

CHRISTMAS AT THE FARM.

If I only were a poet and could write in
tuneful rhyme
With the graceful words the poets use
to charm,
I would be prepared to tell you of the
happy, happy time
When, a boy, I roamed about my father's
farm.

I could tell you of the old, familiar scenes
of long ago,
Which time nor change can cause me
to forget,
The barn-yard and the meadow, and the
corn-stalks in a row,
For the memories of my childhood haunt
me yet.

I could tell you of my brothers, and my
little sisters, too,
Companions of the joyous days of yore;
Of things we used to talk about and things
we used to do.

In the days that will return again no
more.

Of all the happy seasons we children held
most dear,
The one whose coming brought us great-
est joys,
Was the merry, merry Christmas time, the
best of all the year,
With its jolly games, and stockings full
of toys.

And O, the Christmas dinner! Belshazzar's
sumptuous feast
Never tempted mortal appetite so sore;
It seemed the more we ate of it our ap-
petite increased,
Until there was no room for any more.

O, I wish that it were possible to turn old
time around,
By some enchantment, or some magic
charm,
And I, a little boy again, might hear the
welcome sound
That summoned us to dinner at the farm.

I have feasted at great banquets and ate
what'er I would
Of the rarest dishes skillful cooks dis-
play,
But the luxuries provided never tasted half
so good
As the dinner in the farm-house Christ-
mas day.

—Frank Beard, in Ram's Horn.



A CHRISTMAS GRANDFATHER
BY J. FINDLAY BROWN.

JACKIE sat on the front door step and pondered deeply. To-morrow was Christmas, and for Christmas he must have a turkey. A turkey! Jackie's mouth watered at the thought. A whole, big, beautiful turkey, brown and dripping, on mother's big, old-fashioned platter, with the funny little houses and trees and things in blue on a white ground. It had been mother's grandmother's, you know, and was very old. That was why mother kept it up on the top cupboard shelf and took it down only on Christmas and New Year's and Thanksgiving.

But last Christmas and New Year's it had not been taken down at all. Somehow, it had not seemed a bit like Christmas or anything to Jackie, last year. Never since father didn't come home from the hospital, and mother and Jackie had come to live in the queer little brown house that was so close to Squire Grant's big stone one.

There was something queer about Squire Grant. He lived all alone in his big, old house, and his beautiful big farm was rented out to another man all the time. The people that came to see mother never spoke of him, and mother herself never mentioned him except when Jackie asked some question about him. He always looked very cross, and Jackie thought he must be bothered a good deal with the stomachache that made people cross.

Suddenly, on the still morning air, clear with frost, came the sound of turkeys gobbling. It was the Squire's turkeys across the field. Jackie listened a moment. Then he brought his hands together with a little clap. Why not go to the Squire and ask him to give him a turkey for Christmas?

He jumped up and ran into the hall. He would have to tell mother, or she would be anxious. He opened the kitchen door and looked in. Mother was peeling potatoes for dinner.

"I'm going down the road a little piece, mother," said Jackie; "I'll be back soon," and before mother could answer he was out of the door. It was only a little distance to the Squire's, and soon he was climbing up over the tall iron gate that stood at the foot of the wide lane. He went up the steps to the back porch and knocked at the door. There was no answer.

Jackie ran down the steps and across the yard to the barnyard gate. It was a big one. He was just getting down the other side when he was startled by a deep voice behind him.

"What are you doing here, young man?"

Jackie turned to find himself face to face with the Squire himself.

"Oh," he said, in a relieved tone, "is it you, Squire? I was coming down to find you."

He held out his hand in his pretty, friendly way, and the Squire took it rather gingerly.

"And pray, what were you coming down to find me for?"

