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SANTA CLAUS AT HOME—ABOUT TIME TO START.

[Begun in No. 1 of HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE, November 4.]

THE BRAVE SWISS BOY.

VII.—A GLIMPSE OF PARISIAN LIFE.

The bright rays of the morning sun filled the room when Walter awoke from his long and refreshing sleep, to gaze in astonishment at the rich and beautiful furniture that adorned the apartment. Silk curtains, mirrors that reached to the ceiling, beautiful carpets, attractive pictures in gilt frames—all was new and dazzling to the unsophisticated mountain youth. He was still gazing in wonder at all these glories, when Mr. Seymour, who had slept in the next room, suddenly opened the door.

"Jump up, Walter," said he. "Breakfast is ready, and my friend wants to speak to you; so be as quick as you can."

"I shall be ready in a few minutes, sir," he replied, as, springing out of bed, he washed and dressed himself, and respectfully greeted the two gentlemen, who sat enjoying their coffee in an adjoining room.

At Mr. Seymour's invitation Walter helped himself to breakfast; and when he had finished his meal, looked up inquiringly at the stranger.

"Well, then, Walter," said he, in a kindly tone, "tell me in the first place what you intend to do, now that you have got your money back?"

"Oh, that is very easily answered, sir," replied Walter. "I shall buckle the belt round my waist again, and return home to-day."

"I thought that was your intention, Watty," said Mr. Seymour; "but it would be much safer and far easier to send the money through the post. You will then have no further risk of being robbed, and Mr. Frieshardt will be sure to get it in a day or two. As regards yourself—"

Mr. Seymour hesitated, and his friend took up the conversation. "Yes, Walter, you must stay here for the present," said he, "and not dream of leaving me—at least for a long time."

Walter was taken aback. What could the stranger mean? Unable to comprehend the motive of such a remark, he looked in confusion first at one, then at the other, and was greeted only with a hearty laugh.

"I am very much obliged to you for suggesting how I should send the money home," said the lad; "and it was certainly very strange that Mr. Frieshardt did not think of that, for it would have saved all this trouble with Seppi. But what, sir, am I to do here? What is there to prevent my returning home?"

"A proposal that my friend Mr. Lafond has to make to you," replied Mr. Seymour. "My friend is in want of an active and trustworthy servant, and thinks that you would suit him well. I think you should take the situation, Walter, for you will be looked upon rather as a confidential attendant than as a servant, and you

will be well paid into the bargain. In a few years you will have earned money enough to provide comfortably for your father in his old age."

The last words decided Walter. If he could only relieve his father's declining years from care and anxiety, he was content to give up his home for a time, and therefore agreed to accept the proposal. The contract was soon arranged, and Walter entered upon his new duties the same day. He wrote a long letter to his father, explaining the reason of his remaining in Paris, and comforting him with the assurance that when he returned home he would bring plenty of money with him. By the same post he sent a bank draft to Farmer Frieshardt equivalent to the value of the cattle money; and a few days after removed into Mr. Lafond's splendidly furnished mansion. Mr. Seymour did not accompany his friend, having to leave Paris to continue his travels.

Thus Walter, who had suddenly risen from the position of a poor drover to that of the principal servant and favorite of a rich young Parisian, found no reason to regret the change that he had made. Mr. Lafond treated him in the kindest and most friendly way, so that he soon became thoroughly attached to him. But in the course of a few weeks he observed certain traits in the character of his new employer that occasioned him both sorrow and anxiety, and almost made him regret that he had not returned to his quiet but innocent home. Although a kind-hearted man, Mr. Lafond was weak-minded and changeable; and like many other wealthy young men without any occupation, he was addicted to pleasure and dissipation, and spent whole nights at the gaming table, to the ruin of both his health and morals. As he was of a delicate constitution, these excesses soon produced a very marked effect upon him, and did much to shatter his health.

Early one morning Mr. Lafond came home, after a night of gambling, looking paler and more exhausted than usual. Walter, who had been sitting up for him, was terribly alarmed at the appearance which he presented. "Oh, my dear sir," said he, with a deep sigh, as he gave him his hand out of the carriage, "how grieved I am for you!"

Mr. Lafond stared at Walter with his glassy eyes, and tried to speak, but could only utter a few disconnected words that were quite incomprehensible. Besides this, he was so unsteady on his feet that he was obliged to lean on Walter to prevent himself from falling. The faithful servant was terribly shocked to find his master so intoxicated as to be almost deprived of his senses, and lost no time in getting him to his room that his distressing and disgraceful condition might not become known to the rest of the household. After undressing him, which cost a great deal of trouble, Walter got his master to bed, and then sat down, and became lost in thought.

It was not until late in the day that Mr. Lafond woke from his troubled sleep, and was surprised to find Walter sitting by his bedside. "Poor fellow!" he said, in a good-natured tone, "I'm afraid I kept you waiting long for me last night. You are a faithful servant, and shall have your wages raised immediately."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir," said he; "but I can not take more of your money. I have only waited here to request my discharge from your service."

Mr. Lafond stared at the young man with surprise. "What!" he exclaimed; "you want to leave me! What has put that in your head? Has any one here done anything to make you uncomfortable?"

"No, sir, no one," was the quiet but firm reply. "I have met with nothing but kindness since I have been in your house, and you have been more than generous to me; but I can't bear to stay here and see you digging your own grave. It breaks my heart, sir; and I would rather wander barefoot back to my own mountains than witness it longer."

"Why, Walter, I'm afraid you're turning crazy," exclaimed his master, angrily. "Don't let me hear any more of this nonsense! What can it matter to you whether I die soon or not? At any rate you must stay with me, and give up such foolish notions."

Walter shook his head. "No, sir; I must go," he replied. "I can be of no use here. It makes me quite miserable to see how you waste your money in the gaming houses, and ruin your health by overindulgence in wine. If my caring for you were not sincere, it would be a matter of no consequence to me whether you went to destruction or not; but," he added, while tears started to his eyes, "I trust, sir, you will pardon me for saying that I can not look on carelessly while you are ruining yourself; and so I hope you will let me go."

The reckless gamester was quite moved at the devotion and faithfulness of his servant. Springing from bed, he wrapped himself in his dressing-gown, and walked hastily to and fro in the apartment for a few minutes in silence. At last he paused before Walter and grasped his hand. "You are a straightforward, warm-hearted fellow," he exclaimed. "But the more I am convinced of that, the less disposed am I to part with you. Will you not stay with me?"

"No, my good master, I can not," answered Walter, firmly.

"Not even if I promise to turn over a new leaf, and neither to drink nor gamble any more from this day?"

Walter was in a measure reassured by these words, and his eyes were lit up with a new hope. "Ah! if you really will do that, sir!" he exclaimed. "That alters everything; and I shall be as overjoyed to stay with you as I should have been sorry to leave you."

"Then that is settled," said his master, in a serious tone. "I am obliged to you for speaking so faithfully to me. I know that I have been living in a foolish way; but I will be different for the future. That you may rely upon."

Walter's joy was so great at hearing this unexpected resolution that he nearly burst into tears. Unhappily, however, he was soon to experience the disappointment of all his hopes.

