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MARY'S CHRISTMAS TOILET

"Well, is it any bigger?" inquired Mr. Bixby, as he leaned back from the table at the conclusion of a scrappy, girl's-day-out sort of dinner.

Mrs. Bixby did not immediately respond, and eight-year-old Jimmy, human question mark, recognized a conversational opening.

"Is what any bigger, papa?" he asked.

"It's half past 7, James," said his father. "High time for you to tackle that example you missed at school this morning. Go at once."

And James, though he might have liked to argue the question, went; for only yesterday Mary, the new girl, had reminded him that Santa Claus sometimes forgot to come to boys that were disobedient. To be sure there was a family rumor that his bachelor Uncle Simon, who was just about right in everything, did not believe in the whiskered saint, but with the practical test of the matter so near at hand the wise little Jimmie was taking no chances.

Mrs. Bixby, however, had no need to ask what her husband had meant by his question. He had given up his table lectures on the theory and practice of domestic management long ago, and the confusion caused in his mind by the swift, yet never-ending procession of serving maids through the Bixby establishment had reduced him finally to an uncritical silence. Nevertheless, his wife knew that his inquiry referred to the pompadour of that new girl, Mary. It was a thorn in both their sides.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Bixby, when the echoes of James' departure had died away, "whether it is any bigger or not. She hasn't come in yet. This isn't her regular afternoon out, you know, but she seems to have an enormous number of friends to get presents for, and I let her go downtown to do some Christmas shopping. Her hair was all right when she left, but so it was the last time she went out; yet when she came back, you remember, she had to stoop to get under the curtain poles in the dining-room."

"Well, perhaps it takes a visit to an expert hairdresser, and if it never happens except on her days off it will not be so bad."

"No, especially as she hardly ever comes in until bedtime, except for these holiday trips. But you can't tell. If she were to learn to build it up herself and should appear in it next week when Henry and his wife are here for dinner I would die of mortification. And suppose she should wear it Christmas day!"

"She didn't have 'em much when she first came, either, did she?"

"No, not above the average normal size. But, do you know, the last big one she had looked a little crooked to me, and I fancied then that she had been practising on making them herself." Mrs. Bixby was now at the hysterical half-way post between irritation and amusement.

"[illegible] you tell her?" suggested Mr. [illegible] gently, yet firmly, "that there's a limit to——"

"Yes, but it would probably be equivalent to giving her notice. Shall I do that?"

Thus, as the result of his first venture in domestic suggestion in the last nine years, Mrs. Bixby found the problem suddenly put up to him. "I'd certainly hate to see her go," he finally said. "She seems really fond of James and the baby, and they of her; and she's the first girl in the—let's see—the last——"

"The last eleven."

"[illegible] hasn't really disliked them, has she?"

"[illegible] first since Martha Rier. An[illegible] really loves them. Yesterday morning when I came down a little early I overheard her and James sounding each other as to what they wanted for Christmas, and at the end of a long cross-examination he finally made Mary admit that Santa Claus was not the only one who gave presents."

"Yes; and she makes delicious soup; almost as good as that girl we had just before the baby was——"

But here Mr. Bixby was relieved of further responsibility concerning the problem by a ring at the doorbell and the descent, pell mell, from the upper regions, of Jimmie, who for the last week had been on the watch for all mysterious bundles that came into the house.

Mrs. Bixby opened the door and revealed Mary under the largest pompadour she had yet appeared in.

"Let me see your bundles, Mary," cried Jimmy, making a dash at her. "Let me see what you've got."

But Mary, embarrassed, perhaps, by the frowning glance of Mrs. Bixby, dodged past him and hurried to the kitchen, dropping, as she went, the one small bundle she had been carrying.

Jimmie pounced upon this before his mother could stop him, but it turned out to be only a yard or so of some sort of cloth. His mother took it with her as she moved toward the kitchen regions, closing the doors not too gently behind her. Mr. Bixby, who had come out into the hall, knew by the firmness of his wife's step that the problem of the pompadour had been taken out of his hands.

"Papa," began the disappointed Jimmie, by way of staving off further struggle with that vexatious example, "is Uncle Simon an agnostic?"

"Why, no, child. Where did you ever get hold of that big word?"

"Oh, I heard the minister talking about agnostics and unbelievers when he was here the other day to get stuff for that Christmas box for the heathen. I'm awful glad Uncle Simon ain't one 'cause then he must believe in Santa Claus."

Meanwhile, out in the kitchen Mrs. Bixby was saying, after severe contemplation of Mary's coiffure: "Mary, I'm sure, if you could see yourself you would see that that huge pompadour is unbecoming."