"I wanted to see if I could get a turkey," said Jackie, in his simple, direct little way. "To-morrow's Christmas, you know. I wanted to 'sprise' mother. She's always 'sprising' me, and she's so good—oh, you don't know how good mother is! There's only mother and me, and I thought—you see, it wouldn't be like as if you really gave me the turkey, for I'm going to pay for it soon as I'm big enough. You could hardly 'spect me to pay for it right now, could you? But when I'm big I'm going to have a farm of my own, and mother and me will live there and I'll have ever so many cattle and horses and things. Mother says grandfather had a farm like that. Grandfather was mother's father, you know. And mother had a little pony—she called it Trix—and she used to ride it all over when she was a little, little girl. Just think! Having a pony all for yourself!"

He looked up with sparkling eyes, and the Squire smiled beneath his scowl.

"Did your mother ever tell you anything else about your—grandfather?" he

asked, meeting the little fellow's frank eyes with a keen glance.

"She doesn't say much about him," returned Jackie. "I think he must be dead. It's too bad, isn't it? But"—his eyes roved over to the turkeys again, "Have you thought it out about the turkey yet?"

"Oh," said the Squire, as if he had forgotten all about it. "You can have one of 'em and we'll see about the pay after a while when you're bigger."

Jackie beamed up at him. "Oh, thank you," he said. "Shall we catch it now?"

The Squire grunted. "We'll run 'em into the pen, and catch 'em there. Wait till I get some peas."

So Jackie waited and in a little while out came the Squire with a battered, old tin, half full of grain, and began to call in his big, deep voice, "Peep, peep, peep, peep!" And all the turkeys stopped their strutting and ran after him into the pen. Then Jackie ran and shut the door, and in a very little while the Squire came out with a big gobble hanging head downwards in his hand.

"I guess I'd better leave it here just now," said Jackie. "I'll come over for it in the evening. I've just 'membered I promised mother I'd be back soon. Or, perhaps, you might bring it over yourself. You would see mother then. I'd like you to see mother."

"All right," said the Squire again, looking down at the brave little figure with a curious feeling at his heart.

"Well, good morning, then," said Jackie, turning to go. "I think you are the nicest man I ever saw—'cept father," and he ran down the lane to the big gate.

As he mounted it, he looked back and waved his hand, and the grim old man standing on the steps felt a strange little thrill, half pride and half something else he did not understand, as he returned the pretty salute. He passed the back of his rough, old hand across his face, old eyes and muttered, "Poor Margaret! She was a good little girl, if it hadn't been for that scamp Darcy! The boy looks like him, too—more like him than Margaret!"

Meanwhile, mother and Jackie were having their dinner. Mother sat at one side of the little, round, white table, and Jackie at the other. Mother wore her pretty pink woolen dress, and looked just like a sweet pea, Jackie said. Jackie had just finished his story about

Grandfather couldn't have liked father very well because he was poor. Well, when mother married father, grandfather was very angry, and said a great many things. Then when father died, mother had come right back to her old home and rented the little cottage on grandfather's estate, and grandfather had pretended not to know her, because, you see, he was not over being angry yet. And then, it seemed, when Jackie asked for the turkey, he had got sorry all at once, and now they were all so happy. And mother and Jackie were going to live with grandfather up in the big stone house, and they could have turkey every day, grandfather said. And Jackie concluded gravely, "and we've got a turkey for Christmas, mother, and a grandfather, too!"—Montreal Star.

THE MYSTIC MISTLETOE.

Once a Feature of Pagan Rites, It Now Belongs to Lovers.

From time immemorial the white-berried mistletoe has played a leading part in Yuletide festivities, though it has not always conveyed the osculatory privileges which give it its value in the eyes of the romantic youth of to-day. Like so many other features of the Christmas celebration, mistletoe has been borrowed from the pagans of antiquity and Christianized by the lapse of centuries. The Persians before the birth of Christ used the mistletoe in their sacred rites, and in parts of India pagan priests still incorporate it in their ritual. It figures largely in Scandinavian mythology. Baldur, the son of Odin, though a demigod, was slain by a spear of mistletoe, a proof of its magic powers.

