

Article

No 4

Subject  
A Christmas morning in  
San Francisco

Letter

No 1

James M. Smith  
of the  
Board of Trustees



It was Christmas morning in San Francisco, California.

You, dear Reader, must come and find out how and what a California Christmas morning is like. It would be almost useless for me to try to describe it, for the reality would so far surpass the description, but let me tell you, if these lines should reach a few readers "East, or Abroad" it will well repay you to come and see, and hear, and feel, and taste, and smell for yourselves. If there is anything much better, we will have to look higher for it - so high and far away that people who go there, always forget to return and those left behind call them "dead". Nothing is dead. The other day, a dear girl wrapped a few dry, little flowers in a piece of common brown paper and wrote on it: God bless the dear hand that culled you, sweet little rose and fragrant heliotrope. Rest in peace. Your mission in this life is fulfilled. May ours, may mine be fulfilled as well as yours when our, when my time, will come to lie down and rest. Forgive that your little couch is so humble and sleep, rest, until you will be wanted again.

A loving hand had cut these few blossoms, a loving heart had received them. Methinks that in that land where the spirit of love reigns supreme, these flowers are blooming for ever. She will find her flowers again some day - but I forget, she has them - and though years old, counting by time, they are not dead nor faded to her.

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So here it is.

Merry Christmas! Mamma, Papa, Charlie, Maggie rang like a carol out of little Albert's bird- mouth. This little boy was and is that dear girl's ,spoken of above, little sweetheart. He is a very dear, lovely little fellow. It is too sad that I must put in a big ugly "But" here. This "but" is: little Albert would say:  
 " <sup>n</sup>noh! I wont!" It should not be really a comfort, but it is ,it <sub>n</sub> seems to me, that our blessed little friend is not the only one who says noh and I wont. There are so many boys and girls, yes and men and women who say noh and I wont more or less, sooner or later, to our dear Master, to father , mother, teacher or nurse. Ah, yes, many, many times. "No and I wont" are precious words, are diamonds, priceless gems in their places, but they were very much out of place in dear little Albert's sweet mouth.

It was a few minutes after he had greeted his dear ones so lovingly, Maggie, the nurse, said: "Come, Albert, let me dress you."  
" Noh! I wont!"

Santa Claus had been very good and liberal to Albert and his brother Charlie, and in the next room were many beautiful things. A grand tree, a magnificent horse , a noble ship, soldiers, oh so many of them, boys in blue and in gray , officers on horseback, one looked like General Grant it seemed to me ; there was an ark, as Noah built, full of just such animals as our ancestor had in his care during that long, long rain, boxes of splendid blocks , a tool



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chest and oh, ever so many things. When the animals in the ark heard Albert's "no" they all pricked up their ears and listened. They thought that Santa Claus had left them there, because they were going to have such good little masters, and from what they heard they began to be afraid that their life would not be quite so pleasant as they thought.

"Come, now Albert, you must get dressed, papa wants to take you out with him this morning."

"No, I don't want to, I want to go to play. I want to ride on the new horse and then I will build a house and play war, and work with the tools and I don't want to be dressed now."

"Oh Albert, come and we will hurry and then you can have your breakfast."

"Noh, I wont, I want to play."

Well, the first "I wont" sounded quite shocking to all the apparently well disciplined soldiers, even if they were only of wood, and to all the ears in the ark, but after it was repeated several times one little mule pricked up his ears, and listened and thought: "I like that, I will follow suit, and when Master Albert will want me to pull one of those heavy cannons. When I was living in the green woods and saw all the real soldiers, there were many heavy cannons and a lot of my brothers pulling them and it was hard work, so it will be better to say I wont. I am glad I heard it. This thought and said the mule and then an old goose "seconded the motion" and very soon all hands agreed to say "no and I wont".

Have you ever had anything to do with an I wont mule? Well,



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they are not quite so rare as you think. A great many of us have ~~have~~ more or less of it. If we open our eyes, or rather our heart or consciences we will find it, I assure you, more of it than we might think possible.

Well, this little I-wont-mule thought that Albert was a lovely little fellow and just what I would like my brother to be, if I had one. You see he was in the ark and had no brother, but he was the grandsire of all the mules and maybe all the mulishness.

Now it being Christmas morning and the room quite warm Albert's mamma thought she might let the dear little fellow enjoy his gifts for a short while. She did not know at all what a conspiracy had been hatched among Santa Claus' delegates.

Charlie, Albert's elder brother, but always under command of his junior was already dressed.

"Charlie, let's build up the Fort, set up the soldiers and shoot all down with the cannon." They were soon hard at work, The Fort looked grand with a small flag waving from a miniature tower, the soldiers were ready to shed their blood <sup>in</sup> <sup>ing</sup> to defend or ~~to~~ <sup>in</sup> attacking, there were the gallant officers, dear me, how fine! "I am a General, the biggest General," <sup>huttling on a cocked hat</sup> shouted Albert, "all have to obey me. Charlie, load the cannons." Charlie did as he was bid. "Now I will shoot, said our little Commander in Chief. He pulled the rubber which, by letting it go and snapping back into its place, would make the ball or rather bullet fly out. Sure enough, the ball did fly out and hit some of the soldiers,



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"Oh, you did not load that old cannon right, Charlie." "Yes I did, Albert, I loaded it just like Harry's and I guess I know how to load that, why only yesterday I killed five men at ~~one~~ single shot!" "Well, let's try again then," said Albert. The ball was <sup>it</sup> put into the mouth of the cannon, the trigger pulled - out came, hit General Grant right on his breast, but he did not fall.

"There is no fun in shooting unless you kill something" cried the bloodthirsty young leader. "Why dont they fall?" I wonder if some great future conqueror lies dormant in our little friend. The disappointment was great and made our boy very angry, he took the flag from the fort and hit some rebels, who now could not help themselves <sup>now</sup> and had to tumble over.

Mamma now thought that Albert really ought to be dressed, and so he had to undergo this necessary operation, which under Maggie's well accustomed hand did not take very long. Then they all went to breakfast and Albert had his in great haste, but he had to wait till Maggie finished hers.

When he came up-stairs Charlie, who had his meals with his parents in big people's dining room, as he knew how to behave like a young gentleman, had not yet returned, so Generl Albert pressed Maggie into service and she good naturedly loaded the cannon, and when the "firing?" was done, lo and behold! one officer, four rebels and a part of the enemie's fortifications fell. "Hurrah!



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Hurrah!" yelled the enthusiastic boy, in a voice which would have done honor to a little Apache. "Let us kill them all".

Charlie, who now just entered the room, proposed a more peaceful amusement, and I wish I had time to tell you now how nicely he took the animals from the ark and I was astonished to hear how much Natural History he knew. As he took out the elephant he explained *and about all the other animals as well,* where they were found and how useful they were when domesticated.

Dear, dear I could tell you a long story, but pleasant as it would be I have to follow the call of duty just now. So good bye *the present* for now. Do not ask me for Albert's picture, for beautiful as it would be, one could not get <sup>a</sup> quite true one. One can paint a rose, but where is the perfume? A bird, but where is its sweet song?



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