

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth Peace, Good Will Toward Men."

EDITH'S CHRISTMAS DREAM.

PLEASE tell me why the Lord came down, a little child at Christmas-tide! Babe Edith of her mother asked nor gave her peace till she replied,
 And all the dear familiar tale repeated to the little maid,
 Why Christ, among the cattle born, was in a stable manger laid;
 And why no lump was needed there, for where the Blessed Infant lay
 A concentrated brightness shone, till all the place was light as day;
 And why the cattle, in their stalls, in adoration bent the knee,
 And, humbly suppliant to the Babe, acknowledged His divinity.
 Then of the Christ-child's blameless life, and of His cruel death, she told,
 While down Babe Edith's paling cheeks the tears of childish pity rolled,
 Till soothed and comforted again, and to her mother's bosom pressed,
 Babe Edith lips her good-night prayer, and lays her little head to rest.
 "Good-night," the mother's kiss is laid upon her darling's sleepy brow;
 "Good-night, and Merry Christmas dear! 'twill soon be Christmas morning now."
 But still the clinging arms detain: "Dear Mamma, is—it really true?
 And do the Christmas Bossies kneel? I don't believe it quite, can you?"



Then thoughtlessly the mother said: "The people in the legends tell
 How even yet the cattle kneel, when rings the midnight Christmas bell—
 The cows and oxen in their stalls, upon their benumbed knees adore,
 As if they saw some wondrous sights, or heard strange music passing o'er.
 "But sleep, my Edith, now, nor try to speculate on themes so vast.
 Our Christmas has no wonderlore, the age of miracles is past.
 "Oh! please, Mamma," Babe Edith cried, "don't tell me such a dreadful thing!
 For then there'd be no Santa Claus, my precious Christmas gifts to bring."
 The little head has drooped aside, the flower-like eyelids softly close,
 The mother, with a last fond kiss, unto her own apartment goes;
 And soon the house is dark and still, while in the firelight's fading glow
 The Christmas stockings swinging hang, like Blue Beard's wives, a ghostly row.
 When, hark! a door is opened slow, a step is on the landing there;
 Babe Edith enters fast asleep, although her eyes so widely stare.



The great house-door has bolts and bars; her childish hands undo them all,
 The cruel winter wind blows in, and whistles through the silent hall,
 The child is in her night-robe clad, her little tender feet are bare,
 No covering guards her golden head, save its bright aureole of hair.

CHRISTMAS SAVED.

Tearful Tribulations and a Timely Triumph.
 BY ROBERT J. BURDETTE.



They missed her ere the morning came at early break of Christmas Day,
 And found her in the manger warm, amid the clover-scented hay,
 They wakened her with kisses fond, while thankful tears their raptures sent;
 Babe Edith whispers: "Mamma, dear, I dreamed I saw the Bossies kneel."

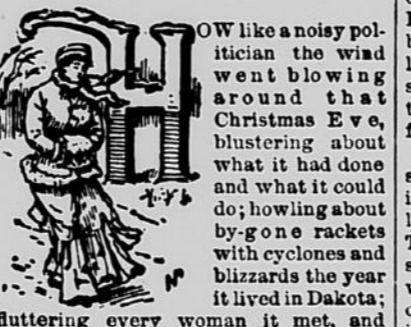
Mrs. M. L. Payne.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON.

