



The Log They Cut. This is the yule of the long ago, The log they cut in the woods, hot hot The yule log old that gave its glow At the Christmas hearth in the olden time When the bells rang mad with their golden chime.

### IN HOLDA'S WOOD.

How Old Father Christmas Was Born—The German Legend of Kris Kringle.

BY ESTHER SINGLETON.



CHRISTOPHER was greatly dissatisfied with his home. He was an imaginative lad, entirely out of tune with his surroundings. He lived in a little wooden cottage, curiously carved, that gave him some delight when the shadows of night deepened and drew dark forms and shapes under the long roof which sloped nearly to the ground. It was not pleasant to return from a land of dreams to the hard facts of life and to the plait and weave of the long, green willow wand into baskets at his uncle's command and to hear the scolding tongue of his aunt busy with her household duties. Finally he determined that he would run away and seek a life for himself; but the day never came until he had completed his fifteenth birthday, which was uncelebrated. It was upon a Christmas Eve that he decided to break away. His aunt had been unusually ill-tempered and as his mind was sure the proper time had arrived for his step into the world, not even the cold of approaching night discouraged him.

Kris was not altogether free of blame, for he had been a discordant note in the household. He was neither cheerful nor amiable, nor unselfish, but then he had never been shown the way towards a loving and grateful disposition. He had become sullen and hardened. As he crept stealthily into the street the twilight was throwing her gray draperies around the little German village. Down the deserted road he passed, on, and up the hill, where he turned to bid farewell to the only home he had ever known, and betook his way into the dark forest that seemed to call him into its depths.

How many voices were there—sweet ones, too, unlike any he had ever heard! The wind blew off his cap by way of a joke, and, touching him with icy fingers, said, "Come! Come! Come, Kris! There is much warmth in the forest and joy. Come! The pine-bow hummed huskily, yet softly: "Come, Kris, come! It is true; the wind knows. Come! Come!"

As Kris passed into the forest he felt, although he could not see, the mysterious spirits. Kris stood still wondering what would occur next, when a young tree about his own height, vain of her beauty and patronizing in her manner, said: "Sit by me, Kris," and he obeyed, still watching and listening to the voices of the mysterious spirits of the winter night.



"COME! COME! AND SEE THE WIND-SPIRITS DANCE WITH THE SNOW!" which had gradually become visible, busily preparing for the celebration of their Christmas feast.

Strange to say, he was not cold though resting on the velvety snow; nor was he homesick. A gay procession entertained him, issuing out of the black hollow of a great oak, that glittered in its armor of ice. First came the children of the Winter-Wind, all fierce-eyed and sharp of feature, dressed in tunics of white and gray flowing mantles. Then followed the Snow-Children in their glistening garments of white and flower-shaped crystal crowns; and after them Holda herself, Queen of Earth and Woods, Queen of Snow and of Christmastide.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

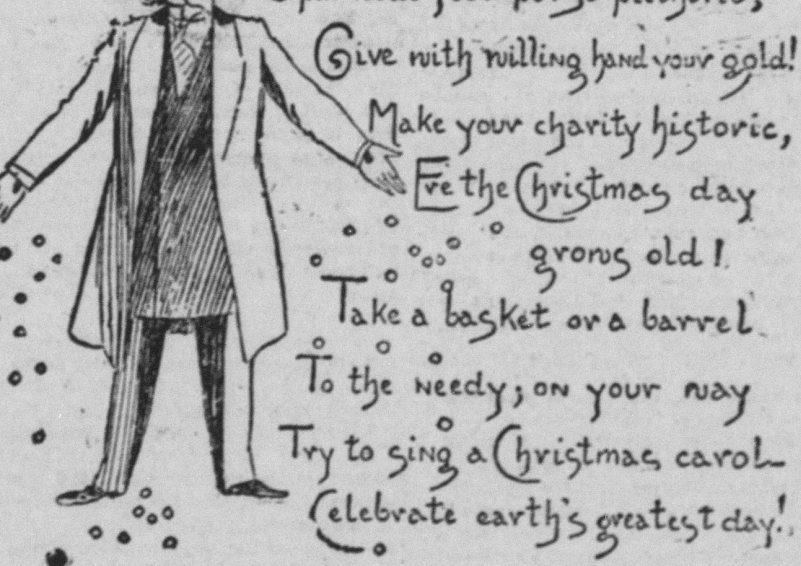
By T. B. CRYSTAL.

