

### Merry Christmas.

Here's merry Christmas, and it seems  
To call back childhood to the breast,  
With kindly words and laughing gleams;  
With leaping steps that shake the beams;  
With noisy games and happy dreams,  
And all of life that's bright and best.

It comes with music in the hall,  
That stirs the old man in his chair;  
And when the midnight measures fall,  
He'll lead the blithest dance of all,  
Spurning alike the chimney wall,  
And seventy years of wear and tear.

Here's merry Christmas come again;  
Cling heart to heart and hand to hand.  
"Love one another," was the strain  
Of him who never taught in vain;  
And let it sound o'er hill and plain,  
And rule the feast in every land.

—Eliza Cook.

### ONE CHRISTMAS.

I did not expect any company for Christmas, yet could not allow the day to pass without some slight observance, such as decking; so my servant and myself had decked the rooms with evergreens, and were busily engaged making mince pies, crullers, and other indigestible delicacies, when little Ben Shafer rushed into the kitchen exclaiming:

"Miss Bronson, I bin down to post-office for pap, and Miss Lippincott give me this letter for yer 'cause she thort it might be from some of yer folks who're commin' to Christmas with ye!" He threw the letter across the table and ran out again in the same breathless way.

It was from my sister, Mrs. Elwood, who wrote to inform me that herself, her daughter Lucy, and Mr. Mayhew, the gentleman to whom Lucy was engaged, would spend Christmas with me. I had not seen my niece since she had grown to womanhood, and Mr. Mayhew was an entire stranger, consequently after reading the letter I was thrown into a flurry of excitement at this threatened invasion of my quiet home.

"Mary," I said, addressing my servant, "three visitors are coming to spend Christmas with us."

"Yes'm," was the laconic answer.

"I really believe if I should announce the expected arrival of Queen Victoria you would answer yes'm in the same indifferent tone," I observed in a slightly irritated voice, for her cool reception of the, to me, exciting news annoyed me. Her face flushed for a moment, but she made no further comments.

Mary was a comely-looking young woman, with large, soft brown eyes and an abundance of brown hair slightly tinged with red. She was remarkably neat in appearance, reserved and ladylike in manner. She had been with me nearly three years, and during that period I had never seen even the shadow of a smile on her face; yet she was by no means sullen—only very sad. When she first came to live with me her melancholy demeanor had a most depressing effect upon my spirits. Her predecessor had been a rollicking Irish girl, who made the whole household ring with her merry laughter; therefore I found it difficult to accustom myself to Mary's sad ways.

Once I spoke to her about her dejected air, telling her she should always try to look at the bright side of life. She answered in a voice quivering with suppressed sobs.

"Life has no bright side for me, Miss Bronson. All the brightness died out of it years ago."

"You are too young to be so utterly hopeless. Life should hold many attractions for you still."

She shook her head sadly.

"I am twenty-six, but so much numbing, heart-breaking sorrow has been crowded into the past few years that it seems as if I had lived a whole century. Before that I was, oh, so happy—so happy." She uttered the words in a wailing sort of way, and raised her eyes heavenward as if appealing for aid to endure her burden of sorrow, then, clasping her hands convulsively over her forehead, she stood for a moment like a marble image of despair. "Oh, God, help me to bear it patiently!" she sobbed, and hurrying out into the garden she walked for an hour or more up and down the graveled path.

When she returned to the house her violent agitation had subsided and her face assumed its expression of intense sadness. Her strange actions terrified me, and ever after I carefully avoided referring to the grief which had overshadowed her life. Certain days in the year she would appear more dejected than usual. These days, I soon learned, were anniversaries of some dead joy or overwhelming affliction. I finally grew accustomed to her peculiar ways, and finding her so thoroughly good and faithful, treated her like a companion or friend rather than a servant.

When my guests arrived everything was ready. Mary and I had done our

utmost to make the house to appear inviting, and the table covered with a snowy cloth fairly groaned under its weight of tempting viands. She was in a remarkably cheerful mood, and looked really pretty in the dark blue dress, white apron and white muslin cap donned for the occasion. The cap was exceedingly becoming, but greatly altered her appearance. It was a fancy of hers to wear the cap when strangers were present. When we were alone we took our meals together.

As soon as our Christmas greetings were over I led the way into the dining-room. Just then Mary came in with a platter of broiled chicken. I observed Mr. Mayhew glared at her with a startled expression. She went out again without raising her eyes.

