



JACK TO HIS MOTHER.
CANNOT see why Santa Claus, When I am fast asleep, My stocking only fills with things So common and so cheap!

He ne'er brings me expensive toys— He never brings a sleigh, A rifle or velocipede Or soldiers blue and gray.

He leaves no trains of cars at all. And I just think it's mean, He fills my stocking to the brim With apples red and green.

Now, there is Mr. McAdoo— He's rich, all people know, And Santa Claus brings lovely things Each Christmas eve for Joe.

He brings him hobby horses, skates, And boats that go by steam, And hollow, spotted pasteboard cows All full of chocolate cream.

And then upon his Christmas tree He hangs red candy dogs, Gold cornucopias, rubber cats, And wind-up jumping frogs.

And I know other rich men's sons With whom it's just the same: The high-priced presents left for them Are more than I can name.

Another poor man's son like me Is little Jimmie Pott, And fifty cents would pay for all The Christmas that he got.

Now if our fathers were so rich They didn't know what to do, Would Santa Claus bring to us boys Such costly presents, too?

—Puck.



UNDER THE SNOW.
TRUE STORY OF NEW YEAR'S EVE.

IT WAS New Year's Eve on Jack Ralston's ranch, and the family and guests were all gathered about the large open fireplace in the living-room, drinking their coffee after a late dinner. The lights were not lit and the party sat in the flickering light of a big fire of crackling pine logs, which threw out quaint shadows in every direction. This party was the usual one that yearly gathered at Jack Ralston's to spend the Christmas holidays with him and his family. As they sat in the cheerful warmth and glow of the fire they listened to the fearful storm that roared outside. A blizzard had been raging for the past three days; the wind howled and shrieked through the mountain peaks, driving the fast-falling snow before it and piling it up in immense drifts against every obstruction. It was a bitter, biting, cold wind, too, as it tore through the valley like a demon seeking whom it might destroy, doing its utmost to completely bury the house from view in the snow; but, sheltered as it was by two giant rocks, one on each side, with the mountain-side at its back, the house was safe, in its snug little spot, even from the storm's greatest fury. The inclement weather had kept the men indoors, and they were grumbling over their enforced idleness, and bragged about the amount of game they would have bagged had they only been able to get out.

"Say, Jack, it's some time yet before midnight. Can't you spin us a yarn?" finally said Bobby Caruthers, after a long pause in the conversation.

"Well, I was just thinking," said Jack, "of just such a night as this, fifteen years ago, when, if it had not been for the pluck of that little woman yonder, I would not be here to-night to see the New Year come in," and he gazed fondly at his wife, who still looked like a young woman as she sat in the flickering light, although on one side sat her son, a fair young giant, and on the other her daughter, a beautiful girl just blossoming into womanhood.

"Let's have it," came in a chorus from the party.

"Well, fill your pipes, and I'll tell you my story. You see, fifteen years ago, I wasn't as prosperous as I am now. I was just starting out ranching, had only been here some three years, then, and where this house now stands we only had a small log cabin. Young Jack over there was only six years old at the time, and Miss Ruth was trotting round, a young three-year-old. The winter had opened badly; snow had come very early, and with it bitter cold weather. We had plenty of fuel, so we managed to keep warm enough. The cabin was in the same spot as this house now is, so the two big rocks helped to keep off the fierceness of the wind; but we were completely buried under the snow, so that we had to dig a tunnel from the front door out into the open air. Myself and all the boys were kept mighty busy taking forage out to spots where the cattle could get to it, and so not starve to death. Well, one morning, about two weeks before Christmas, after a heavy snow-fall, I started out with all hands on one of these trips, intending to gather all the cattle together as much as possible, and to build some large hay-stacks, so that they would have plenty of food for

some time; also, as our grub was getting pretty low, we were going to push through to Dolores, to provision up for the rest of the winter in case we couldn't get through again for some time. I also wanted to get the Christmas presents for the kids; so I told the little wife not to be anxious if I didn't show up for several days.

"Well, we all started, only leaving one of the boys behind, who had been sick and wasn't quite well yet. We had the deuce's own job fixing up the cattle and getting through to Dolores. It took us over a week, and several of the boys were badly frost-bitten. We were ready in a few days to push back again, but another heavy snow-fall came, and another, and another, until really it seemed to be snowing all the time. The days slipped by, one by one, until Christmas came, and there I was snow-bound in Dolores, getting more and more anxious about the folks at home. I knew their grub must be getting low; and, besides, here was Christmas day, and nothing for the kids. I was nearly wild, I can tell you. Well, two days before New Year's there was a let-up, and I made up my mind to push through at any cost. I could only induce one of my men to come with me; the others flatly refused. They said it would be sure death; that another storm was coming up—this time a regular blizzard. At any rate, we started on our fifty-mile ride. The trails were simply one succession of immense drifts, so we made mighty slow progress, as we had to lead a pack-horse. After one day's riding we had only gone twenty-five miles, and a new storm was coming up; and it proved a regular snorter, too.

