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CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

BY THE REV. HENRY RAMSDEN BRAMLEY.



THE FIRST CHRISTMAS CAROL.

THE HOME-PULPIT.

CHRISTMAS IN AMERICA.

SERMON, BY THE REV. DR. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, PREACHED IN THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

"Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."—ISAIAH XXXV. 6.

FOR fourteen Christmas seasons I have spoken to you about the spiritual benefits of Christ's nativity. To-day I speak of the temporal benefits of the Saviour's birth. Fertility to the land, health to the body, manumission to serfs, good government for the barbaric, blessing for this life as well as blessing for the life to come. Christ's cradle was as wonderful as His cross. Persuade me of the first, and I am not surprised of the last. The door by which He entered was as tremendous as the door by which He went out. Through that one stable-gate of Bethlehem have come in more temporal advantages than the world has ever celebrated in song, or sermon, or picture, or cathedral arch. "Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." In that one passage was promised banished crutch, accentuation of speechless tongue and irrigated Sahara. Amid a thousand mercies we give each other holiday congratulations. By long-established customs we exhort each other to healthful merriment. By gift, by Christmas-trees which blossom and fruit in one night, by early morning surprise, by clusters of lighted candles, by children's procession, by sound of instruments sometimes more blatant than musical, we wake up the night and prolong the day. It is with no frivolous thought, but with deep and emotional earnestness, that I wish you all a merry Christmas—merry in your hearts, merry in your homes, merry Christmas in the nation.

I am to speak this morning more especially of Christmas times in America. In no land are there so many happy homes as in America, such varieties of food on the table, such appropriateness of wardrobe, such healthfulness of domestic architecture. At the same time we have to-day in America a great many without work, without food, without shelter. There is something awfully wrong, as you will see when I put two facts parallel: In Dakota and Minnesota and Michigan more wheat than they know what to do with. In the Southern States more cotton than they know what to do with. Plenty of bread, plenty of clothing, and yet multitudes half fed and half sheltered, and to hundreds of thousands of people it is a hungry and starving and shivering Christmas. The trouble is, this nation has had to take a big dose of politics. Public men have spent too much time in destroying the equilibrium of public affairs, and business staggers and stops. The eloquent campaigners have tried to make out that the success of their party decided the fate of everything, when the fact is that with the vast multitude of us it will not make two cents' difference for the next four years who is President. But this great surplus of wheat and rice and cotton and flax must after a while better the condition of this nation. The national depression now is not like that which comes from deluge or drought or plague. It is more like the depression of a man who has plenty of money in the safe, and of a woman who has plenty of food in the pantry, and they have lost the keys, and though it is an impatient and irritating search, the looking for the keys, they will find them, and there will be plenty to eat, and there will be plenty to wear, and

there will be plenty to read, and there will be plenty of all styles of comfort. But I enjoin upon all those whom these holiday times find in comfortable circumstances two things: First, helpfulness to the helpless, and the next, cheerful talk. This experiment has been made by medical scientists. A dozen men conspire to tell a well man he looks sick. They are to meet him on a journey, and by the time the fourth man is giving him melancholy salutation he feels he is doomed, and the twelfth man comes up with his melancholy salutation just in time to help carry him home on a stretcher. Then twelve men conspire that they will meet a man in uncertain health and tell him how well he looks. By the time the fourth man has met him with a cheerful salutation his nervous system is all toned up, and by the time the twelfth man has met him with his cheerful salutation he says to his wife, "Throw out that apothecary shop from our shelves; I don't want any more medicine." Now this nation is only a man on a larger scale. If you want to prostrate business and keep it prostrated, talk in dolorous tone and keep on talking. Let all the merchants sigh, and all the editors prognosticate a hard Winter, and all the ministers groan in the pulpit. In this great orchestra of complaint those who play the loudest trombones are those who have the fullest salaries and the completest wardrobe. They are only mad because they have to fall back upon the surplus resources of other years, or because they cannot make as large investments as they would like to make. Did you have breakfast? Yes. Did you have supper last night? Yes. Did you have a pillow to sleep on? Yes. What are you complaining about? The genuine sufferers, those really in destitution, for the most part suffer in silence; but the loudest ories against hard times are by the men to whom the times are not hard. Artists tell us it is almost impossible to sing well on a full stomach; but it has been demonstrated over and over that it is possible for men to groan well on a full stomach! Now, in these holidays let all the comfortable classes exchange the lamentations of Jeremiah for the exultant Psalms of David. "Praise ye the Lord, let everything that hath breath praise the Lord," and we will have a different state of things in this country. I wish there might be a conspiracy formed—I would like to belong to it—a conspiracy made up that all the merchants and editors and ministers of religion in this country agree that they would have faith in God and talk cheerfully, and there would be a revival of business immediate and tremendous and glorious. Stop singing Naomi and old Windham, and give us Mount Pisgah and Coronation. Merry Christmas! There is a very cheerful Christmas thought at this time in the fact that the great question that for sixty years has been dominant in politics, in philanthropy and in religion, is coming to a righteous solution. What of the colored man in this country? You know that that question put a million men into the grave-trenches, and ever since the war closed it has kept our national finances in a jangle. Through the five thousand miles of my recent journey up and down the South and up and down the Southwest, I kept asking that question and I kept getting an answer

