ah, how lonely the place was when he had sent her away to school, to a distant school where he might not have to endure the pain of seeing her often—and how she had looked into his eyes at parting with the half pleading, half understanding eyes of a young rabbit suddenly met face to face in some leafstrewn hollow in the autumn woods!

He had kissed her in his old, paternal way and her heart aggrieved had sent subtle glances of bewilderment to flash and play within those orbs whose depths he dared not sound!

And to avoid meeting her, he had gone on a distant mission, kept himself aloof for two years, while absence made the heart grow fonder and the memory of her thrilled him as the soft caressing fingers of some sweet innamorata thrills the tremulous strings of her guitar! And now upon

# Christmas at Sea

By Admiral Bob Evans

"ON Christmas morning," said Admiral Evans (Fighting Bob), "I thank God that he made three times as much water as land.

"Every old seadog will join me in this. The sea is his home; he loves it as the farmer loves his broad acres. Apart from it he is restless and dissatisfied, but with a voyage ahead of him he is as happy as a clam at high tide. No true sailor would exchange Christmas at sea for one on shore. It would be like Thanksgiving dinner without the turkey.

"Of all the Christmases spent at sea the one that rises before me most vividly is that of 1865, when the federal army and the gunboat fleet were trying to capture Fort Fisher. The only presents we received, and they came fast and furious, were solid shot and shell from the guns of the enemy. But this didn't destroy our sense of humor. The boys would write on each solid shot or shell before placing it in the gun, 'presented by,' and add the name of the vessel from which it happened to be fired. Mighty few buried at the fort that day lacked this Christmas greeting. All the gunners caught the spirit of the grim jest, for the fighting line is no place for serious faces.

"Despite the excitement of the fierce combat we managed to have the mastheads of all the ships trimmed with Christmas green, even though the sailors had to risk their lives in going ashore to get them, and you may be assured the sentiment of the day was not wasted.

"Last year Santa Claus followed our fleet of 16 vessels. He anticipated our 12,000-mile voyage and furnished us in advance with the pick of his best. On board the supply vessels when we sailed from Hampton roads were thousands of packages containing every imaginable Christmas gift, from a whisky flask to a smoking jacket, each package labeled, 'Don't open until Christmas.'

"Along with those gifts he sent thousands of yards of bunting to decorate the mastheads of the battleships. It would be difficult to imagine a more beautiful sight than these ships lined up Christmas morning with the sailors breaking out the Christmas trimmings with as much zest as the small