

THE DENISON REVIEW.

SIXTEEN PAGES A WEEK—PART TWO.

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HER HERO GUEST.

YOU are waiting yet, Norah? "Waiting? Why not?" The first speaker, a handsome man of 50, looked askance at the person he addressed, a young girl who stood at the bay window, apparently intent on watching the large flakes that came airily down and whitened the ground before the old-fashioned house which had been her home since birth.

A rich fire was burning at one end of the room and threw its light over her supple figure, and the clock which had ticked more than one generation of Hudsons in and out of the world still sent its musical tones throughout the room.

There was a strain of sadness in the man's voice, but in the girl's there was hopefulness, not unmingled with a little sorrow.

"Why, papa," she suddenly resumed, as she turned, "he said he would be here Christmas. You know Arnold never broke his promises."

"But the war, child! We know he went into the battle of Santiago—nothing more."

"I know," was the answer. "We all know that, papa. But there is the promise—the pledge."

"He did not seem to count the uncertainties of battle. That is it, Norah. Weeks and months have passed, and we have done everything to raise our hopes. The result has been terribly disappointing."

"Terribly!" echoed the young girl. She crossed the room and took a seat at the piano. As her fingers swept the white keys John Hudson turned his face away and looked abstractedly into the glowing fire.

It was a plaintive ballad the girl played, and it filled the old room with sadness, as it were. She was not interrupted, but continued till the last stanza had been heard, when she rose, and, bidding her father good night, walked quietly away.

"It's woman's way," said John Hudson. "I guess I will have to put up with it. That's what bothers me. There's Williams, as good a catch as there is in the market. Suits me to a dot, and I could make room for him in the firm. Will be here to-night;

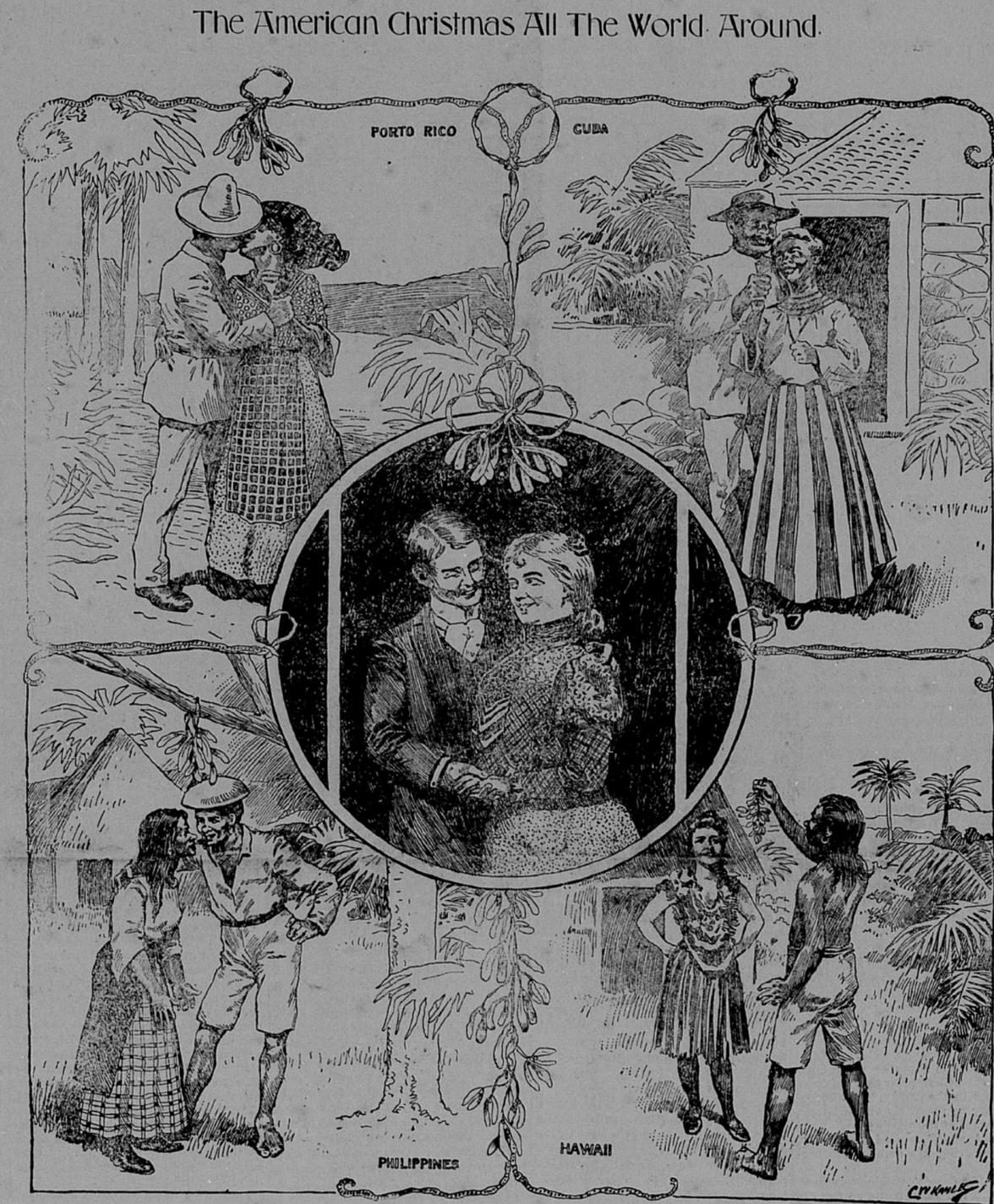
there's his telegram on the table. And Norah doesn't know it. She's like her mother was; she won't cross me. By Jove! she knows better."

