FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH

BY MARY N. PRESCOTT.

Peggy was the little maid-of-all-work in a big boarding-house. She waited on table, answered the door-bell, ran errands and washed dishes, doing whatsoever her little rough hands found to do with all her might.

Yet, she was scolded much of the time because she was too slow or too quick. The cook scolded; so poor Peggy was in hot water even when she was not washing dishes or scouring floors.

If anything was missing, Peggy had mislaid it, of course; if anything was broken, Peggy was to blame; if the fire was low, she had forgotten to feed it; if the lamp smoked, Peggy was at the bottom of it. I'm not sure that they didn't take her to do when the weather was bad.

All the help she had was from the dumb Betty. Maybe you think the dumb Betty is a girl who cannot speak? But though it is nothing of the kind, yet it runs up and down between the kitchen and the dining-room on errands, sends up the breakfast piping hot, and carries down the dishes without breaking a handle off a cup. It saved Peggy many a step. She felt as if it were a friend to her.

At Christmas time, Peggy used to wonder what the little children were going to have in their stockings. She thought she would like to see Santa Claus filling them up with toys and sweetmeats, and rather wondered why he never happened in at Miss Crane's boarding-house.

At any rate, it was a comfort to know that pretty things were in the world for somebody to enjoy, even if she could not have any of them.

She was so used to being neglected and forgotten, that it never occurred to her anybody ought to remember her. Who was there to remember her? Once she had hung up her stocking, to-be-sure, on the door-bell of the basement, and had found it nearly filled with snow in the morning. It wasn't very encouraging.

She used to wonder if she would ever know how to read. She was twelve years old, but small and childish looking. She had learned some of the letters of the alphabet from the signs on the stores where she was sent on errands.

Mr. Millet, the grocer, began with an "M," that was plain enough—a great gilt letter that anybody might know. Then she knew where to look for "B" at the baker's.

She sometimes asked Bridget how to spell this or that simple word, and Bridget, who had no ambition to learn, but was yet ashamed to confess her ignorance, would tell her there would be a scolding spell if she didn't leave learning alone, which was for her betters, and think about her work.

If any of the boarders gave Peggy a few coppers for running an errand, or if anything was left over from her wages after buying her clothes, she would put the money away in an old tin mustard-box, thinking that some time she might get enough together to pay for some schooling.

She never knew how much she had, not being able to count above ten; but she used to take all the pieces out, by way of recreation, and look at them lovingly after she had gone up to bed, and before her inch of candle had burned out.

One day she heard Miss Goodenough saying at the breakfast table:

"If we can raise money enough, little Susan Flynn, the washerwoman's child, will have the cataracts removed from her eyes and be able to see again."

"Dear me!" thought Peggy. "She's worse off than me! Supposing I couldn't see to set the dishes or anything? And then there's a sight of things a girl likes to look at. There's the green grass and the trees, and the birds on the common, and the shop-windows, and people's faces, and the stars after you've gone to bed, nights."

"I don't know as we shall get enough money," Miss Goodenough was saying. "I've begged right and left. Susan's mother has to leave her alone, days when she has work, to grope her way about, tidying up the house and keeping the fire bright. What long days they must be to her! I think I'll try to raise a collection here among the boarders."

Peggy took out her treasure-box that night, and looked at the bright pieces lovingly. Then she began to build her poor little castle in the air. She was at school; she had a real reader; she could spell words of three syllables.

When she had reached the third storey of her castle, her tiny bit of candle went out and left her in darkness. That reminded her of blind Susan.

"I'll give it all—every cent of it—to Miss Goodenough," she thought, "for blind Susan, to buy daylight for her for a Christmas present. I never made a Christmas present before—never, in all my life! Oh, dear!—but I shall never learn to read if I do; and perhaps Susan will never see again if I don't. I should like to give a Christmas present just once; and how surprised Susan will be when she sees the sun and the blue sky! I should like to know how to read; but Susan Flynn ought to have her own eyes."

