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A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

On this blessed Christmas morn,
Come, my little one, to me,
Let me lift you to my knee,
And with loving arms around you
Tell the story o'er again
Of the Christ-child born,
As a Saviour unto men,
To become to you and me
Through His death and agony,
God's own Lamb our souls to win
From the guilt and stain of sin;
God's good shepherd, at such cost
Come to seek and save the lost!
Say, my darling, has He found you?
Thrown His loving arms around you?
With His saving mercy crowned you?

In that hush of holy time,
When He opened first His eyes
Under glory-kindling skies
On His mother in a manger,
Lo! an angel tells his birth,
Heavenly hosts with song sublime
Chant his welcome unto earth,
Shouting o'er and o'er again,
"Peace on earth, good will to men;"
Giving hope to you and me,
If we would His glory see;
In the fulness of His love
Bringing to His home above!
Darling, be no more a stranger
To this Christ-child of the manger,
He alone can save from danger!

In the light of this glad day
Let us, then, remember Him,
And, while joy is at its brim
Giving many a sweet forewarning
Of the treasures of his love;
As we give our gifts, and pray
For His blessing from above,
Let us lift anew our eyes
To the shining upper skies,
Love Him, fill you and me,
In the blessed time to be,
Through the riches of His grace,
He shall show His shining face.
Will not crowns our heads all rising,
Be, my darling, heaven's forewarning
Of an endless Christmas morning?

ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day
In the low manger 'mid the hay
Was Christ, the infant Saviour laid,
While, half amazed and half afraid,
His sweet Maid-mother watched the star
Which blazed in the high heaven afar,
And wondered did she wake or dream,
And what these marvels all might mean.
She saw the startled shepherd throng
Obedient to the angel song;
She saw the wise men from afar—
Gaspar, Melchior, Balthazar—
Bearing their urns of costly spice,
And gold, and myrrh for sacrifice,
Ride from the desert in, star-led,
And kneel beside her Baby's bed,
And at his feet their offerings lay,
On Christmas Day! on Christmas Day!

On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
Dear Lord, who once an infant lay
To wondering human eyes displayed
Beside the blessed Mother-maid,
Let us, too, come as once these came,
Our worship and our love the same,
For us let the bright star o'erhead,
The star of Faith, be witnessed;
For us arise the chorus still
Of peace and heavenly good-will;
Be ours the simple trust who heard
And went without a questioning word;
And as they journeyed from afar—
Gaspar, Melchior, Balthazar—
Bearing their gifts, so let us bring
The gold of truth unto our King,
The frankincense of prayers that rise,
The myrrh of loving sacrifice,
And at Thy feet our offerings lay,
On Christmas Day! on Christmas Day!

—*Susan Coolidge in Chr. Union*

A SEASONABLE HAMPER.

A Christmas Story.

If in the dim yellow light of a certain Christmas morning some few years ago a pair of curious eyes had peered into the dressing-room of a set of well-furnished chambers in Piccadilly, they would have seen nothing more remarkable than a tall good-looking gentleman, aged thirty-nine, engaged in the act of shaving.

Nevertheless, there was something note-worthy in that snug little antechamber, albeit the aforesaid pair of curious eyes would have been unable to see it. Herbert Pinniger, the gentleman, who was so deftly using his razor, possessed, in common with other ladies and gentlemen, a certain pestilent piece of property called a Conscience. This Conscience he had, like many others of the human race, kept carefully bottled up out of harm's way. But, for some occult reason, on this special Christmas morning the Pinniger Conscience became restless. His restlessness grew and grew, till at length he burst the seals which held him in, and issued forth, terrible and gigantic, like the Genie in the Eastern story of the Fisherman.

But just then Snead (discretest of valets, entered, demanding instructions concerning breakfast. A desperate struggle, invisible to the eyes of Snead, ensued, and then the mighty giant was once more reduced to petty dimensions, and forced to re-enter his prison house.