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An Estimable Burglar.

MRS. JENKS had an economical fit. She had them occasionally, and when she did she always had all of her old gowns made over, whether she needed them or not, and collected her husband's half-worn boots in readiness for a rainy day. It was too bad that she should have this particular spell just at Christmas time, her husband thought, and when he had made that lucky investment and wanted to give her and the babies the Christmas of their lives. He mentioned this desire, only to be met with a pathetic reminder that if he did such things they must spend their declining years in the poorhouse. She often spoke of this possibility when she had the fit, and sometimes she varied it by picturing them both dead and the babies in the poorhouse. That always brought her husband to terms.

"But we must have some Christmas," he said. "I'm better off than ever this year, and my prospects—"

"Well, I'll tell you what, Jeff, dear; if you must give me a present, let it be a diamond," his wife replied, magnanimously. "I could sell that, you know, if I ever get very poor. Diamonds are always good. And do let me select the setting, too; I am very particular about settings, and—and if the setting was good it would sell for more if the bank failed and the bonds ceased to pay interest and the house burned down."

"Very true. Then I shall buy the babies a lot—"

"No, indeed, you won't. I have gone over all their last year's toys—they've forgotten



"IT MUST BE BURGLARS."

them by now—and mended them up, and I have dressed two small dolls which do quite nicely. Now, don't look that way, Jeff, dear! The poor little McCarthys around the corner will have nothing at all. If we died in the poorhouse the babies—"

"Yes, yes," her husband broke in, hastily. "All right, then."

He had another lucky stroke in the interval before Christmas, and on Christmas eve he could stand it no longer. He went out and bought recklessly, determined to give his children a Christmas which would demolish their infantile standards.

It was 11 o'clock when he let himself softly in and slipped a huge package into the dark and quiet parlor. Then he went into the sitting-room. His wife was there, with the children's toys spread out. There was anxiety in her eyes, but she strove to be calm.

"They do look sort of poor, don't they? I meant it for the best, and the little McCarthys—"

"M—yes," her husband replied. "Say, Ethel, I'm hungry. I think I'll go down and investigate the pantry. Hullo! that's Daddies crying, isn't it?"

It was, and if her parents had ever found any weakness in her lungs it was dispelled now.

When Mrs. Jenks came downstairs, 15 minutes later, her husband was hunting, rather nervously, in the potato bin. "I—I was looking for a piece of cold chicken," he said, "but—"

"I think you will be more likely to find it in the pantry," his wife replied. "Jeff, I believe I felt a draught as I came past the sitting-room door. Did you open the window? No? Then it must be burglars! Quick, hide in the coal cellar! Maybe—"

"And the babies?"

