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UNDER THE MISTLETOE, A.D. 1187.

By G. A. DAVIS.



EVEN hundred years ago rose the castle upon Tyne;
Wide around and far away rolled the moorland's barren line,
Brown with bracken, flushed with heather,
Sheeted white in wintry weather—
These were all the same, I know, seven hundred years ago!

Seven hundred years ago sang the wild December gale,
And the whirling drifts of snow eddied to its iron flail;
Borne in fitful blasts and sighing,
Far-off chimes came faintly dying—
Christmas chimes rung loud and low, seven hundred years ago!

Up the chimney yawning wide leap the Yule-log's roaring flame—
And they crowded in the hall, knight and squire, lord and dame;
Norman arch and oaken rafter
Thrilled with wassail-shout and laughter—
Far they rang through night and snow, seven hundred years ago!

Round the shields along the wall twined the holly, glistening green,
And the dancing firelight kissed spear and crossbow ranged between;
On the arras, lord and knight
Wavered in their ghostly fight,
Flashed and faded with the glow, seven hundred years ago!

In the pause, the minstrels sang—sang of Christ and Bethlehem;
While the wind along the walls caught the wild refrain from them;
Sang that sweet and strange old story,
Of the Lord who left His glory,
To the manger stooping low—all those years and years ago!

Can you see them—they who stood in the Yule-fire's fitful shine,
Seven hundred years ago, in the castle by the Tyne?
Ghosts that play their old parts over—
Lord and gleeman—girl and lover
Underneath the mistletoe, seven hundred years ago?

them preserved in a castle guarded by a sacred order of knighthood whom it chose itself. The Grail is said to have had a miraculous power to sustain physical life, and was, therefore, borne through the hall at every meal. But Joseph also used it as a touchstone to distinguish the wicked from the good. After Christianity had, according to the legend, been brought by Joseph and his companions to Britain, the Grail disappeared, and the quest of it by a pure and noble knight furnished the subject of another set of romances. In spite of the Christian coloring which the legend received at the hands of mediæval writers, Mr. Nutt, in a recent work, following Mr. J. F. Campbell, holds that the Grail, or sacred basin, and the holy lance, are Gaelic talismans, denoting the glittering weapon which destroys and the medicinal cup which cures. The story, he maintains, is pagan in origin, however much it may have been adapted in later ages to suit monkish conceptions of Christianity.

Mr. Nutt gives the following account of the popularity of the Holy Grail: "Few legends have attained such wide celebrity, or been accepted as so thoroughly symbolical of one master conception, as that of the Holy Grail. Poets and thinkers from mediæval times to our own days have used it as a type of the loftiest goal of man's effort. There must be something in the romances which first embodied this conception to account for the enduring favor it has enjoyed. Nor is it that we read into the old legend meaning and teachings undreamt of before our day. At a comparatively early stage in the legend's existence, its capacities had been perceived, and the works which were the outcome of that perception became the breviary and the exemplar of their age. There are reasons, both general and special, why the Celtic mythic tales grew as they did, and had such overwhelming vogue in their new shapes. In no portion of the vast Arthurian cycle is it more needful or more instructive to see what these reasons were than in that which recounts the fortunes of the Grail.

"The tales of Peredur and Gwalchmai, bound up with the Arthurian romance, shared its success, than which nothing in all literary history is more marvelous. It was in the year 1145 that Geoffrey of Monmouth first made the legendary history of Britain accessible to the lettered class of England and the Continent. He thereby opened up to the world at large a new continent of romantic story, and exercised upon the development of literature an influence comparable in its kind to that of Columbus's achievement upon the course of geographical discovery and political effort. Twenty years had not passed before the British heroes were household names throughout Europe, and by the close of the century nearly every existing literature had assimilated and reproduced the story of Arthur and his Knights. Charlemagne and Alexander, the sagas of Teutonic tribes, the tale of Imperial Rome itself, though still affording subject-matter to the wandering *jongleur* or monkish annalist, paled before the fame of the British King. The instinct which led the twelfth and thirteenth centuries thus to place the Arthurian story above all others was a true one. It was charged with the spirit of romance, and they were pre-eminently the ages of the romantic temper. The West had turned back toward the East, and, although the intent was hostile, the minds of the Western men had been fecundated, their imagination fired, by contact with the mother of all religions and all cultures. The achievements of the Crusaders became the standard of attainment to the loftiest and boldest minds of Western Christendom. For these men Alexander himself lacked courage and Roland, daring. The fathers had stormed Jerusalem, and the sons' youth had been nourished on tales of Araby the Blest and Ophir the