Seated at the trim breakfast table, with cheerful gaslights overhead to counteract the fog, and Snead, noiseless and dexterous, hovering around, ministering to his wants, Mr. Pinniger looked so serene, his spotless linen and well-cut morning coat were so unruffled, that no one could have guessed how furious had been the tussle between himself and that well-intentioned Titan, now securely locked up.

"Any letters, Snead?" demanded Mr. Pinniger, after he had dispatched an egg, a rasher of delicately-flavored bacon, and a morsel of game pie.

He made it a rule never to open letters until he had eaten part of his breakfast. If the news conveyed in them was pleasant, it could wait; if unpleasant, it must not be suffered to derange his appetite.

Snead handed to his employer the letters on a tray.

Before opening them, Mr. Pinniger said: "Where's the *Times?*"

"Not come yet, *sir*," replied Snead, "Bein' Christmas Day, I presume the newsboy is disorganized."

"Confound Christmas Day!" muttered his master. "You needn't wait, Snead." And then proceeded to open his letters.

They were not precisely the sort of letters which most of us would care to receive on Christmas morning, when the joy-bells were welcoming the Birthday of the Child who came bearing a message of peace from Heaven to Earth. But then business is business, and Mr. Pinniger's busines produced letters which were not always of an agreeable character. Mr. Pinniger was not a professional money-lender, but he was fond of all kinds of speculation, and, among other speculations, he now and then lent money.

The first letter which he opened was written in pallid ink, and in that angular rather illegible hand which some thirty years ago was deemed the correct hand for ladies. It was very diffuse in style, and was actually crossed, an absolute crime in these days of cheap paper and cheap postage. Mr. Pinniger glanced over it, and then with a grunt of impatience tossed it into the fire. It was from a widow lady, who kept a struggling school in one of the western suburbs of London, and to whom Mr. Pinniger, on the security of her furniture and other property, had made sundry pecuniary advances. She now asked for an extension of time to pay the instalment which was due, and she even hinted that a further advance would be acceptable, an outbreak of scarletina having caused a stampede among her pupils. The letter concluded with a sentimental appeal about "this festive season, when all hearts should be light and gay." "Lightness and gaiety be hanged!" growled her creditor. "Why didn't she think of this before she borrowed my money?"

The second letter was thoroughly legible, being in that stiff upright hand affected by lawyers' clerks. It was in fact from Mr. Pinniger's solicitors, Messrs. Doublewaite, Ferret and Sharpe, and informed him that, in accordance with his instructions, they had levied a distress on the goods and chattels of Mr. David De Kay, watch escapement maker, of Bezil Street, Clerkenwell, E. C. "Poor devil!" murmured Mr. Pinniger, in a tone of contemptuous pity. "I ought never to have let him have a farthing. I ought to have seen that he was on the road to ruin."

Mr. Pinniger's meditations were interrupted by the reappearance of Snead. "If you please, sir, the Parcel's Delivery, apologizing for delay caused by Christmas—"

"Confound Christmas!" muttered Mr. Pinniger with warmth.

"Has brought an 'amper."

"Bring it upstairs, spread a cloth on the carpet, and open it here."

"I am glad not to be altogether forgotten," he soliloquised. "Bachelors, even when well-to-do, are apt to be neglected at this season." This with a sigh. "But, after all, I daresay," he added bitterly, "it comes from some fellow who wants to soft-sawder me; who baits with a sprat to catch a whale."

Presently Snead reappeared with the hamper in his arms. He panted gentlemanly, as one who was unaccustomed to vulgar burdens.

"From the weight, and the heffluvia, sir, I should guess it was a brace of pheasants and an 'are."

"Don't guess, but open it," observed his master drily.

Thus admonished, the valet knelt down, and began to unfasten the string which secured the hamper. Beneath, there was an abundant layer of straw, and when this had been taken out, the Christmas present became partly visible. Although a animal, it was neither pheasant, partridge, grouse or hare; indeed, except in a perfect bad sense, it could not be described as game at all.