Mrs. Jenks was upstairs almost before her husband, though somehow he got into the sitting-room first.

"I'll stay out here and protect the babies!" she groaned.

"The window was up and everything save the toys was untouched—they had vanished."

Mrs. Jenks began to cry. "Oh-h, my poor babies!" she cried. "No Christmas at all, any more than the little McCarthys! Why didn't I let you get something for them?"

"Goodness me, I forgot!" cried her husband. "The fact is, that I did get a few things for them to-day!" and he brought them out.

"Oh, Jeff, all these! If we end in the poorhouse—"

"The babies will at least have something to brag about to the other poor children."

"Well, I'm glad, anyhow," said Mrs. Jenks, "and maybe we will recover the others, too."

"Perhaps so," said her husband, quietly. After the toys were all laid out he put on his best hat. "Guess I'll step over to the police station and tell them to keep an eye on the house," he said.

When he got outside he executed a waltz on the pavement. Then he slipped around to the rear and got a basket which was hidden under the back steps. In the morning Mrs. McCarthy found a basket exactly like it filled with toys at her door. She announced that the angels had sent it; only Mrs. Jenks could have proved that they had nothing to do with it—and he didn't dare!

ELIAS ARMSTRONG.

Mr. W. C. Pollock has recently received a white Hubbard turkey gobbler. It is a beauty.

Arnold Brent was missing! Comrades knew that he had gone into the battle; they had seen him charging up the hill; they had seen him in the foremost rank, but he had not answered to roll call. There had been but few missing, very few; but Brent was among these.

Then came the waiting, the days of painful hope while the army and navy were winning victories on other fields and at sea. John Hudson's face assumed a merrier aspect. He whistled more. He received Williams with more cordiality whenever he came to town, took him home and made things pleasant there for him. It was all for a purpose which the young girl's heart easily guessed.

The summer of victories faded and the autumn came. The leaves turned to gold and then gave place to the garb of winter. The regiment had been sent back, or what was left of it, and Norah had questioned those who took part in the historic charge.

They gave her but little encouragement. Still, with woman's love and trust, the fair girl waited. It was in her nature to wait, for was not his promise that he would come Christmas still good?

John Hudson, sitting before his fireplace that Christmas night, with the telegram in his hand, thought he saw the fruition of cherished hopes.

Williams would soon be there, and even as the broker read he listened for the sounds of the carriage on the whitened drive.

"She won't hold back any longer," said he. "Why, her mother always knuckled under to me. I've been master here for years, and Norah knows that."

He stopped rather suddenly, for the door behind him opened, and he turned his startled face thither.

Norah stood regally in the doorway, her handsome figure revealed by the soft light, and looking straight at him.

"I—I thought you had retired, child," said John Hudson, stammering, for he had spoken aloud, and wondered if Norah had heard.

"Bless you, no, papa! This is the night he was to come."

A frown darkened John Hudson's brow. "Put that idle hope aside," he answered. "You have had it tested time and again. The others who came home brought no cheering news from Cuba. Norah, you must break this tie. It is my command."

"You loved your mother, girl?" he suddenly said, looking up into her face.

"Her memory is the sweetest one I have."

"Very well. She never crossed me—long. Of course, she had her ideas, but from the day of our marriage I was master here."

There was no reply. Norah's look sought the carpet at her feet, and the clock ticked on.

All at once John Hudson turned toward the front door. He had caught sounds that seemed to infuse new life into his veins.

"My guest is out yonder, Norah," said he. "He is punctual to the minute."

"Your guest, papa?"

"Yes, Mr. Williams."

"I did not know—"

"I hardly thought it necessary to tell you," interrupted Hudson. "His telegram is lying on the table yonder. He comes for our answer, you know."

"For what answer?"

Perhaps Norah dreaded the worst, for she seemed to shrink within herself. Her face paled a little and her hand fell suddenly from her father's shoulder.

"Shall I knock, lieutenant?" said a voice just beyond the door.

"No; I've found the door now, thanks."

"And it's a better charge than the one we made at San Juan."

Some one laughed.

John Hudson looked at his child, over whose face had come a singular look, and caught her eye.

