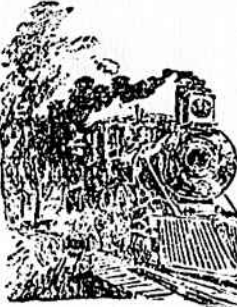


HOMEWARD BOUND AT CHRISTMASTIDE

Take a living thing the straight rails sing
A high, exulting strain,
The coaches reel o'er the shining steel
As we thunder across the plain.
Through night, through day,
we leap away
With rattle and crash and roar,
And our pulses leap as we homeward sweep,
And Christmas comes once more.



The smoke flung back on the shining track,
Like a banner floats and furts,
With a leap and bound, like an unleashed hound,
The engine forward hurts.
Beside us fly the field and sky
And the woods with echoed roar,
And our hearts beat fast as the miles sweep past,
For Christmas comes, once more!

DOROTHY DEANE.

MABEL GIFFORD'S CHRISTMAS

BY ANNE H. WOODRUFF

MABEL GIFFORD was out of sorts. There was an unhappy expression closely approaching a scowl upon her fresh, young face as she gazed moodily from the kitchen window upon a scene bright with the glitter of sunlight upon fresh-fallen snow. An open letter lay upon her lap. Her mother glanced at her anxiously from time to time on her short journeys to and from kitchen to pantry, and at last said gently:

"I am sorry about your disappointment, dear, but I suppose it could not be helped."

"It is all Helen's selfishness," burst out Mabel, hotly. "She promised last summer to spend Christmas with me, and now because she has had an invitation that suits her better she accepts it, no matter how I feel."

Mabel thought of the rows of mince and pumpkin pies on the pantry shelves, the plump turkey waiting to be stuffed, the numerous other dainties prepared for the Christmas holidays, and of the zest and energy with which she had swept and dusted, putting the house in perfect order from cellar to attic, even to decorating the pictures, and every available spot with evergreens, hoping to make the old farmhouse attractive to her fastidious guest. Everything was done, even to the stoning of the raisins for the plum pudding. She was aroused from her reverie by her mother's voice, saying:

"Well, I declare, if there isn't Maria Church plowing through the snow, with a market basket on her arm. I know it must be heavy the way she carries it. Rob," to her son, who had just come in, "if the team is still there and the load off, go after Miss Church and drive her home. It's enough to kill her to get her skirts so drabbed."

"All right, Muz," said the good-natured Rob. "Come along, sis, and don't sit mooning there any longer." They soon overtook the solitary spinster, who ejaculated with gratifying emphasis:

"For the land sakes! Is that you, Rob Gifford? I guess I'm in luck this time," and depositing her trembling form upon the board with a sigh of supreme satisfaction.

After driving a couple of miles they stopped before a small frame house of forlorn and dismal aspect, doubtless owing in part to its aloofness from neighbors.

"Wait here until I come back," said Rob. "I'm going to drive over to see Tom Wilson. I won't be gone long."

speck of dust could be seen anywhere. Rugs and mats of all sizes, shapes and colors were spread here and there, seemingly for adornment rather than use.

"They're here," whispered Mabel's companion, noticing the girl's eyes fixed upon them. By "her" Mabel understood Miss Church to mean the sister who had lived with her and had died a year before.

"Martha had a wonderful gift that way," she continued. "It's surprisin' what she could do right out of her head. They're all her make. I never had no taste for it."

Mabel murmured something inaudible

and I hope that you will do me the kindness to come in her stead. Please do not disappoint me. Your sincere friend, MABEL GIFFORD."

Miss Church was sitting at the window, with her steel-rimmed spectacles astride her nose and her Bible in her lap, when Rob drove up. Curiosity quickly brought her to the door. Utter amazement was depicted upon her countenance when she had read the note.

"Mercy me!" she said, "I don't see what the child wants of me. But if it's a-goin' to be any disappointment my not goin', why I'm a-goin' to go," and she put on her wraps without another word.

Mabel devoted herself to her guest, who enjoyed the day immensely. She was interested in everything—Mabel's fancy work, Mrs. Gifford's recipe for ginger cake, Rob's account of how he caught the mink that had been robbing his henroost, and Mr. Gifford's political views. It was intelligent interest, too, with a touch of quaint humor that made her company very agreeable.