Christmas bells, Oh! Christmas bells,

Chiming through white-mantled dells, Sweet the tale your music tells, Of that blessed birthday when Came to earth the Infant King! Peal, oh, bells! with rapture ring, While the children sweetly sing, "Peace on earth, good will to men."



Old Santa comes, With dolls and drums, And everything that squeaks or hums. He'll make no noise When with his toys, He fills the hose of girls and boys.



Open wide your purse plerotic, Give with willing hand your gold! Make your charity historic, For the Christmas day grows old! Take a basket or a barrel To the needy, on your way Try to sing a Christmas carol Celebrate earth's greatest day!

How lovely she was in her gown of emerald velvet with a big bunch of snowdrops at her breast, and a crown of oak leaves like a Dryad. Her flaxen hair was bound with a strand of pearls, her eyes were blue as summer rivers, her lips as pomegranates, her arms and neck as white as the falling flakes, that, touching her, turned into showers of creamy roses.

"Why have you come hither?" she asked. As he was speechless the Trees and Snowflakes said in their soft choruses: "The Wind brought him, and we bade him join the joy of Christmastide and cried 'Come! Come! Come!'" "Unless you come selfishly," she asked, "what have you brought to us? The birds give their voices, the flowers their perfume, the Trees their shelter, the Wind his music, the Snow-children their service, the Seasons their beauties and their bounties, and I, to grant all wishes. What do you bring to the Christmas Revels?"

Christopher hung his head. He fell to her feet and kissing her dress with emotion, exclaimed: "I have brought nothing but myself. Do with me as you will." "So be it," replied Holda, "you shall give yourself. You shall be one of the greatest Spirits of the hallowed season." The Queen of Christmastide clapped her hands and bade the Revels begin. When all the enjoyment was at its height, Queen Holda clapped her white hands and four and twenty Wish-Maidens bowed before her and, then facing the strange multitude, promised to bring to every one in Holda's realm his and her desire. Bowing low to Holda they took their leave, soon returning. Each one now held a rosy ribbon attached to a silver car, which they drew along and upon which what appeared to Christopher the most wonderful thing he had ever beheld—a glittering tree.

Queen Holda gave to each one present gifts from the Wishing-Tree, and then she said impressively: "We have one more gift. Kris has given himself. He is to go out into the world and carry the blessings of our Revels." Then she called her Snow-Children and, speaking to them in her own language, which none but herself and her little people can understand, or even hear—so low, so soft, so melodious it is—bade them prepare Christopher for his long journey. First they murmured into his ear until he grew drowsy and fell asleep, and when he slumbered they folded around him rich, red robes and a mantle bordered with ermine, and placing on his head a tall peaked cap, bound around it a wreath of holly. They powdered his long hair with snow,

## THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

BY CLEMENT MOORE.