It would need the pencil of a skilled artist to do justice to Mr. Snead's face as he cautiously drew forth the carcass of a large black cat which had evidently been deceased for many days, and around whose neck a label was tied bearing the following inscription:—

"A seasonable gift for Mr. H. Pinniger. May he receive many such. He deserves them."

Snead's face was, as aforesaid, a study for a painter. Chastened wrath, with a dignified compassion for the employer who had thus been slighted, were there skilfully combined. But whether, when safely ensconsed in his pantry, this discreetest of valets sniggered over the coarse practical joke is a matter with which this history need not concern itself. The only words he uttered were:

"It's downright insultin'."

"Take it away, Snead," said his master calmly, "but preserve the hamper, the address-card, and the label. They may be useful as a clue to identification."

Snead went away feeling really humiliated. Coming upstairs he believed that he was carrying a gift worthy of a prince, now he knew that he was bearing downstairs a repulsive piece of carrion.

As soon as he left the room, Pinniger rose softly and locked the door. Then he seated himself at the table, burying his hands. When he uncovered his face, his eyelids were red, and there was a visible moisture on his cheeks. The strong stern man had evidently shed tears.

"God help me!" he murmured. "I have not a friend in the world. Every one hates me, and I deserve to be hated."

After a while he became calmer, and going to his bureau, unlocked a drawer, from which he drew forth his Private Ledger, a volume which he had often fascinated and absorbed him. In old days those who were fond of money loved to feel the touch and hear the chink of the actual coin. Modern refinement is satisfied with a less coarser device, and the perusal of our ledger balances serves in lieu of handling bags of gold and silver.

But on this occasion the volume sacred to the worship of Plutus had lost its charm, and once more Pinniger covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud, "Hated by every one."

Then occurred a memorable scene. Once more the imprisoned giant, Conscience, burst forth resistless from his casket, and stood face to face with his owner.

Soon afterwards Snead was summoned by his master's bell.

"Snead, I want the A B C Guide."

The valet silently placed it before him.

"The service of trains on Christmas Day is, I think, the same as on Sunday?"

"Precisely as on Sunday, sir."

"I shall not dine at home. Pack my small portmanteau, and have a handsome at the door for the 1.45 train from Waterloo."

"Very good, sir," replied Snead, as imperturbably as if he had been asked to replenish the fire from the coal-scuttle.

But his imperturbability was merely external, and on retiring to his own domain he commenced thus with himself:—

"What hever's hup with the governor? It's all along of that beastly cat."

On Christmas Day the train services are apt to be "disorganized," as Mr. Snead would say, and, therefore, Mr. Pinniger did not reach Firling Station till late. It was three miles to Hazledean, but as all the flies had been pre-engaged by holiday makers, he decided to walk, hiring a boy to carry his portmanteau. In such unpretending style did the rich brother go to visit the poor one.

As he tramped in silence by the side of his rustic attendant his heart quaked with an indescribable sense of fear and anxiety. "It is five years since I saw him, three years since we exchanged letters, but if he spurns me, I shall do something desperate."

Presently they emerged from the darkness of the road among the lights of the village of Hazledean, and a few moments later the rays of a red lamp disclosed a door bearing a brass plate.

"This here be Dr. Pinniger's," proclaimed the urchin.

The bell was answered by a neatly-dressed maiden servant.

"Can I see Dr. Pinniger?"

"He is at dinner with some friends, sir."

"I wish to see him on business, but I will wait his leisure."

Thereupon Herbert Pinniger was ushered by the maid servant into her master's consulting room while the boy was bidden to wait with the portmanteau in the hall. Presently a heavy step was heard in the passage, and then the door was opened. John Pinniger, though only seven years senior to his brother, looked almost old enough to be his father. The younger brother was slender, spruce, preserved and well dressed; the elder was stout, red-faced, grey-bearded, and somewhat slovenly in his apparel. The hard work and exposure of a country doctor's life tends both to make him look prematurely old and to be careless about his outward appearance.