Golden, of strife with the Paynim, of the sorceries and devilries of the East. Nothing seemed impossible to a generation which knew of toils and quests greater than any minstrel had sung, which had beheld in the East sights as wondrous and fearful as any the *jongleur* could tell of. Moreover, the age was that of Knight Errantry, and of that phase of love in which every knight must qualify himself for the reception of his lady's favors by the performance of some feat of skill and daring. Such an age and such men demanded a special literature, and they found it in adaptations of Celtic tales."

THE FIRM OF PUSH & PULL.

BY THE REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE.

We have long been acquainted with a business firm whose praises have never been sung. I doubt whether their names are ever mentioned on Exchange. They seem to be doing more business and have more branch houses than the Claffins and the Appletons. You see their names almost everywhere on the door. It is the firm of Push & Pull. They generally have one of their partners' names on the outside of the door, and the other on the inside: "Push" on the outside, and "Pull" on the inside. I have found their business houses in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston, London and Edinburgh. It is under my eye, whether I go to buy a hat, a shawl, or a paper of pins, or watch, or ream of foolscap. They are in all kinds of business; and from the way they branch out, and put up new stores, and multiply their signboards on the outside and inside of doors, I conclude that the largest business firm on earth to-day is Push & Pull.

When these gentlemen join the Church, they make things go along vigorously. The roof stops leaking; a new carpet blooms on the church-floor; the fresco is retouched; the high pulpit is lowered till it comes into the same climate with the pew; strangers are courteously seated; the salary of the minister is paid before he gets hopelessly in debt to butcher and baker; and all is right, financially and spiritually, because Push & Pull have connected themselves with the enterprise.

A new parsonage is to be built, but the movement does not get started. Eight or ten men of slow circulation of blood and stagnant liver put their hands on the undertaking, but it will not budge. The proposed improvement is about to fail, when Push comes up behind and gives it a shove, and Pull goes in front and lays into the traces; and lo! the enterprise advances, the goal is reached! And all the people who had talked about the improvement, but done nothing toward it, invite the strangers who come to town to go up and see "our" parsonage.

Push & Pull are wide-awake men. They never stand around with their hands in their pockets, as though feeling for money that they cannot find. They have made up their minds that there is a work for them to do; and without wasting any time in reverie, they go to work and do it. They start a "life-insurance company." Push is the president, and Pull the secretary. Before you know it, all the people are running in to have their lungs sounded, and to tell how many times they have had the rheumatism; how old they are; whether they ever had fits; and at what age their father and mother expired; and putting all the family secrets on paper, and paying Push & Pull two hundred dollars to read it.

When this firm starts a clothing-house, they make a great stir in the city. They advertise in such strong and emphatic way that the people are haunted with the matter, and dream about it, and go round the block to avoid

that store-door, lest they be persuaded in and induced to buy something they cannot afford. But sometime the man forgets himself, and finds he is in front of the new clothing-store, and, at the first glance of the goods in the show-window, is tempted to enter. Push comes up behind him and Pull comes up before him, and the man is convinced of the shabbiness of his present appearance—that his hat will not do, that his coat and vest, and all the rest of his clothes, clean down to his shoes, are unfit; and before one week is past, a boy runs up the steps of this customer with a pasteboard box, marked "From the clothing establishment of Push & Pull. C. O. D."

These men can do anything they set their hands to—publish a newspaper, lay out a street, build a house, control a railroad, manage a church, revolutionize a city. In fact, any two industrious, honorable, enterprising men can accomplish wonders. One does the outdoor work of the store, and the other the indoor work. One leads, the other follows; but, both working in one direction, all obstacles are leveled before them.

I wish that more of our young men could graduate from the store of "Push & Pull." We have tens of thousands of young men doing nothing. There must be work somewhere if they will only do it. They stand round, with soap-locks and scented pocket-handkerchiefs, tipping their hats to the ladies; while, instead of waiting for business to come to them, they ought to go to work and make a business. Here is the ladder of life. The most of those who start at the top of the ladder spend their life in coming down, while those who start at the bottom may go up. Those who are born with a gold spoon in their mouth soon lose the spoon. The two school-bullies that used to flourish their silk pocket-handkerchiefs in my face, and with their ivory-handled, four-bladed knives punch holes through my kite—one of them is in the penitentiary, and the other ought to be.