It is from the Druids of old England, however, that mistletoe has come to us. The Druidical priests, sprung, it is said, from the magi of the east, the wise men who worshipped at the cradle of the infant Saviour, held the mistletoe as their most sacred possession, and the cutting of the pretty parasite from the oak, the tree which the Druids claimed God loved more than any other, was attended with the greatest solemnity. On the Druids' festival day a grand procession, leading two white oxen, moved to the mystic grove. There the oxen were fastened to the oak by their horns, and a white-robed priest climbed into the leafless branches and cut the bunches of mistletoe with a golden knife. The oxen were

do for one another. That is knowing Jesus and clearly understanding Him. And whenever this true conception of His life and teaching is reached, there we find men and women thrilled with the passion of giving. The little child wakes on Christmas morning with his heart filled with overflowing gladness, and by every gift in stocking, or beside cradle or bed, is taught anew the old, old lesson of love. Husband and wife, brother and sister, lover and sweetheart, friend and friend, as they receive their gifts are reminded once more that love is not a dream, but a reality—and a reality which grows more vital, more precious and more enduring with years.

The sick, in chair or in bed, as they open their Christmas packages are almost reconciled to loneliness and pain. The friendless, the poor, the outcast, the waifs on the street; those who have sinned and seem shut out from God and from man, all begin to feel a strange thrill of hope and renewed aspiration as they are taken up and enfolded in the richness and fullness of the Divine love as it comes to them through human love or attention on Christmas day. That is knowing Christmas in its highest and noblest sense; in its truest conception; knowing it is that spirit from which we derive the surest happiness.—Edward Bok.

"THE CHRISTMAS PRESENCE."

Seasonable Thought for All Who Love Christmas Season.

I couldn't seem to contemplate a continuous Christmas of peace, nowadays, when suddenly I seemed to see the words before me, differently spelled. Instead of "peace" I saw "e-n-ee," an "right befo' my spiritual vision I saw, like sky-writing," "The Christmas Presence"—thess so.

Maybe it won't strike you, but it was a great thought, me, doctor, an' "Christmas all ' year" had a new sound to my ears.

Think of that, doctor—of livin' along in the azure blue, beholdin' the face of the Little One of the manger by the near light of the Bethlehem star! Or maybe seein' the Beloved Infant on a pillar of clouds, illuminatin' our listenin' faces with the gleam of His countenance while He'd maybe repeat the Sermon on the Mount from the book of His Eternal memory. Think of what an author's

PREPARING THE CHRISTMAS DINNER.



the Squire and the turkey, and mother's face was all pink and her brown eyes looked big and bright, like's if there were tears in them.

"O, Jackie," she said, "you dear little son! What would mother do without her little man to manage things?"

Mother was laying the cloth for supper. Jackie was looking out of the window. It had begun to snow—big, heavy flakes that fell softly, silently, in the gathering twilight. Suddenly Jackie gave a glad little cry.

"Here he comes, mother, turkey and all! I can just see him through the snow."

Jackie ran to the door and threw it open. The Squire came slowly up the path, like a great snow man, with a bundle under his arm.

"Come in," called Jackie, cheerily, and the Squire stepped into the narrow doorway, all covered with snow from head to foot.

"You look just like Santa Claus," said Jackie, smiling up at him. "Haden't you better come in and shake yourself? Mother, this is the Squire."

Mother came forward with her hand out; her face white and smiling in a queer, nervous way.

"I am very glad to see you—Squire," she said, "and thank you."

Jackie looked anxiously at the Squire. Something must be wrong. Mother seemed ill. Then the queerest thing happened. The Squire opened his arms with a little choking cry. "Margaret!" And mother ran to him and put both her arms about his neck, and cried in her sweet, tremulous voice, "O, father, father, can you ever forgive me?" And all the while Jackie stood holding the handle of the door, and staring with big, round eyes at the mother, the Squire, and the bundle of turkey that had fallen to the floor.

