

YOUNG FOLKS.

Billy's Christmas Dinner.

"The blamed thing!" Billy stood ruefully regarding the two sections of a mangy fur cap, which lay in his hand. In giving it an additional yank over the red ears which stood out like the sails of a nautilus, the dilapidated cap had gone to pieces like a ship in a storm.

"What's to be done?" mused Billy. "Christmas isn't the funniest time of the year to go bareheaded in. Guess I'll catch a cold in my hair this way."

Then he laughed, for Billy was nothing if not good-natured, and the idea of cold in connection with his fiery red hair struck him as very funny.

"Hello, Reddy! Are you tryin' to warm all outdoors?" yelled Scotty the Terror, as he rushed by, blowing on his cold fingers.

"Yep. I'm a-lyin' things up a bit disingardin' personal inconuenyunce," replied Billy, grandiosely, but with a merry twinkle in his blue eyes.

"Th' stuff's good 'nuff, fur as it goes, but yer've got a big contract, ole Bricktop," yelled Scotty, as he disappeared around the corner which led to Dan Peterson's lunch-room.

Billy looked after him hungrily. "Ef I cud only find some dem things wot the papers advertise: 'Diamond ring—Finder will be rewarded,' or somethin' like dat, wouldn't I hev a blowout! Or some money. Let's see. Half a dollar wud buy a new cap an' some corn-beef hash and hot coffee. Yum! I guess I'm a gittin'—wot wuz it Mr. Dan's sed folks wuz 'who got to diablene things wot yer' use'er b'live? Skerker-cap-tickle—that's it. Well, durned if I b'leve red hair is any hotter than other colors, for my head is cold as if my hair wuz white. Great snakes how de win' blows!"

The poor little red head bent wearily down, peering through every crevice and crack of the sidewalk, every dingy nook of the street where some one might have dropped a treasure trove. The wind from the lake swept round the corners with a bitter cry and an icy touch that made the little tramp figure shiver in its sparse clothing.

The swift winter darkness was descending over the land. Billy straightened his tired little back. "It ain't no use a-lookin'. Nobody an't lost nuthin' terday, I reckon. Guess I'll go and fin' some place to shelter in, an' p'raps I'll hev a sleep. Hey! Who's dat?" he croaked hoarsely as he came in contact with a living body crouched in the deep recess of a back-doorway.

"Who's yerself?" was the sullen rejoinder, "wot do yer want, young feller?"

"Nothin' much! Only yer skered me, cause I couldn't see yer at first. Say! Will yer take company in yer corner there? Two's warmer than one."

"Come in," said the man, "I an't no mortgage on this yer doorstep. Sides I'm spensin' Christmas charity, I am, so I give you lodgin' here rent free, no cookin' allowed. Please don't see the servants."

"Oh! I'm a model roomer, never break de printed rules," said Billy as he squeezed himself in beside the ragged and emaciated man. "I jest want to stay here till I kin hire out as a fog-horn to some of de boats. Been a-goin' bareheaded to-day in order to get my voice inter proper condition. Very hard lines, but me and Patti don't grudge nothin' to perfect our voices. See!"

The ghost of a smile flitted across the man's face. "Had any dinner?" he asked.

"Yes. Leather belt."

"Wot, you eat leather?"

"That an't no trick. I know lots of folk in swell boardin'-houses who try it on every mornin'. I didn't eat mine tho', but leather belt is fine when yer hungry. Just draw it tighter, an' then again tighter, and yer canmost' leve ye've bin eatin', yer feels so good an' full."

"I'll give yer somethin' better than a leather belt," muttered the man, half to himself.

"Bully for you. Take some yerself."

"No I can't take it myself, but see here—jest look at me—straight."

Billy looked up. The strange man started making rapid passes before the boy's face and his eyes.

