

The Family Circle

BALLADE OF CHRISTMAS

Hang up the holly, nor forget
The waxen-berried mistletoe;
What matter if the wind be wet
And roads be slushed with melting snow?
The lamplight's gleam, the yule-log's glow,
Shall brighten all the hours that glide,
And we will bless them as they go—
The merry days of Christmastide!

The clouded sun makes haste to set,
The feet of night are overslow,
The bare bough shivers, black as jet,
While gusty winter's breezes blow;
But on our hearts, no gloom can throw
Its shadow, where glad thoughts abide;
We sing our stave and laugh, Ho! Ho!
The merry days of Christmastide!

Barbished awhile are cares that fret,
Sad memories of grief and woe;
We make a truce with old regret
And bitter tears of long ago;
Such cares may come, such tears may flow
Before the winter shall have died;
But cares and tears must never know
The merry days of Christmastide!

ENVOY.

Friend Father Time may bend his bow
To slay our pleasures in their pride;
His malice cannot conquer so
The merry days of Christmastide!

— Irish Monthly.

TWO LITTLE CHRISTMAS ANGELS

The following true story of the heroic self-sacrifice of two children for the Christ-Child's sake is sent by a reader, who hides the identity of the little girls under fictitious names. The contributor hopes that some of our youthful readers may be influenced by this story to perform some similar act of generosity to the poor during the coming holy season:—

In the year 1862 there resided in the town of F—a family of four, a dear old lady, her daughter, and two little girls, seven and nine years of age respectively. They, like all other children of their age, were counting the days until Christmas should arrive and planning out of their small means to remember dear grandma and mamma with some little gift. It had been their habit from their earliest recollection to present mamma with a Christmas turkey, as the income she had did not permit of such a luxury. This year they had saved up (out of hard-earned money, for they received from that mother each week a small amount for doing their share of the housework) 10s, which they had planned to invest in a turkey and a few accessories for the Christmas dinner. On the Sunday before Christmas the priest of the parish church begged from the altar that the congregation would remember substantially at Christmas a poor family who were in a starving condition. At dinner that day the older girl spoke of the thought that had come to her during the pastor's remarks, and suggested to her younger sister that they obtain their mother's consent to give the money they had saved for their Christmas dinner to the starving family. The younger one, Ellen, was not at all willing at first, as their diet, for financial reasons, was a perpetual Lenten fare, and Christmas would not come again for 365 days; furthermore, she was extremely fond of turkey. After some reasoning on the part of Cissie, the older girl, Ellen consented. "The mother told them how pleased she was to hear that they thought of others, but suggested that they think their sacrifice over before they took any steps to forego their Christmas dinner. Two days later they came to their mamma and told her they realised what they were doing and begged her permission to add to their gift some of their toys and any discarded clothing she could spare. Grandma and mamma entered into the spirit of self-sacrifice, and that evening a substantial bundle, together with the 10s, found its way to the poor family. Christmas dawned, an ideal day. After Mass the morning was spent in exchanging the gifts made by loving hands. Dinner time arrived. Two happier little girls could not be found in all the town of F— than Ellen and Cissie. They both declared they

never ate a turkey that tasted quite as delicious as the roast pork, and no cranberries ever had so delightful a taste as the apple sauce. The mother assured them that the dear little Infant Jesus was so pleased with their sacrifice that He had blessed their dinner with the additional flavor of contentment. While she was speaking the bell rang, and the expressman brought in a large box addressed to the Misses—. Upon opening it they found a turkey, cranberries, and everything that goes to make up a Christmas dinner. It was sent from a distant town by their mother's old friend and former teacher, who, although she was ignorant of their sacrifice of a Christmas dinner, had determined to send them these dainties, as she was sorrowfully aware of the struggles their good mother was making to give them the convent training she herself had enjoyed.

Could you, good readers, only have witnessed the scene that followed the opening of that box you would, like the writer, thank God for a Catholic education. Cissie was so overcome that tears started down her little cheeks, and she exclaimed: "Oh, mamma! the Infant Jesus has given us back a hundred-fold what we did for His poor."

Years have rolled into a decade since that Christmas, and those little girls have grown into women and are still true children of the Sacred Heart. Every Christmas when they are planning to bestow the customary Christmas presents among their family and friends they first find out how much money they may spend and how many people there are to remember, then divide the amount into equal parts, but first on the list is the amount for charity, and each Christmas that goes to some poor family to cheer their Christmas, as that Christmas box of long ago did the little girls of F—. 'Catholic News.'

A DIVISION OF LABOUR

William H. Crane, the actor, tells of an amusing incident that occurred in the course of a performance by a company with which the comedian was connected at one time. Crane had been the understudy of the leading man, and it became his duty at a critical time to lift up the fainting heroine and convey her to the wings.

At the time mentioned Mr. Crane was slight and anything but strong, so that the task assigned him was extremely difficult, when it is considered that the leading woman weighed nearly two hundred pounds.

After sundry attempts to accomplish the 'business' assigned him, with little hope of its accomplishment, the strain was broken by the hearty laughter of the audience, for a strong shrill voice from the gallery had shouted:

'For heaven's sake, man, take what you can and come back for the rest.'

AFTER-DINNER PHILOSOPHY

Housewives form their opinions of one another from the pastry on the pie.

It has been said that the life of an intelligent bachelor is very well worth living, but no woman is willing to admit that a bachelor is intelligent.

When a man is in love he thinks it is the most beautiful thing in the world; when he's out of it he thinks the opposite, with an exclamation point.

Relatives and pirates always quarrel over a division of property.

Many a husband is hungry for love his wife wastes on the dog.

Agree with your wife and you can always have your own way.

If time and tide were to wait for men the world would soon be at a standstill.

TONGUE TWISTERS

To get really good tongue twisters from the collection of thousands that have been compiled by elocutionists is a difficult thing. These elocutionists usually rely upon the letter 's' in various combinations which tend towards hisping unless one is exceptionally clear-spoken. There are a few, however, which are really puzzling, and we submit some to our readers:

The sun shines on the shop-signs.
She says she shall sew a sheet.
The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick.
The sea ceaseth and it sufficeth us.
A noisy noise annoys an oyster.
Peers peer from the pier perusing penny papers.
Fighting feyer's feverish fight fighters feverishly fear fever.