Just then the Christmas bells began to ring.

Peggy thought of all the stockings hanging in the chimney corners of comfortable homes; of little children dreaming in warm beds; of the infant Jesus in the manger, and the wise men bringing gifts of frankincense and myrrh. She didn't know what frankincense and myrrh might be; but something worth giving, she supposed.

One of the housemaids had told her the Bible story of Christmas. If she gave all her money to blind Susan, wouldn't that be something like frankincense and myrrh?

Before the bells had done ringing, she was knocking at Miss Goodenough's door, with the tin mustard-box in her hand.

"It's for blind Susan," said Peggy. "It's a Christmas present to help her see all the meautiful things other folks see."

"Where did you get it, Peggy?" asked Miss Goodenough.

"I saved it. I've been a long time saving of it. I thought maybe sometime there'd be enough to pay for some learning, you know, and a real reader; but I don't care about that now. Susan oughter see things fust. It's a Christmas present to her. I never made one before," a little proudly.

"Thank you!" said Miss Goodenough, rather shortly.

She didn't dare trust her voice to say more. Peggy, the little slip-shod maid-of-all-work, seemed suddenly to wear a halo about her head. They had been entertaining an angel unawares in the boarding-house kitchen.

Peggy was singing about her work on Christmas morning. The dumb Betty had just come up with a hot breakfast, and she was busy setting it upon the table, when Miss Goodenough came down stairs.

"I wish you a merry Christmas, Peggy," said she.

"Thank you! There was a bit of snow last night, and the plum-bush in the yard looks like a Christmas-tree."

"Did you ever see a Christmas-tree?"

"No, marm; but I guessed what it was like. I watched the children across the way this morning. They had very long legs to their stockings, all full to the toes."

"I've been talking to your mistress about you, Peggy," said Miss Goodenough, "and she says you may go to the evening school, where you will be taught how to read and write; and you may begin to-morrow night."

"Me?" cried Peggy. "If ever I heard of such a thing! You're sure it's me? It is a merry Christmas, ain't it, though? My, it's as good as frankincense and myrrh! It's—it's—"

But Peggy was crying on Christmas morning, and the halo was around Miss Goodenough's head this time.

Everywhere.

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas
to-night!
Christmas in lands of the fir-tree and
pine,
Christmas in lands of the palm-tree
and vine,
Christmas where snowpeaks stand
solemn and white,
Christmas where corn fields lie sunny
and bright;
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas
to-night!

Christmas where children are hopeful
and gay,
Christmas where old men are patient
and gray;
Christmas where peace, like a dove in
its flight,
Broods o'er brave men in the heart of
the fight;
Everywhere, everywhere Christmas
to-night!

The Jolly Jelly Clan.

A clever gift idea is to decorate the sensible glass of jelly in such a manner that the decorations are almost as attractive as the glistening contents. Crepe or issue paper is arranged around the glass to form a dress for a doll.

Next a cap is adjusted. This is made of stiff white paper which is folded down around the edges of the glass and ties in place with a large bow, to which is attached a card saying, "We are from the Jolly Jelly Clan, and bring good cheer to you," or any other appropriate greeting.

The card should be covered with tiny sketches of elfin figures. The face is made of an oval bit of white paper, with the features outlined upon it.

This requires but a few minutes' work and is especially diverting as a gift to an invalid.

Zane Grey

The famous author, as he appeared aboard his three-masted schooner Fisherman.

Prince of Wales laying a wreath at the Cenotaph in London, as part of the exercises on Armistice Day, when the eighth anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in the great war was marked with solemn grandeur in London.

NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM

Still was the night in Bethlehem—
Fragrant and still;
And under the shag of a little hill
That sheltered them,
Drowsy and warm lay the huddled sheep,
While the sheep-boys beside them, half asleep,
Stirred, uneasy, and seemed to keep
Watch for they knew not what good or ill.
Oh, still was the night in Bethlehem—
Holy and still!