We dug a hole in the snow and lay down for a few hours' sleep, for we were dead beat; but it was so cold that we were only able to get about forty winks, and started again, so as not to freeze to death.

"The storm increased, getting worse and worse as we went on; the snow, driven by the fierce wind, cut our faces like so many needles, while the bitter cold seemed to numb every faculty and to be slowly freezing out our very lives. My horse then gave out—couldn't move another step, so I let him go and mounted the pack horse. Night then came on, and our whisky, that had given us some strength and warmth, gave out. We didn't know where we were, but thought we couldn't be many miles from home if only we were on the right trail. My man's horse next gave out, and, as I was stronger than he, I made him get on my horse, and, holding on to the saddle, walked along by his side; but only a mile or so further and our last horse dropped down exhausted. What were we to do? I don't know where I got the strength, but I shouldered the pack myself and we both plunged on. I would not give in—the thought that they might be starving at home forced me on. I don't know how

far we walked; I hardly knew in what direction we were going; my one thought was to keep moving. The poor fellow near me was completely gone, and lay down to sleep. I begged him to get up, to try to move. I beat him; I dragged him along; but he only begged to be left alone. I grabbed him by the collar and just pulled him along, stopping to rest every few minutes. I couldn't see; I couldn't feel; I myself longed to lie down in the soft snow and to sleep. Then I thought of the dear ones at home; I would never see them again. This gave me renewed energy, and, dragging my half-lifeless comrade, stumbling under the weight of the pack, I plunged on. Finally I was completely done; I couldn't go another step; I felt that death couldn't be far off. Oh, the utter misery of despair of that moment! I sank down and cried in utter helplessness. I don't know what made me, but I struggled to my feet once more and called again and again, but the storm only mocked me, and I sank down once more. I was so sleepy and tired, and it was so nice and soft lying in the snow. The next thing I remember I was feeling some whisky being poured down my throat, and then that I was being dragged through the snow and that I was home and safe. Well, boys, do you know who did it? Why, it was that little woman sitting so quiet by the fire, there. It appears that she somehow had a presentiment that I was out in the storm and she kept going to the mouth of the tunnel every little while, as she had been doing nearly every night. When I gave up to die I was nearer home than I thought, and she heard my call. She got some whisky, and, making the man hold a torch so that she could find her way back, she plowed through all that snow and storm until she found me, and then by

main force she dragged me back to the house. Not only that, but she went back again and brought in the other poor fellow. What do you think of that for pluck? It was weeks before I got over the effects of that night; but I tell you what, boys, that was the happiest New Year I ever had. It's nearly twelve o'clock; so fill up, all, and make ready to drink the New Year in when the clock strikes, and one toast that I know you'll all join with me in drinking will be: 'The Heroine of New Year's Eve—My Little Wife.'—V. D. Charlier, in Once a Week.

THE TRUE SPIRIT.

"Not to be Ministered Unto, But to Minister."

The New Year has overtaken us and carried us on with it. Those who stop to question ask: "Where?" and "How?"

The first question no one can answer, but the other is for us to reply to by our acceptance of what the year brings us. Our feelings are particularly keen just now. Love seems to burn up brighter on the hearth, no matter how brightly it burned before. Selfishness has for a time been conquered. Our hearts are warm. What has warmed them?

Tell us, grandma, was it the warm shawl which you received at Christmas, or the bright and unusually kind smiles, that warmed your heart most? Could it have been the card case from the thoughtless granddaughter who knew you never made calls, or was it the sweet thought that she had not forgotten you, which made you happy?



LOST IN THE SNOW.

Grandma does not answer, but we will see what mother will say. Was it the pretty potted plants from that kind friend, or the duchess lace handkerchief sent by the boy who thinks nothing good enough for mother? Did these presents lift all that pressure from your heart? Mother shakes her head and we know what she is thinking of. Now let us ask one of the boys about it. I heard one of them saying that the bronze ewer his aunt gave him was just what he wanted and had been waiting for, for eighteen years. Now we think he looked over the little piece of bronze—beyond that and discovered something else which made him happy.

