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### Poetical.

#### AN ANGEL BY THE HEARTH.

BY FANNY FALLES.

They tell me unseen spirits  
 Around about us glide;  
 Beside the stilly waters  
 Our erring footsteps guide:  
 'Tis pleasant, thus believing  
 Their ministry on earth:  
 I know an angel sitteth  
 This moment by my hearth.

If false-lights, on life's waters,  
 To wreck my soul appear;  
 With finger upward pointing,  
 She turns me with a tear:  
 'Twere base to slight the warning,  
 And count it little worth,  
 Of her, the loving angel,  
 That sitteth by my hearth.

She wins me with caresses  
 From passions dark defies;  
 She guides me when I filter,  
 And strengthens me with smiles;  
 It may be, unseen angels  
 Beside me journey forth,  
 I know that one is sitting  
 This moment by my hearth.

A loving wife—O brothers,  
 An angel here below;  
 Atas! your eyes are hidden  
 Too often 'till they go;  
 Ye upward look while grieving,  
 When they have pass'd from earth;  
 O cherish well, those sitting  
 This moment by the hearth!

### Miscellaneous.

#### The Night Before Christmas.

There are many sunny glimpses, and bits of the picturesque, to be met with in our journey through life, dear reader—don't you think so?

Then, is it not a very foolish thing to plunge gloomily in among the shadows, to avoid meeting with those golden gleams that glide at brilliant intervals, across the pathway of the years?

As the maidens of South America gather fire-floes, to light up, with their soft, pale flames, the masses of their dark hair—even so will a thoughtful man garner up flitting fragments of brightness, that, thro' the aid of the arch magician, Memory, they may illumine the blackness of a present sorrow.

If we walk through the world, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, we shall miss many a wayside flower that might have beguiled, with its mute love-language, leagues of heart weariness. But if we wander in our appointed path with our shining robes about us; with a smile for one, a warm grasp for another, and a spare coin slipped quietly into the outstretched hand of poverty, we shall find the world much nearer heaven than some incredulous persons imagine it to be.

I have a few more words for your ear, gentle reader, this pleasant Christmas eve. Benevolence does not consist in giving coin merely. Cheerful smiles, and kindly words, often do more good than the rich man's purse.

Doubtless there are times when our own griefs lay cold about us, like snow in patches, and the very sun looks wintry, seen through sad eyes; but our sorrows will surely melt away in the reviving warmth of true Faith, and if good seeds have been planted in a proper soil, they will soon put forth green leaves, and after a while will come buds, and blossoms of sweet odor.

There never was a good deed hung noiselessly upon the ebbing wave of time but what scented the air around with its fragrance, and returned rosily to the doer at some future flowing in of the tide. If you practice the amenities to those of adult age, dear reader, you shall do well. You shall do better still, if you extend your graciousness to little children.

To be a sage in reason, and a child at heart, is to be gifted with the best attributes of humanity. It is only a child-man that can love little children dearly, and attach them to him with all the native warmth of their young affections.

When we wrap ourselves in our dignity, we may become objects of wonder and of awe to youthful minds; but we shall fail to win either their reverence, or their love.

The nearer our manliness approaches childlikeness, the nearer we are to heaven, for it implies both purity and simplicity.

It is neither, then, descending, nor ascending, to enter with children into their little sports; to soothe them in their infantile troubles; or to bend your maturer mind to the telling of pretty stories, adapted to the listening ears of the tender group that will gather, on such occasions, and stand in rapt wonder about your knees.

They are the best of auditors, for skepticism is with them an unknown feeling; and while they marvel greatly, they implicitly believe.

And then, their imagination! How vividly it pictures all the personages of the story; and with what an easy readiness their credulity admits all manner of violations of natural laws! The wolf that speaks to little Red Riding Hood, and bids her pull the bobbin of the latch, is for them a veritable wolf endowed with human organs.

They absolutely see the marvellous bean stalk of Jack the Giant Killer shoot up, miles high in the air, and sustain upon its topmost branches another world, where ogres dwell in great castles, and subsist by devouring little children.

The seven league boots, and the coat of invisibility, have a real existence in their imagination. The wonderful achievements of the little hero delighted them beyond measure; and with what shouts of rapturous rejoicing they clap their tiny hands, when the valiant Jack severs the bean stalk with his hatchet, and the huge giant comes toppling down headlong, and stretches his great length, prone and motionless, upon the earth.

When you tell them the story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp, how absolutely breathless is the interest you excite!—Look, how the little mouth partly opens, and the eye becomes fixed, and the countenance changes to an expression of fear, or sorrow, or intense joy, as the marvellous tale progresses.