Then through the dusk of the darkling night,
Through the brooding gloom,
There broke a flare, the sudden bloom
Of ineffable light;
A mighty noise as of rushing wings;
And all through the dazzle and thunderings
A deep strange thrill of unspeakable things
That on earth could scarce find room.
Oh, full was the night in Bethlehem
Of glory and light!

Surprised and dazzled and sore distraught
The sheep-boys lay,
In a radiance greater than any day,
Which they fathomed not.
And they seemed to hear from a choiring throng
The rhythm of some celestial song,
Through the aethers lifted and borne along
From the deepest deeps to the faraway.
Oh, glad was the night in Bethlehem
For the coming day!

"Glory and glory!" the voices sang,
"Glory and peace!"
In a dream of unearthly harmonies
The anthem rang.
"This night is born to the souls of men
A light that can never go out again,
Whatever tumults or woes they ken;
For this is the guerdon of Man's release!"
Oh, glory there was in Bethlehem—
Glory and peace!

Think not the evangel given us
Could forfeit be,
Nor the promise become to humanity
Less glorious;
For that peace of God is our heritage.
Down the centuries comes the gage,—
Freedom and power to every age,
Beyond all dreams of mortality:
And the light shines ever from Bethlehem
Victorious!

—Julia P. Dabney.

Holly for Health.

When you hang up holly and mistletoe this year just remember that, although now regarded solely as a Christmas decoratton, these plants have other uses, which our forefathers were not slow to exploit.

In olden times holly leaves were used to make medicine for gout. After being soaked in water for two days, the leaves were boiled, and the liquid thus obtained was said to be of great healing value.

The juice of mistletoe berries was also used in the preparation of a medicine for the cure of the various ailments which followed over-eating at Christmas time.

Early Christmas Service.

In Finland it is a custom to attend church services at 5 o'clock on Christmas morning.

At Bethlehem.

The shepherds came in haste,
And left to angels' care
The sheep upon the waste,
And saw a sight most fair—
Baby and mother lay
Warm in the manger's hay.

No burning lamp gave light,
But through the open door
Stars shone across the night
More bright than ere before—
God's candles flickering
Soft lit the new-born King.

Jesus, who lightened them
With starry candle-flame
Coming to Bethlehem
To praise thy holy name.
At thy Nativity—
Be thou a Light to me.

—Westminster Gazette.

Cradle Hymn.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his
sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked
down where he lay—
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the
hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby
awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he
makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus: Look down
from the sky
And stay by my cradle till morning
is nigh.

—Martin Luther.

A Christmas Talk.

Holly is the plant of the optimist. It shines best and looks loveliest when the lights are low, when the curtains are closed. It is the symbol of cheer within, when the storm rages without.

Holly is a winter green; it bears its brightest fruit when other trees are as bare as broomsticks. Shakespeare wrote: "Heigh-O the holly! This life is most jolly!"

He had just been talking about "man's ingratitude," and "friend remembered not." He says, in effect: "Never mind, there are good fellows left who have a sprig of holly in their nature; who can be cheerful when things are groggy; who can put forth the leaves of hope when everybody else is shedding them; who can deck themselves with the scarlet berries of good nature, thankfulness, kindness, charity, when other people button up their pockets and harden their hearts!"

He calls these people "the salt of the earth," sunshiny souls in the midst of sulky gloom. And he was right.

The First Christmas.

Where man was all too marred with
sin,
The lowly kine were bidden in;
Where angels were unfit to come,
These humble entered holydom—
There in the stable with the beast,
The Christmas Child hath spread His
feast.
These His adorers were before
The kings and shepherds thronged the
door,
And where no angels knelt there
kneeled,
The innocent creatures of the field.

Cranberry Salad.