"Wot queer eyes yer've got mister; they's like fire-balls in the middle of the night, an'—"

"What was that his foot struck against? That toe was always stubbin' itself on somethin' or other he told himself. He would 'row this last obstacle out of the way, as his fingers touched the supposed stone something jingled. Christopher Columbus! X was a purse full of money! There was an electric-light at a store window a little further on. In a second Billy was standing by it examining his treasure. Three gold pieces—one tenner and two fives. A heap of silver his trembling fingers could not count. A roll of greenbacks in an inner pocket, and—good gracious—a ring set all round with a double row of gems that shimmered in the light like drops of water. The very diamond ring he had been wanting to find!

In the midst of his joy a delicious odor swept down and seemed to clasp him in its embrace. Poets say that a scent has more power over the soul than any other influence. Billy knew nothing of poetry, but as that smell of roast turkey, boiled chestnuts, and mince pie gushed forth he felt a delightful quiver of anticipation thrill his frame. Half way down the block was the restaurant whence the vivifying odor came.

"I want the finest Christmas dinner you've got—turkey—cranberry-sauce—everything," said Billy majestically, as he seated himself at one of the little white tables.

He was surprised to see the restaurant-keeper burst into tears. "You remind me so much of my little boy who died—my little Willie," the white-aproned old man sobbed-ly explained.

"My name's Billy, too," said the boy sympathetically.

"Wouldn't you like to dine with the family? I can't a-bear to see the image of my Willie a-settin' an' eatin' his Christmas dinner all alone."

"Thank yer, but I an't got no clothes fit. Got money 'nuff to buy 'em, but the stores is all closed to-day."

The old man explained that Willie's clothes would just fit him, and in a few minutes Billy was in a comfortable suit of gray, with patent-leather shoes, a blue necktie, and lovely soft underwear.

Then he was led into the dining-room. There was the restaurant-keeper's wife, a motherly old lady, who kissed him and called him her "dear," two pretty little girls in pink dresses and yellow curls, and a boy a year or two younger than Bill.

They sat down to dinner. How Billy's mouth watered while Father Mason carved the bird and Mother Mason put a heaping spoonful of mashed potatoes alongside the dressing, poured gravy over it, and passed to him.

What a grand turkey! So brown on the outside and white in and juicy every bit. How luscious the gravy, with little bits of liver, and heart, and gizzard floating about in its rich brownness.

Mother Mason was not a bit stingy either. The saucer of cranberries glowed like plump strawberries. The celery little Molly passed with an adorable smile was so crisp and sweet. The butter he was encouraged to spread "thick, thick" on his bread was real country butter, tasting of cowslips and cream. There were oysters floating about with slices of lemon, and a potato salad adorned with little bits of beet-like budding roses.

"How good the coffee was! Jennie put in four lumps of sugar and a lot of sweet cream. The mince pie showed its lusciousness between flaky crusts and the pudding was so good that Billy couldn't refrain from the second helping, while Molly poured the wine-sauce over it carefully.

After dinner Father Mason told Billy they were having a Christmas tree. Billy knew what that was because he had seen them through the windows on the boulevards, but would as soon have dreamed of flying to the moon as having anything to do with one himself. This was a beauty, sparkling all over with tapers, red, blue, green, and yellow. Best of all, everybody got a present from it. To Billy's great surprise an elegant fur cap was handed off the topmost bough, and it bore his name. What a change from the moth-eaten thing he had worn in the morning. Looking back he wondered with a shudder how he ever could have prowled around the streets bareheaded, and snuggled in doorways with strange men with flaming eyes and unwashed faces. The idea! It seemed as though every bough held something for Billy. Now it was a box of crackers, which he pulled with pretty Jennie; now a parcel of nuts he sat in a corner and cracked with Molly; now a pair of silver-plated skates, upon which young Tom offered to teach him to skim over the ice; now a box of figs or a bag of candy he shared with Father and Mother Mason.

What a wonderful time, to be sure, and all that money and diamonds in the pockets of his natty suit, ready to begin the world with, to-morrow. The poor man in the doorway—he wished had not so completely overlooked him when he found his fortune. He would like to see those blazing eyes light up over a good, square Christmas dinner.