But the tale is not marvellous to them. They believe it all. They would not thank you to tell them that Aladdin never existed. They see him in his youthful poverty. They are eye witnesses of his meeting with the Dervish. They go down with him into the cavern, and pluck with him the many colored fruit-jewels of the tree. When the mouth of the cavern closes over Aladdin, it shuts them in also. When he rubs the lamp in his despair, they see the genius of the lamp rise out of the ground at their feet. They are among the spectators at the wedding of Aladdin with the Princess, and take an especial delight in the gorgeousness of the ceremony.

Quickly as his magnificent palace rose in the night, they saw it grow, and expand from the foundation stone to the pinnacle of the dome, with all its glorious ornaments, its rich gilding, and its vivid colors.

Their keen eyes detect the character of the disguised magician who goes about selling new lamps for old; and their hearts beat with rapid throbs, as the simple wife of Aladdin exchanges his wonderful talisman for a common household vessel.

And then, when the palace rises suddenly in the air, they are lifted with it likewise, and are borne aloft, and are carried with it into a far country, neither knowing, nor caring whither, but moving wherever the course of the story takes them, and coming back, at length, to the world of their own home, with a sort of dreamy bewilderment, followed by a deep drawn sigh.

But, not alone has a child faith in those wonderfully-written stories, which from the time of Saxon Alfred, have made a willing prisoner of the ear, and plumed the rapt fancy of the young mind for exursive flights into an ideal world.

He believes, as readily, in the oral traditions which have descended from father to son through many centuries, and though tricky fairies that once fed on honey dew, and rocked themselves to sleep in the chalice of flowers; or danced gay dances in circles upon the green sward—circles made darker by the pressure of their tiny feet have strangely disappeared from the sophisticated eyes of modern people, the child still throws himself back into the mediæval ages, and dwelling with the cottor at his rude fireside, admits no shadowy doubts to destroy the perfection of the delicious vision.

For him, too, even now, in his tender years, Santa Claus is a real presence.—Has he not seen him delineated in pictures, stepping down a chimney, bearing on his back that astonishing variety of toys and confections, with part of which he benevolently fills the stockings of all good children, somewhere between the closing in of Christmas eve and the morning of that day

which commemorates the birth of the Saviour of mankind? And so, even to this day, little children hang up their stockings over the fire place, not doubting to find them supplied with good things in some mysterious manner, when they rise at break of day, and slip down stairs, with beating hearts, to seize on the treasure which has come to them while they slept. And do not some of them peep cautiously up the chimney before they retire to rest, to see if Santa Claus is already there; while others gaze at the pendant stockings long and earnestly, hoping to behold them in the act of being filled with their choice contents by invisible hands.

And the father and mother look gravely on with only a slight curve of their lips, and a mutual glancing of eyes. Good aunt Margaret, holding the lamp in one hand and the youngest child by the other, coaxes the children to come to bed; telling them that Santa Claus is a timid gentleman, who loves to bestow his favors in secret, and will not make his appearance while there are any youthful eyes watching for his coming.

And now, dear reader, let us remember in this season of festivity that the poor, also, are, in some sort, children—children of a celestial father; that many of them hang their empty wallets over a darkened hearth, and go to sleep, in humble and pious trust; believing, that in some mysterious and unknown manner, Humanity will come, like the Santa Claus of little children, and gladden their eyes, and strengthen their faith, by its well-timed gifts.

W. H. C.

### The Camel.

The want of good pastures and fresh streams is very unfavorable to cattle, but the camel makes amends to the Tartars of the Ortoz for the absence of the rest. It is the real treasure of the desert; it can remain fifteen days or even a month without eating or drinking, and however miserable the country it always finds something to satisfy it, especially if the soil is impregnated with salt of nitre; plants that other animals will not touch—brambles or even dry wood serve it for food. Yet little as it costs to keep, the camel is more useful than can be imagined out of the countries where Providence has placed it. Its ordinary burden is seven or eight hundred weight, and thus laden it can go forty miles a day. In many Tartar countries they are used to draw the coaches of the king or prince, but this can only be on flat ground for their fleshy feet would not permit them to ascend hills and draw a carriage after them.

Notwithstanding the softness of its foot, however, the camel can walk over the roughest roads, stones, sharp thorns, roots of trees, &c., without being hurt. But if obliged to walk too far, the real sole of its foot wears out, and the flesh is bare. The Tartars, under such circumstances, make it shoes with sheep skin; but if, after this, their journey is still much prolonged, the creature lies down and must be abandoned.