SO long ago as a nearly three-quarters of a century the verses beginning, "Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,"

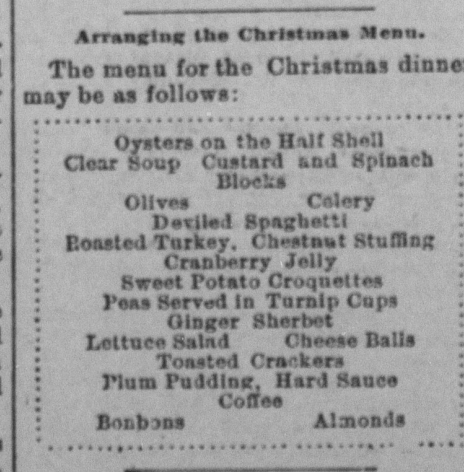
first saw the light of print, appearing in the Troy Sentinel of December 23, 1823. As published then it was anonymous, but it was prophetic of its coming popularity that even in that day, unfavorable as it was for newspaper illustration, it was accompanied by a picture of Santa Claus on his rounds. In the time intervening it has become known to practically every man, woman and child in America, has spread hence to the widest limits of the English-speaking race, has been translated into the language of every nation that has a Santa Claus, and is little, if any, short of being the most popular poem in the world. For years it was an annual feature of all American newspapers. Then, in 1841, it was acknowledged by its learned author, being included in a little volume of his poems published in New York. Thence its inclusion in school readers and all kinds of declamation books was only a matter of a short time. In 1859 the edition that first attained wide distribution was issued, with the pleasant illustrations made by Felix O. C. Darley, which was remembered gratefully by any number of persons now crawling reluctantly into middle life.

It will be a surprise to many to learn that "The Night Before Christmas" was written by the erudite doctor of laws who prepared the first Hebrew dictionary ever published in America. He was Clement C. Moore, a descendant of a famous family in the history of the Episcopal Church, and himself one of its most notable benefactors. Clement Clarke Moore was born on July 15, 1781, in New York City, and died at his summer home in Newport on July 10, 1863. The poem which has given him greater fame than all his learning and benefactions was written as a pastime and given his children as a Christmas present just seventy-five years ago. He thought little of it at the time, or later. Indeed, it is possible it would never have become known to the world at all had not the eldest daughter of the Rev. David Butler, D. D., rector of St. Paul's in Troy, N. Y., seen the lines during a visit to New York the year after they were composed, and published them in the paper mentioned without their author's consent. It is said that nothing but the speedy popularity the verses attained procured Miss Butler's forgiveness.

Good Deeds For the Day. Don't shut your door to pity the poor. Give the children a bushel of happiness and they'll share it with you. Raise the preacher's salary—but not so high that he can't reach it. Make the Christmas tree a green spot in memory. Don't lose sight of the fact that you were a boy yourself in the early years of the century. Don't let the tin horn blast your happiness. Christmas will soon blow over. Make somebody happy, even if you have to settle an old bill to do it.

Arranging the Christmas Menu. The menu for the Christmas dinner may be as follows: Oysters on the Half Shell, Clear Soup, Custard and Spinach, Olives, Celery, Decided Spaghetti, Roasted Turkey, Chestnut Stuffing, Cranberry Jelly, Sweet Potato Croquettes, Peas Served in Turnip Caps, Ginger Sherbet, Lettuce Salad, Cheese Balls, Toasted Crackers, Plum Pudding, Hard Sauce, Bonbons, Coffee, Almonds.

A Young Doubter. Father—"Why, Tom, what are you doing on the roof this time of night?" Tom—"Well, I've got my doubts about that Santa Claus story, and I came here to watch the chimneys and find out if there is such a person."



Understanding. "Well, did you kiss her?" asked Spyles. "Yes," replied Spokes, "I mistle-toed the mark."—Judge.

### BURNING RAILWAY TRACK.

A Car Equipped with Apparatus Which Fires Them with Blazing Kerosene.

The law in most States requires that railroad companies shall keep their right of way cleared of weeds and other growth which might prove harmful to agricultural interests by becoming propagating beds for noxious plants, and it is a common sight along the railroads of this part of the country to see gangs of men at work during the growing season cutting down the grass and weeds beside the railroad tracks, raking these up and destroying them.

