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H. P. MOORE,
Editor and Proprietor.

Business Directory.

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L. R. C. P. EDINBURGH.
L. L. P. & S. GLASGOW.
MEMBER BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION ETC.
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Office at residence, on Willow Street,—between Merchant's Bank and Town Hall.
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Orders promptly filled.
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A MERRY CHRISTMAS
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It assures you scientific treatment, both in the examination of your eyes and the focusing and fitting of "Glasses or Spectacles" for their use.
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Highest Prices for Marketable Grain

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CARRIAGE WORKS.
GEORGETOWN - ONT

Poetry.

THE CHRISTMAS CLERK AND THE CHRISTMAS SHOPPERS

Now that the merry Yuletide comes
The jaded clerk once more must rise
As if to take a judgment seat
And show the world that he is wise;
The great, the small, the rich, the poor,
All come to him to ask advice
In picking out such gifts as may
He deemed appropiate and nice.

The happy mother blandly asks:
"Now, do you think this sled will suit?
Or would you, if you were a boy,
Prefer a tool chest or a flute?"
The fond young husband asks for aid
In choosing stockings for his dear —
The clerk must favor this or that,
And always make his reasons clear.

The youthful grandma, whisper'd, asks
If he will kindly help her choose
The little coat she wants to get,
Or else the cunning little shoes,
And he who has within his watch
The picture of a maiden fair
Implores the clerk to help him find
Such gloves as she'll be proud to wear.

But saddest of the moments which
The poor clerk has through all the day
Is that in which some sweet, sweet girl
Comes trustingly to him to say:
"Now do you—do you really think
That you—that is, if you were me—
Would like to get this if you knew—
Well, if you knew it—came from me?"

Select Family Reading

A Christmas Card

IT is at once painful and perplexing to be answered by a heavy sigh where one expects an exclamation of pleasure and admiration; so it was not wonderful that Mrs. Austin, under these exact conditions, looked anxiously into her husband's face. She was holding-up for his inspection a large wax doll, one of the treasures for Madge, the blue-eyed darling of four years, who was counting the days until Santa Claus should come. Every stitch of Miss Dollie's elaborate costume was the work of Mrs. Austin's busy fingers in hours when Madge was dreaming of full stockings and Christmas trees, and the last stitch set, the result was displayed for papa's approval.

Now papa was quite as devoted a parent to Madge and two-year-old Harold as mamma, and took deep interest in all nursery matters. It may be that the memory of two other curly heads and baby faces that had brightened the nursery for a few brief months and then been hidden by coffin lids deepened the love for the children who came later to comfort the aching hearts. But it is very certain that the little Austins were as much loved and petted as children could be, and did not dream more hopefully of Christmas treasures than their parents did lovingly of supplying them.

So it was with some alarm, too, that Mrs. Austin put aside the last triumph of needlework and threw her arm around her husband's neck.

"What is it Charlie?" she asked.

He drew her into a loving embrace before he said, sadly:

"I met my father again to-day. Margaret, it will kill me to have things go on so. He was downright shabby, feeble and broken; looking so old and so sick that I could not keep the tears out of my eyes. But he would not speak to me. I said all I could say in the street, and tried to follow him home; but he stopped short and said: 'I do not want you, sir! You will cease to annoy me!' And I could not make a scene in the street."

There was a choking sound in Charles Austin's voice as he ceased speaking, but, being a man, he kept back the sob that would have followed. Mrs. Austin's tears were falling fast.

"At Christmas time, too," she said. "It seems useless to send presents, Charlie; he has sent them back every year."

The story this conversation referred to was an old one, a true love marriage made in the face of disinheritance and paternal displeasure. Mrs. Austin had been a poor girl, employed in the factory of Simon Austin, then a man of great wealth and good social position; a man purse-proud, arrogant and full of his own importance. When his only child, his idolized, indulged son and heir, told of his love for pretty Margaret Hay, a factory girl wearing calico dresses, and earning a mere living, the old man was a maniac in his fury.