There is nothing the camel dreads, so much as a wet and marshy soil. When it places its foot on mud, and finds it slips, it begins to stagger like a drunken man, and often falls heavily on its side. Every year, towards the spring, the camel loses its hair, and it all goes to the last fragment before the new comes on. For about twenty days, it is as naked as if it had been clean shaven, from head to tail; and then it is extremely sensitive to cold and rain. You may see it shivering all over, like a man exposed without clothes. But by degrees the hair grows again; at first it is extremely fine and beautiful, and when it is once more long and thick the camel can brave the severest frost. It delights then in marching against the north wind, or standing on the top of a hill to be beaten by the tempest and breathe the freezing air. Naturalists have sometimes said, that camels cannot live in cold countries; but they could hardly have meant to speak of Tartar camels, whom the least heat exhausts and who certainly could not bear the climate of Arabia.

The fur of an ordinary camel weighs about ten pounds; it is sometimes as fine as silk. That which the camel has under its neck and along its legs is rough, tufted and black; but the hair in general is reddish or gray. The Tartars do not take any care of it, but suffer it, when it falls off, to be lost. In the places where the camels feed, you see great bunches of it, like old rags blowing about, and sometimes in the hollows and corners of the hills, large quantities will be drifted by the wind. But it is never picked up, or only a small portion of it, to make a coarse sort of sacks or carpets.

A woman residing in Cincinnati, who has been married thirty-four years, and is now in her sixty-ninth autumn, agreeably astonished her husband by presenting him last week, with a pair of twins, bouncing boys, the first children to whom she ever gave birth. Becoming a mother at this period and for the first time, is not a little singular.

### Some Account of Paganini.

The far-famed Italian musician was born in 1781. He is justly celebrated for his wonderful power over that most expressive of all musical instruments, the violin; for the brilliancy of his mechanical execution, and for the pathos of those tones which he used to draw, as it were, waiting forth from that one string, on which, in the latter part of his life, he invariably played. The following is a brief sketch of his childhood, and of his subsequent career as a violinist.

Paganini, when only six years of age, played the violin; at eight, composed his first Sonata; and at nine, made his first public appearance. Other children have shown the same precocity of talent, but their after efforts never equalled his. When thirteen years of age, Paganini commenced his professional tour. At Parma, Pasina, an eminent painter and violin player, to test his powers, brought him a MS. concerto, containing the most difficult passages, and placing in the hands of the boy musician an excellent Straduari violin; "This," said he, "shall be yours, if you can play in a masterly manner this concerto at first sight." "If that is the case," said Paganini, "you may bid adieu to it," and forthwith proceeded with the piece in so exquisite a manner that Pasini was thrown into raptures.

His course as a young man was by no means free from vice and folly, and gambling and looseness of morals sullied his fame. Many crimes have been attributed to him, murder not excepted, all of which his biographer, who traced his whole life, shows to have been the purest inventions. In 1804, however, he broke off his vicious habits, and again commenced severe application to the study of his violin. In this lay the secret of that unapproached mastery which he obtained over the instrument. Gifted by nature with the highest musical genius, he undoubtedly was, but he possessed that which always powerfully aids in the development of genius—perseverance. He has been known to play the same passages in a thousand different ways during ten or twelve hours, and to be completely overwhelmed with fatigue at the end of the day. The severity of this early study sufficiently accounts for what passed for a miracle in his after life, viz: his never practicing.

At the age of 21, he commenced a new musical tour in Italy. At Lucca, he became conductor of the opera concert, and director of music to the Prince Bacciochi, the sister of Napoleon, who regarded him with something more than esteem. Here, on one occasion, he astonished the court by entering the saloon with only two strings to his violin—the first and fourth. On these he played, to the perfect ravishment of his auditory, a duet expressive of jealousy and subsequent reconciliation between two lovers. After it was over, the Princess said to him, "You have performed impossibilities—would not a single string suffice you for your talent?" Paganini, who himself narrates the incident, says, "I promised to make the attempt. The idea delighted me. Some weeks after, I composed my military sonata, 'Napoleon,' which I performed on the 25th of Augst, before a brilliant court. Its success far surpassed my expectations; my predilection for the G string dates from this period." Thus are at once disposed of all the received stories of his being compelled to adopt one string, by having worn out the others during an alleged imprisonment.