Then mother took down her arms and turned to Jackie with such a happy look on her face that he was almost afraid.

"This is your grandfather, Jackie," she said. "My father, darling. Come and kiss him, dear."

Jackie went up and put both his arms round the Squire's neck, just as mother had done, and kissed him gravely on the cheek.

"I am glad we found you, grandfather," he said. "You must stay for supper."

Jackie thought that was the nicest supper he had ever eaten. He and mother and the Squire all sat round the little white table in the pretty, cozy kitchen, and everybody laughed, Jackie most of all, and then he found out how the Squire came to be his grandfather.

It seemed that long ago, most likely before he was born, mother had run away from grandfather to marry father.

then sacrificed and religious services performed, after which the procession returned to the temple in the forest and the mistletoe was deposited in the Druidical arcanum.

Besides taking its place in the religious observances of the Druids, the mistletoe, which the priests gave a name meaning "all healing," was made into many curious decoctions by processes in which times and seasons and incantations were supposed to add to its mysterious powers. These medicines were regarded as cures for human ills generally.

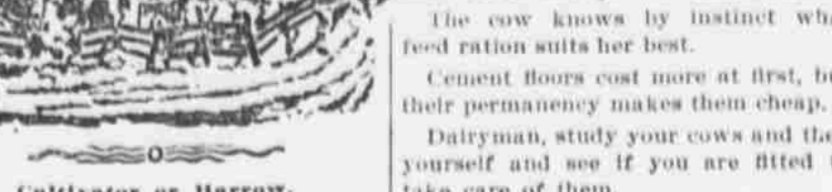
With the advance of civilization and the death of superstition mistletoe has lost its religious character, but not its popularity, and the forests of England and of our own Southern States are as eagerly frequented by mistletoe gatherers as ever were the dark woods of the ancient Druids.

DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS.



Mrs. Turkey—What is your greatest wish?
Mr. Turkey—An airship.

FARMS AND FARMERS



The cow knows by instinct what feed ration suits her best.

Cement floors cost more at first, but their permanency makes them cheap.

Dairyman, study your cows and then yourself and see if you are fitted to take care of them.

From 62 to 64 degrees is about the proper temperature for the rinse water in winter butter-making.



HANDY CULTIVATOR OR HARROW.

Cultivator or Harrow. This is the device of a West Virginia farmer and seems to possess merit. He says:

I send herewith an illustration of a cultivator or harrow that I find very handy when sowing grass seed in corn at the last working, also use it for cultivating potatoes and other crops to some extent. The frame, A A A, is of 2x3-inch stuff, is 3 1/2 feet long. The two pieces, B B, are of 1x2-inch stuff, 20 inches long, with holes about 2 inches apart, so the harrow can be adjusted to any desired width, from 1 to 3 feet. The piece, C, to hitch to, is 2x3 inches and 1 1/2 feet long on top side, firmly bolted to center piece of frame. At D D there are two iron plates 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 5 inches, with three holes in each; these hold A A A together. Use 3/8 bolts of proper length for all of the frame. The teeth should be of 3/4 steel, well sharpened. The handles can be taken from some cultivator or plow and readily adjusted to the cultivator. The two pieces, E E, should be of 1/2 x 1 1/2 inch stuff, and as long as desired. All should be bolted firmly together for best results.

Sun in Poultry House.

The time-honored plan of building poultry houses was to face them due south, when, as a matter of fact, they should be faced southeast, which gives the sun in the house early in the morning when the poultry need it most during the winter, and then the sun shines in the house nearly or quite all day, especially if a window is placed in the southwest side. In cold climates it is not wise to have entire glass fronts, for the action of the air on the glass after the sun goes down makes such houses very cold at night.

