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THE EDITOR'S LEISURE HOURS

Points and Paragraphs of Things Present, Past and Future.

Some one observes that America is feeding the world. The wheat-fields of the West are constantly sending forth three streams of supplies of the "staff of life." One goes towards the Pacific coast for shipment East; another towards New Orleans, and still another towards the Atlantic seaboard.

A man whose official position in the revenue service enables him to know what he was talking about, told us that the manufacture of intoxicating liquors is increasing. He said one on the outside has no idea what is going on. One reason, he said, for the increase in the manufacture is the low price of grain. While grain is so cheap it is possible to make the liquor cheap, and with a rise in the price of grain the cost of producing liquor would be correspondingly higher, and so a less quantity would be manufactured.

The people of North Carolina are becoming much interested in the question of better free school facilities, and the Legislature will doubtless be asked to take steps looking to lengthening the term of the free schools. It is a matter of much importance and the people of the State are so regarding it. The private school interests in the State seem to be better than for some time. The academies and other private schools are flourishing in almost every county and community, and it is proper that the State improve the free schools as much as the private schools improve, and more if possible.

Recently before the New York Supreme Court an attorney remarked in an extenuation of an acknowledged weakness of his client, "The best of men get drunk." The Judge quickly pronounced his dissent, saying, "The best of men do not get drunk. If there ever was such a time it has gone by in this and all other civilized communities."

A similar incident occurred in the Criminal court in Halifax two weeks ago. A lawyer was questioning a witness as to the character of another person concerned in the case. The witness said that he had seen the man in question drunk. Whereupon the lawyer asked, "Some of the best men in the county get drunk, don't they?" To which we believe the witness assented, but there are many people in the county who would dissent and say with the New York Supreme Court, "The best people do not get drunk."

The subject has sometimes been discovered as to whether or not this is a Christian nation. Of course it is so considered, but when we read from the words of the Wise Man: "When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn," and listen at the wall of distress that is coming upon so many parts of the country, it would seem that in many places the wicked are in authority. Of the seventy millions of people in this country more than twenty-two millions are members of some one of the Christian denominations, and it is estimated that as many as fifty-four millions are nominally Christian, being under the direct influence of the denomination.

But it is with this question as with all others with which we have to do. Seemingly to be and being are quite different things. Many of the men who bear rule in this nation to-day are better than they are supposed by their political enemies; but far too many are men of open and blatant wickedness, such as ought to turn them down from places of position and trust.

"It is very kind of you madam," said the tramp, "to give me such a fine dinner." "Don't mention it, you poor man," said the kind hearted woman. "But I will repay you," said the tramp, gratefully. "I'll tell all my pals that you are a flinty-hearted old termagant that aint never known how to cook nothin' decent, so they'll give your house the go-by, and won't never bother you."

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

ALL THROUGH JESUS.

"EMMANUEL—GOD WITH US."

Some Rambling Thoughts.

BY "NEMO."
(Copyrighted.)

(These "Thoughts," by a layman, are read in five hundred thousand homes, scattered in every State of the Union. In this county they will be found week by week in the columns of this paper only, as we have made arrangements with the author for their exclusive publication.)

To you whose hearts are crushed with dumb sorrows that you cannot tell; to you whose burdens are heavy and chafing; to you whose way is narrow and dark; to you who are puzzled as to the meaning of life and your own existence; to you I write.

Be patient at this season of rest and diversion to ponder the words of a humble soul gazing upward to interpret to himself the lightning-flash of unanimous thought that leaps from country to country at Christmas-tide.

The great and the head-wise are often wrong; while the humble and obscure serve to make and transmit the public opinion that gradually overthrows error. Note that the wise men were turned aside to Jerusalem while the simple shepherds, patiently doing their wearisome duties by night, untroubled by the puzzling questions of the Magi, learned more than these about "peace and good-will."

