



Now the Christmas time is near,  
And the stores are bright, but dear  
Little voices may we hear  
Lispings sweet  
At our feet—  
"Santa Claus."  
And the cherubs are not dumb,  
With their wish: "I want a drum,  
Tell us, won't you, when he'll come?"  
Dear mama—  
Good papa—  
Santa Claus.  
"I want a dolly!" princess cries;  
"One that opens and shuts its eyes."  
Another cherub, still, but wise,  
Mutters, "Bricks,  
Lots of tricks  
Santa Claus."  
Chorus still of cherub joys:  
"Ma, tell him to bring us boys"  
Enives, and skates, and lots of toys."  
Baby sings:  
"We want 'ings—  
Santa Claus."  
So they chatter as they play;  
Curly heads both grave and gay.  
Bring them pleasure while you may;  
Youth will fly,  
Hope will die—  
Santa Claus.

**MISS ENID'S PRESENT.**

BY AUGUSTA HANCOCK.



MISS ENID sat by the fire in the oak parlor, and gazed into the bright flames as if she saw there some very lovely picture of the past. "Pretty Miss Enid" they sometimes called her in the parish, and the adjective was well applied, so sweet was her smile, and so tender and gentle were the soft tones of her voice. And she was not really old, nothing like the conventional old maid of story-book fame. She was simply "Miss Enid"—no longer very young, but with a past that had brought to her gladness and then sorrow, and that had taught her a life-long lesson of the tenderest, purest sympathy in and with the smiles and the tears of others. No one came to Miss Enid for help and went away comfortless; no one ever told her some heartfelt grief, and did not receive sweet consolation in return. Miss Enid's great heart was ever open, ever ready to condole with the bereaved, to smile hopefully upon the young and the ardent toiler, to bring a message of patience to the sick and the sorrowing—in fact, to minister to each and every one as they needed her sweet helpfulness. And yet—and yet—Miss Enid had known sorrow, the greatest and the deepest sorrow that can come into a woman's life and blot out forever the sunshine from the pathway!

And she was thinking of the past to-night, this Christmas time, when every one was happy in the society of their dear ones, and when love and joy were the theme of every hymn and anthem that was sung in the great church yonder, the church she had so recently left. She had been twining beautiful wreaths for pillar and pulpit—wreaths of holly and ivy and box, and the vicarage children had helped her, pricking their small fingers with the sharp holly leaves, and tying her string into unnumbered tangled knots. Yet she loved them so much, the darlings, that she was only too happy to have them near her, to hear their little bright voices, to see their rosy faces, and to feel the soft touch of their soft hands as they hung about her trying so hard to help "dear Miss Enid."

"We love you so much, you know," gray-eyed Angela had said, "that we want to do all we can, and it isn't very much, but we do our best."  
And Bobby had broken in with an account of the Christmas card that he meant to send Miss Enid—a very gorgeous production from the village shop, in the purchase of which and similar treasures the children's morning had been happily spent. And Miss Enid thanked him before and, stooping down to kiss the bonny little face, and assuring him that she would like it very much, and would keep it always in memory of him.

"That's right," the little boy said, heartily. "Tis quite the proper thing to say, isn't it, Marjorie?"  
And Marjorie and Angela nodded assent as the nurse came to carry them off home to the vicarage tea.  
Miss Enid had declined their enthusiastic invitation to accompany them—something had sent her thoughts back to the past with a sudden rush of memory, and the scene around seemed strangely dreamlike and unreal. She fastened up the long ends of her wreath and put on her cloak, and then, before her flight was noticed, she slipped away, out into the darkness and the stillness of the winter's evening. She wanted to be alone, to think—she had not had much time to think lately, there was always so much to do; and then she had been glad of it before, for the memories of Christmas time were generally sad ones. But now she longed for quietude, for the sympathy of her own thoughts and of the dreams of that bitter sweet past, the past that had so strangely affected all her life.