In the average poultry house, holding from twenty-five to fifty hens, windows four by eight on two sides of the house would be sufficiently large, and even then some way should be provided for covering them at night. For this purpose nothing is better than old burial hung on a roller with button holes worked at intervals along the sides so that when down it can be fastened over carriage buttons driven in the sides of the casing. This will keep the house snug and warm even on cold winter nights.

A Barrel Feed Rack.

An ideal way of feeding a few sheep or calves is to take a large barrel, such as crackers are packed in, and cut out openings in the staves between the two layers of hoops, making these openings just large enough so that the animal can get its head in and out readily.



Place the barrel in position and hold it in place by driving several stakes into the ground and fastening them to the barrel. Of course the top of the barrel is open. The hay or other roughage is thrown in the top and the animals eat through the holes cut in the staves as described. This is a simple feeding rack, which any one could make and one which will save much waste of roughage. The illustration shows the idea so clearly that no further explanation is needed.—Indianapolis News.

Peanuts Good Hog Feed.

The numerous estimates made by the Arkansas Station as regards the yield of hay from a crop of peanuts varies from one to very nearly three tons per acre. This hay is usually worth at least \$10 a ton and may be considered a by-product when the nuts are harvested for market. In connection with the value of peanuts as a forage crop, it may be noted that in Virginia there is a man who has been accumulating a tidy fortune through the quality of the hams cured and packed by him. Those hams have a rich and sweet flavor which makes them in great demand at increased prices. The packer each year goes through neighboring States buying up razor-backs which he has shipped to his farm. It is there that they are given a food which imparts the flavor and sweetness—nothing more than peanuts.

In the Dairy.

Queer but true, where salt is sprinkled thickest butter is yellowest.

Feed Bag for Animals.



FEED BAG.

The driver of every team should be supplied with a bag of some kind for holding feed for his horses, as he seldom is sure where he will be when feeding time comes. Some drivers are very careful in this respect, while others make use of anything that is available. Quite a large number of feed bags are in use, the majority being constructed so that they can be attached and suspended to the side of the horse's head. This does not give the horse any freedom to move his head without moving the bag also. A Philadelphia man has patented an exceedingly simple feed bag which overcomes this fault, an illustration of which is shown here. The bottom and sides are made of canvas or other flexible material, while the top consists of a circular frame divided into two sections, which are connected by small loops. Supporting the bag are two metal rods, one on each side, having hooks at the end which fit into the loops in the frame. In the center and at the other end of the rods are circular loops which are shaped to fit over the shaft of the vehicle. It can easily be seen how easily this could be done, the bag always remaining in position where the horse could conveniently reach the feed, at the same time being able to move his head freely. This feed bag has the additional advantage that it can be folded up when not in use.

Special Dairy Train School.

One of the latest educational enterprises is the special dairy train sent out by a creamery company for the purpose of reaching farmers in the rich lands of northwestern Missouri and southwestern Iowa. The train carried an exhibition car with dairy appliances and dairy machinery of every sort. Other cars were fitted up to seat an audience. Experts in dairying gave short talks at each stopping place, the use of appliances being demonstrated and instruction given on feeding stuffs and balanced rations. The success of the enterprise was such that in many places the train's facilities proved too small, and overflow and outdoor meetings were necessary.

Fodder-Hauling Sled.

Take two scantlings, 2x4x inches, 10 feet long; dress top of scantling off to fit under side of second bench of sled with notch to fit over rear bench, to give right slant to scantlings. Nail a board on top of scantlings to hold them together. Put a wire around tongue and over front end of boom pole, and a small rope for rear end of boom pole, with two standards in front 4 feet high, and you are ready for "biz." It is much handier than a wagon for one man to haul on, and he can haul a third more at a load with it than without the attachment. It can be set off when desired.

Hog Hints.

It does not take either very much money or very much time to keep the porkers right.

It is too common a conclusion that anything will do for the hogs and that they will wax fat under any conditions and with all sorts of feed.

Swine are money makers generally, no matter under what conditions they live, but if you want more money keep them under treatment which will earn it.