A Few Thoughts Incident to the Happy Time—An Apostrophe to Christmas.
 Of all the holiday seasons, that of Christmas-time is, or should be, at least, the most remembered. Coming, as it does, so near the close of the calendar year, and commemorative, as it is, of the birth of the Saviour of the world, it brings much more to those of thoughtful minds and thankful hearts than the mere temporal pleasure of the season's festivities. It suggests retrospective thought on the year so nearly gone; a review of character and conduct, not forgetting an impartial criticism of one's own faults and follies, and new resolves for the better in the future.
 There is also much to incite a feeling of grateful thanks for the manifold blessings of which we are the constant recipients. We can be thankful above all for the coming of Him who suffered and died for the sins of the race, and who, in addition to His sacrifice of Himself, gave us also such grand principles by which to control and regulate human conduct. Verily, a day which ushered in the Light of the World, and gave to its people the priceless boon of redemption and life eternal, is one to be celebrated with joy and thanksgiving. It can awaken in the human heart none but the highest and holiest emotions.
 A writer in the Chicago News, in an "Apostrophe to Christmas," from which we quote, says:
 "O holy Christmas! No iteration can dull the music of thy joyous greetings. In thy right hand thou bringest comfort and good cheer to the children of men; in thy left hand thou bearest a banner whereon is inscribed: 'Freely ye have received, freely give!'
 "With thy magic wand thou touchest the hearts of men, and the nations rejoice. Thou layest thy finger on the purse-strings of the rich, and they are loosened; thou anointest the eyes of dreaming childhood, and straight it sees visions of Elysian fields where mother-love makes fairer paradise than ever poet dreamed.
 "In thy presence men forget their cares, women their trials, and the scepter of household sovereignty passes to the imperious hands of little children.
 "There is a balsam in thy breath for the healing of the sore of heart and distressed. Thou pourest wine and oil into the wounds of those lacerated and bleeding from the hard battle with the world.
 "O holy Christmas! Thou roudest out the year with loving-kindness; thou fillest the earth with feasting and gladness, and the sky with the music of the love of God to man, and the hearts of us all with that peace and that joy which we know and feel and yet can not understand."
 "FEED well the hungry, clothe the poor
 And such as stand in need:
 This is the way to celebrate
 A Christmas true indeed."

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HOW like a noisy politician the wind went blowing around that Christmas Eve, blustering about what it had done and what it could do; howling about by-gone rackets with cyclones and blizzards the year it lived in Dakota; fluttering every woman it met, and twisting the signs and scuffling with the wooden Indians at the cigar stores; whistling in at key-holes and rattling window-shutters and tree-boxes, for all the world like a hilarious wind whose temperance charter had expired, and who had crept under every screen-door on the street, and gone on a regular breeze just because it was Christmas time. And the December sun, looking down at the antics of the wind, loitered along the western sky to watch the fun, getting a little cloudy himself, and growing redder in the face as it came nearer his bed-time, and finally painting the sky red as he said good-night, just as might be expected of a sun that is raised in Boston, and celebrates "fast day" with a "boss race" and a turkey-shoot, and comes West to find room to finish the day in.

And humanity caught the infection of the hour, and made ready to celebrate the holiday in the human manner, by gorging itself into a general dyspepsia. In the palace and in the pig pen, a holiday means pretty much the same thing, an extra allowance of feed and full rations of enjoyment and repentance. Hail, then, oh Merry Christmas time! Eat, drink and be merry, and don't forget the doctor's telephone number. Is it not the holiest holiday of the year? Feed up, then, that our hearts may be warm and our minds enlightened. What, ho, without there, another keg of was-sail! Stay, good friends, the end is not yet. Here's another drawing of rare old pie, fresh tap, that will raise the cockles of your heart. And here's a mountain of ripe old salad that tastes of the wood, and ye couldn't digest it with a stone crusher. Ah, the world was young when the hen in that salad lost her teeth and learned to crow. Down she goes; he liveth well who feedeth well, and in these stirring times of gallop and gulp, these days of trough and nose-bag, he keepeth holy day who gorgeth most in the shortest time. Fall to, with fork and spoon! More plum pudding for the children. Fill them from chin to chin! Ho, there! A drumstick for the baby! What he can't eat he can rub over his face, and what he can't get on his face he can smear over grandma's rich black silk, bless him! Here, thou loitering varlet; more soft victuals for grandpa! What hale old age is there where he with lusty jaws doth gum the cheering hash. Now silence all, while grandpa tells how he and Abner Grizzlepate ate Christmas dinner with the Esquimaux in Yucatan in 1829. What! He chokes! A vest buckle in the hash! Found his senile back! Lead him away! Thank Heaven, we're saved. On with the feed! The improved, automatic, silent feed. This is what plays the Dickens with Christmas.