Herbert Pinniger had purposly seated himself in the darkest corner of the room, as his brother entered saying in a hearty voice, "Sorry, sir, to keep you waiting, but being Christmas Day, I have a little party of friends, and——" As the visitor made no response, he continued, after a pause. "Do you wish to consult me professionally?"

"Scarcely that," began Herbert, and then relapsed into silence.

"Good heavens! I know that voice. Why, you're Bertie, my brother Bertie, Bertie, how are you?" And the Doctor advanced, holding out both his hands.

"Do you mean to say that you are ready to take my hand?"

"Ready? Of course I am. Why, if brothers are not to shake hands with brothers on Christmas Night of all nights in the year, the world must have come to a pretty pass."

"John, you see before you a ruined man."

"Ruined! Then that is all the more reason, Bertie, why I should shake your hand. Nay, don't shrink, man." And John seized both his brother's hands in a hearty grip. "Ruined?" he continued, "but how much ruined? A few thousands gone in some risky speculation, or everything lost?"

"You shall hear presently. But first tell me this. Can you forgive me for causing your father to alter his will?"

"That, at all events, I can freely and frankly forgive. Bertie, it was the making of me. By nature I am lazy, and if I had got what as eldest son I expected to get, I should have been lazy to the end of the chapter. Whereas, being urged on by Poverty and Love, I took to hard work, and I have thriven on it. Poor old dad did me a right down good turn when he left me £500, and no more. It just served to buy this partnership, and when Buckler, my senior partner, goes the way of all flesh—he is closer on eighty—I shall have the whole practice to myself. So don't fear, Bertie; I can give you a helping hand now you are down on your luck."

"John, your words pierce my heart. I shall never forget this."

"Tut tut," replied the Doctor, cheerily. "But there is one thing you do forget, namely, that this is Christmas Day, and that I am neglecting my guests in the dining room."

"True. Go back to them, and leave me here."

"What! Leave you alone on Christmas night! Never." But on second thought, he added, in a graver tone, that it might be an awkwardness in meeting some of the company. I can not answer for the other people's forgiveness."

"Name them."

"My eldest daughter, Mrs. Rowbotham, and her husband."

"My old clerk. I doubt if he will care to see me. Who else?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Roseburn, and their daughter Ada."

"My old sweetheart, to whom I behaved like a villain. Go, John, go. I could not bear it. Besides, I should come like a hideous ghost upon your merry party. But let me stay the night here, John," he added, almost beseechingly.

"This night, and every night, Bertie, if it so please you."

"Shall you tell them I am ruined?"

"Not unless you wish it."

"Perhaps they will be softened if they hear I am ruined, and will be more inclined to forgive me. But say, John, one moment. From this hour I want to turn over a new leaf, and therefore I mustn't begin with any lies. I am not ruined."

"Not ruined, Bertie?"

"Not in the sense in which you understood me. I am bankrupt in happiness, penniless in love, poverty-stricken of friends, but I am not poor of purse. Go and tell them, Julia and Rosebud, tell Ada Roseburn"—here his voice faltered—"tell them all that Herbert Pinniger has had his eyes opened this Christmas Day, that, though rich in pocket, he had not till you, John took his hand, a single friend in the world, and that he seeks their forgiveness."

* * *

Was it a dream! Did he really make that Christmas journey to Hazledean; or did he fall asleep in his chair in Piccadilly after consulting the A B C Guide? There is some vagueness about this portion of Herbert Pinniger's history, but it is a clear and undoubted matter-of-fact that during the ensuing New Year the following events took place. First, old Mr. Buckler, moved by powerful pecuniary considerations, retired from practice in favor of his junior partner, John Pinniger. Secondly, Mrs John Pinniger was seen driving a pair of admirably-matched ponies in a very comfortable chaise. Thirdly, Mr. Rowbotham, hitherto unable to do much for want of capital, has found a capitalist, and is in consequence, carrying on a flourishing business. Fourthly, the impecunious schoolmistress at Chiswick has met with a friend who put her financially straight, and who hopes that (barring scarlatina and measles) she will do well in the future. Fifthly, Adam Roseburn, Esq., formerly of Manchester, regained a large sum of money which he lost some years ago in a cotton speculation, and lastly, the following appeared among the list of marriages in the *Times*: "On the 3d June, at St. Mary's, Hazledean, by the Rector, the Rev. T. Twyman, Herbert Pinniger, Esq., of Piccadilly and Shepperson, to Ada, youngest daughter of Adam Roseburn, Esq.

