

A DAY IN BED.

O, what is so rare as a day in bed,
A season of rest complete;
A day of delight from morning till night,
With plenty of good things to eat.
For scientists say, and we must believe,
If we want a wise, clear-thinking head,
And a body that's tough, of the right kind of
stuff,
We must give it a day off in bed.
Imagine the yawning and stretching and all
Of the joys such loafing would bring;
Imagine the bliss of a day spent like this,
While the world was a-toil and a-swing.
Just fancy the envy of all fellowmen
Who knew you were bunked for the day;
Why, the malice you'd spread by your day off in
bed
Would more than atone for lost pay.
O, naught is so rare as a day off in bed,
Not even a day in June;
And blest be the man who invented the plan,
Who deserves a far loftier tune.
I beg you to try it and see for yourself
(Though I haven't myself, it is true),
For there's nothing, I say, so rare as a day
In bed, unless it is two.

—JOE CONN.

JANE'S CHRISTMAS SLIPPERS

By Hayden Caruth, in Saturday Post.

The Dominie used to complain sometimes about the character of the stories the rest of us told. He said they were too economical in the use of the element of truth. And truth was so cheap, and also interesting, but we were not so free to acknowledge its cheapness. Like other exotics it seemed to us expensive. Fiction, being so much more easily produced, appeared to be the true mental provender if economy were to be considered. At least this was the case in the Corn Cob Club, a social institution where we decided questions of great pith and moment by the aid of the civilizing and ennobling influence of tobacco incinerated in cob-pipes. The Dominie had quit smoking when he entered the ministry, but he always said the cobs smelt good, so we had hopes of his reclamation; besides, the air was usually so thick that he absorbed enough to bring him up, in a large measure, to the high philosophic plane occupied by the rest of us.

It happened on Christmas Eve that somebody told a story appropriate enough to the season so far as the subject went, but palpably impossible considered as a happening. At least the Dominie said it was, and threatened to tell a Christmas story himself; and being counseled by the professor, who was classical in his language, to "blaze away," the good man complied as follows:

There used to be a young man named Stanwix who was rector of a church at a little town in New Jersey called Appleburg. Very amiable young man, not long in the ministry, and unmarried. Nice-looking chap, too, and a bright fellow, but he had his trials at Appleburg. Mainly it was the women—they thought he ought to marry, and of course they were right. But thinking so wasn't enough for those dear Appleburg ladies; with the true feminine desire to help they resolved to see that he *did* marry. But here again they showed a universal feminine trait by refusing to combine and work together. They all labored hard enough, but independently, and each with a view to inducing the minister to marry a different woman. There were some thing like a hundred and thirty-six marriageable young women in his flock, and obviously he couldn't marry them all. It would have been asking too much. Still, the ladies couldn't seem to combine on any one. What they ought to have done was to call a convention, listen to nominations, and then vote on the candidates and so select a bride for their pastor. Then they could have appointed a committee to wait on him and inform him of what they had done. He was young and tractable, and striving hard to please, it being his first charge, and I have no doubt would have bowed to the will of the convention. It would have been a pleasing instance of the office seeking the man. But the ladies didn't do any of this, but kept on laboring, each independently, trying, at best, to rope him in for her own family, and often, I fear, for her own individual self. The consequence was that the good man found himself between the upper and the nether millstones—and with the stones buzzing around like whirlpools.

It had been going on for some months when Christmas approached. Now of course there isn't much you can give any man for Christmas—slippers and pipes and shotguns and slippers. And in case of a parson it's still worse—you've got to drop off the pipes and shotguns, leaving only slippers—and slippers. Of course there are bookshelves and easy chairs, but the first are trivial and the latter expensive; besides, if he is unmarried and you are of the opposite sex and in the same state, you will see that you ought to give him something made with your own fair hands, and you can't make an easy

chair. So slippers it had to be for the Reverend Mr. Stanwix, especially after his landlady had been sounded on the subject and reported that the poor man didn't have a slipper to his name, except a pair of old dilapidated ones which he kept nailed to the wall about a yard and half above the floor, and before which he used to draw up his chair, and then slide down and sit on the back of his neck with his feet thrust into them as he thought out his sermon for the next Sunday.

Well, the result was, of course, that the whole hundred and thirty-six marriageable ladies at Appleburg went to work on slippers and a few of the flock who already had husbands also began slippers, out of the goodness of their hearts, probably, or maybe thinking that they might be widows some day and might as well have a pair to their credit. The slaughter of plush and embroidery materials was something cyclonic, and the local shoemaker had to sit up nights pegging on soles. Even unfortunate little Jane Wilkinson went at a pair hammer and tongs, though everybody said she hadn't a ghost of a show. In the first place Jane was too young—her older sister Katharine was conceded to have a right to enter for the contest, but it was universally held that Jane had no right to compete at all. Besides being too young—she was really nineteen or twenty—she was also plain. She might have a certain girlish prettiness, but not the beauty which the wife of so handsome a shepherd as the Rev. Mr. Stanwix should have. Further more, Jane was in no other way adapted for the position—she had been a good deal of a tomboy, and was yet, for that matter, she was frivolous and careless, and was always putting her foot in it. The first time the pastor had called at the Wilkinson house and while Katharine was entertaining him in the parlor in the most approved and circumspect manner, Jane had blundered in, and inside of five minutes asked him why he didn't get married—all the girls said he ought to. Jane had explained to everybody that she meant it as a joke, but it had generally been pronounced ill-timed and in bad taste.