"Then you were born in Trenton," said my sister Helen in answer to a former remark made by Mr. Mayhew. "Yes, I was born in Trenton, and lived there until I was twenty-three."

At that moment Mary returned with the dinner-plates. She stopped suddenly and stared at the speaker in a dazed sort of way, apparently forgetful of her errand, until I whispered:

"Put the plates on the table." "Yes'm," she answered. Turning to leave the room she staggered and caught the door frame. I thought nothing of the movement, supposing she had tripped against the rug.

When my guests left the dining-room I went into the kitchen to tell Mary that the dinner was a decided success. I found her sitting on an old settee with her head thrown back against the window ledge. Her face was deathly pale and her eyes closed.

"Are you ill, Mary?" I asked, taking her hand, which was cold and limp. Receiving no answer, I called Helen, and together we succeeded in restoring her to consciousness. She looked around her in a bewildered way, then pointing toward the dining-room, said in a gasping voice:

"Tell him—I forgive—Tell him—I have gone to—baby—I hope he—"

between the struggles for breath I caught the words, "will—happy."

"She has fainted again," remarked Helen, applying the restoratives once more, but this time without success, for we saw no signs of returning life. I was thoroughly alarmed, and sent Mr. Mayhew for the doctor, who, fortunately, was at home, and obeyed the summons instantly. He took Mary's hand, placed his ear over her heart, opened her eyelids and examined the pupils, and then said slowly:

"She is dead. The question is, what has killed her? Heart disease, probably, accelerated by a severe shock."

I was completely unnerved, and wept sincere, heartfelt tears over the inanimate form of my poor Mary, who died as she had lived, making no moan over her burden of pain and sorrow.

In the room Mary occupied was a small box, which I carried down to the parlor, after the first excitement had subsided, thinking that by examining its contents I might gain some clue as to the whereabouts of her friends.

The box contained mementoes such as woman's treasure. There was a package of yellow letters tied together with a bit of faded ribbon, a little blue shoe, still bearing the imprint of a baby foot, a lock of dark hair and a golden curl held together by a band of crape, and several photographs.

"All the letters were evidently written by the same person," said Helen, who had been examining the dates, "and this seems to have been the last one received. It is dated 'Christmas Eve, 1872.' It is addressed to 'My darling wife,' and signed 'Your affectionate husband.'"

"Here is a photograph with something written on the margin. Perhaps you may be able to decipher it, Mr. Mayhew. The words are almost effaced."

I held the picture toward him. He was seated on the sofa, some distance from the table, but came forward and took it from my hand. I saw him start and turn pale, while great beads of perspiration broke out on his forehead.

"George Mayhew, died March, 1873," he read, in a low, trembling voice, while his strong frame shook like an aspen.

He covered his face with his hands and sobbed in a dry, tearless sort of way that made my heart ache with pity.

Lucy and her mother looked at him in blank astonishment.

"Let me see her, Miss Bronson. She was my wife," he said, in tones of the deepest anguish.

I took the lamp, and silently led the way to the room where he had laid her. He threw himself on his knees beside the lounge and placed his cheek against the cold, still face. I put the lamp down and turned away, leaving him alone with his dead.

"Aunt Ruth, what does it all

mean?" demanded Lucy, with an injured air.

"It means that Mary was Mr. Mayhew's wife. Doubtless when his grief is spent he will explain. Such grief is surely born of love," I responded.

Lucy's face grew pallid. She clenched her hands and walked to the other side of the room. I wondered if she was jealous of his dead love.

Despite my remonstrances he passed the night in the room where Mary's body lay. Before I retired he told me the brief story of his wedded life; how he had married Mary Corson, the name I knew her by, when she was a mere child and he had not reached man's estate; how happily they had lived together for three years, and about the baby that had come to strengthen the bond of affection between them.

Then sorrow marked them for its own. He lost his situation, went to Philadelphia hoping to better his fortune, and, as a last resort, shipped on a sailing vessel carrying cargoes from one port to another; was wrecked and all on board were reported lost. But he and two companions were rescued by a ship bound for Liverpool. Through the kindness of the captain who had saved his life he obtained a position in a Liverpool shipping-house. He wrote to his wife apprising her of his safety and told her he would send for her and baby as soon as possible. She never received the letter; for, after waiting week after week for a reply, his own letter was returned to him. Then he asked for leave of absence, and came home only to learn that his child had died about the time he was wrecked, and his wife had gone away, no one knew whither. He employed a detective to continue the search and went back to Liverpool. Later, the detective sent an account of the death of a woman, the name and personal description answering to that of his wife, and for years he had mourned her as dead. He remained in Liverpool, became a partner in the firm, and now had charge of the New York branch.