His subsequent career in London, Paris, and the principle European capitals, was of the most brilliant and successful character, and the fortune he realized, immense. His death took place at Nice, a Mediterranean seaport, situated on the confines of France and Italy, on the 27th of May, 1840. His last hours are thus affectingly given by an Italian writer:—

"On the last night of his existence, he appeared unusually tranquil. He had slept little. When he awoke, he requested that the curtains of his bed should be drawn aside, to contemplate the moon, which was advancing calmly in the immensity of the pure heavens. While steadfastly gazing at the luminous orb, he again became drowsy, but the murmuring of the neighboring trees awakened in his breast that sweet agitation which is the reality of the beautiful. In this solemn hour he seemed desirous to return to nature all the soft sensations which he was then possessed of; stretching forth his hand towards his enchanted violin—to the faithful companion of his travels—to the magician which had robbed care of its stings—he sent to heaven, with its last sounds, the last sigh of a life which had been all melody."

That instrument he bequeathed to his favorite pupil and friend, Camillo Sivori.

MAD OX.—The New York mirror states that on Wednesday evening last an ox became wild and at the corner of Vandam and Varick streets, tressed a little boy named John Quin into the air. The little sufferer was severely bruised, and received a frightful wound in the head, but is in a fair way of recovery. The enraged animal was shot after repeated attempts, at the corner of Broome and Varick streets.

### Anecdote of Dean Swift.

The following is well authenticated. A gentleman who was in the habit of attending the ministry of Dean Swift, and much addicted to sporting; very frequently sent presents of game to the Deanery. The footman who went to the door complained to his master that the man invariably delivered the game in a very unbecoming manner. 'Tell me,' said the Dean, 'when he comes again, and I will go to the door.'—Soon after, the footman announced to the Dean the man's arrival with another present. The Dean immediately went to the door, and was thus accosted, 'Please my master's sent this hare.' 'Now,' said the Dean, with some appearance of displeasure in his voice and manner, 'that is not the way to deliver a message from your master here; just step within and suppose yourself to be Dean Swift, and give me the hare, and I will go out and come to the door and show you how you ought to deliver your message.' The man having agreed to this temporary exchange of their respective social positions, this eccentric divine immediately took the hare, went out of the house with it, and having taken a short walk up the street, returned and gave a suitable knock at the door. It was immediately opened. 'If you please sir,' said the temporary servant in a most respectful manner, 'my master's compliments, and he wishes you to accept this hare.' 'O! thank you,' said the man, acting the part of the Dean to the very life, and taking out his purse, here is a half-crown for you.' 'It is almost unnecessary to add that the hint was taken, and the man for the future delivered his presents of game with a proper courtesy and respectfulness, receiving with every delivery a trifle for his trouble.

### Sleep.

Man is so constituted, that engaging either in physical or mental labor for a certain number of hours every day a feeling of fatigue is induced and he sinks into a state of unconsciousness for a number of hours, and then awakens with a nature refreshed, and ready to toil for profit or pleasure. It is a necessary part of our existence to enjoy sleep, and the more uninterrupted, the more refreshing it is. It is during the hours of sleep that the electric battery of the nervous system is replenished with invigorating power. It is therefore a matter of no little consequence to examine into the means which will tend to refreshing repose. The state of the body before going to bed, the kind of bed clothes, and ventilation must all be then taken into account. A full meal before going to bed, generally causes unpleasant night visitations and broken sleep; therefore it should be avoided. It is not so refreshing for a person to lie on the back, although many prefer lying on their back, or on the left side.

In regard to the kind of beds most suitable for refreshing slumber, there are differences of opinion: some are advocates for soft, and some for hard beds. The difference between the two is this—the weight of the body on a soft bed presses on a larger surface than on a hard bed, and consequently more comfort is enjoyed. Children should never be allowed to sleep on hard beds, and parents err who suppose that such beds contribute to health, hardening and developing the constitution of children. We have read accounts of a few quilts being good beds for children in the summer; others a corn husk mattress, or a pine board with a piece of woolen laid upon it. The latter kind of a bed is a gross violation of the laws for the preservation of health. Eminent physicians, Dr. Darwin among the number, states that 'hard beds' have frequently proven injurious to the shape of infants. Birds cover their nests for their offspring with the softest down or the most velvety moss. The softness of a bed is no evidence of its being unhealthy, and they have but a poor understanding of the laws of nature who think otherwise.