from all classes of persons and from both colors, and I believe I can give you the right impression this morning when I say I believe the black man is better treated at the South than he is treated at the North. In Montgomery, Ala., the day I spent there, the Legislature of the State passed a law for the full and complete education of the colored people, making it a specialty. Colored mechanics have large wages and plenty of employment all through the South. The colored carmen of New Orleans have their three dollars a day and are expecting more wages. The colored people have the preference in the South of service in all the hotels and boarding-houses, and in the rail-trains and in the steamers. They are represented in the State Legislatures. The eloquent and accomplished United States Senator Bruce, whom I met on my journey, is only an illustration of the possibilities of the colored men of the South. In how many of the Legislatures of the North are there colored men? How many are there in the Legislature of New York? How many in the Legislature of Massachusetts? If in the North a colored man come into any kind of service all the other servants run—all the other servants resign. There is a more kindly and Christian feeling among the white people of the South toward the black people than there is at the North. If I were a black man and had a family and were determined to be industrious and sober, I would go to the South. I have noticed the treatment of colored men in the North, and I have noticed the treatment of colored men in the South, and I believe justice will come to the black man at the South sooner than it will come at the North. We cannot at the North teach the South how to treat the black man until we treat him better ourselves. I will imagine a scene: A Northern Legislature assembles in the State House. White men take the oath of office as legislators. They take their seats. A colored man has been accidentally elected. As he passes in to take his seat what do the white members of the Legislature say? "Put that colored gentleman near me"? No. "Image of God out in ebony"? No. "Downcast race come to justice at last"? No. They all snuff the breeze, and their hair rises in indignation, and they say, "Nigger!" There is a more Christian and kindly feeling among the white people of the South toward the black than there is at the North. As for myself, I am so peculiarly constituted that I have not in my nature a particle of race prejudice. I could sit in church contented with a colored man before me, and a colored man behind me, and a colored man at the right, and a colored man at the left, and a black man in the pulpit, and a black choir to lead the music. But we are not all constituted alike. But you may depend that among the merriest Christmas thoughts to-day in America ought to be the consideration that there is coming a more Christian feeling between the races. Some years ago, in the State House of Georgia, at Atlanta, this scene occurred: A colored minister in the State House said he was thirsty, and he was looking for something to drink. A white gentleman standing by said, "I'll get you a drink," and departed the room. As the white gentleman was coming back with a glass of water for this black clergyman some one said to the clergyman, "Do you know who that is bringing you a glass of water?" "No; who is it?" "That is Governor Colquitt." Then the black man took the glass of water and said, "Thank you, Governor, but I cannot drink this under the circumstances," and he poured it out upon the floor, saying, "I pour this out as a libation on the altar of Christian feeling between the races." Dramatic? Yes, but gloriously Christian. It is among the merriest of thoughts this morning that this awful question that has been agitating politics, and agitat-

ing religion North and South, is coming to a Christian solution.