Mary had removed her hat and now broke into smiles. "I don't need to see myself, ma'am," she said. "I'm that ashamed! Do you think Mr. Bixby noticed it? Coming home in the car there was a young fellow I knew was laughing at me. I can't stand it another minute."

She began to fumble with her hair as she talked and finally drew from within the towering structure a little toy locomotive and a train of the same. She put them on the table and then produced from the same region a rubber doll and a baby's rattle.

"For the children," she explained, as she reached up again. "Jimmie was watching the door so lately I didn't know how else to get 'em in."

Whereupon Mrs. Bixby sat down in the nearest chair and had her hysterics after all, and Christmas morning, when the presents were distributed, the papier-mache cigar case, which was Mary's present to Mr. Bixby, was found to have tangled around it a long hair that was not his wife's.

John D. Ruff.

YULETIDE IN SHETLAND.

Curious Customs in the Island Where The Ponies Come From.

The festival of Yule, as is well known, dates back to prehistoric times, when men worshipped nature rather than nature's God.

The inhabitants of the Shetland Isles are descended from Norsemen, who were zealots in religious belief, and "Yule" to them meant a season of great importance. The "Gammel Norsk Hjul" signifies, literally, "wheel," and the festival so called was held in honor of the sun at the winter solstice wheeling round toward the equator. The return of the sun formde an important period of the year as being the beginning of renewed life in nature, which only could be revived by the light and warmth of the ascending orb.

The course of the sun was observed in all things as far as possible. Everything was turned from left to right—the boat was so turned on the water, the corn stacks so built in course, the mill so turned in grinding and the wheel in spinning—in fact, everything went with the sun, even the round of the drinking horn.

Many superstitions included in nature worship had full scope at the "Hjul" time—or more modern "Yule"—when a vast multitude of "trows," or fairy folk, who at that season were not only active, but maliciously disposed, had to be propitiated.

To give the fairy folk no opportunity of playing tricks, the fishing creel and lines were removed from the wall, the spinning wheel taken out of gear and its integral parts laid aside, and everything suspended from ceiling or walls lifted down, as if left in their usual places the ubiquitous elves were supposed to set all going against the sun's motion, which of course would mean serious trouble. The time of Yule was, and still is, rigidly observed as holy"—i. e., a time of rest from all manner of labor.—Madame.

A CHRISTMAS VAMPIRE.

A fool there was, and he made a gift,
(Even as you or I.)
He bought it with taste and care and thrift
(For a lady his friends thought rather swift)
And when he gave it, the lady sniffed,
(Even as you or I.)

Oh, the judgment and taste and time we waste
On the gifts at Christmastide;
Which we give to the lady who isn't pleased
(And now we know she could never be pleased
And never be satisfied.)

A fool there was, and he gave his cheque
(Even as you or I.)
For a necklace of pearls without a fleck,
(And it didn't the least suit the lady's neck)
And she never thanked him a single speck;
(Even as you or I.)

Oh, the chink we lose and the think we lose,
On the things we buy with pride,
To give to the lady who never is pleased,
(And now we know she can never be pleased
And never be satisfied).

The fool was fleeced to his last red cent,
(Even as you or I.)
She threw him aside, when his gold was spent,
(And nobody cared where the lady went.)
And the fool gave way to loud lament,
(Even as you or I.)

And it wasn't the loss, and it wasn't the dross,
The reason that same fool cried;
It was coming to know that she never was pleased
(Seeing at last she could never be pleased
And never be satisfied).

—Carolyn Wells, in December Smart Set.

Making Mincemeat.

I can see a kitchen table, scrubbed as white as white can be,
And three wide-eyed wistful youngsters standing round it I can see;
Oh, the tables piled with good things, there are raisins in a bowl,
There are currants washed and drying, and six hands beyond control,
Six hands that grab for raisins and for currants, and once more
I see mother making mincemeat as she used to do of yore.

I can hear her sweetly saying, "Now, You children mustn't touch;
Not another raisin for you; you've already had too much."
I can see the almonds blanching in hot water at her side;
I can see the candied lemon peel, with sugar hard and dried;
I can see a hand now reaching for another raisin fine;
Yes, mother's making mincemeat, and thieving hand is mine.

But I wake now from my dreaming, and I sit and sadly sigh,
For the gray hair at my temple tells me time has travelled by,
And the Christmas season nearing does not mean the self-same joys,
For there is no dear old mother, and there are no little boys
To shyly pilfer raisins as we used to do of yore,
When mother made her mincemeat, and our lives lay all before.