Poor Mary had believed him dead, and when she recognized him in Lucy's betrothed, her sorrow-stricken heart could bear no more. Had she lived a half hour longer she might have learned that he had been faithful for many years after their separation; but she died believing him false—doubtless thinking he had deserted her.

Mr. Mayhew and Lucy were married last July, and are going to spend Christmas with me.

### The Paris Bourse.

A correspondent, after visiting the Paris bourse, declares himself satisfied that human nature is human nature the world over. He writes: There were the turbulent stock-brokers playing the old Wall street game with no material French variations. Paris has built temples worthy of the Parthenian type to all sorts of gods. The bourse is a temple of mammon, and one of the most beautiful of all. It seems too bad to put a building of such serene and poetic exterior to such a noisy and prosaic purpose. The business conducted within is more like an open market than that of the New York stock brokers. There is no call of stocks and no formality of any kind observed. The public has free access to the brokers on the floor of the bourse. The agents de change move about among the throng like other people, holding their little red books above their heads and taking or executing orders as they hurry along. The more staid and less pushing brokers remain inside the little iron circle which is their special den on the floor, and communicate with their customers across the low railing. This comparatively small space is all that appears to be reserved to the brokers, and is not accessible to the public. Practically, there is perfect freedom of movement and action between buyers and sellers at the Bourse. With the substitution of French for English jargon, the racket was exactly what you can hear in Wall street any busy day. There were the same little brokers who stood on their toes and screamed like cockatoos. There were the same tall and powerful fellows who roared like bulls of Bashan and bore down all opposition as they elbowed their way around. Canards were doing the same work there as in New York. In fact, bluster and bounce are not separable from stock-broking, wherever carried on. And the French are no better or worse than the Americans in that respect. Making the outside tour of the bourse subsequently, I was much amused to observe the elaborate provisions everywhere made for "firing up" the brokers. The square is lined with liquor shops—with absinthe, brandy, American drinks and all kinds of potations placarded in the windows. The brokers evidently had on a full head of steam at 2 P. M., when I visited the bourse.

### PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

Grumblers never work, and workers never grumble.

It is not calling your neighbor names that settles a question.

Occasions do not make a man frail, but they do show what he is.

Genius at first is nothing more than a great capacity for receiving discipline.

Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company and reflection finish him.

All persons are not discreet enough to know how to take things by the right handle.

We attract hearts by the qualities we display; we retain them by the qualities we possess.

There is nothing that is meritorious, but virtue and friendship, and, indeed, friendship itself is but a part of virtue.

It may serve as a comfort to us in all our calamities and afflictions that he that loses anything and gets wisdom by it is a gainer by the loss.

Everyone cannot be beautiful, but they can be sweet-tempered—and a sweet temper gives a loveliness to the face more attractive in the long run than even beauty. Have a smile and a kind word for all, and you will be more admired—nay, loved—than any mere beauty. A sweet temper is to the household what sunshine is to the trees and flowers.

### Unseen Helpers.

"Take, O boatman, thrice thy fee—  
Take, I give it willingly;  
For, invisible to thee,  
Spirits twain have crossed with me."

"Can you give me a day's work?" asked a poor woman of a well-to-do matron.

"You look very delicate," said the lady. "I need some one to wash, but you do not seem strong enough for the work."

"Oh, yes'm; only try me, and you will see. I have been sick and got behindhand, and my children need bread. Besides, Charlie will help carry the water and lift the tubs," concluded the woman, eagerly.

"Who is Charlie?" asked the lady of the house.

"My husband, ma'am," was the low answer.

The woman was engaged and did her work well, but there was something that troubled the mistress of the house greatly. As soon as she left the kitchen the woman would call Charlie, and she would hear her voice talking and laughing, and holding converse with some one; but when she went into the room there would be no one there. The water was carried and the tubs all lifted into their places; but the slight woman who washed was the only person who was visible. When the lady of the house paid her, she said:

"Call your husband; I would like to see him."

"He wouldn't come, ma'am," said the woman, simply. "No one ever sees him but me."

"What do you mean?" asked the lady in astonishment.

"Why, ma'am, Charlie is dead himself, but his spirit comes and helps me—how could I work this way if it didn't? I could no more lift one of those tubs of water than you could, ma'am. He's come ever since I was sick, and helped me that way."