Still, they were such burning eyes—so deep—so queer. Yes, there they were now, right before his—

"Why do you wave your hands about so?" said Billy, and suddenly his voice sounded harsh and cranky again.

"Ah!" said the queer man, "did you have a good time, a good dinner, eh?"

"Splendid!" began the boy, then stopped suddenly as his hand went instinctively to his pocket; Where was his natty suit? Where his new cap? He wore the rags of Christmas morning, this the same doorstep, and over the chimneys-pots was creeping a red flush, which showed that Christmas was indeed over and another day begun.

"Ah!" laughed the old man, "I told yer I could give yer somethin' I couldn't take myself. You've been mesmerized. Glad yer enjoyed it, poor little devil."

Before Billy could answer the door behind them was hastily opened and a half-dressed man stumbled against them.

"Wot's yer hurry, ole lightning express?" said Billy, grasping the man by the leg.

"Lemme go—quick, young Master Harry is took awful sick—eat too much Christmas dinner. They's 'frail he'll die. I'm a-rushin' for the doctor."

Billy relinquished his hold and drew his leather belt a notch closer over his thin little body.

"Seems to me my Christmas dinner wuz the best after all," he said.

Mongrel and Bull-Dog.

A good-natured farmer stopped in front of a Penn avenue saloon one day this week with a load of hay. A big, shaggy, good-natured yellow mongrel dog stood under the wagon. In front of the saloon there were a number of tough young sports and a white bull-dog with red eyes. One of the toughs grabbed the bull-dog and got ready to set him on the harmless mongrel. The farmer saw what he was up to and said:

"If I was you I wouldn't set that dog on mine. My dog'll kill him if you do."

"Kill him eh? Bet ye \$10 this bull-dog kin lick yer son in a minute and a half."

"I ain't no bettin' man," said the farmer "but if you want your dog to live after to-day dor't set him on mine. My dog'll kill him, I tell ye."

The toughs all poked fun at the farmer, who smiled on them from the top of his head. Then the fellow who held the bull-dog said:

"Well, if ye won't bet, I'll let this dog lick yer yaller cur just fur fun."

"See here, my friend," said the farmer, "I told ye once that your dog was no match for mine, but mebbe ye didn't understand me. He can lick two like you and chaw 'em all up. I don't want to see your dog hurt, and so I say ag'in, don't set him on to mine."

"Well, here goes," said the tough, and he released the bull-dog. Like a flash the bull-dog sprang under the wagon, and the farmer's dog ran to the middle of the street, where the bull-dog caught him by one of his hind legs. Without a whine or a murmur or an attempt to give battle to the bull-dog, the farmer's dog squatted down on his haunches and looked up at his master.

"Take care of yourself, Watch!" said the smiling farmer, and in a twinkling the yellow cur swung his head around and set his teeth in the bull-dog's neck. The bones cracked, the bull-dog opened his jaws at once, and the farmer's dog let go his hold and trotted under the wagon. The bull-dog gave one kick and was as dead as a rock. The farmer's dog had broken his neck.

"I told you how it would be," said the farmer, good naturedly, "but you would have your own way," and the toughs all congregated around the lifeless bull-dog and exclaimed:

"Well, that beats —!"—[New York Sun.

An anti-monopolist is one who would like to put himself in a millionaire's place.

Melons were first called canteloupes from being cultivated at Canteluppi, a village near Rome, where they had been introduced from Armenia by missionaries.

HOUSEHOLD.

Christmas Cooking.

ROAST TURKEY AND SAUSAGES.—After having trussed, drawn the sinews, and cleaned the turkey, fill the breast with forcemeat, and if a trussing-needle is used, sew the neck over to the back. Run a skewer through the pinion and thigh through the body to the pinion and thigh on the other side, and then fasten a sheet of buttered paper on to the breast of the bird, put it down to a bright fire, at a little distance at first (afterwards draw it nearer), and keep it well basted all the time it is cooking. About a quarter of an hour before serving, remove the paper, dredge the turkey lightly with flour, and put a piece of butter into the basting-ladle; as the butter melts baste the bird with it. When of a nice brown, and well-frothed, serve with a tureen of good gravy and one of bread sauce. Fried sausages are placed round the dish. About a quarter of an hour to the pound is the time needed for roasting.