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CHRISTMAS SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

LESSON XIII.—DEC. 25, 1910.

Christmas Lesson.—Luke 2: 6-20. Or Review.

Commentary.—I. Christ born (vs. 6, 7.) The explanation of the presence of Joseph and Mary at Bethlehem at this time is found in the few verses preceding the lesson. A decree had been issued by the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, that a census must be taken of the subjects of his empire, and since Joseph and Mary were of the lineage of David it was necessary for them to go to the ancestral city for enrolment. The large companies of people who were at Bethlehem at this time, in obedience to the emperor's decree, exhausted the accommodations at the inn, which was a large building erected at public expense for the convenience of travelers, and Joseph and Mary found shelter in some home in Bethlehem. It was quite common for the family and their domestic animals to occupy the same building, hence the presence of the manger, which became the first cradle of the infant Jesus.

II. The announcement to the shepherds (vs. 8-12.) 8. In the same country—In the region not far from Bethlehem. Keeping watch by night over their flock (R. V.)—The people lived in villages and no dwellings were found in the country, as with us. The flocks were guarded by night against robbers and wild beasts. There is no absolute proof that Christ was born in the month of December, but the fact that shepherds stood in the fields by night would be no argument against that date, because frequently the grass is green and the weather pleasant in Palestine in December.

9. Angel of the Lord—A messenger from heaven sent on an exalted mission. The glory of the Lord—A heavenly radiance appeared about the angel and enveloped the shepherds. This was again and again the symbol of the divine presence, power and holiness as shown by the Scriptures.

10. Fear not—Words of encouragement that have been spoken again and again to God's people and to those who desire to become such. "Fear not" is an exhortation repeated upward of fifty times in the Bible. Good tidings—Good news producing "great joy." To all people—The gospel is for all nations in all ages. It came first to the Jews, but its blessings are for all mankind.

11. Unto you—Jesus came as the shepherds' Saviour, as he came to all the world. City of David—Bethlehem. Christ—The anointed One, the Messiah. Lord—The King of kings and Lord of lords. 12. A sign—That they were making a true announcement. Ye shall find—They would recognize the child Jesus from his clothing and his position.

II. The angels' tribute (vs. 13, 14.) 13. A multitude—The angelic host realized that a great gift was being brought to earth, and the voices raised a song of praise to the God of grace and power.

14. Glory to God in the highest—Honor and praise are ascribed to him who is the source of all excellence, who dwells in the highest heaven. Peace is declared as coming to men as between God and man and between man and man.

IV. The shepherds' visit (vs. 15, 20.) 15. Let us now go—The good tidings had deeply impressed their minds. Which is come to pass—the shepherds believed the angel's message. 16. Came with haste—They were seeking Jesus. They were eager and determined. Such a search for Jesus is always successful. 17. Made known—The events were so full of promise and blessing that they would have done wrong in not telling the good news. The saying—That Christ the Lord, the Saviour, was born, and that peace and good-will toward men had been proclaimed. 18. Wondered—The message appealed profoundly to the hearers. The hope of the ages was being realized. The expectation of the nations was being fulfilled. 19. Pondered them in her heart—The shepherds "made known abroad" the wonderful tidings, but Mary weighed them carefully in her heart, for they were intensely full of meaning. 20. The shepherds returned—They received the message, believed it and were filled with holy gladness.

Questions.—Where and when was Christ born? Of what ancestory? By whom and to whom was his birth first announced? What were the words of the heavenly host? What occurred after the angels had left the shepherds? Why were they the first to receive the glad tidings than the humble shepherds. The importance of the event called for a visit of the heavenly host to earth. Angels were God's chosen messengers to announce the advent of the Saviour to shepherds. Never before had heaven given to earth such a gift as the Christ-child. The supreme hour in the world's history dawned when he was born in Bethlehem of Judea. The whole of the world's history led up to that time. The song of angels on that eventful night was a song of hope to a despairing world. How strangely that song of peace would have sounded to the rulers of the Roman empire! With what contempt would they have to look upon a kingdom founded upon the principle of peace and good-will to men! But to angels it was an occasion to render glory to God in the highest for the ushering in of a kingdom which should reconcile man and God and establish fellowship among men. All nations were included in the wonderful gift of the Saviour. In "the days of Herod" we see the centre of the world's history. There was the turning point between the old and new dispensations. To the world Caesar's palace seemed more important than the manger. Yet the meanest circumstances of Christ's humiliation were attended with some discoveries of his glory. The angels did not regard the holy family less for having lodged in such lowly quarters. Christ was laid where beasts were fed and after his departure beasts fed there again. Only his presence could glorify the manger. And now, if the religion of Jesus could be extinguished, the world working by the operation of the Holy Spirit calls for higher praise. Though there was only a manger for him at birth and a cross for him at death, he is our Saviour, the Prince of peace. The burden of our nature was laid upon him all through his earthly life and a death in hardship. His birth overshadowed his life. The manger and the cross standing at the two extremities of our Saviour's earthly life seem congruous. There is yet no room for the Prince of peace but with the humble and contrite souls which by his grace he prepares to yield him place.