"I had no idea that Maria Church was so well informed," said Mrs. Gifford to her husband, discussing her afterward.

"She's just like her father, old John Church—shrewd, honest and plain-spoken," said Mr. Gifford.

The dinner was pronounced a great success by Miss Church, whose opinion was of value from the fact that she was a judge of good cookery, and was never known to pay undeserved compliments. The crowning part of the day's pleasure was the Christmas tree entertainment in the church in the evening. She beamed on the minister when he made the customary remarks,

you, Rob? Whatever is the matter with the boy. I guess he's got the high-strikes. Good-night."—Chicago Record-Herald.



St. Nick by Automobile.

Good old Saint Nick comes to one of the up-town stores this holiday season in a sadly unpoetic vehicle. There will be no clatter of light hoofs or jingle of sleighbells to mark his passage over rooftops in that vicinity on the night before Christmas. No wicked children, who lie awake to catch him, will hear that jolly old voice urging on Dasher and Prancer, Donner and Blitzen, and all the rest of the famous old four-times-four-in-hand team. In other words, reindeer as a motive power are out of date, and the metropolitan Santa Claus comes this year in an automobile. Nor is this all of the new revelation. The store's decorators have



pictured Kriss as coming, strange to say, from a southerly direction and not out of the frozen north, as he used to appear to the watchful parental eyes of generations gone by. His new-fangled vehicle seems to follow a route that lies over the hills of Staten Island and just touches a corner of South Brooklyn before it leads up toward Liberty's little island and the skyscrapers of Manhattan. To the youthful "higher critics" of the Christmas saint, these disclosures ought to furnish new material for reflection.—New York Sun.

In Santa's Doll Factory.



He prepares to make glad the hearts of good little girls.

BRINGING HOME THE CHRISTMAS TREE

BY KATHARINE FYLE

All morning long the heavy sky
Has seemed to threaten snow,
And over bleak and wintry fields
The crows are flapping low.

The children's voices carry far
On such a winter's day,
And you can hear the hatchet sound
Almost two fields away.

To-morrow night the sturdy fir
Shall decked and lighted be,
And it shall shine with toys and gifts,
A lovely Christmas tree.

All Alike.

Husband—"Do you think we can afford to give away so many Christmas presents, dear?"

Wife—"That's no argument. The people who give us presents can't afford it, either."—Puck.



BRINGING HOME THE CHRISTMAS TREE

(Drawn by Sarah S. Stilwell for Harper's Bazar.)

ble as she contemplated the works of art before her. Scroll work of extraordinary design, bouquets of wonderful flowers of enormous size and painful colors, and animals and birds of astonishing proportions.

"It must be very, very lonely for you," said Mabel with ready sympathy.

"Yes, 'tis," replied Miss Church. "I don't know how to stand it sometimes. When I found Christmas was comin' it pretty nigh made me sick to think of it. When folks git old and uninterested in people don't hanker after havin' 'em round much, and I'd no as I blame 'em any. But when you git used to 'em you miss 'em when they're gone."

"Yes, indeed," said Mabel, fervently, swallowing the lump in her throat with difficulty. "I'm so sorry you have to live here all alone, Miss Church."

"There's them as has ast me to live with them," she said, "but I somehow can't leave my home, where I've lived all my life, and I'd no as I could git along with 'em if I did. There's yer brother come back!"

"Did you notice that rooster, Mim?" he asked with a snort when they had started homeward. "Wasn't he a caution?" but Mabel was in a brown study and did not respond satisfactorily. Her abstraction continued until after supper, making Rob uneasy at such unusual conduct, and giving her mother real concern. Then came the unburdening, followed by consultation, with the result that Rob was dispatched in the morning with the cutter with a note to Miss Church, which read thus:

"Dear Friend: I, too, am lonely this Christmas Day, and disappointed, for the friend I expected has not come,

and rejoiced audibly when little Polly Pratt, a yellow-haired tot, screamed with delight over the huge doll presented to her. She was nearly worn out with excitement and pleasure when the evening was over, and said to Mabel when putting on her wraps while Rob was getting the horse ready to take her home:

"I'm real glad I didn't disappoint you. I never had a better time in my life," and Mabel answered earnestly: "I am so glad you didn't, Miss Church. I never had a nicer Christmas either, and I'm coming to see you often if you will let me."