On the following Christmas Eve the newly married couple were engaged together in examining the contents of a hamper which had just arrived. Then the husband took his wife by the hand, and kissed her. "My darling," he said, gravely, "I cannot feel so thankful to the donor of these good things as I do that unknown benefactor who last year presented me with the—cat! It was like a fairy tale. That objectionable hamper in reality contained a charming wife and all the happiness I now enjoy."

Mild Species of Black-Mail.

The other day at the Neuilly Fair in the environs of Paris, a tall Bohemian, emaciated and in rags, went about from table to table before the cafes and restaurants under the trees with a violin under his arm. The majority of the guests preferred to give him a couple of sous to having their conversations interrupted.

At one table, however, he came upon a stout gentleman, who, being fond of music, signed to him to go on and play. The poor fellow did not move. The stout gentleman insisted. At last the beggar took his violin from under his arm and showed his would-be patron it had no strings.

"What do you carry it about with you for if it has no strings?" asked the astonished amateur.

"Monsier," replied the beggar with a philosophical acuteness of definition that would have done credit to an Academician, "it is not an instrument, it is only a threat!"

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS.

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed throat
The cannon thunder from the moat,
And with the sound
It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stone of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bent my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
For hate is strong,
And mocks the song,
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep,
"God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!"

—*Longfellow.*

JACK'S CHRISTMAS BOX.

Story for the Young.

It was Christmas-eve. A good old-fashioned Christmas too, every one said, but Jack Turner shook his head.

"It's all very well to have plenty of snow and ice when you can stay indoors with your feet on the fender, or put on furs when you want to go out," he said to his mother; "but when you haven't a fire, and have to wear the same smock that you wore in the summer, it's quite different."

"Never mind, Jack," said the widow brightly; "I'm going to take this dress home this evening; and if you go to bed early you will keep pretty warm, and I'll bring in some coals and a nice little bit of meat for to-morrow."

"So plum-pudding, mother?" said Jack, and then he hung his head, ashamed that he had added to his mother's burden by letting see what most troubled him just then. He was only a boy of twelve, and cold toes and thin clothing seemed very little compared to the misery of a Christmas without a pudding.

"I'll see, Jack, what I can do," said Mrs. Turner as she folded up the dress. "You see the money will have to last us many days, for I shall not get any more work till after the holidays are over. Cheer up, my boy; we have had a hard life of it since your father died, but please God we shall have a brighter Christmas next year. Try and bear the disappointment bravely, my boy, for the sake of the Saviour who did so much for us."

"I'd like to do some grand thing, mother; it can't matter much what I think about our plum-pudding, and I'm so hungry that I think after all I'd rather have an extra lump of bread and meat."

"That's what we all say, Jack. We all want to do great things; and yet if we are not faithful in little things how can we ever hope to do the great ones? Do you remember the two lines your father used to say so often?—

"Do the thing that's nearest, though it's dull at whiles,
Helping, when you meet them, lame dogs over stiles."

"Now, whilst I am out, just you think whether you can help any one; of course, it doesn't mean only dogs, it means any one in difficulty or danger. And now good-night, my boy, for I hope you will be fast asleep when I come back. There is some bread and cheese in the cupboard."