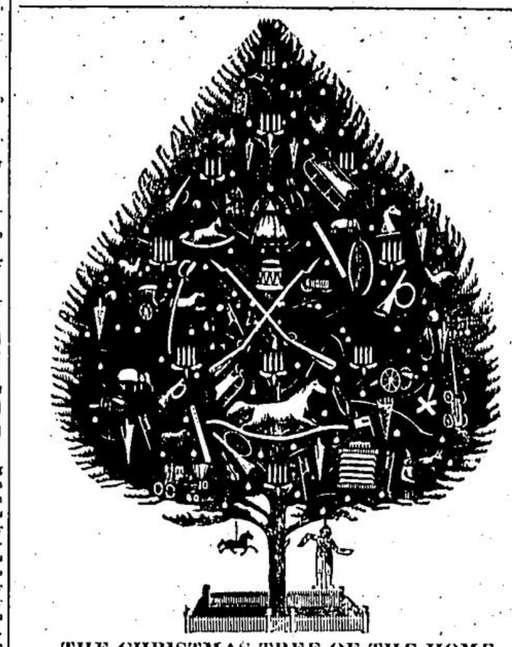
He could not see that the girl was pleasing in manner, refined in taste, well educated, sweet-tempered, one to brighten any home, and make any good man thoroughly happy. He gave a fierce command that the matter should end then and there. Charles Austin, utterly unaccustomed to being crossed in any fancy, refused obedience, never before exacted, and the conversation ended in a stormy quarrel and the young man's expulsion from home.

But with a good fortune that does not often follow disobedient sons, Charles was at once taken into the employ and favor of his mother's brother, an eccentric old bachelor, who gave the young couple a home in his own luxurious house. It was a new life to the old gentleman, and he took the keenest interest in all the household affairs as Margaret managed them; loved and mourned the older children, and dying, when Madge was but a year old, left his entire large estate to his nephew, Charles Austin.

And while the sunshine of prosperity had no cloud for his wayward son, the father's fortunes had gone all awry. Some commercial panic was the first blow to Simon Austin, and an effort to repair the loss by speculation only added to disaster. He missed the cool, clear head of his son who had of late years been an active member, the judgment he had first trained and then trusted to guide his large business. He was angry, and his angry impulses led him into dire blunders, until he grew so involved that there was no escape, and he failed for more than his entire fortune.

At once Charles hastened to him, offering his entire wealth to save him, only to be met by a proud, fierce refusal to be under any obligation to a disobedient child or his beggar wife.

Over and over again, as poverty became more and more bitter to the man broken and aged, did his son implore him to allow him to help him, only to be thrown back with angry scorn.



THE CHRISTMAS TREE OF THE HOME

A proud man always, Simon Austin cherished his wrath as the last remnant of the old arrogance, and would not bend one inch. He found letters telling him anonymous sums of money were in the bank in his name, and wrote back refusing to claim them. He mistrusted every offer of service, as dictated by his son, and returned to Charles every scrap of aid sent to him, often perplexing his son by sending him what had not come from him, though he always refused to believe this.

Very sadly the son and his wife talked of the impossibility of helping one who would not let any appeal touch him until, suddenly Margaret cried:

"Charles, I have an idea! Let me try to win your father over. I will send him a Christmas card."

"My dear, he would not open the envelope."

"But it will not go in an envelope. Don't ask any question. Let me try and see if your father will not dine with us to-morrow."

"Dine with us! Margaret, you must be crazy!"

"Not a bit of it. Just let me have my own way, dear."

"Do you ever fail to get that?" was the laughing query, for something in his wife's face gave a fresh hope to Charles Austin's heart.

It was a very mean room in a very poor house where the sun of a bright Christmas morning wakened Simon Austin.

Very wearily and slowly the old man dressed himself, lit a fire in the grate and rang for the poor breakfast his landlady provided. It was Christmas day, and no business took the old man abroad; so, after the untempting tray was removed, he took a newspaper and drew shiveringly to the fire. But before he had read one column there came a knock at the door, and then it opened wide and closed again behind a child—a little girl in a quaint Mother Hubbard cloak and hat, with large blue eyes and clustering brown curls and holding a large flat basket full of fresh, beautiful flowers. While the old man gazed at her in silent amazement, she said, in a sweet, childish voice:

"If you please, dear grandpapa, I am your Christmas card!"

"You—you are what?" he said utterly bewildered.

"If you please, dear grandpapa, I am your Christmas card!"

"Who sent you here? What is your name?"

"Mamma brought me here! I am Madge Austin, dear grandpapa—" and then, half frightened at the strange and the poor room, the child's eyes filled and her lips trembled. "I want to go home!" she whispered.

"Don't cry!" Mr. Austin said, finding his senses, and taking her into his arms, very tenderly, too. "Don't cry, dear, I will take you home."

