

CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT.

CHRISTMAS.

AN OLD-FASHIONED DITTY.

In days of yore the Baron boid
Was wont at Christmas-tide to hold
In castle hall a solemn feast,
Where all were welcome, knight or priest,
Or squire or clown; the open door
Admitted all—or rich or poor.
Bode poetry crowned the graining board,
All fished, fied, or stream adored.
The cheerer brooch'd his mightiest aie,
The mias-rai told his merriest tale;
Joy reign'd o'er all—a boist'rous glee,
A rauc, unpolished revelry,
Such as might move perennance to scorn
The nature of the later-born:
But meaning 'mid its wildest mirth
"Peace and good will to all on earth!"
Those days are past, nor need we grieve
For their departure if they leave
(As sure they have) the kindly feeling
For wants and woes beyond our healing:
The soothing word, the helping hand,
The timely gift that will not stand
Instead of the old reckless giving
That wastes much in "ridiculous living."
"The good remains; the bannity still
Is seen to flow in many a rill.
But, guided by judicious hand,
It feeds, not murtheres the land,
Nor should we pass without due praise
The Christmas gift of modern days,
The books, whose gilt and splendid cover
Bespeak, at least, the wealthy lover;
The hamper but well-chosen tome,
(The treasure of a future home,
Whose unadorn'd but precious pages
Eclaircise the thoughts of former ages,
What Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton writ,
Or what in modern days is fit,
To name with those immortal bard,
And share the laurel fame award'
To them through in a less degree—
Byron's wild strain, Scott's moral store,
Wordsworth's and Coleridge's moral store,
Or Tennyson's Arthurian lore.
Such Gifts may Christmas still bestow,
May Age and Want the boon relieve,
And Youth and Love the pleasure know
At once to give and to receive,
May still the trusting heart be blest,
May still the fondest hopes prove true,
May still the aged and the distress'd
Find help—as they were wont to do.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

CHARITY GREEN'S GIFT.

"Double fold, and only five cents a yard. It was the cheapest piece o' paid worsted I ever laid my eyes on!" exclaimed to herself Miss Charity Green, the old maid tailor of Allantown, and she unfolded the three-dollar bank-note which she had received the day before for a week and a half's sewing at the Squire's, and smoothed the ragged corners, and looked at it affectionately.
"Six yards'll make me a full dress, and I must have it to wear at cousin Nathan's, as they've sent me their usual invitation to Christmas dinner. I guess I'll step over and get the stuff at once and run up the breadths this evenin', as I've got all them button-holes on Joseph Blake's new coat to make to-morrow, and I've no time to let grass grow under my feet."

Miss Charity Green was a very poor woman who lived by her needle, and rented the "middle-room" in widow Blake's small one-story house. She had a thin, faded face, with nothing attractive about it, except when she smiled, and then little children would be sure to forget all about the wrinkles and the homeliness, and tangle her spools of thread and play with her scissors, which always hung around her neck, fastened with black ribbon, and never dream of stopping or being in the least alarmed by her frequent, "There, there, children! Dear me! I do believe little hands are the busiest in the world! Who ever did see!"

Poor Miss Charity Green! She was that very sad spectacle, a lonely, almost friendless woman, without father or mother, brother or sister, husband or children in the world. Her life was turning its face toward half a century of years; her health, never vigorous, was gradually failing her; and a cold, lonely old age rose up sometimes and appalled her with its chill and gloom. She had to work early and late, for the roof that sheltered and the bread that nourished her. Poor Miss Charity Green!

But as she tied on her straw bonnet that evening, there was a quick knock at the door, and the next moment a little brown curly head, with a pair of eager, bright, dancing eyes was thrust inside.

"Come in, Johnnie, what do you want?" said Miss Charity Green. And if you had heard her voice just then you would have understood something of the secret of her being so general a favorite with children.
"Mother wants to know, Miss Green, if you'll lend her a drawin' o'thea, She'll pay you to-morrow."

"O she needn't be in the least bit o'hurry about that er," answered Miss Green, as she took the little blue cup from the boy's hand. "Do sit down, Johnnie, and warm yourself by the fire."

And the boy sat down in the great arm-chair, while the woman measured the tea in the cover of her tin canister.
"Mother and sisters pretty well to-day, Johnnie!"