Come, now, I will prophesy. The land is full of prophets, and I have as much right to prophesy as any one. I prophesy that we are coming on toward the grandest temporal prosperity we have ever witnessed in this country. Mechanics are going to have larger wages. Capitalists are going to have larger dividends. The factories that are now closed are going to run day and night to meet demands. Stores are going to be crowded with customers, jostling each other and impatient to get waited on. Amid the rapid strides of business, attorneys will be called in to interpret legalities, and merchants overworked will want medical attendance, and the churches are going to be abundant with men and women anxious to consecrate the gains to the Lord. You prophesy midnight, I prophesy midnight. You pitch your tent toward universal bankruptcy. I pitch my tent toward national opulence. "What are your reasons?" you say. I give you one dominant reason. God's evident determination to shower prosperity on this nation. Five years of unexampled harvests. Five years of unprecedented health. Five years of unheard of amity. Northern Pacific Railroad apocalypse in one direction. New Orleans Exposition apocalypse in another direction. When at New Orleans, week before last, I saw a dark-skinned Mexican fugitive thrill 15,000 people into transport and ecstasy, I said to myself: "You are just in front of a great host of the Southern republics and of the Southern empires that are going to join us in a march of commercial prosperity which shall surpass anything that the most optimistic capitalist ever saw in his most enchanted midsummer night's dream. While I am fully sympathetic with the depression abroad, and no man in this audience has a heart that more thoroughly bleeds for the people of this country who are out of work and out of bread, I prophesy national rescue, and just as it is healthful to a man when he is depressed about himself just to walk about amid the destitution and the suffering, and he will come back thankful to God for all the mercies he has—just so it would do this nation good if it would look across the water and see how other nations have it. So many men in this country out of employ, and yet there is not a land on earth where so many people have productive work as in this country. After wages have been cut down as they have been to the lowest point of reduction, that lowest point is higher than the highest on the other side of the sea. Eight cents a day for work in Ireland. One dollar in England good wages for a day. The laboring classes of this country have it 10 per cent. better than they have in any other country; 20 per cent., 40 per cent., 50 per cent., 75 per cent. The editor of an important paper in London told me his salary was \$750 a year. Stand in front of the factories on the other side of the sea, observe the people coming out, and follow them to their homes and see what they suffer. The stonemasons, and the carpenters, and the plumbers, and the shoemakers in our land, and all styles of mechanics and artisans, have finer residences than some of the professional men in England. We go into the house of a mechanic on this side of the sea, and he has pictures and he has upholstery and he has the instrument of music. He has his children educated in the best schools of Brooklyn and New York. He has his life insured so that in case of his sudden death his family will not be flung homeless. While all my sympathies are aroused in behalf of the laboring classes to-day, I want all the men who toil to understand that America is the paradise of industry.

So also these Christmas times in America find us in a

political quiet that characterizes no other nation. A gentleman in a rail-train in England said to me: "I don't understand how you endure a revolution every four years in America. You ought to have a queen, as we have, or a king, and have things settled." Why, the administration changes very often the other side the sea, and it changes just as radically. There is an admonitory vote, and Disraeli goes and Gladstone comes in, and then after a while there will be another admonitory vote, and Gladstone will go and somebody else come in. A change, perhaps, will be effected in a year or six months, while in our land the Administration starting must go on for four years, unless some great disaster happens. Political quiet. No outcry of hatred or contempt. No threat of assassination. Peace, complete peace all over the land. I never remember such a time of peace in America as we have to-day. There are people who say: "Oh, there is so much stealing on the part of public men in this country," and they say it is so much better on the other side of the sea. The reason is, a few people on the other side of the sea steal everything, and there is nothing left for the great masses to steal. After the Government has paid the large salaries of the rulers of those lands there is nothing left upon which one can commit larceny. The Emperor of Russia \$8,000,000 salary a year. Emperor of Austria \$4,000,000 salary a year. Queen of England \$2,200,000 salary a year. Queen's equerry \$10,000 a year. Master of the buckhounds \$8,000 a year. So on all down, and the expenses are made in this way. Do you not think it is really better that we be overtaxed, and then that money be divided up among the Congressmen and the legislators and the lobbyists, rather than the people should be overtaxed and the whole result of it piled up in a palace-yard? I think in our land there is more probability that the money will get back again to its legitimate channels. And then while we have so many wrong things this side the sea, and there is so much complaint about monopolistic oppression—and it is bad enough—it is not half so bad here as it is in other lands. I know the air is full of fear about the great fortunes gathered by some individuals or great commercial houses. As a great protuberance on the neck means sickness to the whole body, so these disproportioned estates mean sickness to the body politic, and those enormous fortunes mean pinchedness of want somewhere. And yet, it is not half as bad here as it is in other lands. Ireland one vast monopolistic devastation. In England there are 32,000,000 people, and yet 32,000 own all the land. Duke of Devonshire owning 3,000 acres of land at Derby, Duke of Richmond owning 300,000 acres at Gordon Castle. Marquis of Breadalbane riding a hundred miles in a straight line, and all on his own property. Duke of Sutherland owning a farm—an estate as wide as Scotland, one side of the estate dipping into the sea on one side, and the other side dipping into the sea on the opposite side.