And once in her cosy oak parlor, in her own chair by the bright fireside, she lay back with half closed eyes and gave herself up, for a brief time at any rate, to the memory of the past. It was not a very eventful past, after all, that the children's talk of Christmas had brought back to her. She was young then, that was all, and life was rose-tinted with health and happiness and—should she confess it, even to herself?—love! Yes, she believed that love had come to her, as it comes once, and only once in a lifetime, to every one. And yet no voice had ever whispered to her that a true heart was hers for always—no lips had ever pressed her own in the glad rapture of a lover's kiss—no sweet, strong arms had enfolded her and held her captive—ah, me, no! And yet, and yet! There were half spoken words imprinted in her memory; there were tender glances, and wonderful smiles, such as love, and love only, could awaken; there was a

had only been time for "Good-by" at the gate, for he would not come in, he said—only "Good-by" and a tremulous hand shake—and—he was gone. And Miss Enid's love story had never really begun—it had only been a dream, perhaps, who was to know? So the long years had passed, taking one by one of her loved ones away, as the autumn takes the flowers that are weary with the long, long summertime, until she was left alone—alone in the pretty old house where the swallows built under the eaves in the spring, and where the garden was ablaze with roses and syringa and clematis all through the summer. And the children of the village were her friends, and the vicarage babies came and grew up like flowers around her, weaving themselves into her calm, sweet life, so she had something to love, and no one ever knew how sometimes she longed and yearned until her heart felt almost breaking—for what? Ah, dear hearts, I cannot tell you.

opened again, and some one, tired of waiting outside, came in!  
There was a shout from the children, and a cry, a glad, startled, tender cry, from Miss Enid and then everything else was forgotten, and the astonished bairnes saw their friend's slender form clasped closely in the arms of the "present," who was usually called by them "Uncle Edward."  
"Darling, darling," they heard him say, and just then Angela, with wonderful tact, discovered the pile of parcels addressed to each of them, and suggested that they should carry them into the kitchen to show to old Jennie, which the children were nothing loth to do, leaving the lovers alone to their wonderful new-found bliss!  
"And I've forgotten to give her my Christmas card, after all, and bootiful money-box that I brought on purpose," said Bobby just as he was going to bed on Christmas night, very much aggrieved.  
"Give her the card to-morrow,"



**WHAT KRIS KRINGLE SENT.**

We hung up our stockings on Christmas Eve  
On the knobs at the foot of the bed,  
"We shall find them crammed with beautiful things  
When we wake in the morning," we said.  
We tried very hard to keep awake  
To see Santa Claus when he came,  
But I dropped asleep very quickly indeed,  
And Eveline did the same.

But when the morning began to break  
I suddenly woke up quite,  
And looked to see if dear Santa Claus  
Had thought of us in the night,  
When, oh! how frightened I was! I heard  
A noise by the foot of the bed,  
I whispered, "It must be Santa Claus."  
"Yes, it must be," Eveline said.

We waited to see what his face would be,  
And my heart went pit-a-pat-pat  
(And Eveline said hers did the same),  
"Till we heard the miaow of a cat.  
There were two little kitties. A lovely present  
For Christmas, I think, don't you?  
And father says, "Well, it was Santa Claus,"  
And Eveline says so too.

face—a beautiful, brave face that dwelt safely shined forever in the depths of Miss Enid's heart—the face of one who had surely, surely loved her once, in the long ago!  
And she fancied sometimes that he meant to tell her so, that the words had trembled on his lips, the words that would have changed her life and his so greatly! She had read part of his story in his eyes—clear, grave eyes that were truth and honesty itself—and yet he had never uttered what his heart surely knew well, and she had never listened to the sweetest words that the human ear can hear.  
For the old, old reason. He was poor and proud, and he wanted, oh! so much, to win honor and fame for his love—and he had gone on, meaning perhaps to tell her if the opportunity offered before the end. And suddenly their parting had come, and she had known that he must go away from her. He had told her so himself, walking home from the old church at Christmas time, under the stars. "Wish me God-speed, will you not?" he had asked her, and her quiet voice had bidden him farewell gently and evenly, so that he never knew how deep was the pain in the loving heart, or how near the tears were to the pretty eyes that strove so bravely to smile on him for the last time. And now, he thought to himself, how he would tell her everything! He would ask her to wait for him, to be his wife when he came back again with fame and fortune to lay at her feet. And the stars shone down on them as they went up the quiet lane, as if to bless his plan.