On some of the Western railroads a method of recent device is in use which is much more economical for this purpose and thoroughly effective. Fire and machinery do the work which men are employed for elsewhere. A crude petroleum oil, which costs 15 cents a gallon, is the material used. A box car is fitted up with a small mining engine, which drives it along by means of a sprocket chain running to one of the axles, which gives it all the speed that is needed. An upright boiler supplies the steam, and within the car, besides the boiler and engine, are tanks of oil. From the rear end of the car project the burners, arranged in a series of eight, all under a metal shield, to confine the heat. The shield is ten feet square, and on the Western roads is used only to destroy the growth of vegetation along the track and for a few feet on each side. A blast of air supplied by an air pump makes the flames from the burners long and intense.

The car moves along the track at the rate of about a mile an hour. The first time it goes over the weeds are killed, and the next time, after the weeds have had a few days to dry in, it sets fire to them and destroys them completely with all their seeds. Insects or grubs, which the weeds harbor, are also destroyed by the flames. The cost of the oil for this work and the wages of the three men employed on the car is only about \$1.08 a mile of single track.

Another petroleum oil is entering largely into a new field of usefulness on railroads as a means of permanently laying the annoying dust which the commotion of passing trains raises from every sort of roadbed. The first experiment in using oil to hold down this dust was tried two years ago on the West Jersey Railroad in New Jersey. It proved so successful that a company was formed for extending the work, and during the past summer hundreds of miles of tracks on Long Island, in New Jersey and some of the Eastern States were so treated. The oil used is a cheap, heavy product distilled for the purpose, and it is sprinkled over the tracks and the roadbed on each side by a sprinkling car made for the purpose. It takes about 2,000 gallons of oil to the mile of track for the first sprinkling, and after that a slight sprinkling once a year or so is said to be all that is necessary. The oil does not evaporate, and not only holds the dust down, but is said to help the life of the ties by making them waterproof.—New York Sun.

Setting an Example. It happened in a large public park, and the angry man failed to receive a bit of sympathy from the throng of people who witnessed the scene. He was walking with a pretty woman, evidently his wife, and a small boy, and he had the air of a man who had brought his family out for a pleasure trip, and left his temper at home. Running along the path the boy tripped and fell; tending the air with shrieks entirely disproportionate to his size. The woman ran to pick him up, and sooth him, while the man sank back upon an adjacent seat, entirely oblivious of a small placard tacked upon it, and proceeded to deliver a lengthy lecture to the boy upon the evils of running away anywhere and in the park in particular.

The child's clothes were somewhat dusty from contact with the gravel pathway, and his mother vainly reached for her handkerchief to remove the traces of his mishap. Finally she asked timidly: "James, will you lend me your handkerchief to dust off Robbie's clothes? I am afraid I have lost mine." "That's right," retorted the father, as he fished out the article and threw it at her; "throw them away; I can pay for more. Money's no object. Look at me; do I ever lose anything? Now, do I?" "No, James," replied his wife meekly. "But—there's no but about it. I stick to things, and—"

"Yes, dear," said his wife, meekly, as she contemplated her task and rose to her feet; "I know you stick to things, and, perhaps—her voice grew still meeker—"perhaps that is why you sat down in that freshly painted seat."—Cassel's Saturday Journal.

### What European War Would Cost.

According to M. Bloikh, a Roman writer, it was a computation of what a European war would cost that largely influenced the Czar to issue his peace manifesto. It is estimated that Europe pays yearly for the maintenance of its fleets and armies the sum of \$1,125,000,000, and nearly as much again in the guise of interest on debts contracted for the prosecution of foreign wars. The daily expenditure needed for a conflict in which the five great continental powers were engaged would amount to \$20,987,000. Altogether, the annual cost of this European war, exclusive of indirect losses, would, according to the calculations of M. Bloikh, reach the fantastic total of \$8,735,000,000.—New York Journal.

### PATHETIC, YET LUDICROUS.

A Deaf and Dumb Father's Punishment of a Bad Boy.

"I witnessed something the other day that made me feel bad, and at the same time there was a laughable phase to the affair," remarked a Denver resident.