"Yes, ma'am, only mother said she felt a little o'rheumatiz in her right shoulder this mornin'."

"Dear me, sez! It won't do for her to let the rheumatiz get hold on her this time o'year. I'll just step out into the shed and get her a little bonnet. I always lay up some every fall, for there's nothin' like it for rheumatiz, as my grandfether used to say."

And as the woman tied up the dried herbs in a piece of brown paper, it struck her that her little neighbor was unusually grave and silent; so half with the purpose of drawing out any concealed trouble which might possess him, Miss Green continued the conversation.

"Well, Johnnie, are you goin' to have a merry Christmas at your house?"

"I don't know," said the boy in a despondent tone of voice, twisting his brown fingers in and out of each other.

"What! you and sisters not going to hang up your stockings?"

"No, ma'am; mother said she could not

afford to give us any presents this year. Ellen and Jane cried all the afternoon about it."

"Well, now, I declare! This is too bad," answered the sympathizing voice of Miss Green, and she silently tied the paper and snipped the thread with her scissors, and as she placed it in the boy's hands she said to him, "Never mind, Johnnie, dear. Pluck up good heart. May be somethin' will turn up about them Christmas presents after all."

"If I was only a little better off now," murmured Miss Charity Green as she rocked herself back and forth in her great arm chair, "them are children shouldn't see without hangin' up their stockings. I'd willingly sell my dinner to buy 'em some presents, for I know just how much store children set by 'em. I shan't take a minutes comfort thinkin' o' the children's disappointment, and yet I don't see how in the world I can prevent it. If I didn't need that plaid dress now—here the woman unclasped her bead purse and drew out the banknote and looked at it wistfully.

"Them children must hang up their stockings, but if they do I must go without my dress, for it's just come to that. One thing's sartin, I couldn't take a minute's comfort there in a new one thinking on Miss Russell's children; no, not if it was the finest satin that ever stood alone," and here Miss Charity Green brought down her foot with solemn emphasis. "I must wear my shabby old silk, and those that don't like the looks must turn their heads 't'other way; for as long as I hold three

dainty rings of real brown hair; and a red bird in a cage pickin' seeds out of a yellow trough; and added to all these was a purple horn of plenty tied with golden ribbons, and filled with sugar plums for each of the children.

Mrs. Russell's faded eyes gleamed with new light as she gazed at the gifts. She gazed at the gifts. She tried to speak but the words choked themselves back in her throat, and she broke down in a sob of tears.

"Well, I do say now, Miss Russell," said her neighbor, attempting in awkward but sincere fashion to comfort her. "Don't give up so. It ain't much, I know, but then we all had to be children once."

"Yes, Miss Green, and it's just the thought o' that and the good times we used to have when I was a wild, careless gal at father's that's even a-most broke my heart ever-since. I told the children they mustn't expect to hang up their stockings this Christmas. You never did see children so put down in your life; they ain't hardly smiled since, and it's seem'd as though we'd had a funeral in the house when I put 'em to bed to-night."

"Well, s'pose now you just get their stockings and we'll slip them in, and you can pin 'em up to the bed post, you know."

Mrs. Russell went to her chest of cherry drawers and brought forth three small, blue and white woollen stockings, and the hearts of the two women were full of a tune of gladness, as they crowded the playthings inside.

"The house won't hold 'em to-morrow

In Love United.

Wilfred Landon and Alice Vane stood side by side in what had been Jonathan Somerton's library at Somerton Hall.

Had been, for he was dead, and his remains were even now on their way to burial. Whose library it would henceforth be remained to be seen.

Wilfred had but this moment arrived, too late for attendance at his old friend's funeral; and yet he and this pale, sweet girl, Alice Vane, were the only two beings for whom, for a number of years past, the strange, cynical old man had shown any interest or affection.

"He was my mother's suitor a whole life time ago," Alice was softly saying, "and the disappointment of his affection soured him. Yet he was kind of heart, and how should I, her orphaned child, have found in him so true a friend? Poor dear Mr. Somerton!"