Great ecclesiastical monopolies. Cathedrals with statuary and braided arch and walls covered with masterpieces of Rubens and Raphael and Michael Angelo; against all the sides of them the great seas of want and woe and filth and abomination dashing. It is bad enough here; it is worse elsewhere. Besides that, on the other side the seas they are all crowded up—cities crowded together, the populations crowded together, institutions of learning crowded together—packed, everything between the Pyrenees and the Alps—packed, everything between the Rhine and the Danube—packed, everything between the English Channel and the Adriatic. If the fortunes are to be gathered, they must be gathered out of somebody else's fortune, while in this land we have illimitable prairie, illimitable forest, inexhaustible mine. In North America

8,000,000 square miles. Plenty of room. Shore line 29,960 miles. The one State of Texas, larger than France, larger than Germany. Four great basins emptying into the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, the Arctic Ocean, and the Mexican Gulf. We have only just begun to spread our Christmas table. We have only put on it the first silver fork and the first salt-cellar and the first loaf of bread and the first smoking dish. Wait until the fruits come in from all the orchards, and the vegetables from all the gardens, and the meats from all the markets, and the silver from all the mines. Then the great national bell will be rung, and it will call millions of people from between ocean and ocean, and it will say to all the millions between the Thousand Isles and the Gulf of Mexico, "Come and dine." While there are so many things in these holidays to depress us, there are a thousand things to rejoice us. Then look at the complete peace of this country. No war with foreign lands. No war with our ourselves. There are 15,000,000 men belonging to the standing armies of Europe to-day. Since our war ended, over there the Zulu war, the Afghan war, the Egyptian war, the Russo-Turkish war, the Franco-German war, and peace not a certainty for another year. Nation watching nation suspiciously, lest it get the balance of power. Four nations month after month watching the Suez Canal as four cats might watch one rat. Royal marriages to keep the balance of Europe. Bright princesses compelled to marry some disagreeable foreign dignitary, the illy matched pair fighting out on a small scale what would have been an international contest. In this land all at peace. I cannot think of anything now that could possibly bring on a war. We have all had enough of that. Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie, Fort Pulaski, Fort Lafayette, Fort Warren, the lions of war sound asleep on their iron paws. Gunpowder out of fashion, only used to blast rocks, or for pyrotechnic display, or to shoot reed-birds down on the flats. Intermarriage between North and South—Northern men marrying Southern wives, and Southern men marrying Northern wives. The consanguinal ties multiplying, the children half Mississippian and half New Englander, so if there should be an attempt to make war between North and South, you would have to do as Solomon proposed to do with the child that was brought to him, cut it in twain by the sword and give half to the North and half to the South. The hardest thing on earth to split is a cradle. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, good-will to men." I have seen this spirit of kindness and amity all through the land. You and I in this respect never saw such a Christmas. While there are so many things we deplore, there are so many things about which to thank God. But while amidst so many alleviating circumstances the nation keeps the holiday, I wish especial happiness for your households. Let middle-aged men and the aged men during these seven or ten holidays rally all their sprightliest feelings and put themselves in accord with the young. Make this a bright memory. They will very soon have to put their shoulder under the burden of life and harness themselves for the world's battle. Father, mother, help them now to get a surplus of exuberance that will last them when life has become a serious thing to them as it has to us. When you and I have gone out of the struggle, and in the far distant holidays they think of us, don't let them think of us as gouty and dull, sitting around discoursing about our aches and pains when we ought to have been sympathetic with their merriment; and after all this gift-bestowing has ceased and all these family unions have ceased, and after we no more light the Christmas candles, and we no more on earth rejoice in the children's glee, may it be because we are altogether in our Father's house keeping the



MACHINE FOR CLEANING RICE. 1

eternal celebration. May we all be there, not one of our household absent—all there, saved and blessed through the birth and death of Him who was the Son of Mary, who was the Son of God.

DOMESTIC LIFE IN CHINA.

