

THE OLIVE LEAF

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Do It Now	85
A Soldier's Dream of Peace	85
Christmas Dinner for the Birds	86
Open the Door of Your Heart	86
What Saved Him	87
The Home-School	87
Memorial to War Horses	87
The Rules of Elizabeth Fry	88
Builders of the State	88
Only a Sunbeam	88

Do It Now.

I MEANT to be kind last Christmas,
The last one that ever came,
But was busy and so forgot it—
I had only myself to blame ;
Since then I have seen a still, cold form,
'Tis useless now, what I meant to perform.

I mean to be kind next Christmas,
The first that will ever come,
To those I love best in the homestead
To the creatures, who, always dumb,
Cannot thank me, and so I avow
That lest I forget, I'll begin it now.

W. O. C.



A Soldier's Dream of "Peace."

A CHRISTMAS TALE.

CONRAD was a brave lad, and when of the prescribed age, after the manner of his country, he had been sent to learn the art of war, otherwise the art of wholesale murder. But when Conrad shouldered his gun and marched bravely out of his native town, a new sort of pride filled his heart which he mistook for patriotism, and but for the tears of his mother at parting, or the memory of a sweet young face that he had loved to look upon, this would have been the happiest day of his life.

The art of war, however, has its laborious side, and before the year was done Conrad had wished himself more than once at his mother's fireside, or walking home from his work in his native village.

Christmas was approaching, and at heart Conrad

was homesick. Isolated in the midst of his companions, and weary with the monotonous round of his daily duties, he had watched the stars that always seemed a link between him and his home, and wept himself to sleep for many a night, his last thought of his mother and her sad face at parting.

This was some years ago ; strange rumours were in the air, and had even penetrated those human pens known as barracks. At San Remo sat the inventor of dynamite in his laboratory, racking his fertile brain to find some more destructive element.

At Toulon the feasting and merry-making to Russia (looking forward) had recoiled to the other extreme, and preparations were on foot to celebrate the victory over England (looking backward) at that place. Chauvinism was rising over France like a miasma, and England was sharpening her knife for a clean cut at the pound of flesh, wherever it might be taken without loss of blood.

Navies were being strengthened, and armies inspected everywhere, and stern counsel had gone forth from the throne at Berlin that *could not be darkened by words.*

All this in the face of the near approach to the day when Christendom (so called) is wont to celebrate the birth of the *Prince of Peace*, and shout *Glory to God! Peace on earth!* to men of good will (new reading). Men of good will, forsooth! *Where* then did Peace reign? Was not the cry in men's hearts, War on earth. GLORY to *nations* instead?

At last came Christmas Eve, and letters from home, and souvenirs, had sent many a soldier to bed with the heart-ache, not the least Conrad. And with his prayer half said, he fell asleep on a tear-wet pillow, whispering, "Deliver us from evil."

On the threshold of dreamland he was met by a shining one, who led him out into the Christmas dawn, where were assembled all the armies of the world awaiting their commands.

The hour had come, when the great question of *Peace* or *War* must be *decided*. Force of Arms, or Force of Will. Man's mandate or God's command.

"To Arms"! rang out the harsh discordant cry from every tottering throne, and every soldier on land and sea looked up despairingly into heaven. "Thou shalt not kill"! was echoed from the throne above, while every man stood dumb before his Maker.

One mighty instinct seemed to stir all hearts, as a breeze flutters through the leaves of forest trees, and Conrad saw that vast multitude bend to the ground while the song of Angels swept again over the earth, and laying down their arms, opposed the force of *will* to that of *Tyranny*, and rose up God's freemen, ready to turn their swords into ploughshares, and make the wilderness to blossom as the rose. Joining their voices to the angel choir they sang, "Peace on Earth"! while Conrad finished his prayer. "Thine is the *Kingdom*, and the *Power* and the *Glory* for ever. Amen."



Christmas Dinner for the Birds.

ONE of the prettiest Norwegian customs at Christmas is the practice of giving on that day a dinner to the birds. On Christmas morning, every gable, gateway, or barn door is decorated with a sheaf of corn, fixed on a tall pole, from which it is intended the birds shall make a Christmas dinner. Even the poorest peasant will contrive to have a handful set aside for this purpose, and what the birds do not eat on Christmas Day remains for them to finish at their leisure afterwards. The chirping of the birds about these poles makes a Norwegian Christmas cheery.