"It doesn't seem to be Williams, after all," he said, testily. "I can't have soldiers here to-night, child, and, besides, you must not be irritated by their stories of the war."

But Norah Hudson did not hear the last words. Her hand was at the knob; she tore the door open and uttered a sharp cry.

"Hang it all, it is not Williams," growled John Hudson. "It's another report from Cuba."

"It is Arnold!" was the response, and then the broker saw his daughter in some one's arms.

He walked over to the table and snatched up the telegram. His face grew dark and the next moment he had hurried the telegram into the fire.

"I am a long time keeping my promise," he heard a voice say. "I have been delirious; I even lost my name in the wilds of Cuba. I have been the inmate of a Cuban hut back of Santiago for months, till I finally came back to myself. I am Arnold Brent, one of the missing men of San Juan hill, and this is Christmas."

"The deuce it is!" cried John Hudson. "Norah said you would come back Christmas. You are her guest. Mine hasn't come."

A CHRISTMAS POSTER.

Traveling Passenger Agent J. H. Gable of the F. E. & M. V., is distributing a very handsome hanger announcing the holiday rates given by his road. It is a genuine work of art.

THE CHRISTMAS EDITION.

But a few extra copies of the REVIEW'S Christmas edition remain. Those wishing to send them away should call at once before the supply is exhausted. It took twelve mail sacks to carry this edition to its out of town readers.

CHRISTMAS MASS.

According to custom the early dawning of Christmas will see the Catholics of Denison at devotions. The first mass will begin at 6.30 a. m., and the second at 10.30 a. m. Christmas tree exercises for the children at 6 o'clock Christmas Eve.

A NEW THISTLE.

Mr. G. W. Redenbaugh has discovered a new kind of thistle on his place. It looks something like the Russian thistle, but those who claim to know say it is not. The specimen will be sent to Ames so that experts may decide upon its nature.

MAPPING THE TOWN.

Many of our good people have had bright visions of new railways running in front of their property irrespective of hills and hollows. The Illinois Central surveyors have been making an accurate map of the town and their appearance on our principle streets has created no end of comment.

FIVE IN QUOD.

The county jail now has five occupants, mostly vags. They seem to be had to be in out of the cold and wet. Mr. Wm. Bloxem is being cared for at the jail and is now able to sit up and is improving finely, after the fierce onslaught on him at Buck Grove.



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"Of course," said he, "Williams is a little older than Norah, but that don't cut any figure. Girls nowadays like their seniors. She'll like him, too—when she knows him better."

Then he thought of a young man who at the first call for volunteers in the Spanish war came to him and said he had decided to go. Arnold Brent, always brave, handsome and somewhat impulsive, thought his country needed him, and he had kept his word with a friend that he would enlist.

Brent was connected with the firm of Hudson & Shipley, brokers, but not in a very important capacity. John Hudson knew the young man's worth and had thought seriously of promoting him, for he had noticed the ties that existed between him and Norah; but the young man's enlistment had spoiled all that.

He simply said to the would-be hero that if he wanted to go he could have his desk back "after the war," shook hands with him, and, entirely unconcerned, saw the regiment march away, while the whole city went wild over its departure. That was John Brent all over—nothing moved him.

Just about that time Williams—Otho Williams—a man of maturer years than Brent, came upon the field of action. He was a thorough business man, shrewd and not entirely scrupulous in his dealings when money was the object, but John Hudson did not particularly object to this.

In Norah's heart there was a sorrow when the boys went away. She had plighted her troth with Brent, and he told her laughingly that Christmas would see him back, for the war would end by that time, and they could plan for a happy future.

Soon after the regiment marched came Santiago.

Thrown into the front in the charge upon San Juan hill, the—th was terribly decimated. The boys were in the open, the Mausers in the bushes.

At first meager reports of the battle; stories of the gallant charge of the—th, but very little about the death roll, though it was said to have been large.

The city waited; hearts grew sick as days rolled by without much additional news. Norah Hudson was not the only one who waited under the strain. As for her father, he thought but little of Brent; stocks were rising and falling, and this interested him more than news of battle and death.

At last came the most terrible of all tidings, for there is something more terrible than death on the battlefield!