For a fortnight Mr. Lafond kept his promise faithfully; but at the end of that time he again yielded to the old temptation, and after a night of revelry returned home in broad daylight in a state of complete helplessness. The servant renewed his entreaties and warnings; reminded his master that the physician had declared that his existence depended on his leading a sober life, and obtained from him a renewal of the broken promise. But alas! it proved as vain as before. In a few days all his hopes were again crushed, and his prayers and entreaties were only answered by his master with a shrug of the shoulders.

"You know nothing about it, Walter," said he. "The temptation is so strong, that one can't be always resisting it."

"But it is your duty to resist it, sir; and you can succeed if you will only make up your mind to do so."

"It's too late now," replied the other, with a faint smile. "I have fought and fought, and been beaten at last. I shall give up fighting now."

"Are you really in earnest?" cried Walter, seriously.

"I am really in earnest," replied Mr. Lafond.

"Then I must indeed quit your service, sir. I will not stay here if I can not save you from rushing headlong to destruction."

"Silly fellow!" replied his master, testily. "What more would you have? It will be for your direct advantage to stay with me. Look at my condition. The doctor was quite right in saying that I couldn't live another year. Remain here for that short time, and you shall be well paid for your services. I will take care not to forget you in my will."

The young Switzer could not restrain his emotion at hearing his weak-minded but good-natured master talk in such a careless way about death. Unable to speak, he turned to leave the room, when Mr. Lafond called him back.

"Have you no reply to make to me?" he demanded, in an offended tone.

"Nothing more than this, sir—that your doctor assured me that you might live for ten, twenty, or even thirty years longer, if you could only be persuaded to live in a sober and reasonable way. Oh, my dear sir," he exclaimed, "do give up these habits that are ruining body and soul, and I will devote my whole life to you!"

"No use," was the gloomy reply. "If I were to make new resolutions, they would only be broken, as the others have been. The doctor is quite mistaken in his opinion. I suppose I must fulfill my destiny. So let the matter drop, Walter."

"Anything can be done if one is only determined," persisted the young man, with entreaty in his tone.

His master turned away and shook his head. "Too late, too late. I haven't the moral courage or determination."

"Then may God have mercy upon you!" replied the servant, solemnly. "This is no longer a place for me."

Swayed on the one hand by a sense of duty to himself, and on the other by pity for his terribly misled master, Walter sorrowfully quitted the apartment, and after packing a few things, returned to take his final leave. Mr. Lafond, however, would not bring himself to believe in the reality of such a sudden and determined resolution, and used every argument to induce the lad to change his mind. He even begged him as a personal favor to remain, but Walter persisted in his determination; nor could the most lavish offers of emolument induce him to stay and be a helpless spectator of the ruin of one whom he was unable to save.

"If I were only as determined as you are," sighed Mr. Lafond, "how much better it would be for me! But now it is too late. Farewell, then, Walter, if you have made up your mind to quit my service. But though you leave me, it is not necessary that you return to your mountain home. I received this letter from my uncle, General De Bougy, who lives in Rouen. The old gentleman is in want of a steady and trustworthy servant, and asks me to send him one, so I think the best thing you can do will be to go there for a twelvemonth. You will find him a better master than I have been; and if you are really determined to leave me, you might do worse than enter his service. I feel sure you will be comfortable."

Walter shook his head. "I shouldn't like to go into another house, sir, after the experience I have had in your service."

"But you will be serving me, Walter, if you go and assist my uncle in his old age. Recollect, I only ask you to go for a year. It is the last request I have to make. Surely you won't refuse?"

"Well, sir, I will go for a year, since you urge it so strongly," assented Walter, who could no longer resist his master's appeal. "When shall I start?"

"When you please. You will be welcome there at any time."

"Then I will set out at once, sir; the sooner our parting is over, the better."

"But if it is so painful to you, why go away at all? You know how glad I should be for you to stay."

"And you know, sir, why I am obliged to go," replied Walter, firmly. "Pardon me, dear sir, for speaking any more on the subject; but if you only had had the resolution to—"

"I'll make another trial, Walter," said Mr. Lafond, with a smile that contrasted strongly with his sunken and wasted features. "You shall hear from me in three months," he continued; "and perhaps— Well, we shall see. Good-by, and my best wishes go with you!"

Walter grasped the hand which his master extended, and kissed it fervently. "God bless and preserve you!" said he, with tears in his eyes. "If prayers, earnest prayers for you, can be of any help, you will be saved."

"Farewell, Walter. You have been a faithful servant," exclaimed Mr. Lafond, with painful emotion. "God be with you!—perhaps we shall never meet each other again."

So they parted. Walter went by the first conveyance to Rouen to the house of General De Bougy; and his former master sunk into profound grief as he dwelt upon the affection and solicitude which the young Switzer had shown toward him. "Only a year sooner," he mused, with torturing anguish, "and I might have been a saved man! Now, alas! thou hast come too late, noble and generous heart!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS GREEN.

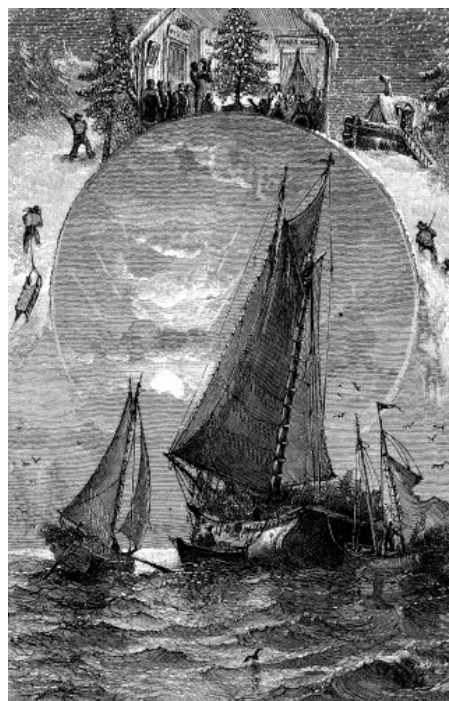
One of the pleasantest pastimes of the whole year for country children is gathering Christmas green. This is done before the very cold weather begins, otherwise the beautiful club-mosses and ground-pines would be frozen solid in the damp soil of the swamps and woods, or the whole would be covered with a snow carpet, broken only by rabbit and squirrel tracks. The freshest green for Christmas trimming is found in damp meadows or on springy hillsides, where it nestles in the moist earth, overshadowed by thickets of alders and birches. It grows in the forests too; not so much among pine-trees, as the dry carpet of fallen needles is less nutritious than the loam produced by the accumulations of dead leaves of oak, maple, and beech trees.