The compassionate lady placed another coin with those she had already given. "For Charlie and the children," she said, with tears in her eyes, and she saw afterward that the sick and wearied mother was helped by living hands.

But there must be many people bearing burdens greater than they are able to, who are helped and made stronger by invisible guides—the memory of some dead Charlie, who lifts unseen the heavy load, with whom they commune as they work. How would the dull routine of daily life be glorified could we for one moment see the angel helper at our side! When the pious monk left his duties to go out on a deed of mercy, he returned to find all his homely work done, and, for one moment, he saw in the doorway of his cell his blessed Master smiling upon him. It may be only a vague theory—the delusion of a sick brain—and there is an infinite sadness in it; but surely

"It is a beautiful belief  
That ever round our head  
Are hovering on angel wings  
The spirits of the dead.

To feel that unseen hands we clasp,  
While feet unheard are gathering round;  
To know that we in faith may grasp  
Celestial guards from Heavenly ground."

Princeton College is to hereafter teach civil service reform. The boys needn't be a bit astonished to see the janitor walk up to the head of the faculty. That's the way the thing works.

### A Ceylon Jungle.

Professor Haeckel has been giving in the German *Rundschau* an account of his travels in Ceylon, and recently he described his first attempt to penetrate a Ceylon jungle. He found it to correspond to the idea of a primeval forest, with its dense and impenetrable mass of trees of all kinds, surrounded and overgrown by a wilderness of creeping and climbing plants of ferns, orchids and other parasites so thickly intertwined as to convince the traveler of the impossibility of his undertaking, except with the aid of axe and fire. After a prolonged struggle he was fain to make good his retreat, stung by mosquitos, bitten by ants, with torn clothes, and arms and legs bleeding from the thorns and prickles with which the climbing hibiscus, the euphorbia, and a multitude of other jungle plants, repulsed every attack made on their impenetrable labyrinth. "But the attempt," observes the professor, "had not been made altogether in vain, for it enabled me to gain a very fair idea of the jungle as a whole, more especially of the magnificence of its trees and creepers, besides introducing me to many separate varieties of animals and vegetable life, which were of the highest interest. Here I saw the magnificent *gloriosa superba*, the poisonous climbing lily of Ceylon, with its red and amber flowers; the prickly *hibiscus radiatus*, with large, cup shape, brimstone colored flowers, deepening to violet in the hollow; while around them fluttered gigantic black butterflies, with blood-red spots on their tail-shaped wings, and chafers and dragon flies flew past with a metallic gleam. But my delight reached its height when on this my first attempt to penetrate a jungle in Ceylon, I came across the two most characteristic of its inhabitants from among the higher classes of animals—parrots and apes. A flock of green parrots flew screaming from a lofty tree as they became aware of the gun in my hand, and at the same moment a herd of great black apes sprang with a growling cry into the thicket. I did not succeed in getting a shot at either one or the other; they appeared to be too familiar with the look of a gun. I was consoled, however, by securing with my first shot a colossal lizard, or iguana, six feet long, of a kind held in much awe by the superstitious natives—*hydrosaurus salvator*. The huge, crocodile-like beast was sunning himself on the edge of a water tank, and the shot hit him so precisely on the head as to kill him at once. Had it struck a less vital part he would probably have dived into the water and disappeared. When seized, the iguana has the power of hitting so sharp a blow with its scaly tail as to cause a severe wound, and even sometimes a broken limb."

### Fashion Notes.

Ultra-fashionable ladies cover their pet lap-dogs with tiny blankets made of a bit of the dress goods of which their own costumes are made.

Train dresses for evening wear are coming back to favor, judging from the unusual number in this style exhibited by leading importers.

Jersey jackets of royal cardinal, olive-green marine blue, velvet or cashmere are very fashionably worn over skirts and tunics of tweed or Roman plaid.

One hundred and fifty yards of ribbon—thirty yards each of terra-cotta, pale blue, olive, cream color, and brown—went to make up the trimmings of a successful toilet from over the sea.

Bewitching little gowns for two-year-old girls are made of soft white wool, crocheted very closely in loops in the stitch known as the brioche, and afterwards cut, leaving a soft and smooth surface. The collar and deep cuffs are made of white plush.