"My father was a friend of his in his youth," Wilfred said in answer, "and from all I can learn, they quarreled with each other incessantly. They must have a warm regard between them, all the same, or whence his interest in me?" It is, thanks to him, I have been able to devote myself to art, as every instinct of my nature prompted. If I attain to the height of my hopes some day, and become a famous artist, it will be old Jonathan Somerton I shall have to thank for it and also, Alice—yours."

He took her hand as he spoke and drew her toward him.

She came half yielding, half resisting, the color coming and going fitfully upon

denly before his glance of scorn; she felt that he—this man whom she loved—was misunderstanding her.

"You think the speculation would be a losing one," he said, with undisguised contempt. "You might take your youth and beauty to a richer market, and drive a better bargain for them. No doubt you are right. Certainly no one can question your worldly wisdom. I have nothing to offer you but love and a life's devotion. Pardon my presumption—I have been mistaken in you, that is all!"

He was turning coldly and haughtily away, when she caught his arm and detained him—less by that, however, than by a little, almost unconscious, but heartfelt cry of love and pain and grief; he paused, in spite of himself, and his heart thrilled at hearing it.

"It was not of myself I thought," she said, with soft reproaches, "but of you! Can I let you add the burden of my poverty to your own? Can I see your abilities hampered by the expenses of a family? Listen, Wilfred! You know I am an artist's daughter—the child of a man whom the cares of a family dragged down to death. My father's talents, his hopes, his possible career, were all blighted by marriage and poverty. Is it for me—having witnessed what he suffered—to condemn the man who loves me to the same? Oh, never, never! My very love for you—the love you doubt gives me strength and courage to refuse you. But, oh! you wrong me when you doubt my love. For your sake I swear to remain single until you claim me, and

She answered very quietly.

"I am neither willing nor at liberty to do as you require," she said. "I am betrothed already, and my hand can only go where my heart is given, irrespective of fortune, sir. You see my compliance is impossible."

"As is also mine," said Wilfred, rising from his chair and approaching his promised bride. "Here is my chosen and betrothed wife, and I will have no other. Darling," he whispered, bending to kiss her hand, "once again forgive me. How could I ever doubt a heart like yours?"

She looked at him wistfully, and answered low:

"I stand in the way of your fortune just the same, though. But for me you might take this wealth and this chosen bride! Ah! it is I who should say not alone 'forgive,' but, if you choose, 'be free.'"

He looked at her reproachfully.

"To my mind money cannot weigh against love," he said.

The lawyer interrupted them.

"You two agree to marry, then, I understand," said he, "and thus fulfil the conditions of the will. I congratulate you."

That was a universal exclamation of surprise.

"Oh, it is so," he went on. "Here is my letter. Jonathan Somerton gave his two dear children to each other and his fortune to both on condition that they marry before the year is over. You will not quarrel with that proviso, I suppose, you two lovers," he added dryly.

They have the same idiotic little carriages in England, comprising from four to six compartments, each holding eight people in the first and second, and ten persons in the third class compartments. In Bavaria there are fourth class cars or carriages. These are principally used in time of war for the transportation of troops, and are plainly marked, "To contain ten horses or thirty-six men." Save in France the service, such as it is, is everywhere equal, if not superior, to that in England. One has to personally see his baggage in the luggage-van and not only give "trink-gilt" to have it labelled, but also to have it put aboard. The guard is the monarch of the train, and runs it apparently solely in the interest of himself. While he cannot take money for a fare, whether or no, with unblinking coolness he will take a bribe from anybody for anything; and even an officer of the road thinks it quite the proper thing to pay tribute to the guard should he wish to occupy an entire compartment. So far does this guard-tribute go that, so I was told by an English gentleman of standing, a train of thirteen first and second-class carriages moved out of Cologne last week containing sixty-seven people, when there were accommodations for over 450 people, and over 100 persons were left at the station who desired to take this particular train. The guards had sold the exclusiveness of nearly every compartment on this train to individual passengers. In connection with this universal nuisance I have heard it seriously stated that the real reason why the introduction of the American sleeping cars upon continental railway lines could scarcely be effected was the opposition of these very guards, who would thus lose a great portion of their revenue. If you have to travel all night, by slipping a five-mark piece (about \$1.25), or very much less, into the hand of the guard, you will secure an entire compartment, or, at least, one side of one, where you can stretch out at full length, whatever may be the discomforts of other passengers, too poor or too ignorant to employ the same system. A berth in the dirty little sleeping cars that have crept into the service, and which contain about four compartments of four berths each, costs three times as much, and is not half as comfortable, as these sleepers have no accommodations whatever—the conductor, usually a vile fellow, who continually insists upon your purchasing his bad wines, refusing to blacken your boots, brush you or do up your berth in the morning, although he is conductor and porter in one.