Since their day each age has through its wisest tried to recreate and interpret anew the fragmentary career of the lowly man. They have darkened his counsel with words, they have smoothed the breadth of his purpose, they have tried to wall around the sea of his goodness, they have attempted to seal up and confine the sunshine of truth. But ever against the limitations of light the monopolists of heaven, the head-wise interpreters, must be set the heart of the common people, who, like the man born blind, cannot argue down sophistries and puzzle out intricate faiths, but can simply fall back upon the unanswerable demonstration of "peace and good-will," whereas I was blind now I see." Because he was so real a man, tempted like themselves, the great common heart has held fast to him through centuries of rapine and licentiousness among his professed interpreters, through ages of creed-making and creed-breaking, through cycles of bloodshed and persecution by the professed exponents of "peace and good-will." Have miracles ceased? It is a miracle that any of his plain teachings should still live; yet steadily the light has climbed the mountain sides of perversion and now shines full strongly down into the valley of the shadow of death that we traverse.

Because then his friends were the lowly, his mourners the tainted and the bereft, his most faithful servants through all ages the outcasts and the obscure; because all this is the People's Age, the age of democracy when the right to think and to learn is no longer denied to us by the lofty ones, may it not have come to pass that this time of all times most remote from the customs, the ideas that surrounded Jesus, is the best fitted after all to measure the length and breadth of the announcement of "peace and good-will" that has so long remained echoless.

And what is he to us, we anxious, burdened workers? Whatever else secretaries may discover in him, to this soul he seems to be "just one of us." We believe that his temptations were not mere theatrie displays, that his suffering was not feigned. We know what agony is, not less did he; in our cases we can too often trace it back to a breach of law, but not so could he, and thus the greater poignancy in his sufferings. We do not lower him by thus thinking of him, but we raise ourselves to a higher, nobler humanity. Surely that was the work he came to do! Because he was a man, manhood is glorious; because he triumphed over evil, manhood is helped to trample temptation under foot; because he remained pure and undefiled, there is ever just before us an exemplar to copy. We discover him to be no splitter of theological hairs; no creator and enforcer of a set belief save in God, the father of all, from which cause we are His sons, and brothers to Jesus. "Deeds, not creeds; deeds are creeds," his forward cry. 'Tis creed enough to see in him a career to imitate. "Creeds first, deeds afterwards," the opposing words of those who, by their human folly, would have darkened the light that rose in the human heart from his career.

Yet some of us are groping onward as if in a night-black passage. We glance bewildered at the events, the dangers, the pleasures of life, and then pass away forever without understanding our relation to it and our fellows, I can imagine All-Father mourning over such wasted force, such profitless existence, when the key of life is already within the world and within our reach:—"Emmanuel; God with us!"

CHRISTMAS TIMES.

It's comin' long—Christmas—with its pleasures an' its joys, An' we're all a-lookin' forward to the meetin' with the boys; An' Sue will come from college, an' Jimmy won't forget, An' we'll all feel mighty thankful that we're all a-livin' yet!

The turkey's been a spreadin' of his feathers—fatin' fine, An' his "gobble, gobble, gobble" seems a darin' us to dine; But the verdict's been agin him, an' his execution's set. An' he makes us feel right happy that we're all a-livin' yet!

CHRISTMAS OUTLOOK.

THE FATAL SEASON.

Toys, Goodies and Gayety.

Selected.
And now, when the landscape takes on an ashen, chilly air, and the last copper leaf has fallen from the mossy twig, we scent the fragrant cheer of Christmas in the near future. For the days that must come between now and the blossoming of the ever-festal anniversary bear about the same relation to it that a long garden-walk does to the castle to which it leads. On each side of this path are lovely flowers, set out in an artistic fashion well calculated to please the refined sense of all appreciative and cultured people. It is a vista of joy that is a guarantee of the character of the castle and of the man who occupies it. It tells you that his pictures and cigars are of the highest color of excellence, and that his furniture is not of the gorgeous, plush-covered, installment kind. It likewise assures you that he would not wear russet shoes in full dress, nor pour his granulated tobacco into the flame by attempting to light his pipe over the lamp chimney.