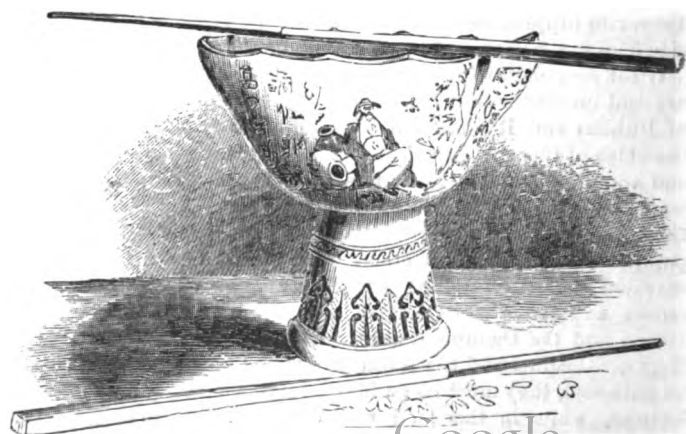
An English lady, traveling in China, gives the following graphic account of life in Canton :

One evening, at sundown, under a ruddy after-glow, which transformed the scene to the resemblance of the last tableau in some delusive pantomime, I was ushered into my Chinese abode at Canton, over an arched bridge, which I attained from some outbuildings or structures—I scarcely know what name to give them. The bridge spanned—or rather failed at the last extremity to span—a creek, or one of the fifty branches of the Pearl River in which Canton is situated. Arrived at my side of the bridge, I had to make a good spring to land on a balcony of my house, one of the many with which all Chinese habitations are adorned.

The only other entrance (except for birds or fish) were some very shiny steps upon the other side of the dwelling, submerged at high tide by the Pearl River. Here the fish swam in, and were frequently stranded. They were "mud fish," of a peculiar flavor, but delicious eating. The birds entered through the apertures for doors and window-frames, for with actual doors to open and windows to shut the Cantonese dispense themselves. They place a large screen before the doorway, which gives privacy sufficient for their need. The window-sashes are closed either by a sort of jalousie or thin matting. They do not surround their domesticities with the same mystery and secret precautions with which we envelop these proceedings in Europe. Human nature, they argue, has to sleep, and here is the mat upon which it stretches itself. Why conceal it? It also wants to eat, and it satisfies its appetite, no matter how many eyes are gazing. Tell a Chinese cook you are hungry, and he will immediately fetch his fire, his cooking-utensils, his provisions, and cook under your very nose. He has no idea of concealing his operations in some far-away back regions, yeleft kitchen. He squats down anywhere, makes a fire on or in anything—a basin,

dish, pan, or pot—there is no limit to his invention. He will cook in the middle of the street, or in the centre of his guests in a restaurant. Upon one occasion, when on board a junk, I observed a man cooking his own and his neighbor's food for days together in a tub, and an earthenware saucer containing the charcoal. Wonderful creatures they are, these despised Chinese, with a deftness of finger and ingenuity and patience unsurpassed by any nation under the sun! To return to the bridge of the willow pattern architecture, by which, as I have said, I entered my dwelling. The first thing which took me by surprise and completely overwhelmed my senses, was the variety of odors, smells, stanches, scents, which assailed me in the various chambers—no, that is a misnomer; I do not believe there is such a thing as a chamber in China. But different localities, such as north, south, east and west of my domicile, were all characterized by different smells. For instance, crossing the bridge and the veranda contiguous, I was fain to shudder under an effluvia which penetrated my whole being with the unmistakable essence of putrid fish.

Escaping from this with the utmost celerity, and resolving to give it a wide latitude in future, I hurried southward. Here was a compartment which, besides six window apertures, three door ditto, had two large square holes in the ceiling, which I ascertained were for admitting a ladder to ascend into the attic. I was once more permeated with a delicious sense of breathing existence in an atmosphere redolent with perfume of spices, wafted, it might be, from Araby the Blest. So it seemed to me, after the nausea of the bridge apartment. Here I pitched my tent, or, to speak more literally, my blankets, mats, pillow, wraps, and general belongings; and here presently arrived my cook, and commenced operations upon a young pig which he was about to roast in my bedroom. It would have taken a long time to make him comprehend my objections, but, fortunately, I had a factotum, undertaking the multifarious duties of valet, chambermaid, courier, interpreter, footman, chair-bearer, seamstress, laundress. Aa-Sing was his name, and he was the most valuable servant I ever had; and only for the difficulty of his tail, which would



CHINESE RICE-BOWL AND CHOP-STICKS.