

# The Humour of Christmas.

BY JAMES WALTER SMITH.



MAMMA: "To-morrow's Christmas Day, Effie, dear, and you will go to church for the first time." (Encouragingly): "There will be beautiful music—"  
Effie: "Oh, mummy, dear, may I dance?"  
DRAWN BY PHIL MAY. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."

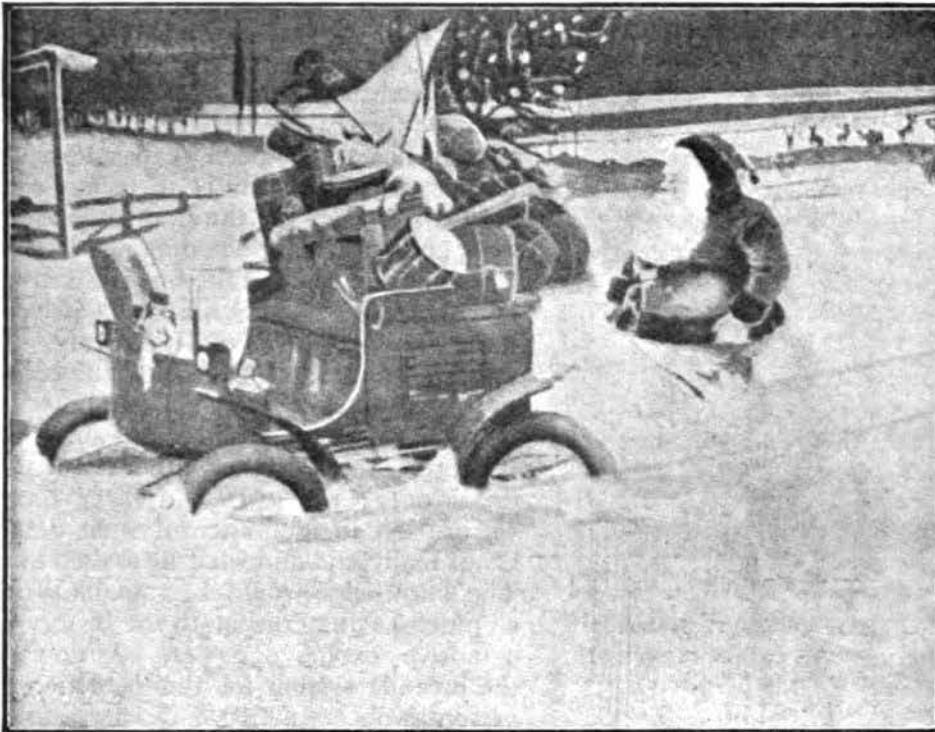


WHEN Effie's mother told her that to-morrow would be Christmas Day, and that Effie was going to church for the first time, where she would hear beautiful music, the little girl cried out, "Oh, mummy, dear, may I dance?" The point of view of Effie is the point of view of untold thousands. We older ones, burdened with the knowledge acquired by years of Christmases, know that Christmas is a religious festival significant with beauty, and some of us are prone to lament, as the Puritans so strenuously lamented, that the fundamental note of the Christmas season seems to be lost. Yet it is not for us to say that the child's point of view is not correct. It makes for happiness, and to be happy in the happiness of others should be the aim of all at Christmas-tide.

The arrival of Santa Claus is so eagerly watched for that we have often wondered why he has never been seen. Possibly because the dustman is in league with Santa, and gets in the way of curious boys and girls. Little Montague, who on Christmas morning told his father that he was awake when Santa Claus arrived, came very near to actual discovery. It was so dark that little Montague could not see Santa, "but when he bumped himself on the wash-stand he said—" "There," replied the father; "that'll do, Monty; run away and play"—and we are left in ignorance of what Santa Claus really said and what he looked like. The knowledge would be valuable—not so much as an addition to the history of explosive expletive as an addition to the juvenile system for the detection of patron saints.



LITTLE MONTAGUE: "I was awake when Santa Claus came, dad."  
Father: "Were you? And what was he like, eh?"  
Little Montague: "Oh, I couldn't see him; it was dark, you know. But when he bumped himself on the wash-stand he said—"  
Father (hastily): "There, that'll do, Monty. Run away and play."  
DRAWN BY C. E. BROCK. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE PROPRIETORS OF "PUNCH."



STUCK FAST.—DRAWN BY ARTHUR F. MERRICK FOR "LIFE."

attempt at personification. On one such occasion Santa appeared in the room where daddy was making up with a shaving-brush and a hand-mirror. "Great Scot!" cried Santa, "is that me?" and we may imagine that he rapidly departed from the scene with some horror at the recollection of a real monstrosity.

Some justification, however, should be expressed on the paternal behalf, for if no one

That Santa Claus should be so intolerably long in arriving at his destination is not to be wondered at when we remember the difficulties in the way of his progress put there by progress itself. Our merry saint has to keep up with the times, and the most accurate knowledge that we possess of his doings tells us that the reindeer which he used to drive so recklessly over the housetops are now possessions of the past, and that Santa to-day rides *en automobile* through the drifting snows. He runs the risks taken by others who fare forth in winter. He may get locked up in the drifts or he may have a total breakdown, so common to beginners in the new and ever-increasing method of locomotion, but the perils in his path are as nothing.