There are many kinds of ground evergreens, most of them members of the *Lycopodiaceæ*, or club-moss family. There is the creeping club-moss, the cord-like stem of which, sometimes yards long, hides among the dead leaves, and sends up at intervals graceful whorls of bright green. Tiny bunches of short white roots run down in the damp mould, where they find nutriment for the plant. If you work your finger under the stem, and pull gently, it is wonderful to see the long and beautiful wreath slowly disentangle itself from the forest floor, disturbing hundreds of little wood-beetles, which scurry away to hide again among the woodland rubbish. There are two kinds of creeping green very common in all moist wooded lands at the North—the kind with leaves rising in whorls, and that with a stem covered with bristle-like spikes. This last variety has leaves, not very abundant,—which resemble a sprig of young fir, and is sometimes called "ground-fir." It is of a deep rich green color, but not so graceful for trimming as the other kind. Besides the creeping green, there are many varieties of what children call "tree-green," independent little plants rooted deep in the mould, which send up a single stalk about eight inches high. Some of these are such perfect little trees as to appear diminutive copies of the firs and pines towering far above them, and are called "fir club-moss." A pretty evergreen to mix with the more feathery varieties is the *Chimaphila umbellata*, or prince's-pine. It has bright shining dark green leaves, which have a very bitter taste, and is sometimes called bitter wintergreen.

As all these ground varieties need to be gathered before ice and snow begin, often weeks before Christmas, care must be taken to keep them from drying. They should be heaped up in some cool, damp place, where they will not freeze, and should be sprinkled plentifully every day. The boys make frames in the form of crosses, stars, wreaths, or letters, and the girls find a pretty pastime in tying on the greens. As fast as the designs are finished they must also be laid away and kept damp until Christmas. Woodland mosses, holly leaves and scarlet berries, and dried everlasting flowers are pretty to mix with the green. Branches of hemlock and young firs for Christmas trees are cut as near Christmas-time as possible. If a room is to be made into a bower of hemlock boughs, they should not be fastened up until the morning of Christmas-eve, as the heated air of the house loosens the flat, tooth-shaped leaves from the branch, and the least movement sends them in clouds to the floor. Any one who has tried to sweep them from the carpet after Christmas, will prefer some other variety of green for trimming another year.

The immense amount of green brought into New York city the week preceding Christmas can scarcely be estimated. Viewing the hundreds of young firs in the markets, and the enormous numbers of wreaths and other designs, it would seem as if the forests and swamps had been stripped to such an extent that nothing would be left for another year; but so prodigal is Nature of her beautiful club-mosses and her aromatic pines, that what is gathered for holiday trimming amounts to little more than a weeding out of superfluous growth. Many of the greens sold in the New York market come from New Jersey. Schooners bring them from all along the coast, freight-cars come loaded with the beauty of the inland hills, and huge market carts trundle their precious burden from the near-lying forests and damp meadows. Although it is prohibited by law to cut young trees from the barrens along the coast, as the growth of pines keeps the sand from drifting, many small coasting vessels drop into the bays and inlets around Sandy Hook and other parts of the Jersey shore a little before Christmas-time, and send their crews ashore by night to secure a cargo to bring to New York.

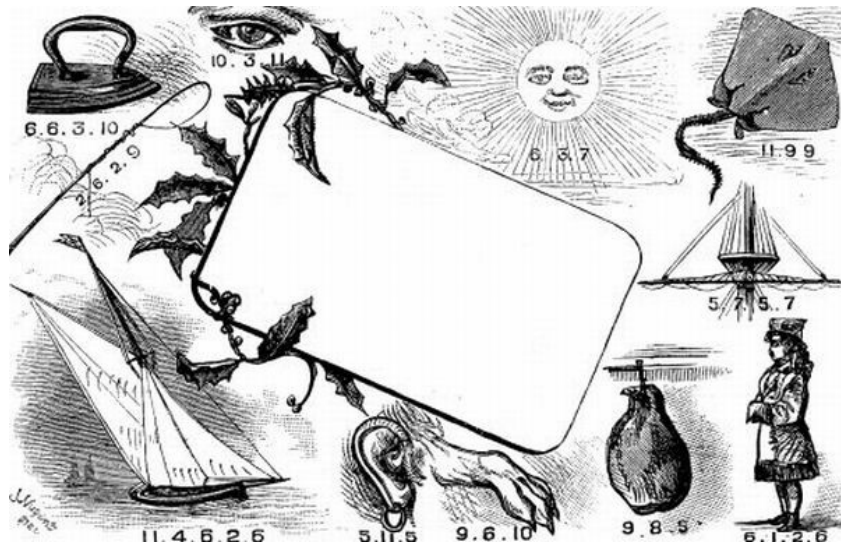
It would be interesting to follow this woodland treasure after its arrival in the great city; but one thing is certain—wherever it is, even if it be only a sprig in the hand of a sick child, faces are brighter, hearts are happier, and the sweet words, "Merry Christmas," have a deeper significance.



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BRINGING HOME CHRISTMAS GREEN.—DRAWN BY J. O. DAVIDSON.

CHRISTMAS PUZZLE.



The answer to this puzzle will form an appropriate motto for the card in the centre. This is the way to work it out: First find the names of the articles around the card, and write them all down in a row with the numbers below them. For example, one of the words is "EYE." Put it down thus:

E Y E
10 3 11

and all the rest in the same way. Each name will have just as many letters as there are figures, else you may know your guess is wrong, and you will have to try again. After you have made out all the pictures and written down the names, you will have thirty-nine letters. Out of these thirty-nine letters you are to make the eleven words that form the inscription. To do this, write on another sheet the numbers

1 2 3 4 5 6
7 8 9 10 11

widely apart, so as to leave room for all the words to be written under them. Then place each letter where it belongs under these numbers. Take the word "EYE." E is numbered 10, then put E under the figure 10; Y is numbered 3, put Y under 3; E is numbered 11, put E under 11. When you have placed all the letters, arrange those under each figure so as to make a word. The whole will be the inscription for the card.



A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY MRS. W. J. HAYS,

"Now, Teddie, be a good boy, there's a darling, and, little Clover, don't tease Daisy. Please let mamma go away to church and know that you are all sweet and lovely and clean as new little pennies to-night."

Splash went one little body into the bath-tub, and splash went another, and again a third; and then, like so many roses after a shower, out they came, dripping, and laughing and screaming with glee. The little mother was kept busy enough, for it was Christmas-eve, and the carols and anthems were to be rehearsed for the last time, and Mrs. Morton's clear soprano voice could not be spared. Indeed, her voice was all that kept Teddie and Clover and Daisy in their neat little box of a house, for their father, a brave fireman, had been killed more than two years before at a fearful fire, and since then their mother had striven hard to maintain her little family by sewing, and singing, and doing whatever work her slender hands could accomplish which would bring in food and clothing for her children.

"Be dood, Teddie," repeated Daisy, after her mother, as she shook out her little wet curls at him, and Clover solemnly raised his finger at his bigger brother, with the warning,

"Remember, Santa Claus comes to-night."

"Yes, and the stockings must be hung up," said Ted, who forthwith proceeded to attend to that important duty. [Pg 62]

"There! how do they look?—one brown, that's mine; one blue, that's Clover's; and one red, that's Daisy's." They were pinned fast to the fender with many pins and much care.

"But, mamma," said Clover, "the stove's in the way. Santa Claus can't get down with that big black thing stopping the chimney."

"Oh, the fire will go out by-and-by, and then he may creep through the stove-pipe and out of the door."

"He'll be awful dirty, then," said Daisy.

"Well, 'he was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot, and his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot,' so that is to be expected. But really, dear children, you must jump into your beds, and let me tuck you up; it is time for me to go."

