



RING out, ye joyous New Year bells,
Ring out the old, ring in the new!
Each brazen throat triumphant swells,
As if, old bells, 'twere much to you,
This happy, merry, glad some time,
You're ringing in with joyful chime.

Perhaps 'tis so; so long you've hung,
So long in that old steeple gray,
Methinks each iron, clanging tongue
Is glad to tell its tale to-day.
Each ringing, swinging, tuneful bell
Its twelve month's tale would gladly tell.

A happy twelvemonth 'twas to some;
Ails! that 'twas not so to all!
But joy and grief alike must come,
Into each life some rain must fall.
Oh, tolling, rolling, heavy bells,
How solemn sound your deep-toned knells!

You've rung for life, you've rung for death,
The glad some lay, and last sad rite;
You've sped the old year's parting breath,
And welcome off the New Year bright:
You clanging, twanging, noisy bells,
That each a different story tell!

But, oh, your maddest, blithest tune,
Your gayest, brightest, sweetest lay,
You chime from June to sequent June,
On every happy wedding day.
Then trilling, thrilling, blithely swells
Your pean glad, oh, marriage bells!

But, dear old bells, what'er your song,
Though sad or merry be your lay,
I've loved you well my whole life long,
I'll love you till my dying day,
You rippling, rhythmic, dulcet bells,
Wherein a world of music dwells!

—Miriam Myers, in N. Y. Sun.

CHRISTMAS.

Facts Which Show That This Holiday Is Christ's Birthday.

Is to-day the veritable anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth? It is a question often asked, but never quite satisfactorily answered. Reverent predisposition can always find sufficient evidence to answer yes, while it is to be noted that the question of itself implies a degree of religious skepticism. Men have even stood in pulpits with little enough to do to devote an hour's oratory to the disproof of it. It is quite as certain that Jesus was born on the 25th of December as that Augustus, the emperor under whom he was born, was born in the sixty-third year before him, or that Tiberius, the emperor under whom he died, came into the world forty-two years, one month and nine days before him. That is to say, it is the decent habit of the world to accept what testimony, tradition and history have to offer concerning the birth-days of the great and therewith be content.

It is certain that as early as the year 150 the date we now celebrate was universally recognized among Christians without a question as their Saviour's natal day. That fact alone is all-sufficient for succeeding generations. If all records and allusions to the date of the birth of George Washington were to be blotted from all American writings earlier than 1900 it would be sufficient for posterity that at the beginning of the twentieth century the 22d of February was universally recognized, and that the day was observed as a legal holiday. This is the best foundation we have for the authenticity of December 25 as the birthday of Jesus.

In the year 140 St. Justin Martyr, the first great Christian apologist, said that the best record extant of the birthday of Christ was to be found in the archives at Rome. Addressing the emperor and Roman senate, he said: "There is a certain village in the land of Judea, distant thirty-five stadia from Jerusalem, in which Christ Jesus was born, as ye can learn from the enrollments completed under Cyrenius, your first procurator in Jerusalem." In the year 200 Tertullian said the same thing: "Finally, concerning the census enrollment of Augustus, which the Roman archives preserve as a faithful witness of the Lord's nativity." Any man in the nineteenth century who wants more explicit proof of a matter that is not of great vital moment anyway must have in his mind a private scheme in which the rest of the world can have no possible interest.—Detroit Evening News.

THEIR CHRISTMAS GIFT.

Only a Twelvemonth More of Life, But It Brought Happiness

She had lain for six months in the big white bed in one of the upper rooms of a Michigan avenue house. Her husband was rich; they were both young and they loved each other. One month ago the family physician had taken the husband aside and broken the news to him as gently as only a good physician can.

"It is a malignant growth," he said, finally. "I can hardly be mistaken about that. I am afraid, my dear fellow, that she cannot live many weeks."

And to them, in this situation, the day before Christmas was ushered in.

All day in the big room three doctors had been moving about noiselessly. Across the hallway the husband sat before a desk, pretending, when anyone came into the room, that he was reading. In reality he was eating his heart out with anxiety and the knowledge that one he loved was passing through the valley of the shadow and he powerless to help.

The evening wore slowly on into the night, and just as the midnight bells heralded the coming of the happy holiday one of the soft-footed doctors came quietly into his room.

"The operation has been successful," he said. "The patient has already rallied from the shock. I think I can

promise your wife another year of life. You may go in and see her."

He went into the sick chamber, and physicians, nurses and all left the two—husband and wife—alone together.

