

A CHRISTMAS STORY

Words by BELLE CLAYTON.

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Allegro Moderato.

Musico by C. J. WILSON.

Christ-mas Eve, joy-ful still. And a sweet dream of dear old San-ta Claus, brings vis-ions of what he will leave, She wants a pre-cious toy.

2 Now she is near-ly there-ly, The world is so bright, And she will be a fair young bride, I hope that he always will prove to be A San-ta Claus close by her side.

Mer-ry Christmas one and all, Mer-ry Christmas great and small, Ring out mer-ry chimes From the bet-try tall, Ringing merry, merry christ-mas one and all.

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This specialist for women has had extensive experience in all cases of female ailments, such as irregular menstruation, leucorrhoea, etc., and is successful in all cases. He has a large number of cases on hand, and is prepared to receive patients at all times.

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THE BOY THAT TALKED TO HIMSELF

BY JOSEPH KIRKLAND.

WRITTEN ESPECIALLY FOR THE HELENA INDEPENDENT.

PART II.

Twice every year Perry's mother took him with her and went to Dexter (they lived in Michigan) to the pension office, and got some piece of paper or other, and took it right over to the savings bank, where they left it and got something written in a little book she had with her. And once each year she went to that same bank and asked for her mortgage, and they gave her a bit of paper to sign and wrote something in her little book and came away.

seep nor a mite nor a little bit. She only poured out a little cold tea from the bottle and drank it out of the tin cup. And she seemed to wait Dolly to sit all the time, which wasn't like her; not like Dolly at all and still less like mammy sweet.

They had been going on so long and so regularly that it seemed as natural as going to church. They just took a fine morning and drove off through the beautiful oak openings past the Escapelle farm and the Sigler farm and the Larue farm and all the others that he knew, because their boys came to his school, and then on across the road and past the lonesome part of the road, and then the farms near Dexter that he didn't know the names of, and so across the Dexter milldam into the town.

It seemed to be one of the college buildings they stopped at, but it had the name "Doctor Porter" on the door. After they had had Dolly they went up the steps and he was knocked on the door, but his mother

The stars were still shining when he put the hat up behind the wagon, and they jogged along in a very lovely time of day; not a light in the village, nor a sound except the roosters crowing at each other, now one closer than the other, from away off down by the mill, where you could even hear the water leaking around the big wheel, and so on, and Ingam's big dog came bounding and barking out and wagged his tail as soon as he found out who it was, and after that signal all the dogs at all the farms were awake and ready for them. And when they passed the big schoolhouse in the edge of the woods, my how lonesome it looked.

"No, no, my son," and pulled a knob that seemed to ring a bell somewhere. And while they were standing there he could see his mother's heart beating and shaking her dress, and it seemed as if he could hear it throb. He began to suspect something and wished he were at home—or dead.

"Kitty Farrand" he cried and seized her hands and drew her into a room; then taking both her hands in one of his he tried to read her veil, but she would not let him. What right had he to call her out of her name or touch her hands or her veil? That was what Perry wanted to know. But she only said:

"No, no, you wouldn't know me."
"Not know you? I knew you before you spoke. I should know you after we had both been dead a hundred years."
"This was pretty foolish for an old doctor. Then she wiped her eyes under her veil and took the chair he offered and said:
"You got my letter?"
"Yes, indeed, and I was coming to see you this very day. That is why I didn't write. I was afraid you would forbid my coming. So this is the little boy, is it?"
And he turned to Perry and she shook hands with him, with a smile so sweet, so loving, so gay—almost admiring, you might say—that Perry felt as if he were as tall as other boys and as straight as an arrow.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THOSE SPOTS ARE? position place before it opened, and then they were the first people in the savings bank after that opened.

"Why couldn't he remember her real name if he knew her well enough to call her Kitty? That was what Perry would like to know."
They went into a room with a long narrow table in it covered with a sheet. The doctor sat Perry up on the table and began taking off his coat. Said Perry: "Do you know what those spots are?"
"Perhaps I could guess."
"Well, if you knew that that was the coat that my father was brought home in then you'd know."
Then what do you think that doctor did? He took that coat up and kissed those spots, one by one. And when he laid it down the lens were running out of his eyes as if he were a woman, though he smiled right along. Perry had never seen a man cry before, and he wondered if they always laughed when they cried. He was so much taken up with this that he did not pay

much attention to what the doctor was doing, looking, feeling him, listening and all that, and he was all the time smiling and the sun's all the time dropping off the end of his nose.

It was the most curious thing Perry ever saw in all his born days. Then the doctor kissed the ugly spots again, and put the coat on again, and went to a wash basin there was there—one of those curious ones where you only have to turn a kind of cog, and the water runs off itself—and washed his eyes, and then asked Perry to sit still a few minutes while he spoke to his mother.

She was standing so close to the door when he opened it that Perry could hear the first words they spoke.
"Kitty, dear. Can you be brave and strong?"
Then he heard his mother fairly scream out:
"Don't talk to me like that! Don't talk to me like that! I know what that means!" And then he couldn't hear any more. He got softly down and walked to the washstand and looked in the glass. He hardly knew his own face, it was so white and starting. Had he any hopes? He didn't know.

He only wanted to go to his mother and comfort her. She knew what "that meant"—well, if "that" only meant that everything was going on as it always had gone on that was not very awful, was it? He would go and tell her so, anyhow. So he opened the door softly and stood still.

Mammy-sweet wasn't screaming any more. Dr. Porter had drawn one of her hands under his arm and was walking up and down the long room with her, while with the other hand she was covering her eyes under her veil. He was saying:
"No, it wouldn't have made any difference—though of course you ought to have sent for me years ago. It was before he was born, one of the sacrifices you made to your country. We could have kept the spine straight by force and tormented the dear little fellow into his grave most likely after years of unresponsible anguish. It is better as it is."
Then the doctor saw him and smiled; but Perry could not bear to see this strange man, not even towards his mother, even if he was Dr. Porter. He ran forward and pushed him away and put his arms around her, crying, "Never mind him, mother. He's not your boy, is he?"
And he pulled her out toward the door and the wagon.

"The doctor followed, and while Perry was whitening the horse, said:
"What a funny thing he said!"
"Not to-day," and held out her hand. The doctor said a funny thing; he kissed her hand, and he said a funny thing, too. It was:
"Thank you."
Perry hoped Dr. Porter noticed how hard he looked when the doctor said "good by," and then drove off.

was the oldest man in the world. And she whispered:
"He's blessing."
Then, what was curious, she grew quite gay and happy. She talked to him as if he was a new grown-up man she had never known before, very well, and she kissed stronger and braver than ever, and happier, too. As they drew near Dexter she explained to him about the pension and the mortgage, how the pension brought in money because the government paid so much every year to poor widows whose husbands had been killed in the war. But the mortgage took away money because it was for an old debt that Perry's father owed for money borrowed to build the house they lived in.

Now, she said, she had saved so much of the pension money she could pay off the mortgage, seeing that the money was of no use for what she had saved it for. Here she had to burst out crying again, but she did not cry more than half or three quarters of a mile. When she smiled again Perry said:
"Does the pension money go right on forever?"
"Well—yes—probably," she said.

And then she laughed and blushed so that he had to tell her that she didn't look so well, if "that" only meant that everything was going on as it always had gone on that was not very awful, was it? He would go and tell her so, anyhow. So he opened the door softly and stood still.

But their old rooster was foolish enough to crow while Perry was putting up poor, dear, tired Dolly. Of course the rooster was mistaken for once, old as he was.

That was long years ago, and Perry had cured himself of talking to himself; or, rather he had changed the habit into one of talking with his pen to other boys who were going to be men, and men who have been boys. The same something that used to make him speak in one way now makes him speak in another.

THE END.
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THE DOCTOR DID A FUNNY THING.

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