"Oh, if you please, because, my big doll is there and all the toys Santa Claus brought, and brother Harry. What did Santa Claus bring you?"

"Nothing!"

"Oh!" with a very deep-drawn sigh, "was it because you are up so many stairs? But he always comes to our house, and mamma said, perhaps, to-day he would bring us our grandpapa! We haven't got any now, you know, and mamma said if he did come, we would love him just the same as papa, and he would love us. And please, grandpa, so we will." And here the child put her little arms round the head bent low before her, and lifted the face quivering and tear-stained.

"Oh, don't cry! Oh, please, men don't cry; oh," and again the terror found voice in the plea, "I want to go home!"

"Yes, yes! I will take you home. Bring your flowers, child. This is no place for flowers or—or Christmas cards!"

Down the crazy old stairs the old man led the child, tenderly watchful that the little feet did not slip nor stumble. Through the sunny streets, unheeding the cold, she walked beside him, prattling of her home, and of the dear grandpapa that she had been taught to love.

There was no need to pull the door-bell of the stately mansion to which Simon Austin led his grandchild. Eager hands were waiting to open its portals wide; eager eyes were watching for the coming of the pair. Tender arms and strong hands led Simon Austin into the parlor; Margaret's kisses fell warm and caressing upon his wrinkled cheeks; Charlie's hands removed the shabby overcoat; baby Harold clung to his knees shouting:

"Danpa's tum! Stanta Tlaus bringed dandpa!"

There was no pride could stand against this loving sincere welcome, so pride collapsed.

"You really want me, Charlie?" the old man faltered. It is not mere charity?"

"Hush!" whispered Margaret. "Do not grieve him by such a word. He will never be happy until you come home, dear father."

And so Christmas once again gathered up some tangled threads of estrangement and knit them into strong bands of home love.

DR. HALE'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"Christmas is not done with at midnight on the twenty-fifty of December, 1907," writes Edward Everett Hale, in his editorial page in the Christmas Woman's Home Companion. "In the older language of the older Christianity, for people who spoke English, the Christ-mass lasted twelve days. Indeed, I think the legends about the birth of the Baby said that after the Wise Men had seen in the East His star they traveled twelve days or twelve nights, until on the twelfth night they came to the saintly stable and unloaded their camels. I like, as one year ends and another year begins, to notify those around me that stupid Labor, the lifting and toiling of daily life, is suspended for a while, and that for the next year energetic Work, the triumph of the soul over mind and matter, is to begin. I like to have a special remembrance of the Christmass every day: The children's celebration on Christmas morning; the service at the church as the day goes by; some Christmas party of the old folks in the evening; the oratorio of the Messiah at least on both the Sundays; the Christmas tree for the Sunday School and one for the Settlement House and one for the Union and one for the Association and one for the Industrial School, and so on until you come to the Twelfth Night, with its ring or its bean in the cake, and a good round dance or a Virginia reel before Twelfth Night is over.

LETTERS TO SANTA

Two of the many letters mailed to Santa Claus last Christmas read as follows:

dear santy klaus. If you don't come to my haus before you come to willie Dargin's I'll never speak to you in my life.

Deer Santa Claus. Tel me your telephone number so I can order a ortomobeel for a poor boy what ain't got no father on our street. MINI BORMAN.
—New York Times.

IMPOSING

"The Swoltons seem to keep up an imposing establishment," remarked the canned goods drummer.

"You bet they do," replied the groceryman, with a sigh long drawn out, "and I'm one of the fellows they impose on."

TWENTY YEARS AGO

A Capacious Collection of Christmas Week Chronicles, Culled, Condensed and Copied from Our Issue of December 27th, 1888

Of the grand jury at the recent sessions in this County not one had ever before served on a grand jury. Remarkable.

Mr. John Lawson, V. S., is talking of disposing of his practise here with a view to removing to Dakota, where some rose-colored offers have been made him.

Mr. Samuel Worden was elected Trustee for Lorne School yesterday. Messrs. John McLean, William Moore and Samuel Worden now compose the Board.

General regret is felt at the removal of J. E. McGarvin & Co's Trunk Works to Berlin, which is in progress.

The houses being vacated by Trunk Factory employees are being taken as fast as the occupants can get out, by families who have been inconveniently doubled up with others in single houses, owing to scarcity of dwellings.

