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The Daily Reporter.

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The Daily Reporter.

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Our Greeting

To one and all, we extend the courtesies and compliments of the season, and wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

The Old Homestead.

When the skies are growing warm and bright,
And in the woodland bowers
The Spring-time in her pale, faint robes

Is calling up the flowers,
When all with naked little feet
The children in the morn
Go forth and in the furrows drop
The seeds of yellow corn;
What a beautiful embodiment
Of ease devoid of pride,
Is the good old-fashioned homestead,
With doors set open wide!

But when the happiest time is come
That to the year belongs.
When all the vales are filled with gold,
And all the air with songs;
When fields of yet unripened grain
And yet ungarnered stores
Remind the thrifty husbandman
Of ampler threshing floors.
How pleasant from the din and dust
Of the thoroughfare aloof,
Stands the old-fashioned homestead,
With steep and mossy roof.

When home the woodsman plods with
axe
Upon his shoulder swung,
And in the knotted apple tree
Are scythe and sickle hung;
When low about her clay built nest
The mother swallow trills.
And decorously slow, the cows
Are wending down the hills;
What a blessed picture of comfort
In the evening shadows red,
Is the good old-fashioned homestead,
With its bounteous table spread!

And when the winds moan wildly,
When the woods are bare and brown,
And when the swallows' clay-built nest
From the rafter crumbles down;
When all the untrod garden paths
Are heaped with frozen leaves,
And icicles, like silver spikes,
Are set along the eaves;
Then when the book from the shelf
is brought,
And the fire-lights shine and play,
In the good old-fashioned homestead,
Is the farmer's holiday.

But whether the brooks be fringed
with flowers,
Or whether the dead leaves fall,
And whether the air be full of songs,
Or never a song at all,
And whether it rain or whether it shine,
Is all to me as one.
For bright as brightest sunshine
The light of memory streams
Round the old-fashioned homestead,
Where I dreamed my dream of
dreams.

—Alice Carey.

OUR BOYS.

HOW CHRISTMAS EVE WAS ENJOYED YEARS AGO.

BY E. L. E. W.

Eighteen years ago Christmas eve, in the city of N——, a group of six young men might have been seen around the vestibule of Grace church. There were services and a Christmas tree afterwards, and the young men were making some plan to pass away the evening. They were all in the early flush of manhood, the eldest being about 20, while the youngest was in the neighborhood of 17 summers. As they talked in earnest conversation, the people began to arrive and they drew back from the door to finish their plans before entering.

"Then it is settled boys," said Harry Slater. "After the entertainment we are all to meet here and for the first time in our lives play Santa Claus and make the poor happy for one day at least."

"Then we can't go to the ball," said Frank Hastings.

"Well, it is hard to give that up," replied Willie Blackwood, "but the tickets are \$1.50 each. There are six of us and that would be \$9.00. Just think how many good things we can get for that sum."

"Now look here, fellers," put in Charly Mason; "You know what we promised the girls and how are you going to get around that? Why! Miss Maud Chamberlain would not speak to me again if I failed to put in appearance for her at the appointed time."

"It is a bad fix," remarked Lawrence Sherman the eldest of all, a quiet young man, but I up-hold Blackwood in what he says. The money wasted on the ball would be but a temporary pleasure, while if put into a basket of good things it would make so many happy, that for my part the sacrifice would be comparatively small."

"Here is my view," said Ernest Inglewood. "Lawrence is the eldest of us all. I say let us count our money and give it to him, reserving but a dollar and a half each, and if afterwards we repent, can put that in, too. We will stay and attend the service and let Lawrence go and get a sleigh; buy all he can; get some masks to disguise our faces, and we will meet him at Mason's Bazaar at 9 o'clock."

"Good!" cried all the boys together, "that is the best plan of all. Let's count out the cash!"

There was a good deal searching of pockets, and as fast as the boys got the money in their hands they put it into Lawrence's hat, retaining only a dollar and a half each.

"Thirty-seven dollars here," said Lawrence and nine more in our pockets, making \$46.00 all told. Gracious! we can get the sleigh full."