Very quickly the rosy little faces were nestling in the pillows, and Mrs. Morton, after kissing them, put out the lamp and left them to their slumbers. Hastily putting on her cloak and bonnet, she paused at the door of her sitting-room to see if the fire was safe. The room was dark but for the gleaming stove, the chairs and table were all in order, and in one corner, under a covering of paper, was the little tree she had decked in odd moments to delight the eyes of her children. She could not afford wax candles, so the morning was to bring the tree as well as the other gifts. Sure that all was in readiness, she tripped down the stairs, locked her door, and sped over the snow to the church, the two tall towers of which stood out against the starry sky.

As she entered the church, her mind full of her duties and her heart tender with thoughts of her children, she thought she saw a dusky little object crouching in the angle made by the towers; but she was already late, and had no time to linger. Up she went to the choir, which was full of light, but the body of the church was dark. Without any words, she took up her sheet of music and began to sing. Never had the carols and anthems seemed so sweet to her, and her voice rose clear and pure as a bird's. The organist paused to listen, and her companions turned satisfied glances upon her; but she went on unconsciously, as a bird does until the burden of its theme is finished, and its exultant strains are lost in silence. They went over the whole Church service, the glorious *Te Deum*, the *Benedictus*, and the anthem for the day, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," and every delicate chord and fugue had to be repeated until the desired perfection of harmony was attained. It was really a very long and arduous study; but of all days Christmas demands good music, and they were willing to do their best. At last all were satisfied, and somewhat tired; but the organist turned to Mrs. Morton, and asked her if she would sing one hymn for him alone, as he especially desired to hear her voice in this one tune. Of course she could not refuse, and to an exquisitely harmonious air she began,

"Calm on the listening ear of night
Come heaven's melodious strains,
Where wild Judæa stretches far
Her silver-mantled plains.

"Light on thy hills, Jerusalem!
The Saviour now is born!
And bright on Bethlehem's joyous plains
Breaks the first Christmas morn."

Only the first and last verses of that exquisite hymn; but like "angels with their sparkling lyres," her voice seemed to have lost its earthliness, and soared, as if it were winged, up to the very gate of heaven. When she ceased singing, there was a hush upon all, as if they had been carried near to the celestial portals.

One by one they pressed her hand in quiet congratulation, and with a "Merry Christmas" bade her good-night. Mrs. Morton was a little excited with her unusual efforts, and while the old organist was locking up, thought she would run down and warm herself in the church. As she hastened toward the great heater, she tripped over something, which, to her great surprise and alarm, she perceived what appeared to be a great bundle was in reality a sleeping child.

Yes, a child, and a little one—a boy of not more than seven years, with elfish brown locks, and eyelashes which swept the olive tint of his cheek. All curled up in a heap, in clothes which a man might have worn, so big and shapeless were they, with one arm under his head for a pillow, and the other tightly grasping a violin. Far had he wandered in the cold wintry air, until, attracted by the light and warmth of the great church, he had stolen in for shelter, and then as his little ears drank in the melody of the rehearsing choir, and the warmth comforted him, he fell fast asleep. He was dreaming now of the warm sunny land of his birth: olive-trees and orchards, purple clusters of the vineyards, donkeys laden with oranges, and the blue sky of Naples shining over the blue bay. Then, in his dream, an angel came floating down out of the pure

ether, wafting sweet perfumes on its white wings, and singing—oh! what heavenly strains!—till his little soul was filled with joy; for the angel seemed to be his mother who had died, and her kind voice again saluted him, and he answered, softly, "Madre mia!"

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Morton, softly, "it seems a pity to waken him, but we must do it; he can not stay here all night." The old organist touched him; but his sleep was too sound for a touch to arouse him, and Mrs. Morton had to again and again lift his head and stroke his little brown hand, before, with amazed and widely fearful looks, he answered them.

"Who are you, child, and what are you doing here?" asked the organist.

"I'm Toni, Toni," was the answer, and he began to cry. "Oh, please let me go: the Padrone will kill me."

"Why will he kill you, and why are you here?"

"He will kill me because I have no money. I have lost, also, my way."

"Have you no home, no mother?" asked Mrs. Morton, gently.

"No, signora, no, madame, no mother. We all live, Baptiste and Vincenzo and I, with the Padrone. We play the harp and the violin; but I was tired, and I could not keep with the others, and they scolded me, oh, so sharply! and I was weary and cold, and crept in here where the angels sing, and it was so beautiful I could not go away."

The organist muttered, "Police," at which the child again sobbed violently. "Yes, to the station-house, of course, he must go."

But Mrs. Morton remembered the three faces asleep on their pillows at home, and as she looked at this tear-stained, dirty little gypsy, she said to the organist, "I will take care of him to-night." So, under the stars, the Christmas stars, gleaming so brightly, she led the little wanderer home.

All was still and safe in the little house. "Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse." The fire still gleamed in the kitchen and the sitting-room, and it was the work of only a few moments to divest the little musician of his uncouth garments, to pop him into the tub of hot suds, to scrub him well, until his lean little body shone like bronze, to slip him into a night-gown, to give him a slice of bread and butter, and then to tuck him up on the cozy lounge.

The children slept like tops, and the tired little mother was glad to say her prayers, and lie down beside them.

The stars were still shining when she awoke; for Christmas-day would be a busy one, and there were no moments to lose. Already the milkman was at the door, and the hands of the kitchen clock pointed to six.

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Hark! what was that?

A long, low, sweet sound, like a voice calling her. She listened, and again it came. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men," so it seemed to breathe. Then it rose in a gay carol, a sweet gushing thanksgiving, and the children came tumbling down in their night-gowns; they rushed to the door of the sitting-room, and there beside his improvised bed stood the young musician, playing on his violin as if all the world were his audience. His brown eyes flashed now with light, and then grew dark and tender, as he drew the sweet sounds out. The children gazed in wonderment: where had this child come from? had he dropped from the stars? had an angel come among them? He played on and on, until, from sheer fatigue, he put his instrument down. Then Teddie and Clover and Daisy came about him; they touched his hands, his curly locks, his violin, to see if all were real. Then they whirled round the room in a mad dance of delight, for the mother had uncovered the tree, and it was really Christmas morning.

Ah, what a happy day for poor little Toni! How nice he looked in Teddie's clothes! how gentle he was with Daisy! how he frolicked with Clover! and when Mrs. Morton came from church, how softly he played all his pretty melodies for her! It was a day of feast and gladness; and when, to her surprise and pleasure, a committee of church people waited upon Mrs. Morton to give her a purse, through the meshes of which glittered gold pieces, she said then and there that Toni should never go to the harsh and cruel Padrone again.

Perhaps some time as you listen to a sweet voice singing to the accompaniment of a violin you may think of Mrs. Morton and Toni, and be glad that the world bestows its applause and its gifts upon them, and that the vision of his mother and her love which came to Toni on that Christmas-eve has been made to him a reality.

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THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGEN AND NYCTERIS.

A Day and Night Märchen.

BY GEORGE MACDONALD.

XIV.—THE SUN.