As the gray twilight of Christmas Eve deepened into night the air fairly quivered with the anticipations of the morrow's jollity. The glittering stars twinkled and shone as never they twinkled on any other night; the gaudy lights in church and home and store laughed back at the stars, and the gleams from the shops where they sold things to eat laughed the longest and loudest. The world and the air and the sky were scintillant with merriment, and it seemed that all creation rejoiced, and there was no dark corner in this happy earth where misery lurked and sorrow dropped her tears in loneliness. But, "There's not a string attuned to mirth
 But has its chord in melancholy."
 Cut that out and paste it in your Hood, unless you have it there already. When every body is laughing, somebody is crying. The time for me to dance is the time for you to weep. You'd think so, if ever you should see me dance. At every feast that ever was spread some mourning dyspeptic sat with gnawing stomach, timidly regaling himself with toast and tea, or else recklessly piling up wrath against the morrow of retribution. At every wedding that ever was or ever will be somebody sits back in a shadowy corner, dimly weeping throughout the ceremony, in damp, audible, distressing

sniffles. And so, on this night of universal rejoicing, amid all the hilarity, the singing and shouting, the music, the merry jostling and the animated confusion, sweet Evelyn Barr was engaged in what her brother Jack called "the great tear act for the Christmas combination—lachrymosis gigantes." Evelyn's eyes were too pretty for tears, but what will you have! The brook that laughs and sings in June will overflow sometimes in April; it is only the cistern that never rises to the passion of a freshet.

Why, nearly two years before this—sit down, it's a long story, and there isn't much in it—Evelyn had danced and laughed and sang her way into poor Tom Applegate's heart, without the slightest effort on her own part, and with a great deal of prompt, earnest co-operation on the part of Tom, though it took him about a year to tell her of it, and then the girls laughed at him and pitted her. At least, they said they did. There were young fellows, a score of them, sighing about Evelyn, weaving her name into acrostics, full of trees and breeze, and passing hour, and opening flower, and sonnets that limped along on unequal feet: handsome young fellows, brilliant young fellows, full of promise and prospects, who worshipped the ground she danced over. And on the outer edge of this circle Tom hovered, a bashful adorer, a faint-hearted lover, who never dared sign his verses, and who often looked as though he were going to say something brilliant, and as often abruptly gave it up, and looked at his hands, on the useful fingers of which he carefully tallied the feet of his sonnets.

But the deep, still fountain in his heart overflowed one night when the summer had sped away and the falling leaf was



warning the woodland orchestra to put up its pipes and close the season. Tom and Evelyn, coming from some concert or prayer-meeting down town, paused a moment at the veranda steps, and a husky "good-night" had just dropped from Tom's lips, when the moon, peeping through a rent in a fleecy veil of clouds had been wearing until the winds had torn it to rags, saw him take Evelyn's hands more tenderly than common, or even the most courtly politeness required, and then, although the moon couldn't hear a word he said, for he spoke so softly that nobody but Evelyn—not even the big black cricket under the flag-stone, that stopped fiddling and listened with all his might—could hear; yet he must have said good-night over again, and said it slowly. For, after the moon had tried on two other clouds without keeping either of them, she happened to look down, just as Tom ceased to speak. And there Evelyn's hands lay still in his, although he had said "good-night," and it was time for him to go; the quivering lashes lifted, the brown eyes looked up into his own, and then, the sweetest little face under the stars lay on Tom's shoulder. And the moon, with a great show of being astonished, as though she had never seen such a performance since she began hovering around the earth, made her mouth into a great round O, and pulled a thick cloud over her face and left Evelyn there, crying on Tom's shoulder.