In answer to an appeal by Rev. John Philip, pastor of St. Paul's Methodist Church, Brampton, for $12,000 as a Christmas Thank offering to God, towards the extinction of the floating debt, the congregation put on the plates $13.01.

Scott Act fines in Wellington Co., are still being vigorously secured.

The following are the names of those promoted to their several classes at the Lorne Public School:

Lottie Moore, Jennie Waldie, Benson McLean, Mary Cleave, Nellie McDougall, Kate Lynd, Maggie Lynd, Janie Waldie, Ida Fernley, Kate Lasby, Fred Ryder, Bertie Gamble, Joe Lynd.

Miss Daisy Corrigan, of the Public School staff, who is removing to Toronto, was presented with an address and a Bible from the members of Knox Church Choir. Mr. A. T. Mann presented the address, and Mr. John Lawson, the Bible.

The entire absence of snow, and mud in plenty gave Christmas Day the appearance of a spring day instead of mid-winter.

Mr. A. Wooding, of Mansewood, lost his life last week by being thrown from his waggon, his horses having run away while he was moving some furniture to the station for Mr. P. Campbell.

An enjoyable tea-meeting was held at Ballinafad by the Presbyterian congregation. Knox Church Choir, from Acton, including a quartette—Messrs. Lawson, Mann, Lowry and Johnston—furnished appreciated music.

An appreciative address to Miss Jean McLean, late teacher of Lorne School, was last week presented by the pupils, accompanied by an elegant plush dressing case. The address was signed by Lottie Moore and Nellie McDougall.

Nominees for Public School Trustee Board were: Dr. Lowry, W. H. Storey, A. E. Nicklin, John Cameron, Dr. Stacey, W. P. Brown, Thos. H. Harding, James Matthews.

In his sermon on Sunday night, Rev. Dr. Gifford referred in pointed terms to the evils resulting from allowing children to run on the streets at night.

The Methodist S. S. Anniversary was held on Christmas night, and to show the boys and girls who contributed to the programme we give their names summarized from an in extenso programme published:—Recitations, Nellie Matthews, Percy Gifford, Edna McGarvin, Clifster Gifford, Lizzie Creech, Kirby Gifford, Charlie Towers, Eddie Moore, Dean Craine, Mabel Brown, Ada Francis, Bella Stephenson, John Parkins, Daisy Nicklin, Annie Stephenson. There were numerous choruses, and a quartette by the Gifford brothers. Dr. Gifford was Chairman, and J. E. McGarvin, Secretary.

At the close of the following, taken from the Dundas Standard we remarked, our readers will now ask, "Who is the man?":—"Years and years ago, away back in the 40's, Mr. Nash, who was the pioneer in the fur business in the old Gore District, sold a man some goods. Then as now, there was a large credit business done, and the transaction was stated. Mr. Nash died 42 years ago, and his wife in 1871. Among the outstanding uncollected accounts was one owing by a party in Acton, who shall be nameless. Now for the strange story. On the 7th inst., Mrs. W. R. Gray, of Dundas received a letter addressed to her mother, the late Mrs. Nash, stating the above facts, and on the 10th the money was received. What a memory that man must have had! 42 years carrying around the intention to pay, but never able! or was it a case of re-awakened conscience? We incline to the former belief, and regard the man as a hero, who, of his own free will, after a lapse of 42 years, and when all knowledge of it had gone from all but himself, paid his debt. It would be interesting reading to know the struggles through which he had passed before being able to do the thing his heart dictated, but that, we suppose is without the probabilities. We doff our hat to the Acton debtor who has thus paid a debt of 42 years' standing."

Municipal finances published show the assets to be $10,500, to which should be added the public library $1,500, and school buildings $3,500, total $15,500. The total liabilities, including town hall and cemetery debentures only amount to $5,000.

BORN.—At Charlottetown, P. E. I., to Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Le Page, a daughter.

MARRIED.—On Dec. 22, at Sunderland Villa, the residence of W. H. Storey, Esq., by Rev. Dr. Gifford, Mrs. Annie Storey, to Mr. James Firstbrook, of Toronto.

MARRIED.—At Guelph, on Dec. 12, by Rev. J. C. Smith, B. D., John J. Dredge, of Esquesing, to Martha Morton, of Nassagaweya.

R. B. Jermyn, Geo. Havill, T. Agnew, Henderson, McIlne & Co., Kelly Bros.,

SANTA CLAUS A PEEKIN'

Aunt Sally said: "You best look out,
An' mind right sharp what you're about,
And stop straight off that cut a-tweakin'
For Santa Claus is round a-peekin'!"