It is a beautiful custom and does the children as much good as the birds, for it teaches them to be kind. So the young people of one country may find lessons of life in the doings of those who live in lands far away.



Open the Door of Your Heart.

OPEN the door of your heart, my lad,

To the angels of love and truth;
When the world is full of unnumbered joys,
In the beautiful dawn of youth.
Casting aside all things that mar,
Saying to wrong, "Depart"!
To the voices of hope that are calling you
Open the door of your heart.

Open the door of your heart, my lass,
To the things that shall abide;
To the holy thoughts that lift your soul,
Like the stars at eventide.
All fair and fadeless flowers that bloom
In the realms of song and art
Are yours if only you give them room;
Open the door of your heart.

Open the door of your heart, my friend,
Heedless of class and creed,
When you hear the cry of a brother's voice,
The sob of a child in need.
To the shining heaven that o'er you bends
You need no map or chart,
But only the love the Master gave;
Open the door of your heart.

EDWARD EVERETT HALE, D.D.



A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,
And a heart to enjoy the Christmas cheer!



What Saved Him.

ONE Christmas morning, many years ago, a young reporter on a daily paper had occasion to call with a message at the office of one of the foremost editors and publishers in the country, says the *Youth's Companion*.

The young man was a sickly country lad of keen sensibility and nervous temperament, who, finding himself homeless and friendless in a great city, had yielded to temptation, and had fallen into the habits of drinking and gambling. The publisher, as he listened to the message, noted the lines which dissipation had already left on the boy's face. He was a man who made it his work in the world to help others. No man touched his hand in passing who did not gain from him new courage and hope in life.

He answered the message which the reporter had brought, and then, holding out his hand cordially, said, "Let me wish you a merry Christmas, my lad." He took from a shelf a book, containing sketches of the lives of the greatest English, French and German authors, with extracts from their works.

"Here," said he, "are some friends for the new year. When you spend an hour with them, you will have noble company."

The surprise of the gift and the unexpected kindness from the man whom he regarded with awe had a powerful effect upon the lad. He spent all his leisure time in poring over the book. It kindled his latent scholarly tastes. He saved his money to buy the complete works first of this author, and then of that; he worked harder to earn more money to buy them. After a few years, he began to gather together and to study rare and curious books, and to write short papers upon obscure literary subjects.

Men of similar tastes sought him out; he numbered some of the foremost scholars and thinkers of the country among his friends, but he never forgot the lonely, friendless lad who had been sinking into a gambler and a drunkard until a kind hand drew him back; and he in his turn sought out other lonely, friendless boys in the great city, and gave them a helping hand out of the gulf.

So, year by year, his life widened and deepened into a strong current from which many drew comfort and help.

During his last illness, the newspapers spoke of him with a sudden appreciation of his worth.

"A profound scholar, with the heart of a child." "A journalist who never wrote a word to subserve a base end," they said. He read these eulogies with a quiet smile.

One day he put into the hands of a friend an

old, dingy volume. "When I am gone," he said, "take this to Mr.—, and tell him that whatever of good or usefulness there has been in my life I owe to him, and this Christmas gift of his, thirty years ago."

The little story is absolutely true. We venture to tell it because there is no one living whom it can hurt, while there are many whom it may help to hold out friendly hands to their brothers who have stumbled into darker paths in life than they.

Christian.



The Home-School.

LESSONS IN ESPERANTO.

NEW SERIES. XI.

SEE "A Curious Gift" in THE OLIVE LEAF for November.

Ĉu vi legis la rakonton en la lasta numero de THE OLIVE LEAF pri la stranga donaco, kiun oni ĵus faris al la Natur-historia Muzeo en Soletta? Tio estas birdnesto tute farita el ŝtalo! Kelkaj birdoj, ekzemple, la turdoj kaj merloj, konstruas siajn nestojn el branĉetoj, aliaj, ekz.: la hirundoj, el tero, sed ili ofte utiligas strangajn aĵojn. En Soletta estas kelkaj poŝ-horloĝ-fabrikaj, kaj ĉirkaŭ ili troviĝas ĉiam multe da rompitaĵoj forĵetitaj poŝhorloĝ-risortoj, kaj el tiuj strangaj objektoj paro da kinereoj konstruis sian neston. Kiam la birdo fine forlasis la neston, la horloĝisto en kies ĝardeno ĝi troviĝis, sendis ĝin, kiel kuriozaĵon, al la Muzeo. Ĉu ne plaĉus al vi vidi ĝin?