In the midst of her suffering she found courage to smile.

"It is my Christmas gift," she whispered, "and yours. We shall have twelve months more of life and happiness together. God is very good to us, darling."

Perhaps people who did not have enough to eat Christmas day may find it in their hearts to give this man and

FATHER'S PRESENTS.

Why He Sometimes Thought They Were Just a Little Too Useful.

They were talking about Christmas presents, the girls and mother and I, when father came in. Then we changed the subject just a little bit, because it was father's presents we were discussing. Father sat down by the stove and rubbed his hands—he had just been out at the barn—and a queer expression slowly settled upon his features.

"Say, mother, and Ned, and girls," he said. "I don't want any on ye to get

his hands, settled himself back comfortably in his big chair, and his eyes twinkled more than ever.

"Well, let's see," he went on, in a ruminating manner, "do you remember the dozen hem-stitched han'kerchiefs that you gave me last Christmas, Leny? I guess I used one of 'em just once. Some way or other (with a genial, impartial glance at the company), Leny and Nell have been usin' of 'em and I've been usin' of Leny and Nell's old torn, stained ones. He, he, I don't know jest how't was, but it's a fact! Then, Ned, do you remember the compass you got me

us ever again thoughtlessly used the dear old man's things.—American Agriculturist.

Concerning Resolutions.

He—I made a lot of good resolutions last year.

She—Not at all. They were all bad.

He—How do you make that out?

She—They wouldn't keep.—Chicago Tribune.

Things Go by Contraries.

"The contrariness of human nature is one of the most remarkable phenomena possible," mused Rev. Dr. Thirdly.

HOW SANTA CLAUS GOT A FALL.

BY FRANK E. WELCH.

A story's related about Santa Claus,
How he once got a terrible fall
While out on his regular Christmas trip,
With his gifts for his little friends all;
And a sad fall it was for the dear old soul—
If the story about it is true,
Which doubtless it is—however, I'll tell
This unique Christmas story to you.

Dear Santa was perched on a high, wabby stool
As he worked at his task so pleasant,
Determined that everyone then in the house
Should receive a nice Christmas present;
He merrily laughed when he thought of the joy
To his dear little friends it would be,
When early next morning they all got up
And beheld the magnificent tree.

The goodies went flying all over the room
As the tree fell on poor Santa's pate,
Frightening Tabby from her cozy nap
On the rug at the side of the grate;
It was a great pity such ruin to see
As was strewn there all over the floor.
Misfortune so dreadful I'm sure never came
Any Christmas to Santa before.



Old Santa had climbed, with a fine Christmas tree,
Down a chimney at just twelve o'clock,
And decked it all over with gifts and toys
Using up a good part of his stock;
There were soldiers and doll-babies, guns and books,
Hanging all about over the tree,
And little wax candles of every hue,
Besides candies as thick as could be.

But, alas! poor Santa, his smile was soon changed
To a comical grimace of pain,
For, leaning far back on his shaky perch
A good view of the pretties to gain,
The jolly old soul lost his balance and fell
To the floor with a horrible crash,
And grabbing the tree brought it down on his head
With a toy-breaking, ruinous smash.

The tumble he got didn't bother him much,
For it happened he landed just right;
But sorry indeed was Santa to see
All around him so sorry a sight;
The damage was great, but he quickly repaired
Everything that was injured at all,
And out on his journey he went forth again
None the worse for his terrible fall.

woman something of that tender pity, which after all binds mankind into one great family with the bonds of human sorrow and human suffering.—Chicago Tribune.

A Happy Thought.

How good it is for those who are bereaved and sorrowful that our Christian festivals point forward and upward as well as backward; that the eternal joy to which we are drawing ever nearer is linked to the earthly joy which has passed away.—Mrs. Charles.

me any presents. 'Tain't no use, you know."

"Why, father?" said Lena, in an aggrieved voice, "we always get you useful presents, don't we? I don't myself believe in things that are not useful."

Father's eyes twinkled. "Yes," he said, "but I sometimes think they are just a little too useful, you know."

for a birthday present last June? It was a nice little compass, and I guess a feller about your size thought so, too, for he's been a-usin' of it ever sence. Then, let's see, there was the silk han'kerchief that mother give me at birthday, and I put it away, choice-like, and the first thing I knew, Leny was a-vearin' it inside her jacket. Yes, my presents are all useful, a leetle bit too useful, mebbe. See the point, don't ye?"