II. Accepted and proclaimed by shepherds. The glory of the Lord of which the proud and self-seeking see nothing, shines round about the lowly. The message of the angel was given to the shepherds while they were in the line of duty. The best place in all the world to be is at the post of duty. There was no occasion for sorrow when the angels returned to heaven since the object of their visit was upon earth. The next thing was to act upon the instructions given them. Divine revelation does not supersede our own diligence, investigation and research. The effect upon the shepherds at seeing the babe was uplifting. Every detail was according to the angel's words. Joy and thanksgiving filled their hearts, causing their lips to speak forth the glad tidings to others. They were in truth the first to proclaim the gospel among men. Down through the ages this glorious truth has sounded. It is ever new and full of inspiration, making each Christmastide a season of joy and rejoicing to every believing heart. That all nations are being reached increases the Christian's joy, for "unto all people" was born this Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.—T. R. A.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS.

The shepherds. 1. Faithful. "Abiding in the field" (v. 8). The words suggest fidelity. Faithfulness in the little things is a keynote of the gospel. 2. Dutiful. "Keeping watch over their flock by night" (v. 8). While the shepherds were attending to duty the angels came. H. C. Trumbull says, "If they had been at home or at a party or even at a prayer meeting, when they might to have been in that sheep field, they would have missed the angels' visit. The best place in all the world is the [illegible]

[redacted]

in the custom house (Mark 2. 14). James and John mending their nets were called to be fishers of men (Mark 1. 19, 20). A lazy man rarely becomes a Christian.

The sermon. 1. Practical. "Be not afraid" (v. 10, R. V.). Every sermon should have something in it to lift man out of himself into God. The supernatural is apt to make us "sore afraid" (v. 9). A. J. Gordon says, "When God specially visits his people his first work is to allay their alarm." 2. Pointed. "For . . . I bring" (v. 10). "For unto you . . . a Saviour" (v. 11). Christianity is reasonable. God does not give us practical precepts without giving abundant reason why he should obey them. 3. Personal. "I bring you good tidings" (v. 10). "Unto you is born . . . a Saviour" (v. 11). "A sign unto you: Ye shall find" (v. 12). The Bible is a personal book. The Father is a personal God. The Saviour is a personal Friend. The Holy Spirit is a personal Comforter. They all dwell in the heart of the wholly sanctified believer (John 14:17, 23).

The sign. 1. The sign of love. "Ye shall find the babe" (v. 12). The cradle of the Son of God is the great token of a Father's love. Looking into the face of God, stripped of his majesty and glory, we are "not afraid" (v. 10, R. V.). 2. A sign of nobility. "The babe wrapped in swaddling clothes" (v. 12). There were two kinds of swaddling bands. One, the ordinary bandages in which all babes are swaddled; the other, an outside coat beautifully embroidered, used by the princes and the wealthy. The ordinary band would be no sign. The sign was to be in the contrast, a babe dressed in the "swaddling" garb of a king, lying in a "manger" with the cattle. His nobility, as "Christ the Lord" (v. 11), the "King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:2), and his humility, as the child of Mary the wife of the carpenter, were his credentials. The mother knowing by the word of the Holy Spirit that he was to be the heir of David's royal line, provided the token. 3. A sign of humility. "Christ the Lord . . . the babe . . . in a manger" (vs. 11, 12). Christ was the almighty Jehovah; he became the helpless babe. He was God; he become flesh (John 1: 14; Heb. 2:14, 17). He was rich; he became poor (2 Cor. 8. 9). So he "emptied himself" (Phil. 2:1, R. V.). "How easy it is to get to Jesus. He puts no barrier between the lowliest and himself." "Glory to God in the highest" (v. 14). "Creation reveals God's glory of wisdom and love."—A. C. M.

People Who Work Indoors With Their Hands

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(Toronto Star.)

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For Your Christmas Recipe Book

ROAST YOUNG TURKEY.