VORTARETO.—Numero *number* (of journal, etc.), stranga *strange, curious*, donaco, *a gift*, ĵus *just* (time), muzeo *museum*, tute *quite, wholly*, ŝtalo *steel*, kelkaj *some, a few*, turdo *a thrush*, merlo *a blackbird*, hirundo *a swallow*, kinereo *a wagtail*, konstrui *construct, build*, branĉeto *a twig* (branĉo *a branch*), tero *earth, soil*, utila *useful*, aĵo *a thing, an object*, horloĝo *a clock, a watch*, poŝo *a pocket*, fabriko *a factory*, ĉirkaŭ *about, around*, pri *about, concerning*, troviĝi *to be (become) found*, rompita *broken, for away*, ĵetita *thrown*, risorto *spring* (of watch, etc.), paro da *a pair of*, fine *at last, finally*, kies *whose* (ties *that person's*, ĉies *everyone's*, ies *someone's*, nenies *no one's*, ies *denotes possession*), kiel *as, how*, kuriozaĵo *a curiosity*, plaĉi *to please*, Ĉu ne plaĉus al vi, *would it not please you, would you not like*. **us** is used to express a condition.



Memorial to War Horses.

ERECTED AT BURSTON.

A DRINKING fountain and trough erected in memory of the horses killed and wounded in the

war in South Africa, was some time ago opened at Burston and surrendered by Mr. William Tebb to the care of the Burston Parish Council.

The inscription on the fountain is as follows :—

“In Memory of the Mute Fidelity
of the 400,000 Horses
Killed and Wounded
At the Call of their Masters
During the South African War,
1899-1902.
In a cause of which
They knew nothing,
This Fountain is Erected
By a Reverent Fellow-creature.”



The Rules of Elizabeth Fry.

THE following rules for the guidance of life are by the celebrated Mrs. Fry :—

1. Never lose any time. I do not think that lost which is spent in amusement or recreation every day ; but always be in the habit of being employed.
2. Never err the least in truth.
3. Never say an ill thing of a person when thou canst say a good thing of him. Not only speak charitably, but feel so.
4. Never be irritable or unkind to anybody.
5. Never indulge thyself in luxuries that are not necessary.
6. Do all things with consideration, and when thy path to act right is most difficult, put confidence in that power alone which is able to assist thee, and exert thine own powers as far as they go.



Builders of the State.

WHO builds the state? Not he whose power,
Rooted in wrong, in gold entrenched,
Makes him the regent of the hour ;
The eternal light cannot be quenched :
This shall outlive this little span ;
Shine fierce upon each tainted scheme ;
Shall show where shame blots all the plan ;
The treachery in the dazzling dream.
He builds the state who builds on truth,—
Not he who, crushing towards his aim,
Strikes conscience from the throne, and ruth,
To win a dark, unpitied fame.
He builds the state who to that task
Brings strong, clean hands, and purpose pure,
Who wears not virtue as a mask ;
He builds the state that shall endure,—
The state wherein each loyal son
Holds as a birthright from true sires
Treasures of honor nobly won,
And freedom's never-ending fires.

RICHARD WATSON.

Only a Sunbeam.

ONLY a slender ray of light
That followed fast the passing night,
And lo ! the morning shone out bright
Only a sunbeam.

Speeding along it smote a heart
Downpressed by sorrow's bitter smart
And woke it to life's better part
Though but a sunbeam.

It shone, but glided swift away,
The beam of comfort could not stay
But left a pathway bright as day—
That little sunbeam.

The sunbeam paints the flowret's face,
The sunbeam glads the dingiest place
And fills it with peculiar grace—
Only a sunbeam.

Children are sunbeams every one,
Helpless and useless there are none
And none too small, when good is done,
By God's own sunbeams.

One little beam may bear His love,
Another, comfort from above,
A third one, sweet as mystic dove.
May radiate Peace.

But all, however faint their ray,
May shed God's light upon earth's way,
May chase life's shadows all away,
And be real sunbeams.

GLADYS DE LAVELAYE.



The Editor's Letter-Box.

COMMUNICATIONS for THE OLIVE LEAF, or in connection with the BAND OF PEACE, should be sent to the Secretary, 47, New Broad Street, London, E.C.

The Secretary will be glad to receive the names of new members, of whom a register is kept at the Office.