The grand contagion of self-forgetfulness which rages at the Christmas-tide warms all hearts and lightens all burdens. How long will it last? Ah, that is what we must decide, and I want to ask all to join me and take this motto for the New Year: "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister." This will insure us our Christmas feelings for all the year round, and a sweet peace will settle down upon us besides. How about "joy" and "happiness," you say? Well, we cannot be sure about them, but peace is better—best of all, really—quiet, restful happiness, joy under control, activity without friction—peace.

To minister—"this resolve will unlock any door which opens upon peace."

Have I felt slighted? Here is the antidote, I am not to be ministered unto. Have I felt lonely? Let me go to work. I am to minister unto others. I must be idle to be lonely. Have I felt unworthy of the blessings life has brought me? Let my worth or want be forgotten—lost sight of in service. Have my burdens become heavy and discouraging? Let me take hold with another more heavily burdened than I am, and, walking together, the inspiration of companionship will lift many pounds of pressure. Am I intoxicated with joy?

Let me mete it out to others that it may endure. Nothing must be allowed to stop with us. We must pass it on, for we ourselves stagnate when our feelings and experiences do. Let us not confound peace and rest with stagnation. They are sweet and beautiful; it is something to be avoided, even if not foul.

An old Italian proverb says: "He is richly endowed who is cheaply diverted." If we take a view of American life, we shall recognize how much need there is of this rich endowment. People cannot be "cheaply diverted." The fault lies largely in our education. We must learn to divert ourselves more by ministering unto others. Let us turn more often and more lovingly to nature. She is a never-failing source of delight and instruction to those who are able to receive what she can give. Then let us revive the sweet and real friendships that used to be in the "good old times" when the world moved slower and the people had more time. Now the idea of friendship is degraded to mean an acquaintance of variously modified degrees. We all need friends that are true, deep sources of joy and strength. But these, too, must come through ministration. If we would gain the greatest friendship we must be the greatest friend.

I cannot turn my thoughts to other things without taking you with me where I have been since I made the resolve above. We have read the kind wishes of many friends for a "Happy New Year," and thoughts grouped themselves about us which, push them back as we might, persisted in being recognized. Yes, sorrowful thoughts I

mean. How do you treat them? We must not scorn them or shudder before them. Familiarity, remember, blunts the keenest edge. So it is best to consider calmly the possibilities of the greatest grief and suffering. A heart-broken mother told me once she had never thought it possible her child could die, and then I understood her grief better. She was not prepared for it in any way; not even the poorest preparation had been made. Do not, by any means, be morbid, but let us give resigned recognition to all possibilities. We shall be happier and more thankful if we see the sternest forms of sorrow turned away from us and standing in the background. But we must be acquainted with them, or else we shall not be able to discern their distance even. We must be hopeful and cheery, filling up our lives with works of love, and then whatever comes we shall be prepared to meet it—prepared by a charmed life, the secret of which is "not to be ministered unto, but to minister."—Country Gentleman.



CHRISTMAS EVE.

Father—Why, Tom, what are you doing on the roof, this time of night?

Tom—Well, I've got my doubts about that Santa Claus story, and I came here to watch the chimneys, and find out if there is such a person.—Life.

ANOTHER CHRISTMAS.

Some of the Many Things We May Casually Expect with the Day.

Another Christmas day is about to dawn, and the customary thanks are awaiting the customary presents, and everybody is prepared to criticize the Christmas sermons, and compare the weather of this year with the weather of last year, and we are all ready to wish all our friends a "Merry Christmas," and a good many more of them.

We speak softly of those who are gone, and recall with tenderness the gracious memory of their sweet presence; we wonder where we shall be next year at this time, and we all hope for something better and more satisfactory as time goes on.

The young people sigh because Christmas comes but once a year; the old people are sad because it comes so often.

The man of large family and lean pocketbook wishes it did not come at all, and the hungry boy, with his growing appetite, welcomes it as an epoch of plum pudding and turkey, with all the "stuffing" he can eat, and pound cake in unlimited quantities to top off with.

The churches hang their walls with graceful ferns and evergreens; the choir practices for a week beforehand on some noted anthem with zigzag quavers and trills in it, and the good and hard-worked pastor changes pulpits with a brother in some adjacent town, and by this arrangement the two manage to work off their last year's sermons on the new and unsuspecting congregation. And who can blame them? For if it does not require genius to say something entirely new on the same theme for fifty-two days in the year—something that somebody else has not said before—something that will not displease a good-paying member, something that will be thoroughly within the old orthodox standard—if you think it does not require genius, then you had better try to do it, and if you succeed you can name your own salary.