Of all things in the world, crying! What under the moon was there to cry about! I don't know, any more than I know why Jacob lifted up his voice and wept when he kissed Rachel. All I know is what the moon saw. She loitered around behind the clouds that night until half-past eleven o'clock, and then went to bed. Just as she pulled the coverlid of the horizon over her head, she looked at the house. It was

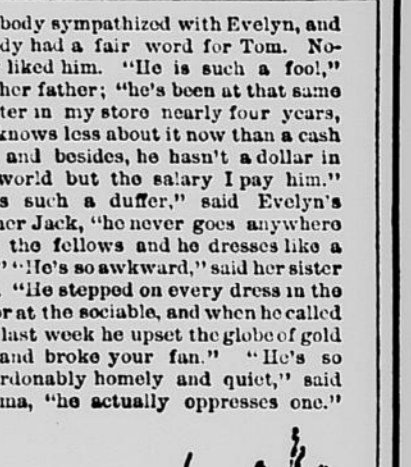
dark and quite still, and there was Tom, standing on the lawn, with clasped hands and bended head, like a man in a dream. "Oh, go to bed, Tom," said the moon, as though she was rehearsing a snare-drum exercise, and she made his shadow as long as the lawn, and a most grotesque caricature of himself, and then put out her light and shut up the world for the night.

"Evelyn," chirped the crickets in the grass, "Tom and Evelyn," called the katydids in the trees, so plainly that it made Tom start; "Evelyn," sang a whippoorwill down by the lake; "Evelyn," whispered the wind and the rustling leaves, and "Evelyn, Evelyn," sang Tom's heart all the way home. "I am afraid to go to sleep," said the poor, happy boy, "because it will be daylight when I waken, and this is only a dream." But when morning dawned he was just as delirious as ever. Think of it! What a discovery he had made! What an unheard-of revelation was this! What measureless happiness was his! He was the first and the only man, in all this world, from Adam to Cleveland, to love and to be loved! No wonder things went wild at the handkerchief counter at Barr & Bolt's that day. But for the other salesman, who was married and had a son nearly as old as Tom in the upholstery, chaos would have reigned over the handkerchiefs that day.

But those two people were the happiest, silliest—What two people! Oh, it is so hard to tell a story to people who don't know anything. Have you never been to school? If you will read the history of the world, edited by Applegate & Barr—the only authentic edition—you will learn, in volume 19, page 1884, that in September of that year the entire population of the world consisted of two people, quite young, living in Onlyville, which was at that time the only inhabited portion of the globe. Well, these two people spoke the strangest language, and were interested in the stupidest things, and would talk for hours about matters that we wouldn't give a moment's thought to. They were deplorably ignorant, too. They believed that people lived in the stars, and they wanted to go to one of them and live on it. A nice place that would be to live, when the smallest star is a mass of furious heat, equal to the burning of eight million cubic miles of coal every second. Then, again, they wanted to go away and live on an island, where there were no dry-goods stores, no bakeries, no groceries, no daily papers—nothing but a cottage and a little stone chapel covered with vines. I suppose Tom would preach and Evelyn would sing in the choir. "Weren't you surprised when I told you how dearly I loved you?" asked Tom. And Evelyn's head nestled down on Tom's breast, and she cooed up a little laugh from it, for it had become a famous laughing, as well as a good, comfortable crying, place, and she said: "You dear old stupid, I knew it six months ago."