ROAST GOOSE.—Pluck, singe, draw, and carefully wash and wipe the goose; cut off the neck close to the back, leaving just sufficient skin to turn over; cut off the feet at the first joint, and separate the pinions at the first joint; beat the breastbone flat with a rolling-pin, put a skewer into the underpart of each wing, and, having drawn up the legs closely, put a skewer into the middle of each, and pass it quite through the body. Insert another skewer into the small of the leg, bring it close down to the side bone, run it through, and do the same on the other side; cut off the end of the vent, and make a hole in the skin sufficiently large to pass the rump through. Make a sage-and-onion stuffing as follows: Peel four large onions, put them into boiling water, simmer for five minutes or rather longer, and just before they are taken out put in ten sage-leaves to take off their rawness; chop both these very finely, add $\frac{1}{2}$ lb breadcrumbs, seasoning to taste, and $\frac{1}{2}$ oz butter; work the whole together with the yolk of an egg, put it into the body of the goose, and secure it firmly at both ends by passing the rump through the hole made in the skin, and the other end by trying the skin of the neck to the back; put it down to a brisk fire, keep it well basted, and roast from one and a half to two hours, according to size; remove the skewers, and serve with a tureen of gravy and one of apple-sauce.

ROAST BEEF.—Choose about 6 lb top of the rump, trim it neatly, and place it in front of a brisk, clear fire; place the joint near the fire for the first half-hour then remove it farther away; baste frequently. When nearly cooked sufficiently, sprinkle the joint over with a little salt; put a little water in the dripping-pan, and drain off the gravy, freeing it as much as possible from the fat, and pour over the meat. A quarter of an hour should be allowed for roasting each pound of meat, and half an hour for browning it.

YORKSHIRE PUDDING.— $\frac{1}{2}$ lb best dry flour and one teaspoonful of salt; mix the flour to a smooth paste with a little milk; beat three eggs, and add to them a pinch of ground ginger and a pint of milk; beat all the ingredients together, well grease a dish or tin, pour in the batter, and bake in a brisk oven for three-quarters of an hour.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING.—Soak 4 oz bread-crumbs in a teacupful of milk for a few hours; 1 lb finely-chopped beef suet, 1 lb stoned raisins, 1 lb currants washed and piced, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb mixed peel, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb sugar, a pinch of salt, a teaspoonful of mixed spice, a little ginger, four eggs well beaten; mix the above ingredients thoroughly together, beat well for twenty minutes; butter a pudding-basin or mould, put in the mixture, cover with a cloth, and boil from five to six hours.

CHRISTMAS CAKE.—Wash in water 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. fresh butter, and then do the same with it in rose-water, beat it to a cream, beat the yolks of twenty eggs for half an hour, and the whites separately for the same time. Have ready 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. flour dried and kept hot, also $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. white powdered sugar, 1 oz powdered mixed spice, 3 lb currants thoroughly washed and dried, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb blanched almonds, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb candied peel and fruit cut neither too small nor too thin, mix the dry ingredients, add the eggs to the butter, to this pour half a pint of sweet wine and a glass of brandy, mix them thoroughly, and add by degrees, while mixing, the dry ingredients; mix these thoroughly, add in $\frac{1}{2}$ lb stoned best raisins chopped moderately fine, and finish with half a teacupful of orange-flower water, beat well for an hour, place in a cake-tin well lined with six thicknesses of paper, and bake in a quick oven for five hours. The icing: To 1 lb. Jordan almonds, 3 lb. white powdered sugar, the juice of a lemon, the white of an egg; blanch the almonds, soak them in water for twelve hours, chop them small, then pound them in a mortar, mix them gradually with the white of one egg, the sugar, and the lemon, spread it over the cake, and let it stand for three days before putting on the sugar-icing, which is made as follows: To the whites of four eggs add the juice of two lemons, and 3 lb sifted sugar, work together with a wooden spoon, spread it over the cake, and let it dry in a warm place. Do not put it in the oven.