One ten-pound turkey, one pound chestnuts, one cupful bread crumbs, one cupful cracker crumbs, half cup hot water, half cup butter, two eggs, well beaten; one rounding teaspoonful salt, one level teaspoonful pepper, one teaspoonful poultry seasoning. Draw and truss the turkey. Take care to remove all pin feathers, singe and wipe inside and out with a piece of cheesecloth wrung out of hot water. Then make the stuffing. Pour the hot water over the bread crumbs and let stand ten minutes. Then add the cracker crumbs and seasonings. When well mixed add the butter, melted, and the eggs. Hull and boil the chestnuts and blanch them, then pass them through the food chopper. After this add them to the stuffing and mix well. Now stuff the turkey and leave plenty of room for the stuffing to expand, otherwise it will pack and be soggy. Now stuff the turkey and leave plenty of room for the stuffing to expand ,otherwise it will pack and be soggy. Now place the prepared fowl in a roasting pan. Place in a hot oven and cook until nicely browned. Then add a cup of boiling water, pepper and salt, and reduce the heat. Baste frequently and cook until tender. If the fowl is young and tender two hours will be suficient. Serve with cranberry jelly and giblet sauce.

For the sauce place the giblets in a saucepan and add enough cold water to cover. Cook slowly until tender. Then hemove and mince fine. Use one cup of the water from the giblets and one cup of the drippings from the turkey. Place these in a saucepan and add done heaping tablespoonful of flower combined with water to pour. Cook five minutes and add the giblets, a pinch of mustard and salt and pepper to taste. Finish cooking and serve.

CHANBERRY JELLY.

One quart cranberries, one pint water sugar. Wash and drain the berries. Place the saucepan over the fire, cover closely and cook until the berries are tender. Then remove from the fire and pass the berries through a fine sieve. Measure the fruit and add an equal quantity of sugar. Place on the fire and cook ten minutes. Pour into mold and serve when stiff.

CHESTNUT STUFFING.

One-half pound of lean veal, one-half cup of melted butter, one cup of bread crumbs. Blend, and if not moist enough add a little broth. Add four dozen chestnuts blanched and boiled, one tablespoonful of salt and a little pepper. Small potato cakes can surround the turkey on the platter, sprinkled over.

COLONIAL SALAD.

Potatoes, sugar, butter, sherry wine, cinnamon, crumbs. Select large round shaped sweet potatoes and allow one-half of a potato to each guest. Scrub and wash well. Place them in a kettle, cover with hot water and cook slowly twenty minutes. Remove from the fire [illegible] chicken, salad dressing, salt. Select [illegible] and let stand on ice two hours. Chop the tomatoes on the inner side with salt from the flower bed. Scoop out all the pulp and remove the seeds. Sprinkle one perfect, firm, ripe tomato for each guest. Peel and remove a thin slice the pulp and to each cup allow one cup of cold chicken cut in cubes and one cup of celery cut in small pieces. Mix with salad dressing. Drain the tomatoes and wipe dry. Then fill them with the salad mixture and top off with salad dressing mixed with a little whipped cream. Serve very cold on a crisp lettuce leaf.

CHESTNUT PUREE.

Shell and blanch a pint of chestnuts and boil them for 20 minutes with a slice of onion, a half-cup of chopped celery, a bay leaf and half a teaspoonful of paprika. Press all through a colander and then add a pint of milk and a pint of chicken stock, to a saucepan rub together a tablespoonful of butter and one of flour and add the liquid slowly. Season with a teaspoonful of salt, strain and serve with wafers or croutons.

CELERY SOUP WITH OYSTERS.

Chop one pint of celery tops and let them simmer in a pint of water for 20 minutes. Drain and press through a sieve. Put this in a double boiler with a pint of milk and two tablespoonfuls of butter rubbed with two of flour, stirring until smooth. Add two dozen small oysters and cook until their edges curl. Serve at once with crackers.—What to Eat.

His Christmas Gift.

When Santa Claus shall find you,
Sweetheart on Christmas day,
These roses shall remind you
In their alluring way
Of one who knows how kind you
To flowers and friends can be.
Dear flower and friend,
Read this and send
An answer back to me!

These crimson hearts of beauty
With love's quick impulses beat;
These fragrant dew velvettes
Love's tender words repeat:
Delight, desire and duty—
They win them all in you.
Ah, listen well
And hear them tell
Their secret, sweet and true!

Their fresh and smiling faces
Await your smiles above;
Love, in their ribboned places,
Their only dream is love;
And so my pencil traces
Hope's pathway, line by line:
To one red rose
Your heart disclose,
And let that rose be mine!

—Frank Dempster Sherman, in Sunday Magazine.

"His death was very sudden, wasn't it?" "I don't think so. He'd been aeroplaning for several weeks before the accident occurred."—Detroit Free Press.