There Nycteris sat, and there the youth lay, all night long, in the heart of the great cone-shadow of the earth, like two Pharaohs in one pyramid. Photogen slept, and slept; and Nycteris sat motionless lest she should waken him, and so betray him to his fear.

The moon rode high in the blue eternity; it was a very triumph of glorious Night; the river ran babble-murmuring in deep soft syllables; the fountain kept rushing moonward, and blossoming momentarily to a great silvery flower, whose petals were forever falling like snow, but with a continuous musical clash, into the bed of its exhaustion beneath; the wind woke, took a run among the trees, went to sleep, and woke

again; the daisies slept on their feet at hers, but she did not know they slept; the roses might well seem awake, for their scent filled the air, but in truth they slept also, and the odor was that of their dreams; the oranges hung like gold lamps in the trees, and their silvery flowers were the souls of their yet unembodied children; the scent of the acacia blooms filled the air like the very odor of the moon herself.

At last, unused to the living air, and weary with sitting so still and so long, Nycteris grew drowsy. The air began to grow cool. It was getting near the time when she too was accustomed to sleep. She closed her eyes just a moment, and nodded—opened them suddenly wide, for she had promised to watch.

In that moment a change had come. The moon had got round, and was fronting her from the west, and she saw that her face was altered, that she had grown pale, as if she too were wan with fear, and from her lofty place espied a coming terror. The light seemed to be dissolving out of her; she was dying—she was going out! And yet everything around looked strangely clear—clearer than ever she had seen anything before: how could the lamp be shedding more light when she herself had less? Ah, that was just it! See how faint she looked! It was because the light was forsaking her, and spreading itself over the room, that she grew so thin and pale. She was melting away from the roof like a bit of sugar in water.

Nycteris was fast growing afraid, and sought refuge with the face upon her lap. How beautiful the creature was!—what to call it she could not think, for it had been angry when she called it what Watho called her. And, wonder upon wonder! now, even in the cold change that was passing upon the great room, the color as of a red rose was rising in the wan cheek. What beautiful yellow hair it was that spread over her lap! What great huge breaths the creature took! And what were those curious things it carried? She had seen them on her walls, she was sure.

Thus she talked to herself while the lamp grew paler and paler, and everything kept growing yet clearer. What could it mean? The lamp was dying—going out into the other place of which the creature in her lap had spoken, to be a sun! But why were the things growing clearer before it was yet a sun? That was the point. Was it her growing into a sun that did it? Yes! yes! it was coming death! She knew it, for it was coming upon her also! She felt it coming! What was she about to grow into? Something beautiful, like the creature in her lap? It might be! Anyhow, it must be death; for all her strength was going out of her, while all around her was growing so light she could not bear it!

Photogen woke, lifted his head from her lap, and sprang to his feet. His face was one radiant smile. His heart was full of daring. Nycteris gave a cry, covered her face with her hands, and pressed her eyelids close. Then blindly she stretched out her arms to Photogen, crying, "Oh, I am so frightened! What is this? It must be death! I don't wish to die yet. I love this room and the old lamp. I do not want the other place! This is terrible!"

"What is the matter with you, girl?" said Photogen. "There is no fear of anything now, child. It is day. The sun is all but up. Good-by. Thank you for my night's lodging. I'm off. Don't be a goose. If ever I can do anything for you—and all that, you know—"

"Don't leave me; oh, don't leave me!" cried Nycteris. "I am dying! I can not move. The light sucks all the strength out of me. And oh, I am *so* frightened!"

But already Photogen had splashed through the river, holding high his bow that it might not get wet. He rushed across the level, and strained up the opposing hill. Hearing no answer, Nycteris removed her hands. Photogen had reached the top, and the same moment the sun-rays alighted upon him: the glory of the king of day crowded blazing upon the golden-haired youth. Radiant as Apollo, he stood in mighty strength, a flashing shape in the midst of flame. He fitted a glowing arrow to a gleaming bow. The arrow parted with a keen musical twang of the bowstring, and Photogen darting after it, vanished with a shout. Up shot Apollo himself, and from his quiver scattered astonishment and exultation. But the brain of poor Nycteris was pierced through and through. She fell down in utter darkness. All around her was a flaming furnace. In despair and feebleness and agony she crept back, feeling her way with doubt and difficulty and enforced persistence to her cell. When at last the friendly darkness of her chamber folded her about with its cooling and consoling arms, she threw herself on her bed and fell fast asleep. And there she slept on, one alive in a tomb, while Photogen, above in the sun-glory, pursued the buffaloes on the lofty plain, thinking not once of her where she lay dark and forsaken, whose presence had been his refuge, her eyes and her hands his guardians through the night. He was in his glory and his pride; and the darkness and its disgrace had vanished for a time.

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XV.—THE COWARD HERO.

But no sooner had the sun reached the noonstead than Photogen began to remember the past night in the shadow of that which was at hand, and to remember it with shame. He had proved himself—and not to himself only, but to a girl as well—a coward!—one bold in the daylight, while there was nothing to fear, but trembling like any slave when the night arrived. There was, there must be, something unfair in it! A spell had been cast upon him! He had eaten, he had drunk, something that did not agree with courage. In any case he had been taken unprepared. How was he to know what the going down of the sun would be like? It was no wonder he should have been surprised into terror, seeing it was what it was—in its very nature so terrible! Also, one could not see where danger might be coming from! You might be torn in pieces, carried off, or swallowed up, without even seeing where to strike a blow! Every possible excuse he caught at, eager as a self-lover to lighten his self-contempt. That day he astonished the huntsmen—terrified them with his reckless daring—all to prove to himself he was no coward.

But nothing eased his shame. One thing only had hope in it—the resolve to encounter the dark in solemn earnest, now that he knew something of what it was. It was nobler to meet and recognize danger than to rush contemptuously into what seemed nothing—nobler still, to encounter a nameless horror. He could conquer fear and wipe out disgrace together. For a marksman and swordsman like him, he said, one with his strength and courage, there was but danger. Defeat there was not. He knew the darkness now, and when it came he would meet it as fearless and cool as now he felt himself. And again he said, "We shall see!"

He stood under the boughs of a great beech as the sun was going down, far away over the jagged hills: before it was half down, he was trembling like one of the leaves behind him in the first sigh of the night wind. The moment the last of the glowing disk vanished, he bounded away in terror to gain the valley, and

his fear grew as he ran. Down the side of the hill, an abject creature, he went bounding and rolling and running; fell rather than plunged into the river, and came to himself, as before, lying on the grassy bank in the garden.

But when he opened his eyes, there were no girl-eyes looking down into his; there were only the stars in the waste of the sunless Night—the awful all-enemy he had again dared, but could not encounter. Perhaps the girl was not yet come out of the water! He would try to sleep, for he dared not move, and perhaps when he woke he would find his head on her lap, and the beautiful dark face, with its deep blue eyes, bending over him. But when he woke he found his head on the grass, and although he sprang up with all his courage, such as it was, restored, he did not set out for the chase with such an *élan* as the day before; and despite the sun-glory in his heart and veins, his hunting was this day less eager; he ate little, and from the first was thoughtful even to sadness. A second time he was defeated and disgraced! Was his courage nothing more than the play of the sunlight on his brain? Was he a mere ball tossed between the light and the dark? Then what a poor contemptible creature he was! But a third chance lay before him. If he failed the third time, he dared not foreshadow what he must then think of himself! It was bad enough now—but then!