"Come along, my dear," said Miss Church, heartily. "The oftener the



"POLLY SCREAMED WITH DELIGHT OVER THE BIG DOLL."

better. I don't seem to feel nigh so lonesome as I did. I will let you take off the pattern of them mats when you come. I'd just as lief you would as not. A girl as smart as you be had ought to copy 'em in no time. Is that

RACE GLEANINGS.

Tell the Truth or Nothing.

Nothing is more disgusting and aggravating than the practice of careless or mischievous misrepresentation of what we see and hear. Those meddlers and busybodies with evil tongues who trot around from house to house to smell and bag news and rumors are dangerous machines in society and are capable of doing a vast amount of mischief. In repeating what they see or hear they either ignorantly or carelessly misrepresent or misinterpret facts which oftentimes if correctly told would be productive of no evil results, long years of warm friendship and the peace, prosperity of homes, churches and neighborhoods have been broken up by that class of gadders who have no regard for truth and honesty. "An idle brain," says some one, "is the devil's workshop, and a dog that will bring a bone will carry one." When decent and intelligent people stop giving an audience and encouragement to liars and scandal mongers who enjoy a demoniacal pleasure in stabbing the characters, reputations and views of the innocent and upright, they will cease their wicked and damaging tongue work. It is the duty of all people to speak nothing but the truth or keep silent, for a strict regard for the truth is the foundation upon which character is built. A liar is universally despised and shunned.

A Pessimistic View.

The National Pilot takes a very gloomy view of the religious outlook in the following:

"There is a tidal wave of irreligiosity, we might call it idolatry, sweeping over the land from Negro hearts and hearth stones, and, if it is not speedily checked, in the three decades our people will cease to build churches and condemn everything that is sacred.

"To prophesy our down fall in the face of seeming prosperity will appear to be mere folly to some of our people as did the daring threatenings of our Lord against the Jewish nation when they became so indignant until they invited him out of the temple to behold the magnificence and beauty of their great building. But it was none the less true; for the day came when there was not left one stone on top of the other and the Jews are now scattered over the entire world. What was true with regard to the Jewish nation more likely to be true with regard to the colored people; for the Jews had the first promise of eternal life. The people that serve God may hope to do well; but woe unto every one who chooses to leave the path of rectitude and walks the broad and beaten road of sin."

Anti-Americanisms.

It is very necessary that the Negro give special attention to all questions which concern himself. The Tuskegee Negro Conference, which will convene at Tuskegee next February, seeks to keep the public informed of the substantial progress that is being made by the race, as well as bringing to light the obstacles which confront it.

Stop fighting each other in the matter of getting teachers for public schools. Put aside personal preference and come together on this important matter; for while you are fighting each other, the children are suffering for education.

Mr. Frank Gilmore, at Crests, is a progressive and successful farmer. His success is simply another proof of what a man can do who is determined to forge ahead.

In practicing economy, all members of the household must contribute their mite toward the general result. Every one must cut down on expenses.

Down in Jacksonville, Fla., the colored people have inaugurated a stock company, and will organize a stage-coach service throughout the city exclusively for persons of the race. This has been done on account of a recent ordinance separating the races on street cars.

We hear so much these days of what the South has spent in education for the Negro. All this is true, and for it we are grateful. But all the beneficence he has received is yet equal to the just dues of a darker past still remaining, and that must ever remain unpaid.

Thanksgiving is really a part of true happiness.

Confidence in our own racial integrity will prove one of our greatest bulwarks of protection.

It is not always the truly heroic Christian who gets the most honor among men.

He who is so modest to stay down in the valley will never get on the top of the mountain.

We must organize and co-operate against all the forces that may come against us as a race.

Whatever position in life we occupy we are unworthy of it if we do not discharge its duties with conscientious fidelity.

No chain can support a weight greater than that which its weakest link can sustain, nor can any nation rise higher in the scale of intelligence than the humblest people of that nation.

The Negro's property as far as it goes, is taxed equally with the white man's for public education and the maintenance of the State. This being the case, he should share every benefaction of the State.

Two wrongs may not make one right, but it makes them both write, if they occur between two editors or correspondents.



DECORATING THE HOUSE.

Mabel followed Miss Church into the house. It was very scantily furnished. The floors were bare, but white as soap and water could make them. The table was spotless in its purity. Not a