To render sleep refreshing, the body should be bathed every night, and the bedroom should be of large dimensions; not the life-destroying boxes named 'bed rooms,' for which our cities are famous, owing to the value of city property. From current statistics, it has been observed that the deaths of children of the poorer classes under ten years of age, in proportion to the children of the higher classes, are as ten to five. Poor beds is one cause of this mortality. Above all things, however, it should never be overlooked, that cleanliness tends more to healthful sleep than anything else.

In warm weather, night clothes should be light, and a thin blanket is perhaps the best covering that can be used, but many assert that a cotton sheet is preferable; and if the clothing consists of warm climates are any data whereby we may form a correct opinion, the latter covering must be the best. It is all nonsense to suppose that the Arabian has a sounder constitution, a stronger frame, and can bear more than the civilized man, owing to his squalid

bed, and what is called 'the hardy manner in which he is reared.' The civilized man has a better constitution, if he is a man of temperate habits, and he has also a stronger frame and can endure more fatigue.

The officers of Napoleon's army, at the retreat from Moscow, endured the fatigue far better than the common soldiers, and there are abundant evidences to prove that a generous rearing tends to produce a nobler physical and mental constitution, than that to be reared amid poverty and stunted with hardship. Those who point to the advantages of a barbaric life can find no argument for bettering the condition of the poor classes. It is an old and exploded doctrine, that the children of the poor are healthier and stronger than the children of the rich. If this were true, poverty surely were a blessing. We conclude by saying that good, soft and cleanly beds for children and adults, will tend greatly to promote health, by producing refreshing slumber, especially to the weary workman.

[Scientific American.]

### Who is Kriss Kringle?

It was the day before Christmas—always a day of restless, hopeful excitement among the children; and my thoughts were busy, as is usual at this season, with little plans for increasing the gladness of my happy household. The name of the good genius who presides over toys and sugar plums was often on my lips, but oftener on the lips of my children.

"Who is Kriss Kringle, mamma?" asked a pair of rosy lips, close to my ear, as I stood at the kitchen table, rolling out and cutting cakes.

I turned at the question, and met the earnest gaze of a couple of bright eyes, the roughish owner of which had climbed into a chair for the purpose of taking note of my doings.

I kissed the sweet lips, but did not answer.

"Say, mamma? Who is Kriss Kringle?" persevered the little one.

"Why, don't you know?" said I, smiling.

"No, mamma. Who is he?"

"Why, he is—he is—Kriss Kringle."

"Oh, mamma! Say, won't you tell me!"

"Ask papa when he comes home," I returned evasively.

"I never like deceiving children in any thing. And yet, Christmas after Christmas, I have imposed on them the pleasant fiction of Kriss Kringle, without suffering very severe pangs of conscience. Dear little creatures! how fully they believed, at first, the story; how soberly and confidently they hung their stockings in the chimney corner; with what faith and joy did they receive their many gifts on the never-to-be-forgotten Christmas morning!

Yes, it is a pleasant fiction; and if there be in it a leaven of wrong, it is indeed a small portion.

"But why won't you tell me, mamma?" persisted my little interrogator. "Don't you know Kriss Kringle?"

"I never saw him, dear," said I.

"Has papa seen him?"

"Ask him when he comes home."

"I wish Krissy would bring me, Oh, such an elegant carriage and four horses, with a driver that could get down and go up again."

"If I see him, I'll tell him to bring you just such a nice carriage."

"And will he do it, mamma?" The dear child clasped his hands together with delight.

"I guess so."

"I wish I could see him," he said more soberly and thoughtfully. And then, as if some new impression had crossed his mind, he hastened down from the chair and went gliding from the room.

Half an hour afterwards as I came into the nursery, I saw my three "olive branches," clustered together in a corner, holding grave counsel on some subject of importance; at least to themselves. They became silent at my presence; but soon began to talk aloud. I listened to a few words, but perceived nothing of particular concern; then turned my thoughts away.

"Who is Kriss Kringle, papa?" I heard my cherry-lipped boy asking of Mr. Smith, soon after he came home in the evening.

The answer I did not hear. Enough that the enquirer did not appear satisfied therewith.

At tea-time, the children were not in very good appetite, though in fine spirits.

As soon as the evening meal was over, Mr. Smith went out to buy presents for our little ones, while I took upon myself the task of getting them off early to bed.

A Christmas-tree had been obtained during the day, and it stood in one of the parlors, on a table. Into this parlor the good genius was to descend during the night, and hang on the branches of the tree, or leave upon the table, his gifts for the children. This was our arrangement. The little ones expressed some doubts as to whether Kriss Kringle would come to this particular room; and little "cherry lips" couldn't just see how the genius was going to get down the chimney, when the fire-place was closed up.