



The Log They Cut.
This is the yule of the long ago.
The log they cut in the woods, hot hot
The yule log old that gave its glow
At the Christmas hearth in the olden time
When the bells rang mad with their golden
chime.

IN HOLDA'S WOOD.

How Old Father Christmas Was Born—The German Legend of Kriss Kringle.
BY ESTHER SINGLETON.

CHRISTOPHER was greatly dissatisfied with his home. He was an imaginative lad, entirely out of tune with his surroundings. He lived in a little wooden cottage, curiously carved, that gave him some delight when the shadows of night deepened and drew dark forms and shapes under the long roof which sloped nearly to the ground.

It was not pleasant to return from a land of dreams to the hard facts of life and to the plait and weave the long, green willow wands into baskets at his uncle's command and to hear the scolding tongue of his aunt busy with her household duties.

Finally he determined that he would run away and seek a life for himself; but the day never came until he had completed his fifteenth birthday, which was uncelebrated. It was upon a Christmas Eve that he decided to break away. His aunt had been unusually ill-tempered and as his mind was sure the proper time had arrived for his step into the world, not even the cold of approaching night discouraged him.

How many voices were there—sweet ones, too, unlike any he had ever heard! The wind blew off his cap by way of a joke, and touching him with icy fingers, said, "Come! Come! Come, Kriss! There is much warmth in the forest and joy. Come!" The pine-bow hummed huskily, yet softly: "Come, Kriss, come! It is true; the wind knows. Come! Come!"

As Kriss passed into the forest he felt, although he could not see, the mysterious spirits. Kriss stood still wondering what would occur next, when a young tree about his own height, vain of her beauty and patronizing in her manner, said: "Sit by me, Kriss," and he obeyed, still watching and listening to the voices of the mysterious spirits of the winter night.



"COME! COME! AND SEE THE WIND-SPIRITS DANCE WITH THE SNOW!"
which had gradually become visible, busily preparing for the celebration of their Christmas feast.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

By T. B. CRYSTAL.

Christmas bells,
Oh! Christmas bells,
Chiming through white-mantled dells,
Sweet the tale your music tells,
Of that blessed birthday when
Came to earth the Infant King!
Real, oh, bells! with rapture ring,
While the children sweetly sing,
"Peace on earth, good will to men."



Old Santa comes,
With dolls and drums,
And everything that
squeaks or hums.
He'll make no noise
When with his toys,
He fills the hose of
girls and boys.
Open wide your purse plerhoric,
Give with willing hand your gold!
Make your charity historic,
Ere the Christmas day
grows old!
Take a basket or a barrel,
To the needy, on your way,
Try to sing a Christmas carol,
Celebrate earth's greatest day!

though resting on the velvet snow; nor was he homesick. A gay procession entertained him, issuing out of the black hollow of a great oak, that glittered in its armor of ice. First came the children of the Winter-Wind, all fierce-eyed and sharp of feature, dressed in tunics of white and gray flowing mantles. Then followed the Snow-Children in their glistening garments of white and flower-shaped crystal crowns; and after them Holda herself, Queen of Earth and Woods, Queen of Snow and of Christmastide. How lovely she was in her gown of emerald velvet with a big bunch of snowdrops at her breast, and a crown of oak leaves like a Dryad. Her flaxen hair was bound with a strand of pearls, her eyes were blue as summer rivers, her lips as pomegranates, her arms and neck as white as the falling flakes, that, touching her, turned into showers of creamy roses.

"Why have you come hither?" she asked. As he was speechless the Trees and Snowflakes said in their soft chorus: "The Wind brought him, and we bade him join the joy of Christmastide and cry 'Come! Come! Come!'"

"Unless you come selfishly," she asked, "what have you brought to us? The birds give their voices, the flowers their perfume, the Trees their shelter, the Wind his music, the Snow-children their service, the Seasons their beauties and their bounties, and I, to grant all wishes. What do you bring to the Christmas Revels?"

Christopher hung his head. He fell to her feet and kissing her dress with emotion, exclaimed: "I have brought nothing but myself. Do with me as you will."
"So be it," replied Holda, "you shall give yourself. You shall be one of the greatest Spirits of the hallowed season."

The Queen of Christmastide clapped her hands and bade the Revels begin. When all the enjoyment was at its height, Queen Holda clapped her white hands and four and twenty Wish-Maidens bowed before her and, then facing the strange multitude, promised to bring to every one in Holda's realm his and her desire. Bowing low to Holda they took their leave, soon returning. Each one now

held a rosy ribbon attached to a silver ear, which they drew along and upon which what appeared to Christopher the most wonderful thing he had ever beheld—a glittering tree.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

BY CLEMENT MOORE.