That's the Difference.

Cabbage—What's the difference between a dilatory man and the president of a female college?

Rubbage—I'll give it up.

Cabbage—One misses the train and the other trains the misses.

Try hard cider—a wine-glass full three times a day—for ague and rheumatism.

Dry Humor.

After Tommy had devoured about seventeen cakes he applied for more.

"Mamma, gimme another cake?"

"No, my child, you have had enough."

"But I can't drink my tea dry, can I?"

Didn't Want that Kind.

"Nice carpets. Can't be beat, said h salesman."

"I know it," said the customer, sadly. "I bought some of them last year, and when I tried to beat them last week they fell to pieces. I want something that will stand a triennial thrashing."—[Harper's Bazar.

Little Girl (at the opera for the first time)—Mamma, what are those women doing with their feet?

Mother—Don't ask so many questions.

"Mamma, are they trying to catch flies with their feet?"

"No; dudes."—[Tex. Siftings

The Nest Will Soon be Empty.

Before my chamber window,
In glossy splendor dressed,
A giant hemlock swung his arms
And bore the heavy breast,
While soft within the shadows,
Slow swaying all the day,
Within his mighty fingers,
A fragile bird's-nest lay,
With cheery chirps and twitters,
The glossy twigs among,
Upon a tiny birdie sat
And brooded o'er her young,
Through all the merry springtime,
And summer's mellow ray:
But now the nest is empty,
The birdies fled away.

I watched the little mother,
When, with a cooing cry,
She taught her tiny yearling brood
To flap their wings and fly;
And when, at last, they fluttered
Into the drying day,
I watched the lonely parent birds
And heard their plaintive lay.

But now the snows of winter
Are settling o'er the nest,
And covering with ermine soft,
The giant's brawny breast,
And ne'er a birdie's twitter
Is heard the livelong day,
For, oh! the nest is empty,
The birdlings fled away.

Ah me! my little nestlings,
In mother's circling arms,
I brood with loving, jealous eyes,
O'er all your growing charms,
For soon, too soon! my sunset
Will show its reddened ray,
And out into a wind-tossed world,
My wee ones flit away.

But mother-love is tender,
And mother's arms are tight,
She'll teach her little nestlings now,
To know and do the right,
She'll teach them to be gentle
And merciful, while she may:
Then "Neath the shelter of His wings,"
They all must fly away.

But, oh! 'tis for the parent birds
My heart to-day is sore,
And, oh! 'tis for the empty nest,
That was so full before!
And, oh! 'tis for the solitude
And sadness of the day,
When from the shelter of the home,
The birdlings fly away.

BEE EVELYN PHINNEY.

Christmas in India.

Dim dawn behind the tamarisks—the sky is
saffron yellow—
As the women in the village grind the corn
And the parrots seek the river-side, each calling
to its fellow
That the day, the starting eastern day, is born,
Oh, the sun is rising on the highway! Oh, the
stanches in the by-way!
Oh, the clammy fog that hovers over earth!
And at home they're making merry 'neath the
white and scarlet berry—
What part have India's exiles in their mirth!

Full day behind the tamarisks—the sky is blue
and starry—
As the cattle crawl afield beneath the yoke,
And they bear one o'er the field path, who is
past all hope or caring,
To the that below the curling wreaths of
smoke,
Call on Rama; going slowly, as ye hear a brother
lowly—
Call on Rama; he may hear, perhaps your
wail.

With our hymn-books and our psalters we
appeal to other altars,
And to-day we bid "good Christian men
rejoice!"