Father's next presents had his name written on each of them, and none of

"When I was a bachelor my female parishioners brought in on an average seven pairs of slippers every Christmas. Now that I am married and have several children in occasional need of chastisement I never receive a single pair."

—Let no pleasure tempt thee, no ambition corrupt thee, no example sway thee to do anything which thou knowest to be evil; so shalt thou always live jollily, for a good conscience is a continual Christmas.—Benjamin Franklin.

THE PASSING YEAR.



Why should we mourn the dying year?
What hath it brought of love or cheer
That is not ours to keep away?
Why meet the coming year with fear?
What can it bring of toil or care
That shall not bless us in its day?

The passing year—the year in view,
Alike to God's good purpose true,
Our hearts, in clearer light, will own.
They go, they come, we will not sigh—
There waits a harvest by and by,
Which fleeting years for us have sown.
—R. M. Offord, in N. Y. Observer.

Holiday Attentions.

"My dear, you're looking very tired to-night."
(That means a Christmas cloak.)
"I'll get your slippers and your pipe—a light."
(That's business, and no joke.)
"You'll kill yourself if you keep working so!"
(That speech is bound to win.)
"Darling, I could not live if you should go!"
(That means a diamond pin.)
"I've had the girl make just the nicest tea!"
(My head has fallen back.)
"The kind you liked best when you married me!"
(Mercy! a fur-trimmed saque.)
"Poor, tired dear! I'll rub your head for you!"
(In mute despair I look.)
"When I go shopping I'll be tired, too!"
(That means—my pocketbook.)
—Atlanta Constitution.

A Good Word.

Joe was a youth of such exceeding popularity with his uncles and aunts that his mother was compelled to call a halt on her too-indulgent brothers and sisters, who, she claimed, with justice, were spoiling the youngster with their reckless generosity and rendering him heedless of the value of property.

"Why, do you know," she said to one of the too-indulgent aunts, to whom she was explaining her trouble, "the little rascal received fifty presents this very Christmas."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed the young person in question, "more than that. I received sixty-two presents."

"Well, I knew it was a great many," sighed his mother, "but I wanted to keep on the safe side. I tried not to exaggerate."

"No," remonstrated Master Joe, in a patronizing tone; "but you should try not to exsmallerate, either."—Harper's Magazine.

Seasonable Size.

Johnny Jones was one of the children who still have faith in Santa Claus. Two days before Christmas he entered the village store and asked for a pair of stockings.

"What size do you want?" inquired the salesman.

"About number twenty," said Johnny. "But, my little man, you can't wear anything larger than a four."

"Yes, but I ain't going to wear them. Day after to-morrow is Christmas."—Youth's Companion.

A Christmas Song.

While stars of Christmas shine,
Lighting the skies,
Let only loving looks
Beam from your eyes.

While bells of Christmas ring
Joyous and clear,
Speak only happy words,
All mirth and cheer.

Give only loving gifts,
And in love take;
Gladden the poor and sad
For love's dear sake.
—Emily Poulsson, in St. Nicholas.

Almost a Hint.

"What did you get for your Christmas?" asked a bachelor of a married friend.

"I got a holiday hint from my wife," he replied, with a sigh that made his pocketbook squeak.

"What was it?"
"A cardboard bearing the inscription: 'The Lord Loveth a Cheerful Giver.'"—Texas Siftings.

A Calculating Boy.

"I think, Tommy," said Mrs. Harlem River, "that I shall put you into long trousers pretty soon."

"Not now, ma, not until after Christmas."

"Why not now?"

"Because you know I'll have to go into short stockings, and they don't hold much."—Texas Siftings.

A Little Mixed.

Fiddle—Christmas is all humbug. I didn't get what I expected, and I knew I shouldn't.

Fiddle—I agree with you. It's a humbug. I got just what I didn't expect, and I knew I would.—Boston Transcript.

A Hint.

I wish you a merry Christmas! Let's try while we're repeating.
The dear old-fashioned greeting,
To add a kind, unselfish act,
And make the wish a blessed fact.
—Youth's Companion.

Still on Hand.

Wife—I am afraid, dearest, you have given me such a big Christmas you haven't anything left for yourself.

Husband—Oh, yes. I still have the stub-end of my check book.—Truth.

The Reason Why.

"I guess I know why Santa Claus has rain-deers," said Jack. "So if there's rain instead of snow they can get here just the same."—Harper's Bazar.

After Christmas.

Johnnie—I wonder why papa is so cross?
Freddie—Maybe Santa Claus left him a bill.—Truth.