You must picture for yourselves a lonely woman—one who could love deeply, truly, passionately, one to whom little children turned as to a mother's protecting care, to slumber peacefully on her tender bosom or to smile up into the sweet face above them. Picture that to yourselves, and then tell me for what it was that my dear Miss Enid longed so much sometimes. She was very good and sweet and patient, but she was very human, after all—a woman at heart—and every woman yearns at some time or other of her life for love.  
Christmas Day broke white and calm and beautiful, for snow had fallen in the night and the whole world was shining. And Miss Enid, as she sat at her solitary breakfast table, hearing a number of voices without, smiled expectantly. Were not the children coming to give her Christmas presents, and would they not be delighted with the purchases that she had made for them? And she glanced towards a pile of neatly wrapped parcels with some pleasure—they were just the things that she knew they wanted. As the door burst open, the four children crashed in, in even wilder spirit than Christmas Day usually called forth.  
"Merry Kis'mas, Merry Kis'mas," shouted Bobby, holding up his rosy mouth for a kiss. "We've got a big present for you, such a beauty; mother said you would like him."  
"Hush, Bobby," the little girls said hastily; "Miss Enid, dear, don't mind what he says. Mother's love and all of ours, and oh! forgetting all their demureness and flinging two pairs of arms around her neck at once, "we'll bring it this minute. Promise that you'll be pleased."  
But Miss Enid's promise was never made, for at that instant the door

suggested Ronald, and Marjorie said, "And the money-box would do for a wedding present, you know, Bobby. Mother says 'tis to be soon."  
And then she added, what every one said that happy day when they heard of the wanderer's return, "Dear Miss Enid."  
**Christmas in Sweden.**  
At Christmas the royal family of Sweden assemble, as many as are in Stockholm at the time, exchanging presents on Christmas Eve, according to the Swedish custom. The King and Queen give sums of money for charities, which are remembered every year.  
The grand New Year's ball given in the beautiful "White Hall" in the royal palace is the next great public occasion. The absence of the Queen and Crown Princess from the court assemblies detracts much from its former brilliancy and life. The young Princes are much courted and are invited to innumerable balls during the season. Being fond of sports they have a royal ice skating club, which takes the lead among clubs of that kind.  
Every Monday, beginning in January, the court is seen gliding on ice under the glare of lanterns, and dancing on skates to the tones of an orchestra.  
Sleighting parties, balls and the opera occupy gay society in Stockholm during the winter season.  
"I might say that I feel drawn to you," as the turkey remarked to the man who had won him in a raffle.—Buffalo Courier.  
Cobble—"Well, I suppose I'll have to eat my Christmas turkey in a boarding house this year." Stone—"That's tough."—Life.

**CURIOUS FACTS.**

It is computed that a well-known pianist in twelve hours' practice struck 1,030,500 notes.  
One of the curiosities exhibited at a fair in Maine was a horse with a perfectly-formed earbone's foot.  
It is said that the largest bar of gold ever cast was sent to the Bank of California in 1882. It weighed 511 pounds.  
A perfectly white squirrel, with pink eyes, was caught by a hunter near South Windham, Conn., a few days ago.  
A lynx weighing forty pounds was shot in a main street, near the centre of the city of San Diego, Cal., a few days ago.  
Some husbandmen in ancient Egypt paid a land tax of \$8.20 per acre annually. The average tax for the whole country is \$4.56 per acre.  
The skin of the black fox of Kamchatka is the most expensive fur known. Single skins have been known to sell for more than \$1000.  
Only one marble statue of the human figure with eyelashes is known. It is the sleeping Ariadne, one of the gems of the Vatican, and was found in 1503.  
A man who had been an inmate of the Allegan County (Michigan) poor-house for forty-seven years died there last week at the age of seventy-three years.  
At Christiania King Harald Harde, the last of the Vikings, who was killed at Stamford Bridge fighting against the English Harold, is to have a statue.  
The deepest place ever measured in Lake Michigan showed a depth of 870 feet, or about one-sixth of a mile. The mean depth is 325 feet, or one-sixteenth of a mile.  
A grandson of Mrs. Siddons, the tragic muse, fell dead in the London streets the other day. He was an artist, and so poor that he peddled his oil paintings on the sidewalks.  
The Marquis of Zotland, fishing in the Stanley water on the Tay recently, killed a salmon weighing fifty-five pounds. This is the largest salmon heard of for many years in Scotland.  
Mrs. Cavana, who died recently at Iowa Falls, has been fasting most of the time for the past year to reduce her flesh, going for weeks without any substantial food, but the more she fasted the fatter she got.  
The old bell which in early days stood on Belfry Hill, north of the town of Council Grove, Kan., and was rung to warn the settlers of the approach of Indians, is now used by a citizen as a flower pot in his garden spot.  
Japanese houses in the larger cities are of one general shape, two stories high, and put together by a curious method of mortising, at which these people are adepts, not one nail being used throughout the construction of the building.  
It is announced that the historic Fairbanks house in Dedham, Mass., has been offered for sale and is in danger of being destroyed. This is one of the oldest houses in the country. It was built shortly after the settlement of Dedham in 1636.