In brocaded satins, velvets, and silks the figures this season are monstrously large in size—dahlias, sunflowers, full-blown roses, passion flowers and vines and the like, all being reproduced in their natural hues and dimensions. These fabrics are designed exclusively for the use of portly dames and dowagers, and never for little women, who would look like lost babes enveloped in a labyrinth of huge buds, blossoms and spreading foliage, two of these floral monstrosities being almost enough to cover their dainty and delicate backs.

A very beautiful wedding dress of white ottoman silk is decorated with long sprays of white snowdrops and orange blossoms, which begin at the shoulders, curve over the chest, and meet at the waist, curving over the hips from thence in panier style, and falling in long trailing garlands over the long court train. The petticoat in front is covered with a similar silk embroidery, and the dainty little silk sandals accompanying the dress are also embroidered to match.

### Now.

Rise! for the day is passing,  
And you lie dreaming on;  
The others have buckled their armor,  
And forth to the fight have gone;  
A place in the ranks awaits you,  
Each man has some part to play;  
The Past and the Future are nothing,  
In the face of the stern To-day.

Rise from your dreams of the Future—  
Of gaining some hard-fought field;  
Of storming some airy fortress,  
Or bidding some giant yield;  
Your future has deeds of glory,  
Of honor (God grant it may!)  
But your arm will never be stronger  
Or the need so great as to-day.

Rise! if the past detains you,  
Her sunshine and storms forget;  
No chains so unworthy to hold you  
As those of a vain regret;  
Sad or bright, she is lifeless ever;  
Cast her phantom arms away,  
Nor look back, save to learn the lesson  
Of a nobler strife to-day.

Rise! for the day is passing;  
The sound that you scarcely hear  
Is the enemy marching to battle;  
Arise! for the foe is here!  
Stay not to sharpen your weapons,  
Or the hour will strike at last,  
When from dreams of a coming battle,  
You may wake to find it past.

Adelaide Proctor.

### PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

NOT TOO FAIR.

He dropped my fair into the box  
With gentle mien and winsome air.  
Black were his socks with purple clocks,  
I noted he was passing fare.  
The modern pie-rate—ten cents a piece.

The best thing to take before singing—breath.

There's very little or no opposition to a red-hot poker.

The right kind of a dog in a yard is a terrier to evil doers.

If a dog loses his paw, and a rooster loses his maw, does it make orphans of them?

Since 1850 eighty-two people have thrown themselves from the Vendome column in Paris.

A New York female pickpocket is so pretty that one of her victims refused to make complaint.

When a man gets into stocks nowadays he is very like the culprit of old times, and suffers in a corresponding degree.

"Yes," said the farmer, "barbed wire fence is expensive, but the hired man doesn't stop to rest every time he climbs it."

An exchange contains an article on "Women who Die Early." Those who light the fire with kerosene in the morning are apt to die early.

"Marie, what's that strange noise at the gate?" "Cats, sir." "Cats! Well, when I was young, cats didn't wear long hats and smoke cigars." "Times are changed, sir."

Clara (looking at the bonnets, etc.): "Don't you think they are very handsome?" Any (whose thoughts are on the other side of the street): "Very, specially the one with the black moustache."

The man who will invent some practical substitute for the ordinary wooden knob for drawers, desk doors, and the like, or some way of keeping the ordinary knob on, will make a fortune and die respected.

Perhaps the casual reader has never at dawn on a buzz saw and felt himself gradually fading away. If so, he doesn't know what it is to form the acquaintance of a somnambulist bulldog in the prime of life.

In dangerous proximity to meanness—"Yes," said Burkenstein, "I came pretty near doing a mean thing to-day. I had a counterfeit half and I was about to give it to a poor blind beggar who asked for alms, but I resisted the temptation and got an old apple woman to change it by buying five cents' worth of fruit."

When a California panther sees a poodle and a young woman he eats the poodle and leaves the young woman. He probably reasons in this way: If I eat the girl and the poodle, that will be only one meal; if I always eat the poodle the girl will always get another, and I can always be sure of another meal.

A London paper describes an American girl in that city who "wears a gown with a flight of embroidered swallows, beginning on her left shoulder and ending at her right foot; and swallows also fly about her parasol." The American youth in London is also addicted to "swallows," but they don't begin on his left shoulder—they begin under his nose and run down his throat.

A scholar in a public school who had been over the map of Asia, was reviewed by the teacher, with the following result: "What is geography?" "A big book." "What is the earth composed of?" "Mud." "No; land and water." "Well, that makes mud, don't it?" "What is the shape of the earth?" "Flat." "You know better, if I should dig a hole through the earth where would I come out at?" "Out of the hole."