But poor Jane kept working away on her slippers regardless of the talk. Everybody said that Jane's slippers wouldn't fit, or that they would both be for one foot, or that she would get the heels sewed on the toe end, or something. Still Jane worked on, embroidering blue rose-buds and red leaves, and all that sort of thing. Some of the older people pitied Jane, but the other girls said her mother wasn't doing her duty by her in not putting her alleged slippers in the fire and sending Jane to bed without her supper. But Jane worked on, though everything went wrong, and the worst that folks had predicted about her slippers bid fair to come to pass. The rose-buds really looked more like Jane-buds, and the leaves resembled nothing so much as the seals on a legal document; but Jane thought the slippers a veritable work of art, and slept with them, under her pillow. Then the shoemaker, who was pretty well run down by the time he reached Jane's, got the left sole on the right slipper, and the right sole on the left slipper; but of course Jane never knew the difference, and put them in a pasteboard box and tied it with pink ribbon.

Then she got her other Christmas presents ready. She had a lot of handkerchiefs for an aunt, and a shopping bag for a married sister, and a little knit shawl for her grandmother, and a pair of skates for a boy cousin, and various other things for divers other persons, including a fine meerschaum pipe and a pound of his favourite smoking tobacco for her brother who was at college, and who wouldn't be home till New Year's. Each thing she carefully put up in a box or bundle and laid it away. Then the day before Christmas she labeled them and got them all off, including those impossible slippers with the goes turned out like a pair of shears, though her sister came to her at the last moment and implored her not to send them and disgrace the family. But Jane was stubborn and sent everything off by the expressman just as she had planned; though, of course, anybody but Jane could see at a glance that the unfortunate clergyman, if he ever tried to wear the slippers, would walk around himself one way with one leg, and around the opposite way with the other leg, and get all folded up like a breakfast roll.

The day before Christmas was a never-to-be-forgotten time for the Rev. Mr. Stanwix. Slippers just came down on him like an Egyptian plague. Ten pairs turned up before breakfast. The postmaster came up with twelve more right after breakfast—said it wasn't a delivery office, but that he'd got to make room for the other mail matter. An hour later he came with sixteen more. Then about one o'clock the postmaster sent up, in a grocery wagon, a special sack containing thirty-one pairs. And the expressman drop-

ped in six or seven times during the day, while private messengers were streaking in across the lawn from all directions. They used to say that one pair came by carrier pigeon—I don't know how this may have been; but I do know that the landlady's dog took a turn around town and came back with a neat parcel tied to his collar and directed to the Rev. Mr. Stanwix.

Along about four o'clock Stanwix got crowded out of his room—slippers piled half way to the ceiling—and had to put a chair out in the hall and sit there with an atlas of the world in his lap writing his Christmas sermon on it. Mighty tough sermon it was, too, and got tougher as the slippers continued to arrive. Fact is, he was getting pretty mad; and every new pair sent his temperature up five degrees. Consequently, at ten o'clock he was just boiling. Of course he couldn't swear, but the way he tramped up and down that hall and ground his teeth really amounted to the same thing. The arriving slippers now began to fall off. For ten minutes nothing came, and he was just starting down to ask the landlady if she couldn't put a cot in the hall so he could go to bed, when in came another box. It was from Jane—just her luck, of course, to be late and strike him when he was all worked up to the bursting point. But let us draw a veil over the scene right here and leave the poor man alone as he opens Jane's box.

It was not more than half-past nine the next morning when Rev. Mr. Stanwix mounted the Wilkinson steps and tugged at the door bell. He asked for Jane. It seemed rather queer, but they ushered him into the parlor and sent Jane in. Well, to make a long story short, it wasn't ten minutes till he had the thing all fixed up. He had his chair drawn close up beside her end of the sofa.

"Jane," he was saying, "I've loved you ever since the first time I saw you, but I never knew it till I opened your box."

"Then you liked them, did you? I'm so glad," murmured Jane.

"I should say I did! Why, its one of the finest meerschaums I ever saw, and that tobacco used to be my favorite brand at college. But, Jane, how did you know that I used to smoke, and was dying to begin again?"

Jane had stopped breathing at the word meerschaum. Now she caught her breath, and for once in her life rose to the occasion and didn't put her foot in it. She simply looked up at him and smiled demurely.

"Oh, I guessed it," she said.

"It was the best guess you ever made. I should have died last night amidst that landslide of slippers if I hadn't smoked about half of that tobacco. I mean to keep on smoking now—that is, if you don't object, dear?"

Jane scored again. "I rather like the smell of good tobacco," she said.

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