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We might take up our burden of life again. Not saying even, it might have been,  
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He would relate to his friends marvelously eloquent descriptions of scenes and incidents. In diagnosing his case some physicians said that the covering of the actor's brain was inflamed, others said that he had in some way absorbed into his system some deadly poison. The last named explanation proved to be the true one. It seems that two weeks previously, while the company was passing through Washington, D. C., the Superintendent of the National Botanical Gardens invited Mr. Wheelock to be present at the unfolding of a night-blooming cereus.  
The actor accepted the invitation. At the conclusion of the phenomenon the superintendent invited Mr. Wheelock to take the flower. Taking a penknife from his pocket, the actor cut the flower from its stem. In doing so he inflicted a slight cut upon his right thumb, and in this way he became inoculated with the juice of the flower, which is very powerful and is distilled for use as a homeopathic medicine. The actor had also preserved the flower in alcohol, keeping it near his bed, thus inhaling the slight vapor and emphasizing the influence of the deadly drug. Homeopaths say that there are one or two cases where men have purposely placed themselves under the stimulus of this poison for its effect upon their brain, and while under its influence have dictated weird poetry and extravagant romance.—The Independent.

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Why should we be care-stricken? We have nothing to do with the past, and to do with the future; we have to do with present only, and that even in the trial we are by God's grace strong enough to bear.—Canon Farrar.

**POISONED BY A FLOWER.**  
A singular case was that of the actor, Mr. Joseph Wheelock, who some four or five years ago was said to have been bewitched by a flower. While traveling in the West in pursuit of his profession he suddenly developed peculiar symptoms. He could not sleep, except by taking occasional naps at irregular intervals. Toward midnight, at the close of the performance, though usually a calm, phlegmatic man, he would become unusually talkative, demonstrative and full of enthusiasm. He was usually a man of few words, but on these occasions he would grow very fluent and redundant in expression.  
He would relate to his friends marvelously eloquent descriptions of scenes and incidents. In diagnosing his case some physicians said that the covering of the actor's brain was inflamed, others said that he had in some way absorbed into his system some deadly poison. The last named explanation proved to be the true one. It seems that two weeks previously, while the company was passing through Washington, D. C., the Superintendent of the National Botanical Gardens invited Mr. Wheelock to be present at the unfolding of a night-blooming cereus.  
The actor accepted the invitation. At the conclusion of the phenomenon the superintendent invited Mr. Wheelock to take the flower. Taking a penknife from his pocket, the actor cut the flower from its stem. In doing so he inflicted a slight cut upon his right thumb, and in this way he became inoculated with the juice of the flower, which is very powerful and is distilled for use as a homeopathic medicine. The actor had also preserved the flower in alcohol, keeping it near his bed, thus inhaling the slight vapor and emphasizing the influence of the deadly drug. Homeopaths say that there are one or two cases where men have purposely placed themselves under the stimulus of this poison for its effect upon their brain, and while under its influence have dictated weird poetry and extravagant romance.—The Independent.

**STRIDES OF EUROPEAN ARMIES.**  
The length of the strides in the various European armies is as follows: In the German army it is 31 inches, with a cadence of 112 steps per minute; in the French army, 29 inches, with a cadence of 115 per minute; in the British Army, 30 inches, with a cadence of 116 per minute.—New York Telegram.