Alas! it went no better. The moment the sun was down, he fled as if from a legion of devils.

Seven times in all he tried to face the coming night in the strength of the past day, and seven times he failed—failed with such increase of failure, with such a growing sense of ignominy, overwhelming at length all the sunny hours and joining night to night, that, what with misery, self-accusation, and loss of confidence, his daylight courage too began to fade, and at length, from exhaustion, from getting wet, and then lying out-of-doors all night, and night after night—worst of all, from the consuming of the deathly fear, and the shame of shame, his sleep forsook him, and on the seventh morning, instead of going to the hunt, he crawled into the castle, and went to bed. The grand health, over which the witch had taken such pains, had yielded, and in an hour or two he was moaning and crying out in delirium.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



BRINGING CHRISTMAS CHEER.



**LITTLE BO-PEEP FELL FAST ASLEEP, AND
DREAMT—**

THE GIFT OF THE BIRDS.

No sweeter child could ever be
Than fair-haired, blue-eyed Cecily.
She loved all things on earth that grew;
The grass, the flowers, the weeds, she knew;
The butterflies around her flew,
That she might see their rainbowed wings.
The very bees and wasps would come
To greet her with a gentle hum,
And ne'er betray that they had stings.
But, most of all, the birds in throngs,
Where'er she went, with chirps and songs
Gave her glad welcome. Her first words
Had been, "I love the pretty birds;"
And ever since her baby hand
Could scatter seed and crumbs of bread,
Each day a waiting feathered band
The darling little maid had fed.

The loving, winsome Cecily—
No dearer child e'er lived than she—
One Christmas-eve (in crimson hood
And cloak she'd in her garden stood
That morn and fed a hungry brood)
In her white bed lay fast asleep,
The moonlight on her golden hair,
Her hands still clasped as in the prayer,
"I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep."
She slept, and dreamed of Christmas times,
Of Christmas gifts, and Christmas rhymes;
But in no vision did she see
The host that filled the cedar-tree—
The cedar-tree that, tall and straight,
Rose high above the garden gate,
And though the winds were cold and keen,
Wore berries blue and branches green.

A hundred birds or more were there;
Some—from the sunny Southland, where
The fragrant rose was blooming still,
And green grass covered field and hill,
And, free as ever, flowed the rill—
Had come in answer to the call

Of friends who at the North had staid,
By stern old Winter undismayed,
To see the dainty snow-flakes fall.
These kindly greeted, with small head
Held on one side, a sparrow said,
"To choose a gift for Cecily
We've met to-night. What shall it be?"
A flute-like trill, in graceful pride,
A thrush sang sweetly, then replied,
"What better than the gift of song?"
"None better," answered all the throng.

And when next dawn sweet Cecily—
No sweeter child could ever be—
Into the sunlight smiling sprang,
In wondrous notes a hymn she sang.
Exultant on the air it rang,
And waked the echoes all about.
Straightway the morning brighter grew,
The pale sky turned a deeper blue,
The merry Christmas bells pealed out.
And, from that day, whoever hears
The wee maid sing, sheds happy tears
(So potent is her power of song),
Forgetting pain and care and wrong,
Rememb'ring only heaven is nigh,
Where dwells the Christ who came to die
On earth, that we might live away,
And who was born on Christmas-day.

THE FAIR PERSIAN.

BY JAMES PAYN.

To those young ladies and gentlemen who are acquainted with the *Arabian Nights*, I foresee that the title of my tale will at once cause to spring up in their recollection the adventure of Nourhadeen and *his* fair Persian; that a vision will instantly present itself to their gaze of singing trees and dancing fountains, of hanging gardens, and groves of palm, and purses of sequins; and I am sure they will thank me for having recalled to their minds (though I didn't mean to do it) remembrances so charming. To other little folks, on the other hand, who have *not* read the *Arabian Nights*, my story will have none the less attraction, since it has no more to do with Nourhadeen than with their excellent grandmother (if they happen to have one), and the fair Persian is not a "young person" at all.

How it all happened was thus: It was papa's birthday, you see, and the children knowing—clever creatures—exactly when it was coming, had prepared a surprise for him. They knew his tastes to a nicety, and had put their money together and bought the present that he would be sure to welcome most. Only he was not to know what it was to be; and yet it being "such fun" to hear him guess, he was allowed three chances, and if he guessed right he was to be told. Only you mightn't say, "You're burning" (which is the same as "you're near it," you know), or anything more to help him than this, namely, that the present was "half alive and half not," and that "one part of it was within the other."

Papa said that he would rather not have been helped in this way, as it did him more harm than good, by putting all probable things—the guesses he would naturally have made—out of the question. The children gave him one minute to guess in, and not till fifty-nine seconds had gone by did he utter a syllable, and *then* he only said, "I give it up."

They thought it rather stupid of dear papa, but then, you see, they *knew*, and he didn't, which makes an immense difference in guessing.

Then he asked them to give him "a light"—not a light for his cigar, of course, for all this took place in the drawing-room—but a hint as to what the present was. Then they said, which was a pretty broad one, that it was "a fair Persian;" but even then he couldn't guess. "I have never heard," he said, twiddling his watch chain, "of any fair Persian, except in connection with Nourhadeen, and *she* was not half alive and half not." "Very good," said Polly, who had given the biggest subscription, and had therefore the best right to speak; "it is plain to us, dear papa, that you want more prompting. When I tell you that Nourhadeen, in this case, is a little basket house, with a lovely red rug in it, that will let the cat out of the bag;" whereupon dear, clever papa guessed it was a Persian cat.

But it wasn't, for it was only a kitten.

It didn't look like a kitten, however, being, when rolled up and asleep, a mere round fluffy black ball, and, when awake, a little black bear, looked at through the wrong end of a telescope. It would have taken about ten thousand of it to have made a real bear, and even then it would have been a small bear, only its tail was by no means small, but a splendid article. Otherwise it was so very tiny that it lay upon its red rug like an ink spot on a piece of blotting-paper. It had a fine house of basket-work, just like what Robinson Crusoe built for himself for a summer residence, with a sloping roof, and a little door that fastened with a pin outside, when he wished to be private; and as every house which has not a number must have a name (so that the postman may know where to leave the letters), it was called Nourhadeen (because of the fair Persian), and the tenant of it was called Fluffy.

Of course, since a gift is a gift, it was papa's own Fluffy, but that did not prevent its being the pet of the whole house, baby included; and to see these two little creatures together was (almost) as good as a play.

One was so black, and the other so pink and white, and yet both so soft and warm, and about equal as to talking. For though baby could babble, he couldn't purr, and though Fluffy could purr, she couldn't babble, while neither could stand up on their hind-legs for more than two seconds together.

But when it came to climbing, baby was nowhere. Fluffy was but three months old, but she was oftener on the roof of her house—where baby could *never* have got—than in it, while if dear mamma came near her, with her long flounces, Fluffy was on them at once, and stuck there like a hairy burr. That was the sad thing about Fluffy, she was such a gad-about, being everywhere where you didn't expect her to be; and so tiny that even when you did expect her, nobody knew she was there.