"Out a few doors from where I live, a deaf and dumb couple have been living for several years, and seem to get along with their neighbors better than any of us. The husband has good employment and the wife is a frugal and prudent woman; so, taking everything into consideration, they have gotten quite a nice little home for themselves and some money ahead. But they have one thing that is not a credit to them, and that thing is in the shape of a great big, overgrown boy, that is one of the meaneast evidences of humanity on earth. Some day, if he is not checked, the hangman will get him, but that has nothing to do with the story.

"I was passing by the house yesterday morning, and I noticed that the old man was angry at the boy. Now, the latter can talk and hear as well as anybody, and rather seems to enjoy getting a crowd of boys together and then cursing the old man, just so the other boys will laugh. This time, however, the old man was mad, and did not propose to allow his wayward boy to have his own way. Just as I was passing he motioned me to stop, and then, pulling his hand from behind him, brought to light what shone out in grand style as a newly purchased rawhide. Then I knew there was going to be some fun, and I walked inside the yard. Well, sir, he grabbed that boy, nearly as large as he was, jerked him into a half upright position and then began laying on the leather. The boy began to swear and use language that would shock any neighborhood, but of course the father did not hear a word of it.

"The father quit a second, and then coming over to where I was standing, took out his pencil and paper and asked me in a line or two to tell him what the son said. I wrote out the brutal swear words just as I heard them. He read the words as I wrote them down, and then, fairly shaking with rage, returned to the boy and began anew the work. It was fully ten minutes before that boy was conquered, but when he did give in he was the most penitent fellow you ever saw. Before the old man had finished, half of the neighborhood was present, and congratulated him on taking the boy in hand. Here is what he wrote on a slip of paper when they suggested thanks to him:

"I know he is a bad boy, but the Lord has made me without hearing, so I cannot know these things like you can. I got a letter from a neighbor woman this morning saying that he said bad words about his mother. That is what I punished him for. Please tell me when you hear him say bad words and help me to make a man of him."—Denver Times.

### Concerning Ears and School Rooms.

Defective hearing is a symptom frequently seen in the schoolroom about which teachers should know something. Pupils are sometimes considered backward and stupid, whose worst fault is their deafness. This is not as common, probably, as defective sight, but it is quite as apt to be neglected and to lead to disastrous results. Head colds, diseased conditions of the pharynx and tonsils, and discharges from the external ear are all common with children in this climate, and are all prolific sources of permanent deafness.

The teacher is in a position to detect this symptom early, and should investigate every case of apparent inattention and stupidity, especially if it is noticed that this is accompanied with persistent mouth breathing. The teacher can easily inform herself about a child's hearing, and quite accurately; thus, a child should be able to hear words spoken in a clear, low voice twenty feet away, and should be able to hear a watch tick three feet from either ear. Children of defective hearing should, of course, be seated near the teacher's desk.

### She Drove Sixty Miles to Vote.

An illustration of the determination of Idaho women who have a voice in the result of elections is afforded by the record made by Mrs. R. F. Jeffers of Halley. She has a ranch at Soldier, thirty miles from Halley, and registered in that precinct. Later she removed to Halley and took a transfer to that place, but neglected to record it. At noon on election day she found she could not vote at Halley, and at once secured a team and started for Soldier. It was cold on that high prairie, but the courageous woman faced the wind and urged the team along in order to reach the voting place before the polls closed. This was accomplished and she voted, though several men insisted she had lost her right to vote there. Mrs. Jeffers then drove back to Halley the same night, the total distance covered being sixty miles.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

### Largest Grower of Cotton.

James R. Richardson, who died recently on one of his plantations in Mississippi, was not only the largest individual grower of cotton in the world, but also the owner of one of the best appointed plantations in the country. There is in operation on one of his places in Mississippi a complete railroad, devoted exclusively to the service of the plantation. He employs several thousand hands upon his various places, which are located in Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana.