A Christmas Derelict

By Viola Justin

AS THE boat pointed its nose toward the city, the solitary man at the prow turned his back on freedom and gazed longingly at the graystone penitentiary, which seemed to be slipping away from him and growing smaller and cosier as distance lent the enchantment of perspective to his loneliness.

For Mulcahy, dazzled by liberty, was very lonely indeed. Every moment that the water widened between him and the prison it lessened the distance from the city, and in two minutes more the man knew that the metropolis, bristling with antogonism, cold and strange and busy with its holiday season, would be upon him, and it filled his heart with a nameless dread.

But, after all, he had only himself to blame for his liberty. "Good behavior"—that was the thing that had turned him loose from a comfortable home, three square meals a day, and his companions of the quarry.

If he had only transgressed a few laws, broken a simple rule or two, all might have been well. He might have eaten Christmas dinner with Jerry the Spike, Bottles, Hank and the whole happy crew who had contrived to spend another Christmas in the "pen" through trifling indiscretions committed in defiance of the keepers.

These reflections were interrupted by the sharp teeth of the wind snapping at his legs through the thin trousers and the threadbare coat.

He shivered as the boat docked, and then took a long breath as he walked up the gangplank and out into—was this freedom striking terror to his soul?

He was only free to go anywhere; but these people had their homes to go to, each his separate "penitentiary," where there were warmth and food and human things to talk to.

He shut his eyes for an instant and started bravely up the hilly street that led to First avenue. Then suddenly a strange thing happened. He forgot his misery and his wretched homesickness. At first he couldn't realize what the influence was, then he recognized the soothing and thirst-inspiring smell of hops that poured over him like a hot breath from the brewery on the next street. This prompted a thought which was immediately followed by a sharp movement.

Mulcahy minded him of the faded five-dollar bill he had in his pocket, the last bounty of the good home across the river. He pulled it out and looked at it.

It represented two weeks and a half of life; that is, he calculated that while he was looking for a job it would provide food and shelter for him. If he couldn't find a job—but that thought ended with a look toward the river; and again he saw the "pen," and another thought occurred to him.

If he didn't find anything to do, he could go back to the "pen" and beg them to take him in. No, he couldn't do that. He squared his ragged shoulders as if trying to rise superior to the thought, for there was a remnant of pride in Mulcahy, albeit time and a desperate struggle to keep his feet on the globe had frayed its edges.

No, he determined to go back there honorably, as he had left. He might get a job shoveling snow—but alas! it was one of those cheerless Christmases, and nature had not even supplied the people out of work with snow to shovel.

Mulcahy had worked all his life. He was fifty now, and, as he unrolled the long catalogue of calamity which other people might have called his career, he found that the only year of his life that had been a happy one was his last in jail.

These thoughts and the haunting smell of hops brought Mulcahy to Fouth avenue and a saloon. It was twelve o'clock, and corned beef and cabbage-leaf being slated for lunch on a blackboard under a Satyrish-looking bock and a life-sized "schooner," determined the man, and he stepped inside.

The story will move much more rapidly if we do not follow Mulcahy and wait for him to eat his corned beef and philander with a spirit more of his ilk than any he has met for the last year, a spirit that seemed almost fabulous when dreamed of in the "pen"—to-wit, the bartender.

But look where Mulcahy emerges half an hour later, the inner man lulled by the succulent cabbage and beef, but a melancholy gnawing at the outer man, whose clothes are slight protection against the increasing wind.

As the day drew her portals slowly together he fell to trembling again. How was he going to face the night? All alone in one of those ten-cent beds which promise so much to a

"Have You Seen My Mamma?"

weary body that soon discovers the egg-shell substance of the promise?

He shuddered and hurried down a side street of American-basement houses, with their dainty Boston ferns and yews, pretty windows with costly curtains that sealed happy homes from the profane eyes of the public. And this atmosphere gave Mulcahy hope. The inspiration born of despair took root.

He intended to abandon all thoughts of getting work until warm weather. It was worse than hopeless to think he could get work now—why, the weather, his age, all were against it. He would go back to the "pen" if he had literally to "steal" his way back. The thing to do now was to conjure up some reasonable offense, some trifling transgression that would open the iron gates of the prison, as difficult of entrance as it was of exit, and tide him over the winter months.

But what could he do? Not a single misdemeanor suggested itself to his overwrought brain. If he could only steal something long enough to get arrested and sent to the island! But how? When, and above all where?

Broadway and Thirty-third street, with its triangle of shops, answered that question. It was very late, but he knew that a week before Christmas the shops would be open until late. In the hope that his clothes would contribute their help toward arousing the suspicions of the store detectives, he quickened his steps feverishly.

Inside the shop was warm, brilliant, and jammed with people. The incoming and outgoing crowds jostled and pushed Mulcahy as if he were a rubber-washer between the hub of a wheel and the linch-pin.

Presently he found himself at the notion counter, swept there by the tide of customers. He wondered at the confidence of the storekeepers, who took no trouble to protect their wares set forth in little compartments.

Now he was backed into a little case of tooth-brishes. He felt his fingers close on something; mechanically he placed the thing in his pocket, and then let himself drift along with the crowd.

He had stolen something! Was it a cake of soap—perhaps; but with a sickening sensation of impotence he remembered that one cake of soap might not unlock the iron gate of the "pen."

Mulcahy sighed. Now he was in the jewelry department. It yielded vast possibilities as far as valaubles were concerned, but these were carefully protected by glass cases. True, there were some little trays of gold-filled pins and bracelets scarcely worth the effort of attainment. And yet a handful of these trifles, flagrantly abstracted, might attract the attention of a detective.

Perhaps there were no detectives, after all. This thought smote to him in the act of reaching out a trembling hand toward a delicate gold-filled bangle. Then he paused, and in that moment of hesitation he felt a twitch at his coat, and, turning to face what he felt must be authority either in plain or blue clothes, he perceived at his side a very pretty little girl.

She was well dressed; and after the first shock he felt on looking into her clear blue eyes, Mulcahy saw a beautiful locket and chain clasped around her neck.

In the mean time she has possessed herself of his coat-pocket as if it were his hand, and clung to him as she asked:

"Have you seen my mama?" Her voice was smothered by the crowd that pressed around her, and Mulcahy had to lift her up in his arms to make himself heard.

"No," he replied, his face close to her pretty neck and ear. "Shall we go and look for her?" he added, touched by the sudden moisture that blurred her eyes.

As he spoke he carried her to the revolving-door. Once out in the street, she told him that she had been shopping with her mother and had got lost. She lived, she said on Fiftieth street, between Madison and Fifth avenue. She didn't know the number, but there were green trees at the door, and it was a white house.

You musn't think that this escapade diverted Mulcahy from his original scheme. Only he wanted to be of use to the child, and he also saw a much better way of obtaining his arrest and entrance to prison.

The locket and chain he knew would serve his purpose, for he intended stealing them as soon as he had found her home. There were four dollars and ninety cents left from the "pen's" munificence, but he spent enough of it in a candy-store to have provided for himself for two days.

Over a congenial glass of ice cream soda the little girl gave him her name —Violet Van Twiller. The telephone book did the rest in the matter of locating the Van Twiller mansion, whither Violet was escorted by her ragged friend.

Afterward, when Mulcahy left her standing at the door of her home waving at him and smiling in her sweet, frank way, he wondered how he had found it in his heart to steal the necklace; but there it was in his hand, still warm from contact with her throat.

Then he darted away from the street, and, clasping the locket tightly, flew to the first police station and gave himself up.

The judge did not conceal his disgust when he learned that Mulcahy had robbed a child; and when he uttered sternly, "Six months on the island for him," he marveled at the brutality of a man who could smile at the sentence.

II.

Meantime, Violet Van Twiller had been received with the tears and rejoicings of a hysterical and loving family and diligently interrogated concerning the events of the evening.

Over and over again she repeated the story of the "kind, ragged gentleman" who had bought her candy and soda and had found her home for her.

Later, Mr. Van Twiller discovered that Violet had mysteriously lost her locket; but, though he suspected her

Boasted to Jerry, the Spike.

strange friend, he was so grateful to the "ragged gentleman" that the next day he advertised in all the papers that he wished to reward the person who had restored his daughter to her family.

But Malcahy never learned of this golden apportunity which might have given him a new start in life, though he gave the officer who accompanied him to the island the name and address of the little owner of the necklace, and it was sent to her.

The next day saw Mulcahy safely aboard the Fidelity and headed for the "pen."

At the end of the week he was sitting at the Christmas dinner which had seemed a fantom on that dreadful day he was set at liberty.

Between mouthfuls of fat turkey and cranberry sauce he boasted to Jerry the Spike, Hank, and Bottles of how he had hoodwinked justice.

When he reported for work, a few days later, the keeper who presided over the men engaged in breaking stone remarked casually to a fellow keeper:

"I see Mulcahy is back on the job."

"Yes," the other replied; "he was liberated a week ago, and now he's back again. I tell you this place is a cinch for those fellows. They're doing life on the installment plan. If you dumped the whole caboodle into the East river and told them to swim to New York, they'd all turn like a lot of rats and squeak to come back to the 'pen.'"

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CARLSBAD AS HEALTH RESORT

Humorous Resume of One Pilgram's Visit to the Famous Watering Place.

London.—It is not necessary to have a map to find a health resort. Just jump on a train and look steadily out of the window. You may ride a day and you may ride a week. Eventually you will come to a place where every person looks the picture of health. You will see streets crowded with men with thick necks and broad backs, and women whose shapes could be revised ad lib. The glow of health is in their cheeks and their clothes are expensive. Immediately you will recognize this place to be Carlsbad. All these people have come to take the cure. Absolutely you are looked upon as being a perfect heathen if you are not considering the cure, for a poor man gets sick and takes the cure and a rich man takes the cure and gets sick.

I arrived in Carlsbad about four o'clock in the afternoon and after having been comfortably established in

Principal Carlsbad Spring.

one of the hotel apartments I happened out on my balcony and there witnessed streams of people, all bound in the same direction and each and every one carrying little red bags. My first thought was that an American circus was in town, but then why on earth was everybody carrying their own refreshments Instantly I caught up my hat, dashed out on the street and said: "Declare me in. I'm a sure-enough." Nobody in the crowded thoroughfare heard me, so I declared myself in. I walked and walked until finally I reached a place called Kaiser Park. There hundreds of these supposed to be invalids, instead of keeping to their strict diet of about 106 glasses of water a day and merely enjoying the music, were gratifying themselves with coffee and a superabundance of cake, which constituted the contents of the little red bags. Well, it was worth the long walk to hear such wonderful music, the time fairly flew, but the orchestra leader did beat it.

You go through the same routine about four times a day, or first walking yourself to death, then eating everything in sight. Then first thing you find yourself tipping the scales far beyond your own approval and instantly you wish to make a quick get away before you increase another inch in diameter. The only thing that detains you from taking the first train out of town is you must report to the constable of your intentions to leave, then gently slip him the lower half of your letter of credit for taxes on the water and music. Then you may leave with a light pocketbook, but plenty of excess weight.

LAD ENDS LIFE ON BIRTHDAY

While Mother Was Buying Him Presents John J. Kopp of Orange, N. J., Commits Suicide.

New York.—Instead of celebrating his fourteenth birthday anniversary, John J. Kopp of Orange, N. J., chose death by suicide, to end his eleven years of suffering from injuries received in a fall when he was two years old. Gas was the means used to end his life.

The lad was the son of Mr. and Mrs. John F. Kopp of 199 Alden street, Orange. The fall which he had when only two years old is believed by physicians to have formed a clot at the base of the brain.

Since the accident he had suffered continual headaches. He could not enjoy life as other boys did, and his frequent attacks of illness often kept him from school. Physicians were unable to give any permanent relief.

The mother strove in every way possible to distract his attention and to prevent him from becoming despondent, but as he grew older he is said to have brooded over his apparently incurable illness.

Mrs. Kopp's absence from home to buy presents for his birthday gave the boy the opportunity for which he had evidently been waiting. Taking the gas tube from the kitchen stove, he carried it to his bedroom, and attaching it to the gas jet there,opened the jet and lay down to await death. When his mother returned with her arms filled with presents for him she found him dead.

WILLS HIS BODY TO SCIENCE

Metchnikoff, the Famous Bacteriologist, Wants it to Benefit Even After His Death.

Paris.—Prof. Eli Metchnikoff, the world's leading bacteriologist, director of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, has willed his body, when he dies, to scientists, whom he gives permission to do what they like with it. This was admitted by Metchnikoff.

"I insist, however," he added, "that my remains must be interred in the cemetery nearest to the Pasteur Institute. I expressly stipulate in my will that my body must not be carried any farther from my home than the Montparnasse cemetery, which is a short distance from here."

Metchnikoff said he was continually receiving offers of important appointments in the United States, England and Germany, but that he was determined the only change he would ever make would be from the institute to the grave.

IS GROWING BETTER

Each Christmas Sees Nearer Approach to Ideal.

Humanity Affected by Teachings of Him Whose Birth is Celebrated—Spirit of Helpfulness Prevails Among Men.

EACH year brings the world nearer to the ideal of the Prince of Peace, the ideal of universal brotherhood. Wars may occur from time to time and nations continue to arm themselves, but steadily the thought develops in the minds of men throughout the range of civilization that fighting is a wasteful, senseless, inconclusive method of adjusting differences, and that righteousness and justice can be maintained by other means.

Over nineteen hundred years have passed since Christ was born, bringing the message of peace on earth and good will to men. Before his time the world knew no such doctrine. There was the law of might, and might prevailed. There were rights, but rights were dependent upon the strength of arms and often suffered. The strong arm governed in the affairs of men. The doctrine that Christ preached was one of enlightenment, an appeal to the reason, addressed to the higher self of man.

Those who are discouraged by the occasional outbreaks of strife between nations should take comfort in the thought that there is a steadily increasing sentiment for pacific adjustments, that the essential spirit of Christianity is at work throughout the world to bring men into more reasonable relations, and that in the international as well as the private conditions of life the doctrines that were first preached in Judea nineteen hundred years ago are becoming steadily more dominant.

Christmas day naturally causes a reflection upon the state of humanity as affected by the teachings of him whose birth is celebrated. Men are unquestionably kinder and more thoughtful toward one another now than ever before. There is more charity in the world, and more justice, and more earnest disposition to bring humanity up to a higher level. There is more widespread education as a result of this spirit of helpfulness, and there is less suffering. Men are devoting themselves and their lives to the study of the needs of the less fortunate and to the amelioration of their condition. In all lands practical Christianity is working to the end literally of bringing peace on earth and good will to men.

The observances of Christmas are mere tokens of the essential spirit of the day, which is more than the mere twenty-four hours of this particular calendar time, and extends throughout the year. No matter how elaborate or costly the gifts that are exchanged, how beautiful and impressive the services in the churches, how extensive the decorations, Christmas is no more sincerely commemorated than by him who on this day pauses to remember what it means, who pays tribute in his soul to the glorious example of Christ's life and resolves to conduct his own as nearly as possible in imitation of it. It is the personal Christmas celebration that counts, the individual effort to apply to everyday life that which underlies the occasion, that which began at Bethlehem over nineteen centuries ago.

TEACHES LESSON OF LOVE

Christmas the Season of All Others Where Its Beauties May Be Learned Anew.

LOVE is the keynote of the Christmas season. The greatest mystery of life is love. Who has not sought to sound its unspeakable depths? Who has not felt its all-compelling power? Who has not surrendered to its irresistible force?

Romances are built about it. Wars have been fought for it and religions based upon it.

Love is the dream of the poet, the puzzle of the philosopher, the theme of the novelist and the song of the minstrel.

Love links all the human race. Its note of victory is heard in the royal court and in the peasant's cottage. The song of love is on the lips of the proudest queen and of her humblest subject.

It is the stimulus of parental affection in the home and of patriotism in the nation. Brave men die for it and noble women perish that they may bear its sweet incense with them to the grave.

How sweet and tender is this splendid attribute of mankind! In its smiling presence, anger, bitterness and strife melt away. How much more has the world to hope for from love than from envy, malice and hatred!

In this period of world-wide distrust, of resentment against economic conditions, of protest against authority, human and divine, and widespread defiance of law, can we not turn aside at this Christmas season for a moment and learn anew the lesson of love?

When we shall have learned that lesson, we shall also know the better and fuller meaning of obedience, contentment and peace.

The Yule-Log.

When the Yule-log burns upon the hearth,
With carol, chime and Christmas cheer,
A fire should kindle in each soul
To gladden all the coming year.
—Louisa M. Alcott.

Safe and Sane.

The movement which proposes to confine to children the giving of Christmas gifts would, at least, have the merit of doing away with a lot of social hypocrisy.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS

Same Ones Followed Year After Year in Many Homes.

Big Wicker Basket Which Receives Presents of Visitors Opened With Fitting Ceremony—One Established by Little Girl.

In many homes the same customs are followed year after year at Christmas. Thus in one home, where there are always visitors for the holidays, an enormous square wicker hamper, which has done service in the same capacity for twenty years, is brought from the storeroom and placed in the general hall. Festive holly wreaths are tied to the handles and to the top with big red bows, giving it a decidedly holiday appearance. As gifts arrive they go at once into the hamper. On Christmas morning, after breakfast, the father of the family opens the hamper and with fitting ceremony and humorous remarks distributes the gifts.

A large bag resembling a mail pouch and made of brown and tan denim with "U. S. Mail" marked in large black letters on it hangs each Christmas season near the fireplace in the large living room of another house. Into this are slipped family presents and those sent by outsiders. The leather strap which fastens the bag is regarded as sacred and no one would think of tampering with Santa Claus's property till Christmas morning.