She was lost about ten times a day, and found in the most astonishing places. Once in mamma's work-box, where she was looked for, but not seen, being taken for a ball of worsted; and once in papa's shooting-jacket pocket, who took her to his office with him, under the impression that she was his seal-skin tobacco pouch.

Moreover, a very fashionable lady called one day, and took Fluffy right away with her, the poor little dear having clung to her mantle, and been amalgamated with its fur trimmings.

To say that dear papa was "weak" about the fair Persian is to take a very favorable view of his devotion to her; but dear mamma said it was "quite ridiculous to make such a fuss about a kitten"—and never herself lost a chance of picking it up and fondling it in her arms. The rest of the family were described by their cousin Charley, who lived over the way, as "sunk in the Persian superstition," and even as "addicted to nigger worship"—an allusion to Fluff's sable hue.

And now comes the best part of the story, which is, of course, the "creepy-crawly" and horrible part.

Cousin Charley had a mastiff dog called Jumbo, ever so high and ever so huge, with great hanging chaps (which are pronounced chops, you know) on both sides of his jaws. If you never saw him open his mouth, I can scarcely give you any idea of it; but if you have seen pictures of Vesuvius during an eruption, think of the crater. It was said by his master that Jumbo would never hurt a fly, but that was not the point with those who were not flies, and all these stood in great fear of him. It is very little satisfaction to one who meets an elephant in his morning's walk, in a narrow way, to have read that that creature is the most gentle of mammals (or mammoths); and similarly there was no knowing what catastrophe might not take place from the presence of Jumbo, though he might not mean to bring it about. He was positively too tremendous for society; while, out-of-doors, I never knew a dog so respected—and avoided—by other dogs.

To see Jumbo and Fluff together was to behold the meeting of two extremes of the animal creation; the introduction of the King of Brobdingnag to the Princess of Lilliput, or of Chang, the Chinese giant, to Mrs. General Tom Thumb. Yet, if you will believe me, on Jumbo's first appearance on our drawing-room rug, Fluff scampered up to him (all on one side, as usual) and hung on to his tail! The moment was one of terrible suspense, not only to her, but to the spectators generally, except Charley, who said, "Oh, Jumbo won't mind," which might or might not have been the case; for it is my fixed conviction that that noble animal was totally unaware of what was taking place, so to speak, behind his back, and to this hour is ignorant of the indignity that was put upon him.

One Sunday morning, in midwinter, Jumbo called without his master, and walked into the back parlor without being announced; there was no living creature there except himself and Fluff, and when the family entered the room *there was only Jumbo*. They looked everywhere for his late (yes, his *late*) companion; but she had vanished. Whither? To this vital question it seemed to their horrified minds that there was but one reply; it was in vain for Jumbo to assume an indifferent air, as though he would say, "How should *I* know?" The accusation that trembled on every lip was, "The dog has swallowed her." He looked about the same size as usual, but that was nothing; fifty Fluffs would not have made any external difference. One of his chaps, indeed, seemed to hang a little lower than usual, but she was not there. He yawned—nobody believed in *that*; it was just what a dog would do, conscious of crime and assuming unconcern—and everybody shuddered. What might not that enormous throat have swallowed, and thought nothing of it? Messengers were dispatched at once for Charley, who came and cross-examined the animal; but he only shook his head and wagged his tail. These actions might have been proofs of his innocence if Fluff had still been with us, but as it was, it only showed his callousness—the callousness of cannibalism.

All sat round Jumbo in a circle, and listened in solemn silence. Even the tiniest mew of farewell would have been welcome, but it was not vouchsafed. Nothing was heard but the thumping of that wicked tail (to which they had once seen Fluffy cling) upon the bear-skin rug on which they had so often lost her. She was not there now, for they took it up and shook it. She was not in the envelope case upon the writing-table; nor in the coal-scuttle, for they took the coals out one by one, to be quite sure; nor in the work-box, for it was Sunday, and it was not there; nor up the curtains, for they examined them with "the steps"; nor up the chimney, for the fire was alight; nor in either of papa's boots, which were set on the fender to get warm. She was gone from their sight like a beautiful dream, though still, alas! in a manner, *present*.

Dear papa was the first to recover from the catastrophe. "Whatever has taken place, my dears," said he, "we must go to church; the last bell is already ringing."

Dear mamma sighed, and took the hands of the two youngest children, leaving her muff to hang from her neck by its ribbon. She felt that in that hour of trouble the clasp of her fingers would be a comfort to them.

The whole family walked together like a funeral procession, and they could see the neighbors draw long faces, under the impression that there had been some fatal domestic calamity to account for such looks of woe. Even Charley was affected, though he could hardly believe even yet in his favorite's guilt, while Jumbo came behind with his tail between his legs—either from the stings of conscience, or because he knew he would be left as usual at the church door.

I am afraid the thoughts of some of the little party wandered a little, during the first part of the service, in the supposed direction in which Fluff had gone; but the sermon riveted their attention. They wished sincerely Jumbo could have been there to hear it, for it was upon cruelty to animals. It had just begun, and dear mamma had for the first time got rid of her books and placed her hands in her muff, when she drew them sharply out again and turned very red. At the same time a piteous little mew pervaded the sanctuary. At home we could not have heard it a yard away, but the church, being built for sound, developed those delicate notes. At the same time all the people on



"FLUFF'S LITTLE BLACK FACE PRESENTED ITSELF."—Drawn by A. B. Frost.

the right hand of the aisle began to smile. Fluff's little black face had presented itself at that end of the muff. Dear mamma hastened to close it up with her hand, and then all the people on the left hand of the aisle began to smile. Fluff's little black face had peered out at the other end. Then dear mamma, in desperation, put in both her hands, and then the imprisoned Fluff began to mew indeed. "How hard must that heart be," said the clergyman, going on with his subject, "who would ill use an innocent, helpless kitten!" "Like *me*, like *me*," said Fluff, or so it seemed to say, in its piteous way. The people in both aisles fixed their eyes on dear mamma, who in vain pretended to be rapt in the sermon; they knew very well by this time what was wrapped in her muff, and in the end dear mamma had to go. The denunciations of the clergyman against cruel people followed her down the aisle, and were supposed, no doubt, by those who didn't know her, to have a personal application, for Fluff was mewling all the way. It was altogether a most terrible business. What all the family felt, however, when they got home, was that an apology was, in the first place, due to Jumbo for the imputation on his character, and it was offered (on a plate of beef bones) in the amplest manner, and accepted in a similar spirit.

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THEY GOT THE TURKEY.

BY MRS. MARGARET EYTINGE.