WASN'T IN.

The occupant of an office on Congress street west fixed matters one day, in such a shape that any caller had to run the gauntlet of a boy in the ante-room, and as he retired into his den beyond he said to the youth:

"Now, young man, look me in the eye."
"Yes, sir."
"And remember what I say."
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"If any person calls and asks if I am in you must say you don't know. You will then ask their business. If they say it is a financial matter you must come in here, stop a minute, and return and say that I am out of town to take baths for my rheumatism."
"Yes, sir."

It was hardly an hour before a stranger came up, and when asked his business he replied:

"Well, I called on a little errand involving some money."
That was the cue for the boy. He retreated to the back room, to thud to his employer, and returned wink ante-room and reported:

"He has just left for the country on a vacation."
"Then I'll leave a note," said the man, and he sat down and wrote a few lines and his departure. When he had been gone ten minutes the employer came out to read it. It read:

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THE CHILD'S DREAM OF CHRISTMAS.

dollars in my hands them children shan't go without a merry Christmas."

"Oh! that's you! Do come in, Miss Green," and the little, pale, sorrowful-faced, care-worn Mrs. Russell lifted her head from the child's stocking she was darning as her neighbor entered the room.

"Little folks all a-bed?" whispered Miss Green in a low, mysterious tone of voice, as she came into the room with something carefully concealed under her shawl.

"Yes, I sent 'em off an hour ago—poor things!—and a deep sigh heaved the heart of widow Russell—a sigh that was born of wearying cares, and baffled hopes and fainting spirits.

"Well, you see, Miss Russell," still preserving her low, mysterious tones, and slowly uncovering her red merino shawl, revealing several packages in brown paper.

"I thought as it was about Christmas time when little folks would want some fixings—you know children ain't like grown folks anyhow; so I kinder thought I'd slip somethin' into their stockings, for I s'pose you'd ways enough for every penny."

"Oh, Miss Green, you are too good now!"

What a light it was that broke over the pale, worn face of the mother as her eyes fell on the bundles!

"S'pose you jest take a squint at 'em," said the old maid, breaking the small cords and tearing away the wrappers.

First there was a blue drum with red stripes for Johnnie, which his mother knew would faintly throw him into ecstasies; then in a round pink box was a white china tea set for Ellen, with the most diminutive cups and saucers, and the daintiest sugar bowl, and cream mug and water pitcher and for little Jane there was a wax doll, with black eyes, and ruby lips, and small,

mornin'," exclaimed Mrs. Russell. "They'll be as proud as kings and queens."

"Bless their hearts!" said Miss Green. "There ain't no use o' tryin' to get this drum inside."

"Fo, I'll just set it on the mantle. Dear me! I expect I shan't know whether my head's off or on to-morrow mornin' about 7 o'clock."

And so Mrs. Russell's mother heart dwelt on the delight of her children, and Miss Green drank in her words greedily, with frequent ejaculations of wonder and sympathy.

"Unl' how the wind does blow!" said the old maid as she gathered her shawl closer about her head and hastened down the road to her home, while a raw blast struck her in the face. The night was full of the moan of winds and the snarl of black, wintry clouds; but Charity Green did not mind this, for her heart was full of the last words of Mrs. Russell:

"I don't know how to thank you, Miss Green, but you have remembered the widow and the fatherless, and be sure God will remember it of you."

SHells that are covered with a thick skin may be cleaned by steeping in warm water and then rubbing with a stiff brush. Or, if this fails, soak the shell in water, adding a little nitric acid. Polish the new surface with leather, aided by tripoli.

An extremely shabby young man called at G.'s house. "What is your business?" said G. "I have come for my New Year's present."

"But who are you?" "Assistant to the bailiff who arrested you the other day."

Her voice ceased, her head dropped sud-

denly before his glance of scorn; she felt that he—this man whom she loved—was misunderstanding her.

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