Soften a half box of gelatine in one-half cup of cold water, add two and one-half cups of boiling cranberry juice, one tablespoonful lemon juice, a dash of salt, and sweeten with sugar to taste. Stir until cold and beginning to thicken, add one cup of finely cut celery and one cup of finely cut meats. Turn into small wet moulds and set aside to harden. Serve in nests of lettuce leaves with a garnish of mayonnaise.

Living Christmas Trees.

Why not plant a tree instead of cutting one for Christmas? A living tree is infinitely more precious than a dead one.

"Heap on more wood! The wind is
chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still!"

—Sir Walter Scott.

Betty (looking up narrow chimney): "Well, I hope Santa Claus has gone on a diet!"

A DRESS OF DISTINCTION.

Dignity and smartness are combined in this charming frock of moire. The front of the bodice is joined to the skirt and the back is in one piece. The deep V opening, shawl collar, and plaited apron tunic, are becoming features and give the much coveted slenderizing lines. The vestee and lower section of the sleeves add a smart note of color contrast. No. 1461 is in sizes 36, 38, 40, 42 and 44 inches bust. Size 38 requires 3½ yards 39-inch moire, and ⅝ yards 36-inch contrasting for sleeves and vestee. 20c.

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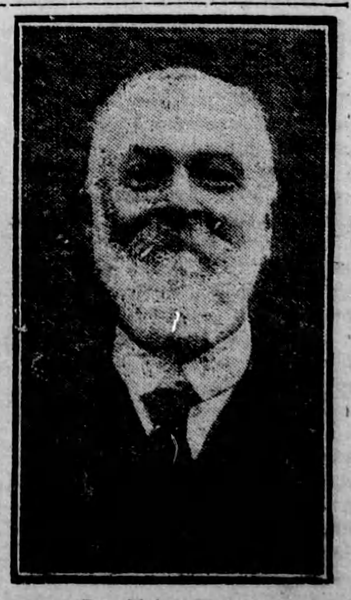
Origin of Christmas Card.

The current use of the decorated Christmas card for the purpose of offering holiday greetings found its earliest manifestation, according to most authorities, in the year 1846, when Sir Henry Cole, an Englishman, commissioned J. C. Horsley, an artist of the Royal Academy, to design an appropriate Christmas greeting which he might send to his friends. This early Christmas card was lithographed and copied by hand and only 1,000 copies were made. The decoration consisted of a trellis of rustic work divided into a centre and two side panels. The two outer panels held figures representing two acts of charity, "feeding the hungry," and "clothing the naked," while in the centre a merry family of three generations, grandparents to grandchildren, was depicted drinking draughts of wine.

The Christmas card, however, did not reach any high degree of decorative excellence until 1867 when an English firm secured some well-known artists to execute designs for cards and large numbers of skilfully decorated greeting cards were circulated at the Christmas season. Among the artists who did this work was Kate Greenaway, whose figures of little maidens made her well remembered.



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INTERIOR ARRANGEMENT AVOIDS WASTED SPACE

Improvement in ventilation ideas have enabled modern architects to reduce the height of ceilings without impairing health. The saving in building costs and in heating expense, on that account, is well worth calculating.

The most marked advancement in interior arrangement, however, is the growing utilization of space that otherwise might be wasted for built-in features such as buffets, china closets, kitchen cabinets, book-cases, cosy-corners, etc. All of these things save time and steps in the housekeeper's scheme of things. They do not as a rule collect as must dust and dirt as the ordinary portable furniture, nor do they have to be moved about in order to sweep and clean behind them. Less tiresome to the housekeeper, they are also less expensive than the individual portable items which they replace.

Greater satisfaction will be assured if, before building operations are commenced, you have a preliminary set of plans made. You can then study each room, put the plans aside for a while, and then pick them up again, thus, over a period of time, familiarizing yourself with what the various rooms will be like, almost as though you were actually living in them. By so doing you will doubtless be struck from time to time with improvements that might be made, and after thinking these over, a revised set of plans can be made from which the home finally will be built.