A traveller such as he is always prepared for shocks. Often when for some reason or other his arrival has been given up as hopeless, and daddy has undertaken, in response to a pressing and unanimous request, to figure as Santa Claus, the unexpected appearance of the saint upon the scene throws things into confusion. Santa himself might well be astonished at such a moment to look upon the results of daddy's



PAPA MAKES UP.—Shade of Father Christmas: "Great Scot! Is that supposed to be me?"

DRAWN BY TOM BROWNE FOR "THE KING."



SANTA CLAUS VISITS THE FREAK MUSEUM.—DRAWN BY C. J. TAYLOR FOR "PUCK."

haired doll that moves its eyes. If by any chance the old fellow were to find himself in a museum devoted to freaks, as one of our artists pictures him, he would be equal to the emergency. Santa Claus possesses the discriminative power to please the diverse tastes of such abnormal people.

Once upon a time Santa had experience with a selfish boy who, thinking to get the better of his brothers and sisters, climbed to the roof and there hung, at the top of the chimney, his empty stocking attached to a broom. Expectantly he went

has ever seen Santa Claus how can anyone tell the way he should be dressed? Although the saint brings with him gifts enough to fill every reasonable want, and would hardly feel at a loss were a hundred thousand stockings hanging before him when he entered the chimney of a well-regulated house, he is compelled to exercise some discretion in the act of distribution. His insight into the consciences of the young tells him unerringly where to place his gifts. Never will a box of paints be found in the stocking of the little fellow who has longed for a box of bricks, and tin soldiers never occupy the place intended for a flaxen-

to sleep, and in the night the Frost King came, covering the cities and the villages with white and leaving behind a world of trackless snow. When Santa, in his sledge and furs, drew towards the home of the selfish one, he found the stocking filled with ice and snow and the house barred by wintry rigour against



COLD STUFFING.—Little Gussie Greedy hangs his stocking outside the chimney so that he can be sure to get it filled, but is not entirely satisfied with the result.

DRAWN BY F. BEARD FOR "JUDGE."



his approach. Departing as quickly as he came, he rode for miles and miles towards the city of the Rising Sun, and when the morning came a wet and empty stocking was found at the top of the chimney by the little boy who had placed it there. No message had been left, but there remained a lesson in the heart of the little one, for good or ill.

Would we could always be as successful in interpreting the morals taught by artists! From them we get so many pictures of the humorous side of Christmas and its festivities that we tend to

forget the sorrow. Where there exists a Christmas tree and a purse to buy its candles and pendent ornaments, there will pleasure reign, but there yet remain some lives into which a real Christmas rarely comes, try as we may in philanthropic mood to give it them. The little waif in the slums who got nothing for the holidays but two punishments, and "didn't hang up no stockin' for them neither," is a typical figure in a class that is always with us. To relieve distress thus humorously emphasized is, happily, a common work at such a season.

The best-laid plans of philanthropy, however, stop short in many cases where they would do most good. Says little Milly, in one of our pictures, "Don't yer think if she hung up her stockings Santa Claus might give her a pair of legs to put in 'em?" the remark being directed against a waif, with spindle legs, carrying a heavy basket along a

snow-covered pavement. How wise it would be if we, in our Christmas philanthropy, were to fill the stockings of the poor with fatter limbs instead of presents! The Christmas feeling that we have no right to our own turkey if we have not filled the larder of the poor is a feeling beautiful in itself. More effective would it be were we to do it daily, and not soothe ourselves with the balm that Christmas comes but once a year.

That the festival does come but once a year is looked upon by some as a blessing.

Consider, for instance, the poor father who, in a benevolent mood, undertakes to act the part of Santa Claus at the Christmas-tree festivities. Father thinks, in his innocent way, that it would be no end of a lark to dress up and please the little children, but we have known many cases where father has pleased the children to the point of terror by his



"Did you get anything for the holidays, Billy?"  
 "Yes; dad give me two lickin's, and I didn't hang up no stockin' for them neither."  
 DRAWN BY M. WOOLF FOR "LIFE."



PERSONAL.—Milly: "Don't yer think if she hung up her stockings Santa Claus might give her a pair of legs to put in 'em?"  
 DRAWN BY M. WOOLF FOR "LIFE."