Jack got out the bread and cheese, and began to eat it; then, as the bells of the village church burst into a joyful peal, he went to the door and looked out. The snow was thick on earth and tree, and the moon shed a silvery light upon all. At the end of the garden was a pigeon-house which Mr. Turner had built many years before, when his business was prospering, and a long illness had not chained his purse.

"You poor little pigeons," said Jack aloud; "I expect you have more to grumble at than I have, for I don't believe you can pick up any food now, and I forgot all about you."

Then he scattered a big piece of his bread just before the pigeon-house, and thought how pleased the birds would be in the morning.

"Halloa! Jack, is that you?" said a cheery voice. "Do you feel inclined for a moonlight trip? I've lost one of my sheep, and what's worse still, I've lost Dash."

It was Farmer White, who was very glad to have the chance of a companion in his search. Jack was very fond of Dash, who had often gone for walks with him when the sheep were safely folded, and he was very sorry to hear that it was more than four and twenty hours since anything had been seen of him.

"I expect something went wrong with the sheep, and Dash is staying near it," said the farmer, as they walked quickly over the crisp snow. "The worst of it is that he would die of starvation before he would move from his post, if he has found the sheep."

Just then a gust of wind blew the sound of the bells towards them, and the farmer went on.

"A fine thing it is, too, to be tramping like this on a Christmas-eve after a lost sheep and a lost dog. And yet it isn't so bad after all, for it was at Christmas that the good Lord Jesus came into the world to save us, who had strayed from the fold like poor silly sheep that we were."

They walked on, occasionally whistling loudly, till at last the farmer began to lose heart: "It's no good going any farther."

"No, no; let us try a little longer. Let me call him, and you listen said Jack."

Suddenly, through the silence, there came the very echo of a bark, so far away and weak it sounded. But it was enough to put new life into the two searchers, and they stepped out bravely over the crisp snow as if they had only just started.

Then at last they came upon a sad, sad sight. Poor Dash sat by a mound of snow, so cold and exhausted that he could hardly move even when his master put an arm around him; and poor Jack, over tired and excited, shed warm tears on his poor patient face.

"The sheep is under that mound, you may be sure; but we can't dig it up tonight."

"Oh, yes we can," said Jack, forgetful of all fatigue; and together they worked with the spade which the farmer had brought, till they touched the sheep, and found that it was quite dead. It had probably fallen down exhausted or hurt, and then been covered by the heavy fall of snow.

It was past two o'clock when they reached Mrs. Turner's. She had heard from a neighbor that her son was with Mr. White, hunting for his dog, but was getting just a little bit anxious about him.

"So you found something to do?" she said, as the boy dropped into a chair, and fell to devouring the food which she had prepared for him.

"Indeed he has," said Farmer White, who still stood on the threshold, while Jack gave Dash some bread. "If it hadn't been for him, I should have turned back, and lost my dog. Come over and see me in the morning, Jack. But it's morning now, I declare! Well, good-night, and a Merry Christmas to you both."

Jack slept until ten o'clock on Christmas-day, and the moment he had had his breakfast, he would go over to Farmer White's to see Dash. Mrs. White, who had heard all about the night's work, gave him a nice bowl of bread and milk to take to Dash, who had persisted in leaving the kitchen to have a drink at a pump trough, which was of course frozen hard. There was not a happier boy in the village that morning than Jack, when the dog turned round and covered his face and hands with grateful caresses.

"Look here, my lad," said the farmer as Jack turned to go home. "You just bring your mother over here to dinner; and I tell you what—I'll give you for a Christmas-box that little cottage that stands by Marlstone Wood. That will save you rent. And if you like to work on the farm, you shall; for I do like a boy who is ready to help any one."

Christmas for the Aged.

Make the Christmas a glad time for the aged. Let each child, even the baby, have his little tribute to bring. Let the dear old heart know that its own gift, however simple, is prized and expected by every one of the household band. Help the trembling hands that may have grown slow to fashion the dainty miracles of needle-work. Keep all the secrets of what she is going to give to this, that or the other friend. Go patiently on the shopping jaunts, even if the feet are slow, and the eyes take a great deal of time in searching for "just the right thing." Ask for the day when grandmother is no longer here to do for us or to be done for! Let us remember how sacredly that day is coming nearer; and that, to make her thoroughly happy and conscious of how dear and necessary she is, is our only way of begoiling the angel to linger in the house.