A huge red Christmas stocking, large enough to hold all the family gifts, makes its annual appearance in a western home. It is constructed of a firm bright red cotton cloth and a barrel hoop encircles the top, holding it open. It is suspended by wide red ribbons from the second floor stairs landing and before Christmas boxes and packages of all sizes and kinds are dropped in from above. On Christmas morning the family gathers beneath this well filled receptacle, which is lowered and dragged by the ribbons into the center of the living room, where the contents are distributed.

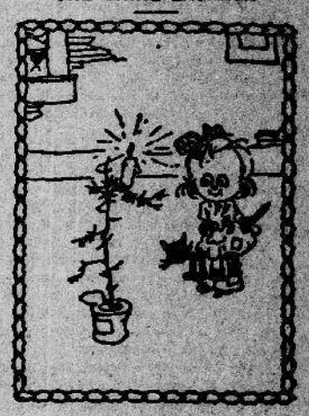
Several years ago, the young daughter of another family established a little custom which is still carried out each Christmas eve. On large red placards, hung with red ribbons, she writes with phosphorus the names of the different members of the family. These she places about the room. The mother's card hangs over the piano, on which her gifts are to be laid. Over the library table is suspended the father's card designating his allotted space. The deep window seat, the davenport, etc., are other places assigned to other members of the family. Late Christmas eve all the lights, except a dim flicker in the hall, are extinguished, the armfuls of presents are brought down and by means of the bright signs the gifts are put in their proper places.

For the past ten years, a miniature sleigh, drawn by six papier mache reindeers has appeared on the Christmas breakfast table of a New England family. Surrounding jolly little St. Nick, who, seated in the sleigh, holds the red lines, are piled the choice gifts, those that fit into small packages, such as jewelry and money. The boxes are opened before breakfast is served and the Christmas tree festivities come later in the morning.

A pretty custom observed by several musical families is for the entire household to come downstairs together early in the morning singing Christmas carols.

In some homes the celebration begins on Christmas eve. At a country place near New York the custom is to have a small tree hang with joke gifts in the center of the dining room table. Piled about the tree is the collection of substantial worth while remembrances. After the latter have been distributed, the family and house guests adjourn to the main room, which is hung with garlands of holly and mistletoe. Then the Yule log is brought in and laid on the andirons of the big fireplace. The lights from the blaze and from numerous candles furnish the only illumination. While the gifts are taken from the miniature tree and the attached sentiments read, steaming punch is served and the health of Santa Claus is drunk.

ONE THING LACKING.



"Oh, Kitty! if we only had a piece of candy to put on it, wouldn't it be just lovely!"

A YEAR OF PLENTY.

The Christmas trees nid in the hills;
The candy from them drops.
And folks declare they'll surely have
The heaviest of crops.
—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Everywhere.

Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight—
Christmas in lands of the fir tree and pine,
Christmas in lands of the palm tree and vine,
Christmas where snow peaks stand solemn and white,
Christmas where cocoanuts hang in the sunny and bright—
Everywhere, everywhere, Christmas tonight!
—Phillips Brooks.

Mistletoe in America.

Mistletoe becomes scarcer and more expensive in the United States each year, although it flourishes to such an extent in France that the government at one time gave orders to have every particle of it destroyed. This raised such a protest among the French florists that the order was not carried out. It flourishes in rampant luxuriance along the road between Paris and Fontainbleau, and in one place for a mile or two the great poplars have fairly had their lives squeezed out by the branches of this green parasite clinging to them. This part of the road is known as Lovers' Delight, from the fact that the traveler is always "under the mistletoe." The English species of the plant is perhaps the most beautiful, but the genuine articles is rarely seen in this country. The American supply comes from the southern states and abounds in large quantities in the Dismal swamp of Virginia. Its branches are more symmetrical than the imported variety, but the berries are smaller and less transparent.

Christmas-Tide.

"The twelve days of Christmas," embracing the period between Christmas eve, December 24, and Epiphany, of Twelfth Night, January 6, is unknown as Christmastide. Great as the feast of Christmas is, nothing can be definitely traced as to its origin, nobody knows who first celebrated it, or when or where, or how. We find that various communities of Christians kept the day on different dates until about the middle of the fourth century, when Pope Julius established the festival at Rome, on December 25. The holidays of the year are the red letter days of its calendar. Among them all, Christmas is unique, inasmuch as it brings universal joy and good will. Let the nations, therefore, rejoice and be glad in the gift of the world's greatest life.—Jennie Day Haines.

Egyptians, Romans and Greeks of antiquity were familiar with the use of wigs which were made of natural hair.