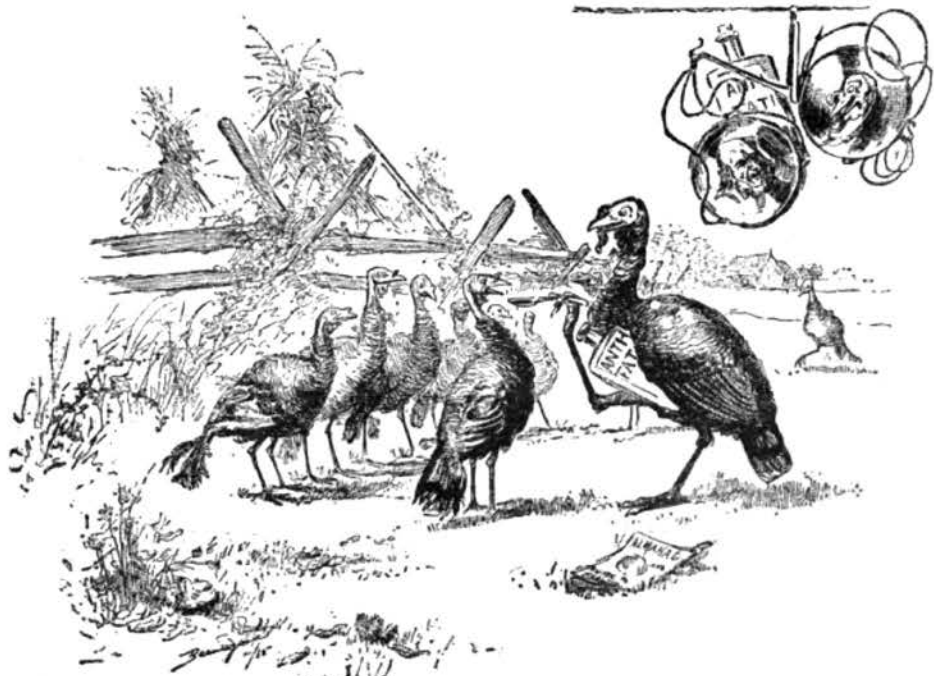
There has been an interesting event in Bagly's household, of which Johnny has been kept in ignorance. Johnny: "Put this on the tree, too, Pop. I found it in mummy's room. She's asleep."  
DRAWN BY J. A. SMITH FOR "PUCK."

As for the good, fat turkey which forms the staple of our Christmas feast, there is little to be said that has not already been told. There yet remains a chance for someone to sing his praises as Lamb sang the praises of the pig, and as the writers of the olden time lauded the virtues of the boar's head. One old writer, dealing with pre-Christmas preparations,

extraordinary rig. Again, it is no small job to do Santa's work thoroughly, and to come out of a chimney just like the real thing is a feat of grace quite impossible to the well-fed British parent of mature years. At such times as these accidents are bound to happen, for the curiosity of the family to know just what father is doing is a known quantity, certain to be expressed in the little equation of holiday life. One of our humorists tells us how the Christmas tree was in preparation in the home of one Bagly just after a certain interesting event had taken place. Johnny, who had been kept in ignorance, suddenly appeared in the room with a parcel in his arms. "Put this on the tree, too, Pop," cried Johnny; "I found it in mummy's room. She's asleep." We have nothing more to add, except that this harassing scene is immortalized on the present page.

has barbarously written: "Now capons and hens, beside turkeys, geese, and ducks, with beef and mutton, must all die, for in twelve days a multitude of people will not be fed with a little. Now plums and spice, sugar and honey, square it among pies and broth. Now or never must music be in tune, for the youth must dance and sing to get them a-heat, while the aged sit by the fire."

What the turkey thought of these prepara-



THE MARCH OF SCIENCE.—Result of over-education in animals.  
DRAWN FOR "LIFE."

tions, or thinks of them to-day, would be fit subject for an ornithologist to consider. Does the sumptuous bird have a foreboding of his fate? Can it be that he knows the real reason of his being — that the kindly care bestowed upon him by the farmer in the month of November tricks him not? As the old poets say, we trow not. Foolish he may be, but the turkey is too old a bird — as he



Mr. Charles O Connor: "Golly, wot's der matter wid yer, Jakey?"  
Mr. Jacob McFinnigan: "Turkey."  
DRAWN BY "CHIP" FOR "LIFE."

if we look back upon our childhood days, there is not one of us who will fail to understand the condition of Mr. Jacob McFinnigan, the small and swelling youth shown here. Sermons might be written on this subject.

The end of all is the pudding. It comes upon the table smoking hot and leaves behind it memories of a happy day. It goes by parcel post to English families throughout the world, and does more good than Christmas cards. It is a staple commodity upon which the household can fall back at any time, and can be used to induce manual labour in tramps, with indifferent result.

We are indebted to Messrs. James Henderson for permission to reproduce the drawings from *Puck*, *Judge*, and *Life* which we have selected from *Pictorial Comedy*.



MISPLACED GENEROSITY.

Mrs. Gamp (to tramp): "If you saw up that wood for me I will give you this Christmas pudding."

sometimes proves himself to be — not to understand the object of his existence, and he bears it almost bravely when doomsday comes. The day has yet to arrive — although the humorist has anticipated it — when turkeys will gather in a farm-yard to discuss the virtues of anti-fat.

On one of the turkey's virtues all can to-day unite to praise. It is a filling bird. And,



Tramp (a few minutes later): "Beg parding, mum, but if it makes no difference to you I would rather saw up the pudding and eat the wood."  
DRAWN BY TOM BROWNE FOR "THE KING."