SO long ago as a nearly three-quarters of a century the verses beginning, "Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house, Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse,"

first saw the light of print, appearing in the Troy Sentinel of December 23, 1823. As published then it was anonymous, but it was prophetic of its coming popularity that even in that day, unfavorable as it was for newspaper illustration, it was accompanied by a picture of Santa Claus on his rounds. In the time intervening it has become known to practically every man, woman and child in America, has spread hence to the widest limits of the English-speaking race, has been translated into the language of every nation that has a Santa Claus, and is little, if any, short of being the most popular poem in the world. For years it was an annual feature of all American newspapers. Then, in 1844, it was acknowledged by its learned author, being included in a little volume of his poems published in New York. Thence its inclusion in school readers and all kinds of declamation books was only a matter of a short time. In 1859 the edition that first attained wide distribution was issued, with the pleasant illustrations made by Felix O. C. Darley, which was remembered gratefully by any number of persons now crawling reluctantly into middle life.

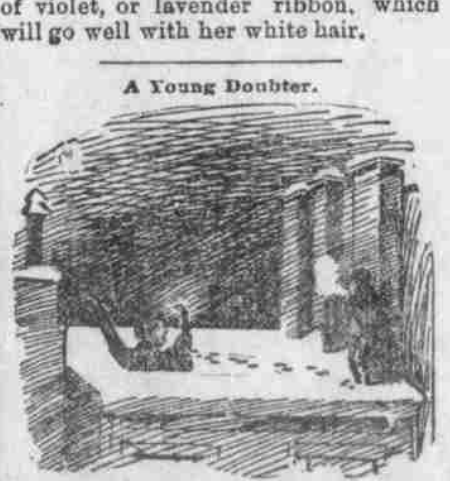
It will be a surprise to many to learn that "The Night Before Christmas" was written by the erudite doctor of laws who prepared the first Hebrew dictionary ever published in America. He was Clement C. Moore, a descendant of a famous family in the history of the Episcopal Church, and himself one of its most notable benefactors.

Clement Clarke Moore was born on July 15, 1781, in New York City, and died at his summer home in Newport on July 10, 1863. The poem which has given him greater fame than all his learning and benefactions was written as a pastime and given his children as a Christmas present just seventy-five years ago. He thought little of it at the time, or later. Indeed, it is possible it would never have become known to the world at all had not the eldest daughter of the Rev. David Butler, D. D., rector of St. Paul's in Troy, N. Y., seen the lines during a visit to New York the year after they were composed, and published them in the paper mentioned without their author's consent. It is said that nothing but the speedy popularity the verses attained procured Miss Butler's forgiveness.

Christmas For the Old People.

Give grandpa a big, cozy arm chair, with sides projecting at right angles from the back, to shield him from draught and cold.
Or, give him a soft, warm, many-colored rug, which he may always find handy when he retires to take his afternoon nap.
Give grandma a knitting bag, if she affects that industry, made of rich brocade and delicately lined and perfumed.
Or, give her a big wicker arm chair, cushioned and padded, and fitted with pockets at the side to hold her spectacles or needlework.
Or, give her the daintiest and whitest of lace caps, ornamented with a box of violet, or lavender ribbon, which will go well with her white hair.

A Young Doubter.



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."

DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

SUNDAY'S DISCOURSE BY THE NOTED DIVINE.

Subject: "Life's Minor Chord"—Trials and Tribulations Are Necessary For the Proper Development of Character—Man's Compensation For Suffering.

Text: "I will open my dark saying upon the harp."—Psalm xlix., 4.

The world is full of the inexplicable, the impassable, the unfathomable, the insurmountable. We cannot go three steps in any direction without coming up against a hard wall of mystery, riddles, paradoxes, profundities, labyrinths; problems that we cannot solve, hieroglyphics that we cannot decipher, anagrams we cannot spell out, sphinxes that will not speak. For that reason David in my text proposed to take up some of these somber and dark things and try to set them to sweet music. "I will open my dark sayings on a harp."

So I look off upon society and find people in unhappy conjunction of circumstances, and they do not know what it means, and they have a right to ask, "Why is this? Why is that? and I think I will be doing a good work by trying to explain some of these strange things and make you more content with your lot, and I shall only be answering questions that have often been asked me, or that we have all asked ourselves, while I try to set these mysteries to music and open my dark sayings on a harp.