The shop of Mr. Onosander Golong looked, that 24th of December, like a bower. Two young cedar-trees stood one on each side of the doorway; long garlands of evergreen, sprinkled with bright berries, were festooned all over the walls; and every turkey there, and there were lots of them, hanging like some new kind of gigantic fruit from the mass of green that covered the ceiling, had a gay ribbon tied around its neck. And such a wonderful picture in the way of freshness and color as the big window presented to the passers-by! Bunches of crisp light green celery leaning up against heaps of brown, pink-eyed potatoes and honest red onions; fiery-looking peppers side by side with golden oranges and yellow lemons; hard, smooth, shining cranberries trying to look as though they were sweet; great fat pumpkins; piles of green and piles of rosy apples; bunches of fragrant thyme; and more turkeys, some with and some without their feathered coats, but all, as I said before, with gay ribbons around their necks. Dear me! if Santa Claus could have only looked into that window and peeped into that shop, how pleased he would have been, and how he would have laughed! And he certainly would have taken Mr. Onosander Golong for a long-lost brother, for never before did mortal man so strongly resemble the children's old Christmas friend. Snow-white hair, long snow-white beard, twinkling blue eyes, round, fat, red, good-natured face, a fur cap on his head, bunches of holly berries pinned here and there on his shaggy jacket, and a laugh—good gracious! such a loud, hearty, mirth-provoking laugh, that the very people on the street, hearing it, began to smile, and feel that Christmas was here indeed. And I tell you Mr. Onosander Golong was busy that day, and so were all the men and boys employed by him. Turkeys and other things that had been ordered the evening before, turkeys and other things that had been ordered early that morning, and turkeys and other things being ordered all the time, were to be packed away in huge baskets, and sent to their respective destinations. But he wasn't so busy but that he stopped a moment from his work to give a piece of meat to a poor dog that had trotted hopefully into the shop (having evidently translated the name "Golong" over the door into "Come in"), and was asking for it with his eyes. And as he rose from patting the dog, he saw two children standing before him, also asking for something with their eyes. They were poorly dressed children, but the girl had a sweet, bright face, and the boy was as jolly-looking a little fellow as you could find anywhere. His cheeks were as round, if not as red, as Mr. Golong's, and his merry black eyes actually danced in his head. Now if there was one place in Mr. Onosander Golong's heart softer than the rest, it was the place he kept for children; and so when he saw these two looking up in his face—the boy with boyish boldness, and the girl with girlish shyness—he said, in the cheeriest, kindest manner, "Well, small people, what can I do for you?"

"We would like to tell you a story," answered the boy, in a frank, pleasant voice.

"Tell me a story!" repeated Mr. Golong, in a tone of great surprise.

"Yes, sir, please—a Christmas story," was the reply.

"Bless my heart! what a queer idea!" said Mr. Golong, and he laughed a silent laugh that half closed his eyes and wrinkled his nose in the funniest way.

"Wouldn't you like to hear one?" asked the girl, coaxingly.

"Of course I would—I'm very fond of stories—but I don't see how I can spare the time. We're so busy just now, and likely to be until night," said Mr. Golong.

"It's only a short one," said the boy.

"A very short one," added the girl.

"Well, go ahead," said the good-natured old fellow. And he sat down on a barrel of potatoes, and his young

visitors placed themselves one on each side of him.

"One Christmas-time," the boy began, "there was a big tenement-house in this city, and ten families lived in it, and every one of these families 'cept one knew they were a-going to have turkey for their Christmas dinner. They knew it sure the day before Christmas, all 'cept this one. The family that wasn't sure the day before Christmas morning lived on the top floor, and it was—it was—"

"Mrs. Todd, Neal Todd, Hetty Todd, and Puppy Todd," prompted the girl.

"Yes, it was them," said the boy, and went on with his story again: "Mrs. Todd was Neal's and Hetty's mother—they hadn't any father; he died three years ago—and Puppy was their dog. Mrs. Todd is one of the best mothers ever lived, and she sews button-holes on boys' jackets for a big store; and Hetty cleans up the house, and gets the supper, and such things; and I—I mean Neal—runs errands for folks when he can get a chance after school. His mother wants him to go to school till he's fourteen anyhow, 'cause a boy that has some education can get along better than a boy that don't know anything. And this family, though they were very poor, had always managed to have a turkey dinner till the Christmas I'm telling about, and Mrs. Todd she loved turkey."

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"Didn't Hetty and Neal?" asked Mr. Golong, closing his eyes and wrinkling his nose again; and he hurried away to wait on a stout lady, all covered with glittering jet ornaments and bugles, who must have been a very particular customer, she talked so loud and so much.

"Didn't Hetty and Neal?" he repeated, when he came back.

"Oh, my! I guess they did!" said the girl, her eyes sparkling.

"They'd 'a been funny fellows if they didn't," added the boy; "but, 'pon their words and honors, they wanted it more for their mother—she's such a good mother, and has so few good things to eat—than they did for themselves. And it made them feel awful bad when she came home and cried 'cause some wicked thief had stolen her pocket-book with half a week's earnings in it, and the two-dollar bill that the boss had given her to buy a Christmas dinner with besides. And so the boy Neal—he's kind of a nice chap, ain't he, Hetty?"

"Awful nice," replied Hetty, with a mischievous little giggle.

"And he says to his sister—she's awful nice, ain't she, Hetty?"

"Kind of nice," said Hetty, with another little giggle.

"He says to his sister," continued the boy, "'Don't say anything to mother, but put on your hat, and bring a basket, and we'll make a try for a merry Christmas dinner—turkey and all.' And they went round the corner to a beautiful market, kept by a gentleman who looked exactly like Santa Claus—"

Mr. Onosander Golong laughed aloud this time, and flew to wait on another particular customer.

"So he looked like Santa Claus?" he said, with a chuckle, when he sat down on the barrel of potatoes again.

"The very image of him!" said the girl, with great emphasis.

"The boy," began the boy once more, "had run errands for him two or three times, and each time had got two apples or oranges besides the reg'lar pay; and he was good to cats and dogs. So this chap went to this gentleman—he took his sister along, 'cause he thought Mr. Golong would like to see her—and they told him their story. And the boy says, when it was done, 'If you would only trust us for a turk—I mean, a turkey, and a few other things, I'll work for you all holiday week, and another week too, after school. My name's Neal Todd, and my mother is a real nice woman, and I love her just as you used to love your mother when you was a little boy.' And the gentleman, says he, 'Being as it's Christmas-time, and I look so much like Santa Claus, I'll do it.' And he did. And that's all."

Mr. Onosander Golong burst out a-laughing, and oh! how he laughed! He laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. He laughed until he nearly fell off the barrel. He laughed until everybody far and near who heard him laughed too, and the very roosters in the poultry shop over the way joined in, and crowed with all their might and main. And they got the turkey.



"AND THEY GOT THE TURKEY!"

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WILLIAM B. K.

WAYNESVILLE, OHIO.

As you kindly invited us all to write to you, I would like to tell you about a pet pigeon I had. I called it Lily, because it was so white. I got it when it was a little bit of a thing, and I did not keep it in a cage. I taught it to eat out of my hand, and when I came from school and called Lily, it would come flying from the barn-yard, where it was with the other pigeons, and light on my shoulder, and put its bill up to my mouth. One day I called Lily, and it did not come. I went to look for it in the barn-yard myself. It was there, but it would not come to me, and always after that it was wild. I think HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE is a very nice paper, and mamma thinks she will take it for me. My papa has taken HARPER'S WEEKLY and MONTHLY ever since they were in existence.

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A. H. A.

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EDITH S.

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