

nate layers of the richest creams, of various colors and flavors, sugared and glazed fruits, etc. If we look beyond the rich display such a window contains, this Christmas eve, we shall see within troops of bewitching *señoritas* readily complying with the invitations of their debonnaire escorts and revelling in elaborately constructed cakes, *caramelos*, chocolates and custards.

At midnight of the *Noche Buena* all Mexico forsakes its pleasures and repairs to the *Misa del Gallo* or Mass of the Cock, a high mass of the most imposing character which, in every one of the magnificent temples reared by the Catholic Church in the City of Mexico, is celebrated exactly at midnight on Christmas eve or morning to commemorate the Saviour's birth. All the churches have an augmented choir and a large orchestra specially engaged for the occasion. The mass is celebrated with every concomitant that can heighten its effect and grandeur. The magnificent old cathedral on the Plaza Mayor displays a complete representation of the Nativity in wax figures of life-size *con mucha propiedad* (very like the original), and at midnight the signal for the mass to begin is given by the crowing of a real cock; hence its name *Misa del Gallo* or Mass of the Cock.

Christmas in the West Indies is perhaps the most novel experience that a citizen of the United States can enjoy in connection with Christmas. To wander about among palm trees, orange groves and fields of sugar cane on Christmas Day with the thermometer at 90 degrees in the shade, certainly has the zest of newness. If you are in the British West Indies—in Kingston, Jamaica, for example, as I was on Christmas day, 1885—your attention will be most attracted in all the Christmas gatherings of which you form a part, whether in the streets, the home, or the church, by the close association of whites and blacks, and you will find upon inquiry that intermarriage between the two races is so common as to excite no remark. I passed my Christmas as a guest in the home of an English gentleman of a noble family—an attaché of the Governor General's staff—whose wife, a coal black negress, was one of the most intelligent and refined ladies, and without exception the best amateur pianist I ever met. To my surprise I found that the mixed race resulting from such intermarriages possessed the wealth, culture and influence of the island.

The Swedish Christmas has many quaint superstitions. In Sweden for centuries there has been handed

down from generation to generation a popular belief that all cattle fall upon their knees at midnight on Christmas Eve, as the ox and the ass of Bethlehem are said to have done when Jesus was born in the manger beside them.

GEOFFREY WILLISTON CHRISTINE.

A SHORT STORY TOLD ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

"Hello, Hartley, when did you get home?" asked a slender well-dressed gentleman of a young man with a stove-pipe hat.

"Last night, and I can't get home till to-morrow, I find, on account of the trains. I did want to get there to-day, for you know it's Christmas, and my folks are expecting me."

"That's too bad. But never mind; come and eat dinner with us; my wife will be glad to see you."

Just then a man with a light mustache, grey eyes, and an intelligent face came up to the two and said in surprise:

"Why, Hartley, when did you get home? Been away four years, haven't you?"

"Yes, over four years. How on earth is it that I find you here in—Are you up on a visit?"

"No, indeed," laughed the other, whose name was Russel; "I am living here; moved up two years ago."

"You don't say. Well I am sorry you have left us."

"Come down and see us, Hartley. Do you go on to day?"

"No, I cannot, I am sorry to say."

"Come and have dinner with us then."

"Thanks, Fisher here has just asked me to eat my Christmas turkey with him."

"Good-bye then; I am in quite a rush. It is busy times for us."

As Russel turned away Fisher said: "There goes a good man—a consistent Latter-day-Saint. Did you know he was our Bishop's first Counselor?"

"You don't say. How is that?"

"Well, I don't know unless it's because he is worthy, and the Lord knew it. Come on home and I'll have my wife tell you a little story about Brother Russel which I think is not only a key to his own success in life, but a valuable lesson to all who wish to advance in this kingdom."

Accordingly the two hurried to Mr. Fisher's house, where they were welcomed by Mrs. Fisher and cheered by a good Christmas dinner.

"Now, Margaret, sit down and chat with us. We met Brother Russel on the street, and Henry here was surprised to find him moved up to, and

first Counsellor to the Bishop. I told him you would relate a little story about the matter that would perhaps interest him; so go on."

"Well," said the good lady, smoothing the folds of her dress with her hands, and slowly rocking back and forth as she talked, "I once traveled between here and — in a freight team—we had no cars in those days—in company with a brother who was going on a mission. He had been in the church for forty years, but was a tame spirited, shiftless, poor old man, and in my girlish way I wondered why the Lord did not reward his long services in this work with more prosperity and honor in the Church. We left home in the morning; that noon I got out my lunch box—the old gentleman had somehow forgotten to provide himself with anything to eat during our long trip—and when things were ready I called him to eat, and of course bowed my head and waited for the blessing. He blessed the food, and we proceeded with our dinner. At night I again got the food ready; he blessed it, and we ate. He then went off to his team; I said my prayers and went to bed in the wagon. Next morning our meal was conducted in the same way. That day at noon, however, when I bowed my head, the old gentleman said testily:—

"I have blessed everything in that grub-box three times now, and it is certainly as righteous as it will ever get."

"I looked up in utter amazement, and just managed to say: I thought you blessed the food we were about to partake of."

"Well, that included the whole lot, I guess."

"But," finding my tongue in my half-indignation, "you might as well take your sack of flour and quarter of beef and bless it all in one lump, that one blessing lasting all winter."

"Well, that's about my way of doing. No use going through such things every day. The Lord is too far off to want to be bothered three or four times a day with our trivial requests."

I was too young, too surprised, too angry to make any reply, and ate my unblessed food in grim silence. The remains of our meals were always eaten without being blessed, for I was too young then to have the sense to do what I should now—turn to and bless it myself. However, I said no more about the matter. One night, as we drew up to our stopping-place, we found a number of wagons already camped there, with perhaps a dozen people running about and gaily romping.