Interrogation the first: Why does God take out of this world those who are useful and whom we cannot spare and who are alive and in good health so many who are only a nuisance to the world? I thought I would begin with the very toughest of all the seeming inscrutables. Many of the most useful men and women die at thirty or forty years of age, while you often find useless people alive at sixty and seventy and eighty. John Carless wrote to Bradford, who was soon to be put to death, saying: "Why doth God suffer me and such other caterpillars to live, that can do nothing but consume the aims of the church, and take away the best of its worthy workmen in the Lord's vineyard?" Similar questions are often asked. Here are two men. The one is a noble character and a Christian man. He chooses for a lifetime companion one who has been tenderly reared, and she is worthy of him and he is worthy of her. As merchant or farmer or professional man or mechanic or artist he toils to educate and rear his children. He is succeeding, but he has not yet established for his family a full competency. He seems indispensable to the household; but one day he is taken and has paid off the mortgage on his house, he is coming home through a strong northeast wind and a chill strikes through him, and four days of pneumonia and his earthly career, and the wife and children go into a struggle for shelter and food. His good neighbor, who is a man who though strong and well, lets his wife support him. He is around at the grocery store or some general loading place in the evenings while his wife sews. His boys are imitating his example, and lounge and swagger and swear. All the time that man is in that house is to rave because the coffee is cold when he comes to a late breakfast, or to say cutting things about his wife's looks, when he furnishes nothing for her wardrobe. The best thing that could happen to that family would be that man's funeral, but he declines to die. He lives on and on and on. So we have all noticed that many of the useful are early cut off, while the parasites have great vital tenacity.

I take up this dark saying on my harp and give three or four things on the strings in the way of surmising and hopeful points. Perhaps the useful man was taken out of the world because he and his family were so constructed that they could not have endured some great prosperity that might have been just ahead. And the altogether might have gone down in the vortex of worldliness which every year swallows up 10,000 households. And so he went while he was humble and consecrated, and they were by the severities of life kept close to Christ and fitted for usefulness here and high seats in heaven and they meet at last before the throne they will acknowledge that, though the furnace was hot, it purified them and prepared them for an eternal career of glory and reward for which no other kind of life could have fitted them. On the other hand, the useless man lived on to fifty or sixty or seventy years because all the ease he ever can have he must have in this world, and you ought not, therefore, begrudge him his earthly longevity. In all the ages there has not a single loafer ever entered heaven. There is no place for him there to hang around; not even in the temples, for they are full of vigorous, alert and rapturous people. If the good and useful go early, rejoice for them that they have so soon got through with human life, which at best is a struggle, and the useless and the bad stay rejoicing that they may be out in the world's fresh air a good many years before their final incarceration.

Interrogation the second: Why do good people have so much trouble, sickness, bankruptcy, persecution, the three black veitures sometimes putting their fierce beak into one set of jangled nerves? I think now of a good friend I once had. He was a consecrated Christian man, an elder in the church, and as polished a Christian gentleman as ever walked Broadway. First his general health gave out and he hobbled around on a cane, an old man at forty. After awhile paralysis struck him. Having by poor means been compelled suddenly to quit business, he lost what property he had. Then his beautiful daughter died; then son became hopelessly demented. Another son, splendid of mind and commanding of presence, resolved that he would take care of his father's household, but under the swoop of yellow fever at Fernandina, Fla., he suddenly expired. So you know good men and women who have had enough troubles, you think, to crush fifty people. No worldly philosophy could take such a trouble and set it to music, or play it on a violin or flute, but I dare to open that dark saying on a gospel harp.

You wonder that very consecrated people have trouble? Did you ever know any very consecrated man or woman who had not had great trouble? Never! It was through their troubles sanctified that they were made very good. If you find anyone in this city a man who has now, and always has had, perfect health, and never lost a child, and has always been popular and never had business struggle or misfortune, who is distinguished for goodness, pull your wire for a telegraph messenger boy and send me word, and I will drop everything and go right away to look at him. There never has been a man like that and never will be. Who are those arrogant, self-conceited creatures who move about without sympathy for others and who think more of a St. Bernard dog or an Alderney cow or a Southdown sheep or a Berkshire pig than of a man? They never had any trouble, or the trouble was never sanctified. Who are those men who listen with moist eye as you tell them of suffering and who have a pathos in their voice and a kindness in their manner

and an excuse or an alleviation for those gone astray? They are the men who have graduated at the Royal Academy of Trouble, and they have the diploma written in wrinkles on their own countenances. My tears they have wept. What injustice they have suffered! The mightiest influence for purification and salvation is trouble.