The boys all laughed at the coming fun as Lawrence put the money in his pocket.

"I'll go now and get everything ready so when you come down we'll start. Shall I speak to your father, Charley, about what we propose to do. He might help us?"

"By all means," answered Charley Mason.

Just then the great organ in the loft began a low, solemn voluntary, and the boys hastily entered and took their places in the choral.

The organist, a new player recently from New York, proved to be an artist of more than ordinary ability. The rich melody rose and fell in exquisite harmony; now loud and deep, then low and sweet, carrying one's thoughts way beyond the River of Life into that mysterious hence, where angelic voices steal softly o'er the longing soul. During this voluntary the rector of Christ church entered the chancel and knelt at the altar.

While the pastor was engaged in offering up his silent prayer, the organist played with soft pedals and the music came floating down from the organ loft as if it were ever so far away; low, sad-like and dreamy. The sweet sounds grew fainter and fainter; only an echo remained. As the minister arose from his kneeling position, the organ opened forth in a grand, triumphant burst of melody. The building seemed fairly to tremble as the great bass pipes sent forth their notes. It seemed as though this huge organ was thundering forth "Remember the poor, for on this day Christ, the Son of man was born."

The boys stood ready with their parts as the soprano began Handels beautiful oratorio, the Creation—Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will toward man. The soprano sang with rare sweetness to-night and when Ernest Inglewood commenced his tenor part in a duo with Miss Royal, way down in his heart a small voice was crying, "remember the poor."

Ernest sang with unusual effect and his pure tenor voice was heard in every part of the church. When the quartett came forth there were many handkerchiefs in demand as from the organ loft came the sweet strains of the Messiah: "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

The rector, Mr. Paxton mounted his pulpit and in clear voice said:

"Let us pray."

It was a prayer that penetrated to the hearts core of more than one poor sinner that sat in that congregation in costly garments. He prayed for the

audience; he asked blessings on the poor as well as the rich; but one sentence that struck deep in the hearts of the young men, was, as nearly as I can remember, as follows:

"And now, most heavenly Father I beseech you to install in the hearts of those present a kind remembrance of the poor and lonely. Guide them thou great Director, in the holy paths of charity, for sweet charity's sake, for there are countless numbers in our city to-night that look upon the coming of the morrow with dread and fear, for their treasury is empty and poverty stands at the half shut door."

After the sermon the Christmas tree was tendered to the children and our boys left the church and hastened to Mason's Bazaar, where they found Lawrence with his sleigh loaded down, looking like a veritable Santa Claus.

"Well here you are my saints," cried Lawrence in a hearty voice. "Hurry up and get in for we have no time to lose."

"Hold on a minute you jolly old Saint" said Ernest Inglewood, "here's my dollar and a half. I find that my conscience will not permit of my keeping it," and he gave the money to Lawrence.

"And here's mine, too," chimed the boys one after another.

"You see," said Ernest by way of explanation, "we had a splendid sermon and the seed fell in good places."

"Thanks, thanks, you dear fellows," enthusiastically said Lawrence. "I had to go in debt a little. I bought sixteen turkeys and ran short seven dollars, but now we are all right, so jump in."

Lawrence had provided a lot of bells, and as the boys left Ma-on's Bazaar, a large crowd that had congregated to watch them off, gave a grand cheer when Mr. Mason informed them what the boys had done, and several voices in the crowd could be heard to say: "God bless them, God bless them; hope they'll find my house."

A drive of two miles and they were in the out-skirts of the city, and near the manufacturing village of Willamantic. The boys drove slowly into town, first removing the bells so as to make no noise. Passing down the almost deserted streets, the boys got out of the sleigh and taking a turkey in one hand, a basket of candies, nuts, oranges, apples and toys, in the other, they separated according to Lawrence's directions, and went to the abodes of those who had combated with fate, only to be thrust unheedingly aside, crushed and discouraged.

The first house that Ernest Inglewood visited was somewhat apart from the rest. There was a faint light in the window but no curtain, through which Ernest could see a father and mother sitting by the stove to keep warm, while by the chimney place

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