Young man, the road of life is up-hill, and our load heavy. Better take off your kid gloves, and the patent-leathers, and white vest, and ask Push, with his stout shoulder, and Pull, with his strong grip, to help you. Energy, pluck, courage, obstinate determination are to be cultured. Eat strong meat, drop pastries, stop reading sickly novelettes, pray at both ends of the day and in the middle, look a man in the eye when you talk to him, and if you want to be a giant, keep your head out of the lap of indulgences that would put a pair of shears through your looks.

If you cannot get the right kind of business partner, marry a good, honest wife. Fine cheeks and handsome

curls are very well, but let them be mere incidentals. Let our young men select practical women: there are a few of them left. With such an one you can get on with almost all the heavy loads of life. You will be "Pull," and she "Push"; and if you do not get the house built and the fortune established, send me word, and I will tear this article up in such small pieces that no one will ever be able to find it.

Life is earnest work, and cannot be done with the tips of the fingers. We want more crowbars and fewer gold toothpicks. The obstacles before you cannot be looked out of countenance by a quizzing-glass. Let sloth and softness go to the wall; but three cheers for "Push & Pull," and all their branch business houses!

MISS UTTIET, better known, perhaps, as "Maxwell Gray," is the only daughter of a physician at Newport, Isle of Wight, and is a hopeless invalid. It is told that when "The Silence of Dean Maitland" was published, Lord Tennyson read it with great interest, and was anxious to know the author. He wrote to Miss Uttiet, inviting her to visit him at Freshwater, but she was too ill to do so. Thereupon he drove over to Newport and called upon her.

BISHOP FALLOWS, formerly a Methodist, but now of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Chicago, announces his conversion to setting apart women as well as men for the Gospel ministry, and Miss Willard says it is the grandest declaration ever made by a bishop since the world began: "The time has come for the setting apart of woman for the work of the Gospel ministry. If woman in the beginning, through Satan, tempted man and led him astray, Christ has come to destroy the works of the devil. On the resurrection morn the commission was given first to woman to preach the good news to man. The Corinthian women were not to be compared for a moment with the refined, cultured women of to-day. The injunction to the former did not apply to the latter. I have been long, I confess, in coming to this conclusion. I read the life of our Lord in a new light; the last ritualistic prejudice has vanished. Christ's commissions were given to women and men alike. Men have too long misconceived the true position of women. This present period in the Church is very important. Let us not array ourselves against Holy Ghost women, lest we be found to fight against God." Bishop Fallows received some truly Methodist "amens" during the latter portion of his sermon, and was treated to equally Methodist hand-shaking at its close.

THE CHILDREN COMING HOME.

* MAMMY, light up the nursery, quick,
And make it warm and bright;
The children, little Joe and Bell,
Are coming home to-night.

"They have been gone a long, long time—
I know not where they roam;
But they will come; they never spent
A Christmas Eve from home.

"Make haste; hear little Dot and Dash,
Their doggies, how they bark!
The children must not come back home
And find it cold and dark.

"Oh, yes! I know you say they're dead;
You always call them *that*;
But I know better: find the stool
On which Joe always sat.

"Now bring Bell's little rocking-chair;—
That's right; one on each side!
How dare you say my children, too,
'With yellow fever died'?

"I know poor Sue lost all of hers,
And sister Kate lost two,
And all my neighbors lost a child,
But mine—mine lived it through.

"And they are coming home to-night—
And, Mammy, you shall be
Their nurse again; you know they love
'Black Mammy' next to me.

"Poor, good old soul, why do you weep?—
They're coming very soon;
When was it that they went away?
Oh, yes, it *was* in June.

"How hot the children were that day—
We dressed them both in white;
But they will need their Winter clothes
When they come back to-night.

"Here, Mammy, take this bunch of keys,
Unlock the cedar chest,
And bring me Bell's blue velvet suit;
She loves to wear that best.

"And bring Joe's suit of navy blue,
(I wonder if it will fit—
Boys grow so fast); he used to look
A little man in it."

And from the chest old Mammy brought
The pretty clothes with care,
To say "They're dead and cannot come"
Was more than she could dare.