There are only three things that can break off a chain—a hammer, a file or a fire—and trouble is all three of them. The greatest writers, orators and reformers get much of their force from trouble. What gave to Washington Irving that exquisite tenderness and pathos which will make his books favorites while the English language continues to be written and spoken? An early near-break, that he never once mentioned, and when thirty years after the death of Matilda Hoffman, who was to have been his bride, her father picked up a piece of embroidery and said, "That is a piece of poor Matilda's workmanship." Washington Irving sank from hilarity into silence and walked away. Out of that lifetime grief, the great author dipped his pen's mightiest reinforcement. Calvin's "Institutes of Religion," than which a more wonderful book was never written by human hand, was begun by the author at twenty-five years of age, because of the pain of the French king of France. Faraday toiled for all time on a salary of £30 a year and candles. As every brick of the wall of Babylon was stamped with the letter N, standing for Nebuchadnezzar, so every part of the temple of Christian achievement is stamped with the letter T, standing for trouble.

When in England a man is honored with knighthood, he is struck with the flat of the sword. But those who have come to knighthood in the kingdom of God were first struck, not with the flat of the sword, but with the keen edge of the sword, and his magnificent character Paul could not have spared one lash, one prison, one stoning, one anathema, one poisonous viper from the hand, one shipwreck. What is true of individuals is true of nations. The horrors of the American Revolution gave this country the name of the Mississippi River to Independence and France gave the most of this country west of the Mississippi to the United States. France owned it, but Napoleon, fearing that England would take it, practically

made a present to the United States—for he received only \$15,000,000 for Louisiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Colorado, Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and the Indian Territory. Out of the fire of the American Revolution came this country east of the Mississippi, out of the European war came that west of the Mississippi River. The British empire rose to its present overbearing grandeur through gunpowder plot and Guy Fawkes' conspiracy and Northampton insurrection and Walter Raleigh's beheading and Bacon's bribery and Cromwell's dissolution of parliament and the battles of Edge Hill and the vicissitudes of course.

So the individual, the nation, the empire, an appropriate and beautiful residence for the human family, had, according to geology, to be washed by universal deluge and scorched and made incandescent by universal fires, and pounded by sledge-hammer of icebergs and wrenched by earthquakes that split continents, and shaken by volcanoes that tossed mountains and passed through the catastrophes of thousands of years before paradise became possible and the groves could shake out their green banners and the first garden pour its carnage of color between the Gihon and the Hiddekel. Trouble—trouble, trouble, trouble—a good thing for nations, as well as a good thing for individuals. So when you push against me with a sharp interrogation point, Why do the good suffer? I open the dark saying on a harp, and though I can neither play an organ or concert or harp or burgle or clarinet, I have taken some lessons on the gospel harp, and if you would like to hear me I will play you these: "All things work together for good to those who love God."

Interrogation third: Why did the good God let sin or trouble come into the world when He might have kept them out? My reply is, He had a good reason. He had reasons that He has never given us. He had reasons which He could no more make us understand in our finite state than the father, starting out on some great and elaborate enterprise, would never have known an Abraham or a Moses or a Joshua or an Ezekiel or a Paul or a Christ or a Washington or a John Milton or a John Howard, and a million victories which have been gained by the consecrated spirits of all ages would never have been gained. Had there been no battle, there would have been no victory. Nine-tenths of the anathemas of heaven would never have been sung. Heaven could never have been a thousandth part of the heaven that it is. I will not say that I am glad that sin and sorrow did come into the world, but I am glad that after God has given all His reasons to an assembled universe He will be more honored than if sin and sorrow had never entered and that the unfallen celestials will be outdone and will put down their tongues to listen and it will be in heaven when those who have conquered sin and sorrow shall enter as it would be in a small singing school on earth if Thalberg and Gottschalk and Wagner and Beethoven and Rheuberg and Schumann should all at once enter. The immortals that have been chanting 10,000 years before the throne will say, as they close their librettos: "Oh, if we could only give like that!" But God will say to those who have never fallen and consequently have not been redeemed, "You must be silent now; you have not the qualification for this anthem." So they sit with closed lips and folded hands, and sinners saved by grace take up the harmony, for the Bible says "no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth."

A great prima donna, who can now do anything with her voice, told me that when she first started in music her teacher in Berlin told her she could be a good singer, but a certain note she could never reach. "And then," she said, "I went to work and studied and practiced for years until I did reach it." But the song of the singer redeemed, the Bible says, the exalted harmonists who have never sinned could not reach and never will reach. Would you like to hear me in a very poor way play a snatch of that tune? I can give you only one bar of the music on this gospel harp. "Unto Him that hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and the Lamb, to Him be glory and dominion forever ever amen."

But before leaving this interrogatory, why God let sin come into the world, let me say that great battles seem to be nothing but suffering and outrage at the time of their occurrence, yet after they have been a long while past we can see that it was better for them to have been fought, namely, Agincourt, Inverness, Tolous, Arbia, Agincourt, Trafalgar, Blenheim, Lexington, Sedon.

But here I must close up lost in trying to