High noon behind the tamarisks—the sun is hot
above us—
As at home the Christmas day is breaking
wan,
They wail,
Oh, drink our healths at dinner—those
who tell us how they love us,
And forget us till another year be gone!
Oh, the toil that knows no breaking! Oh, the
Hemlock, ceaseless, aching!
Oh, the custom of the alien plain!
Youth was cheap—wherefore we sold it,
Gold was good—we hoped to hold it,
And to-day we know the fullness of our gain.

Gray dusk behind the tamarisks—the parrots
fly together—
As the sun is sinking slowly over home;
And his last ray seems to mock us, shackled in
a life-long tether
That drags us back howe'er so far we roam.
Hard her service, poor her payment—she in
ancient fetters raiment—
India, she the grim stepmother of our kind,
If a year of life be lent her, if her temple's
shrine we enter,
The door is shut—we may not look behind.

Black night behind the tamarisks—the owls
begin their chorus—
As the conches from the temple scream and
bray,
With their countless years behind us and the hope-
less years before us,
Let us honor, O my brothers, Christmas day
Call a truce, then, to our labors; let us feast
with friends and neighbors.
And be merry as the custom of our caste;
For if "faint and forced the laughter," and if
sadness follow after,
We are richer by one mocking Christmas
past.

—Rudyard Kipling.

My Darling's Shoes.

God bless the little feet that never go astray,
For the little shoes are empty in my closet laid
away.

Sometimes I take one in my hand, forgetting,
till I see
It is a little half-worn shoe, not large enough
And all at once I feel a sense of bitter loss and
pain,
As sharp as when, two years ago, it cut my
heart in twain,

O! little feet that wearied not, I wait for them
no more,
For I am drifting on the tide, while they have
reached the shore;
And while the blinding tear drops wet these
little shoes so old,
I try to think my darling's feet are treading
streets of gold,
And so I lay them down again, but always turn
to my
God bless the little feet that now so surely can-
not stray!

And while I thus am standing I almost seem
to see
Two little forms beside me, just as they used
to be!
Two little faces lifted with their sweet and ten-
der eyes,
Ah, me! I might have known that look was
born of Paradise.
I reach my arms out fondly, but they clasp the
empty air,
There is nothing of my darlings but the shoes
they used to wear.

O! the bitterness of parting cannot be done
away
Till I meet my darlings walking where their
feet can never stray
When I no more am drifting upon the surging
tide,
But with them safely landed upon the river
side;
Be patient, heart, while waiting to see their
shining way,
For the little feet in the golden street can never
go astray.

He Was a Sheep.

A Sunday-school teacher endeavored to
make his pupils understand that parable
about the good shepherd. He said:
"Now, little children, suppose you were
all little sheep, what would I be?"
He expected them to say that he would
be the good shepherd, but much to his dis-
gust one of them replied:
"If we were little sheep you would be a
big sheep," whereupon the teacher looked
very sheepish, indeed.—[Tex. Siftings.

CHRISTMAS GIVING.

Every time that the great festival of Christmas dawns upon the earth it brings with it certain reflections, or rather emotions, that seem to be as much a part of its atmosphere as the frosty sky and keen snow scents which in Northern latitudes belong to it, and which we most frequently associate with our thought of Christmas, in spite of the fact that the day comes—and is kept, too, with all due state—in the tropical and semi-tropical latitudes, where frosty weather is unknown.

The chief of these emotions proper to the Christmas season is the consciousness of a great and warm good-will to man such as that of which the storied angels sang; a good-will which makes us desire every one's happiness, and inclines us to do all in our power to achieve it, so that for the time being we feel almost reconciled to our dearest foe, if we have one; a good-will which sharpens our needles, empties our larders, opens our purses, and brings cordial words and kind wishes to our lips; a good-will which goes out even to those in the white and silent cities of the dead, and lays fresh wreaths of Christmas green above the snow upon their graves.