As the traces joy comes from the consciousness of power to bless, so the more fully we convince the aged of the blessing they are to us, through their experience and their presence, and through their angelhood, that has so often been born in their sorrows, the more we shall really minister to them. They are often afraid of becoming useless, conscious of failing powers, fearful of being in the way, or casting a shadow on the household mirror. See to it, dear young friends, that on this of all days of the year they be made to know how much we love and need the light of the faded faces, and assure them by every gentle attention that Christmas would not be Christmas without the "angel in the house."—*Mary Lowe Dickinson.*

Christmas Waifs and Strays.

A green Christmas makes a lean liveryman.

Dressing a Christmas tree cannot make it look any more spruce.

Capital presents for Christmas or any other time—Presence of mind.

If the children ask how Santa Claus get down the chimney, tell them he flue down in his winter soot.

Now that Christmas is approaching it is a good time for young men to watch a girl. Let it be a gold watch, however.

This is the time of the year at which a man gives his wife money in order that he may be surprised with a Christmas present.

Have faith in Santa Claus, and hang up your stocking. He has never been known to steal one, even if he didn't put anything in it.

"Name a clause in our National Constitution," said a teacher just before Christmas. "Santa Claus!" shouted a happy-eyed urchin.

"If old Santa Claus comes down the chimney he must be a sooty fellow," said Tommy. "Well, he just suits me, any way," chimed in Charlie.

The man who presented his wife last Christmas with a dinner-kettle in which to put up his dinner on workday mornings is puzzled to determine what gift would be most appropriate this year. He has almost decided upon a briar-wood pipe for his wife to fill for him during future hours of recreation at home.

The Tramp's Paradise.

"Probably no city is so tramp-ridden as our blessed city of New York," writes a complaining correspondent to the *New York Evening Post*. "It is their paradise. All they ask is to be let alone. They are a study. We treat them delicately! We want more parks. *They* want more parks. We want more places of recreation for the people. Try it; walk through one of them. Try Union Square. We'll kept walks, trees, flowers, and, if we could afford it, a fountain! Then see the rows upon rows of idle men, some asleep, some awake, all able to smoke, to chew, to spit! If you are a woman, be careful for your garments; if you are weary, find a decent place, *if you can*. Go even to Central Park and hear decent women ladies, complain that every seat is filled with men, if not tramps, and so defiled with spittle (we use plainness of speech) that any chance vacant seat is made impossible to them (we all know also that in spite of care and vigilance there are parts that are unsafe). However, the tramp enjoys it, and monopolizes the benefits of the liberality of our people. He is the true monopolist, for he makes himself unapproachable."

The Christmas Anthem.

"Peace on earth and good will to men." Such is the anthem rung out by the wild Christmas bells "to the wild sky," and yet what weird tidings fall almost simultaneously on the listening ear. The world seems to be receding farther and farther from the enthronement of a millennial king—civilization, with all its imperial blendings of scientific and philosophic triumphs, is infinitely more perplexed than ever it was. Wars and rumors of wars are evidently ripening the minds of men for a very new state of things. But the rudest shock of all is that which is administered to transcendentalism. The old sway which it once held on men's minds has been most effectually weakened and loosened.—Still the Christmas bells will go on ringing—

"Those evening bells—those evening bells,
How many a tale their music tells!"

Yes! and how many a tale they leave untold! Stories, the depths of whose meaning will one day be known in all their fulness, perhaps in that good time coming, when the Christmas bells will in every accepted and pleasurable sense of the word, "ring out the false—ring in the true."

THE CHRISTMAS ANGEL.

"Papa, what are the bells ringing for?"