Even so is the airy avenue that leads to the rosy day which ranks among ordinary days as a proud, prancing palfray would rank in a chaste coterie of superannuated car-horses. And along this avenue what lovely things we see to fill us with sweet and rosy dreams of anticipation. To the small boy the toy-store windows are hot-houses of rare exotics, for the toys bloom like flowers that to him are perennial, and never fade even long after the paint has been knocked off. The rose of his world may fade, like the day upon which there is no school, but the spots remain on the toy leopard after they have vanished, and the stripes are to him as lasting as those of the flag he loves. In the candies he sees beds of spicy carnations and blushing tulips that he longs to cull and fashion into epicurean bouquets, to wear with pride and satisfaction upon his inner boy. And he pauses before these windows of never-ending enchantment, as over the pages of a fairy tale that never becomes the same or loses its subtle, mystic charm. He looks upon the dolls, whether constructed of wax or paper, as real personages, and most important ones, too, and even at the dry-goods window he looks upon the stockings with a tender wishfulness, until he regards them not as articles of wearing-apparel, but as articles made for the express purpose of being suspended by the open fire-place against the coming of Santa Claus. And then there are the pretty holiday books that he opens on the counters—like summer landscapes—with their wealth of illustrations, and appeal to people who do not care for books in July, any more than they care for the seashore and its murmurous billows in the dead of winter, when the winds howl and pile the snow-drifts before your front door until you have literally to pry yourself out to start upon your daily pilgrimage in the trembling kiss of dawn. But perhaps the finest Christmas book is the one you can balance on the right side at this merry season of bills. It is a book of fine reading, to which every man can furnish fitting illustrations from the festive negative of his mind. These pictures, of course have a great deal of Christmas feeling and color in them, and they set forth the suspended market geese as a rich and glowing cameo of never-ending joy, worthy of shining as a lacque upon the grandest castle of ancient Athens or of modern Constantinople. And when he sees the live turkey trying to be happy in a crate, and looking very much like a six-foot man endeavoring to rest on a canvas-back cot with his feet dangling over one end and his head over the other, he listens to the red-whiskered bird that seems to be saying, "Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!"

And every dealer in the town, no matter what line he may be in, is carried away and overjoyed by the coming festival that he seems to fear, that he feels certain that his wares are the proper ones to select for a gift. The barber advises you to take home a bottle of hair restorer, which is useless alike to the man who has or who hasn't hair. The barber booms it as a present gift with the enthusiasm displayed by the skate-dealer and the oil-stove man; and it is really surprising that the same line of tactics is not employed by the manufacturer of hammocks and lawn-mowers. But, nevertheless, the days that lead to Christmas are very dear days, richly fringed, filled and arabesqued with all the rosy flowers of fond anticipation; and as they pass on in a lovely pageant, it is like a procession to a fairy realm. There is music in the silent air and in the silent heart, and it is a music that ripples along with a tender charm, like a summer brook among lilies; and the days march in with gentle and noiseless tread, until they pause at the gate of Christmas, whose snowy wreath sparkles in the frosty air that trembles with songs of cheer and good will, quite as melodious in sentiment as the Christmas bells whose echoes linger in the crisp blue sky.

Mr. R. B. Greeve, merchant of Chilhowie, Va., certifies that he had consumption, was given up to die, sought all medical treatment that money could procure, tried all cough remedies he could hear of, but got no relief; spent many nights sitting up in a chair; was induced to try Dr. King's New Discovery, and was cured by use of two bottles. For past three years has been attending to business, and says Dr. King's New Discovery is the grandest remedy ever made as it has done so much for him and also for others in his community. Dr. King's New Discovery is guaranteed for Coughs, Colds, and Consumption and for all affections of Throat, Chest, and Lungs, there is nothing so good as Dr. King's New Discovery. Trial bottle free at E. T. Whitehead & Co.'s Drug Store. Regular size 50 cents and \$1.00.

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Father was sick and the mortgage on the farm was coming due, I saw in the Christian Advocate where Miss A. M. Fritz of Station A., St. Louis, Mo., would send a sample combination dipper for 18 two-cent stamps, and I ordered one. I saw the dipper could be used as a fruit jar filler; a plain dipper; a fine strainer; a funnel; a strainer funnel; a sick room warming pan and a pint measure. These eight different uses make the dipper such a necessary article that I went to work with it and it sells at very near every house. And in four months I paid off the mortgage I think I can clear as much as \$200 a month. If you need work you can do well by giving this a trial. Miss A. M. Fritz, Station A., St. Louis, Mo., will send you a sample for 18 2 cent stamps. Write at once.
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