Oh, come away. "Come off," to quote Evelyn's brother Jack again; come into the garden and light acigar. I want to show you the plans for the new kitchen and laundry we're going to put up at the State Asylum for the feeble-minded. But when papa came to be told of it, there was a scene. Tom, with a marvelous tact, for which he is unable to account to this day, chose a most singularly appropriate time for approaching Mr. Barr with the subject. He had just been called to account for a grievous mistake in some sale he had made, and in the course of the investigation he was brought into the senior partner's private office where he was informed that his mistake, \$11.75, would be charged against him. This was a godly bite into his week's salary, but Tom, feeling quite willing at that time to buy out the establishment, merely asked permission to say a few words, and then, with his heart beating like a pulse in a fever, and a shorter allowance of breath than he would have believed any man could live on for two seconds, told the astonished merchant that he and Evelyn loved each other, that he wished to ask her father's consent to their engagement, that he—that he was willing to—willing to—and the eyes that glared upon him so fiercely made him forget what he was "willing to," and he never again remembered it. The interview from that point was very brief. Tom went back to his counter with a great lump of lead lying heavily right where his bounding heart used to be, and that night Evelyn cried her pretty eyes to sleep on an unresponsive pillow, because the lapel of a certain four-button coat that had been set apart as a place of lamentation was inaccessible. More than that, it had been permanently removed without the gates by her father's orders, and wearisome nights and troublesome days were appointed unto her.

Nobody sympathized with Evelyn, and nobody had a fair word for Tom. Nobody liked him. "He is such a fool," said her father; "he's been at that same counter in my store nearly four years, and knows less about it now than a cash boy; and besides, he hasn't a dollar in the world but the salary I pay him." "He's such a duffer," said Evelyn's brother Jack, "he never goes anywhere with the fellows and he dresses like a guy." "He's so awkward," said her sister Effie. "He stepped on every dress in the parlor at the sociable, and when he called here last week he upset the globe of gold fish and broke your fan." "He's so unpardonably homely and quiet," said mamma, "he actually oppresses one."



"He's manly, and brilliant, and graceful, and handsome," said Evelyn, defiantly, "and I love him more than all the rest of the world," and as she uttered the last and truest words of her defense she broke down and ran away to cry over a tin-type of an ordinary-looking young fellow with a mustache that faintly lost itself in its own shadow when it felt strong enough to make one. But the luckless has ever been jester in ordinary to Cupid, and the best way to bring two young people together is to keep them apart. There was an eternity of loneliness and separation amounting to four days, and then a half-hour's paradise of kisses and tears, and the next day Master Tom's place at the handkerchief counter knew him no more forever, and Miss Evelyn was scolded by every one in the family who could realize the enormity of her offense in loving a young man who was an object of indifference to other people.

"I will send you away to school," stormed papa; "you shall start to-morrow."
 "Will it be a Kindergarten or a Sunday-school, papa?" asked Evelyn. "I'm too young to attend any other kind."
 But papa was in no jesting humor, and darkly threatened a convent, with barred windows and gloomy walls, and when Evelyn suggested that she couldn't get in because of the prejudice against Baptist nuns, she was sent to her room.

But three days after she saw Tom, who rather favored the convent plan, because his sister was educated at a convent school, and liked it and came out the bluest kind of a Presbyterian. But when Evelyn told papa she would go to please him, he said: "Eh?" and looked at her suspiciously, and at once revoked a plan that had been matured for sending her away down East, to her great-aunt Dorothy, who lived in Maine, in a town which nobody in all the West could pronounce when it was spelled for them, or spell when it was given out.
 "I wish," said the old man, speaking to the clock when he was alone with it, "I wish I could put Tom into an insane asylum or the penitentiary, I don't much care which."

But still Tom retained about enough sense to keep out of the asylum, and as there is no law providing for the imprisonment of a young man for falling in love, papa could do nothing.
 So the time dragged wearily away. One, two, five, ten, fifty years completed their circuits, and notes that run twelve months from the day of Tom's banishment began to fall due, and, occasionally, go to protest. This seems remarkable, until by reference to the only authentic history of the world, from which the facts in this narrative have been mainly compiled, it is found that the period from September, 1884, to December, 1885, really covered a period of fifty years. Some of the nights were many months long; for weeks at a time during that half century the sun did not rise at all, the stars were frequently blotted out, and the world rolled
 (CONTINUED ON THIRD PAGE.)