About the time when Christmas puts in an appearance you can safely expect cold weather. Your aunt from the country will come on a visit and stay all winter, and every day she will tell you that there is not money enough in the world to tempt her to live in the city.

The shortest days in the year will be upon you, and it will be dark at four p. m., and the gas bills will be frightful, and the coal bin will lower with the mercury, and all the coal dealers will be building brown-stone fronts, and their wives will wear diamonds in their ears and on their fingers.

All creation will have colds, and the man who has patented a cough sirup and advertised it well will be sure of a bigger income than the president of the United States.

Bright colors will flame on the streets as the pretty girls and the fashionable women go by to look into the shop windows and note the cut prices and observe with complacency the numbers of merchants who are ready to ruin themselves by selling their merchandise ten per cent. below cost! A strange philanthropy which prevails about the time the demand for Christmas and New Year's goods is over.

The merry sleigh—we have always heard it called the "merry sleigh," so we thus dominate the skies along, if there is snow enough, filled with people who enjoy having their ears and toes frozen and their eyes knocked out with snowballs; and the horses like the fun as they toss their heads and jingle their bells and seize the first opportunity to upset the whole business into the deepest drift on the road.—Kate Thorn, in N. Y. Weekly.

MAXIMS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

I do not point out this fact to you that you shall this year be mournful. Make it the best year of all your life—the brightest, the happiest and the best. Imbue your heart with the freshness of the morning, your soul with the sparkle of the dawn. Resolve by good deeds and thoughts to make this the most triumphant year of your life. As a series of short maxims to carry with you through this year, let me give you these:

Make every day begin and end with God.

Be content with what you have.

Have a hearty, joyful family altar in your family circle.

Fill your home with as much good reading and bright music as your means will allow.

Think ill of none, but well of all.

If fortune favors you, think of others.

Don't shun; be real.

Keep busy and you will keep healthy.

Respect all sacred things.

Love God.—Talmage, in Ladies' Home Journal.

This stock-king is monarch of Christmas day.—Brooklyn Life.

AT THE CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT.



Prestidigitator—Hal, what have we here? A live rabbit in this boy's pocket! Now, let us see what else he has concealed about him.



Frightened Youth (producing cigarettes and dime novel)—Here they are, mister; that's all I've got—honest!—Puck.

MAKE THE NEW YEAR A HAPPY ONE.

Every one of our actions finds its reflection in the life of some one else. No matter how humble may be our surroundings, we have an influence on some other life. Individual good cheer means general happiness. If we are bright we brighten our neighbor; the neighbor is an emissary to the community, and the community, in turn, to the great world at large.

Thus in the year before us we have it pretty much in our own hands. National advantages are ours; we need only supply the individual elements. The past is valuable only for the lessons it can teach; the present for its opportunities; the future for its possibilities. Whatever the past year may have meant to you make it dead history. But let the new year be a living issue. With a big, fresh sponge, dripping with the clear water of forgiveness, wipe clean the slate of your heart. Enter the year with a kind thought for everyone. You need not kiss the hand that smote you, but grasp it in cordial good feeling, and let the electricity of your own resolves find its connecting current—which very often exists where we think it not. An ill-natured thought often makes us unhappier than the person to whom it is directed. A happy mind is an elixir, and as are the spirits of the wife in the home, so will be those of the husband, who in turn will carry them into the outer world. Domestic happiness often confers commercial prosperity. The hearthstone is the corner of the counting-room. An unhappy wife makes a blue merchant. As we men live at home, so we work in the outer world.

Therefore, to the thousands, yea, I may say the million and more of women to whom I speak with these words, let me say: Make the new year a happy one in your home; be bright of disposition; carry your cares easy; let your heart be as sunshine, and your life will give warmth to all around you. And thus will you and yours be happy.—Ladies' Home Journal.

A SAFEGUARD.



He remembers his letterwriting experiences of last year.—Chicago Mail.

A SUGGESTION.

Head of Firm—You had better give the office boy a couple of dollars, Mr. Penwiper, for Christmas.

Mr. Penwiper (the bookkeeper)—I think we had better make it a New Year's gift, sir. I have just sent him out with a telegram, and I don't think he will get back by Christmas.—Brooklyn Citizen.

LIKE A WOMAN.

Wife—I must have some more money, my dear. I find that the Christmas tree itself costs very little, but that it takes a great deal to fix it up.

Husband—That's just the way I've found you all these years.—Epoch.

NO FAINT HEART ABOUT HIM.

Jennie (reprovingly)—But we're not under the mistletoe now, Jack!

Jack (unabashed)—So much the nicer!