This good-will manifests itself especially in relation to children, for whom at this time, if never before, it seems to us necessary to make the earth teem with happiness. And not only do they go on journeys to old homes, and receive with all ceremony of welcome those who come journeying to them, but they are admitted to all the tempting stir of the kitchen in the preparation of substantial cheer, they are initiated, to the delight of their small hearts, into the secret manufacture of gifts.

It is surely a pity that the pure joyousness of such a day should be marred by anything partaking of the nature of covetousness, or the sense of acquisition; but as that would seem to be counterbalanced by the delight of giving, on the general average, it is only just to leave it out of sight. What is absolutely to be regretted about the manner of celebrating the day is that this habit of giving to the children has become such a prodigal one that it has increased the quality and cost of gifts to those who are not children, till the custom is likely to become a burden, if it has not already become one, and possibly to cease altogether by mere reason of its excess.

If the very wealthy limited themselves, by the general acceptance of an unwritten law, to the giving of Christmas gifts involving only a very moderate expenditure, then the less wealthy and those to whom the giving here means the going without there, would be able to give and not be pinched in the purse for a period of weeks and months afterward. It is true that the Christmas time affords opportunity and excuse to the very wealthy to make gifts that it seems to them they cannot make quite with delicacy at other times. But to those who truly wish to do generous things, other times and seasons can be made propitious with a little care and ingenuity. For one absolutely needs the Christmas-tide in order to make acceptable the gift of those who can hardly afford to give at all; but the very wealthy, of sufficiently friendly footing to give gifts at Christmas or any other time, are so indisputably superior in the point of ability to give, that rivalry on that point is not to be thought of; the giving may really take place at any time without reference to a general custom or any especial season of the year, and acceptance becomes as graceful as bestowing, it being taken for granted that the receiver, in accepting in such cases, renders as great a favor to the giver as the giver renders to the receiver—renders it in affording the other the chance to enjoy the pleasure of bestowal, and the gratification belonging to the doing of good deeds.

When it shall be made a general custom to give only inexpensive gifts at Christmas time, a great and needed reform will have been wrought, and one that will bring more comfort to many people than a wilderness of gifts can ever do. A book that costs a dollar and a quarter is as full of the spirit of the day as a check many times its worth, a diamond, a trinket, or a possession of any sort; a photograph, a drawing, a bunch of flowers, a bit of handiwork, says all that any prodigality can say. It would be well, then, for a large number of people of only average means—the majority of givers, indeed—if by general consent gifts of any great money value should be reserved for their own occasions, and it should come to be considered something outside of the limits of good taste to give any gifts at all on Christmas Day whose purchase, were the giving reversed, would be able to occasion the least inconvenience to a narrow purse.

Very Polite.

"Is this Ned Phillipot?" the justice asked, addressing a little nappy-headed negro.

"Yes, sah, thankee, ef you please."

"Been drunk again?"

"Yes, sah, thankee."

"Been here some ten times within the last year, haven't you?"

"Yes, sah, thankee, 'bleeged ter you."

"When are you going to quit?"

"Doan' know, thankee, sah."

"I believe I'll send you to the workhouse for twenty-five days."

"Thankee, sah."

"Look here, what makes you so polite?"

"Kain't help it, thankee, sah; born in me, I reckon."

"Well, I think I'll let you off this time. Politeness ought to be rewarded."

"Bleeged ter yer, sah, thankee."

When the little old negro was gone the justice said: "There can't help but be some little good in so polite a man. He may be a drunkard, but—but—"

"What are you looking for, Judge?" some one asked.

"Why, that red silk handkerchief. It was lying on this desk a moment ago."

The little old negro walked along the street. "Dis yere hankerchief is good fur two drinks," said he.—[Arkansas Traveler.

Center of the Land Hemispheres.

The city of London is put down by geographers as the center of the land hemisphere. In other words, a radius of about 6,000 miles on the curved surface of the earth, with London as a center, would describe a circumference inclosing more land than any 6,000-mile circle that could be drawn from any other city in the world.

There is a new element, a mineral discovered in the Boleo mines. It is composed of cubic crystals of a fine blue color, and has been christened "boleite."