Now I stopped 'quick, an' gave her head
A pat, an' "nice ole pussy!" said
An' I danced up 'est like a doorin!
When she said, "Santa Claus is peekin'!"

I d'n'o' put pins in chairs, nor light,
Nor hide pa's pipe no more at night.
My goodness—shucks, 'est like a begron!
Since I know—Santa Claus is peekin'.

I've learned my Sunday lesson, too,
How we must all be kind and true.
With piety I'm 'bet a-peekin'!
For Santa Claus is round a-peekin'!

—Louise W. Barton, Fort Erie.

J. C. HILL, W. H. D. . W. J. King, W. Widdows, J. B. Pearson, L. G. Matthews, C. F. Hill, J. C. Nelson, and Rutledge & Johnson, announce that with a view to treating all customers alike they are under agreement to give no Xmas or New Year presents.

Miss Annie Boomer, who has been spending the past year in Pattersonville, Iowa, and Saginaw, Mich., has returned to Acton.

Mr. Robt. Nicklin, who has been in the North West since harvest, returned home last week. He intends to move thence in the spring.

Mr. Francis Warne, of Carman, Man., arrived on Saturday to spend a few weeks in his former home.

YULETIDE CUSTOMS

How the Day is Observed in Many Countries

IN ENGLAND

In England in the early Anglo-Saxon day Christmas was celebrated with almost saturnalian revelries, the lords of misrule holding full sway, but the first breath of Puritanism scorched the zeal of the revelers, and it became a heinous offence to so rejoice and be merry. The year of 1643 saw the abolishment of all saints' days, and those who observed the "three grand festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide, were heavily fined." With the restoration a sad countenance was not at a premium, but rather a merry one, and all the observances of these festival days were revived.

IN SPAIN

In old Seville and the other beautiful cities of Spain Christmas is largely an out of door celebration. The Anglo-Saxon idea of hearth and home is foreign to the Latin temperament, and the gracious climate lends itself to al fresco merrymaking. All is movement, color, tumult, dance and song. The great plazas are kaleidoscopes of human movement. The cathedrals and churches are thronged. Piety and gayety mingle.

IN ITALY

Inspired by the ancient poetical thought of cheering the Virgin during the pangs of maternity, young men and maiden's throng on Christmas eve before her shrines in Italy and play upon their guitars and mandolins, singing songs of praise. It is their part, too, to decorate the beautiful old churches, most profusely, a loving service at which they spend the greater part of the night, refreshed by a collation after midnight mass.

IN GERMANY

Germany is the land of Santa Claus, the home of the beautiful legend of Kris Kringle, which is a corruption of Christ Kindlein, or Christ Child. While the good child finds its little stocking laden with Kris Kingle's gifts, the naughty child finds nothing but a birch rod placed there by the avenging Pelznichol (St. Nicholas with the fur.) Such an experience makes the small victim intensely miserable.

IN AUSTRALIA

In Australia Christmas comes during the midsummer season. The mercury may register 100 degrees or more. Families, instead of being united, are divided, for this is the time of the long vacation. Still, English traditions are preserved. Plum pudding is the dessert and holly the decoration. Moreover, the Australians have a decoration of their own—a crimson flowering shrub which they call Christmas bush and which blooms only in December.

A NEW PROVERB

The book-keeper looked at the new stenographer somewhat critically. He was a satirical book-keeper and had an unpleasant way of impressing the fact on all newcomers. He picked up one of the young women's lead pencils and stared at it disapprovingly.

"Why is it," he asked, "that a woman never can sharpen a pencil?"

The girl looked over at the book-keeper's desk.

"You keep your pencils very sharp, I see," she observed.

"As sharp as needles," he answered.

"We had a proverb at the lawyer's office where I worked," she said in a dreamy way. "I guess you've never heard it."

"No," he said, "what was it?"

"It was 'The sharper the pencil the duller the wit.'"

Then she opened up the typewriter and prepared for the day's business.

HAS GALL

"All Gaul is divided into three parts," an old Roman once wrote. But he did not know. He had never been one of three speakers at an evening banquet, each of whom was to have a half-hour, and the first of whom spoke for an hour and a half. The men had all the gall in the world, and it was not divided.—Philadelphia Westminster.