

GIVE THE SHOP-GIRL HER DUES

KATHERINE POPE

IN an excellent short story published not long ago, O. Henry gave to his shop-girl heroine a colossal character, emphasized that in her were combined the notable attributes of Hercules, Joan of Arc, Una, Job and Little Red Riding Hood. And at this season of the year—"glad Christmas days"—it easily might seem to a less sympathetic person than the regretted O. Henry that the shop-girl most stands in need of the strength of Hercules, the heroism of Joan of Arc, the truthfulness and other singular excellencies of Una, the patience of Job. Think what it must mean, from eight to six, or eight to ten, as the case may be, to face and serve the rattled throngs that are now surging through the shops, think of the strain on endurance and nerve, on temper and manners. The wonder is not that she often comes up to the demands on her, but that she ever does.

Some of the veterans, survivors of many hard-fought Christmas battlefields, are marvels; may be seen at fag-end of day still alert, though drooping; still clear-headed, though dripping with conscious effort; still with courteous attitude in their serving, though those they serve have lost the last shred of any politeness with which they may have started out.

Compare the manners of some spoiled darling, some indulged, arrogant child of wealth, with the dignity and patience and sweetness often shown by the girl behind the counter. The one self-centered, of most restricted vision, captious, petty; the other self-effacing, far-seeing, charitable, big. Caleb in search of a wife might well pursue his quest along the aisles of the big stores, find womanly ideal standing there behind the counter.

They are not all caricatures of fashion, with hair tortured into latest exaggeration, frocks cheap copies of showy splendors; not all more given to powder and rouge than to soap and water. And in the attainment of the so highly-desirable neatness and trimness heroism again has to come to the fore, it is no easy matter after long hours of labor to labor more, take pains for personal cleanliness, sew and darn when eyes are heavy, back is aching. Heroines every one of them that make a good show.

I know a girl in a fashionable candy shop that every other night washes and irons that she may be presentable the next day. Her moderate wage is the chief part of the family support, there is not enough money for enough blouses to last the week, and so the midnight laundrying is done as a matter of course. But how pretty and sweet and fresh the girl does manage to look in her snowy white and well brushed black; much better dressed, she seems to me, than the woman of fuss and feathers.

What little mothers they are, a lot of them, simple affectionate, domestic creatures—though so often characterized as vain, shallow, foolishly ambitious, thinking only of dress and "dates." I know one girl that worked in one of the department stores which keep open evenings at Christmas time, who the night before Christmas did not leave the store until midnight, then after traveling an hour on the street cars to her home stayed up hours to trim a wonderful Christmas tree for the children of the family, the bunch of little ones the poor seem always to have with them. I know another girl that at this season goes down unusually early mornings to arrange "stock," comes home unusually late evenings; but after dinner cheerfully dons kitchen apron and helps with giant plum pudding and other Christmas preparation that yearly is repeated in honor of old England and the home left behind when there was made search for fortune in the rich land of America. These are just two instances, the one quite commonplace, unheroic, but you may pick up a few for yourself by eavesdropping a bit in your shopping; observing among the buyers the many shop-girls purchasing toys and silver "pusher," children's

THE IDEAL WORKSHOP.



And the jolliest and best old workman in the world.

Christmas Day

To rule and reign with gentle sway,
The King of Love was born today.
No palace walls enclosed him round,
But in a manger was he found;
That so the boastful world might see
The greatness of humility.

He came, a child, in lovely grace,
That so a child might seek his face;
So poor was he, the humblest boy,
Might come, without a fear of scorn.
To all mankind he showed the way,
And ushered in the dawn of day.

And so, with grateful love and praise,
We hail this blessed day of days.
The children's joy, the poor man's feast,
The star of hope to great and least;
When holy angels come to earth,
And sing anew a Savior's birth!

gloves and sweater, or gray dress for mammy, muffler for daddy.

Of course there is any number of pert, incompetent girls that wait on hapless customers, rather keep hapless customers waiting, but they have been pictured with enough frequency, this sort repeatedly held up as typical, thereby obscuring the virtues of the many worthy ones following the profession of "waiting on." For some time past I have been gathering data, making experiment; and have found it the rule rather than exception that courtesy meets with courtesy. "Soft and fair go far in a day," not only on highway but in the miles of space in a huge department store.

A man said to me recently: "How little of church is brought into the Christmas of today." And how sadly true this is—"church" in this connection standing for whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are good, of full import to all religions. And bullying and bullying a shop-girl at this season seems about as far from "lovely and good" as one may wander. Put yourself in her place, remembering previous failures of your own when bodily weariness snapped strained nerves, broke down poise.

Ye gods and little fishes, in what condition is the shop-girl to "enjoy" Christmas! I am sure if I were she



Sew and Darn When Eyes Are Heavy. all I would ask of good Saint Nicholas would be a dark, airy room far, far away from people (from man, and especially woman); a great, soft bed where I could stretch out long and wide; silence and sleep forever and forever. No dreams to disturb that sleep; no vision of past haggling, no vision of wearisome "exchanges" to come.

But the reality is a long way from this that I would ask. Do you suppose such a proud wage earner as she would be content to let Christmas day go by without displaying wealth and power? No, every dependent in the household must partake of her bounty, every pensioner be given good proof of what it means to have her dress up and go down town every day. Nothing of niggard is the shop-girl at Christmas, she is as much a Lady Bountiful as any millionairess of them all.

What a creature! A "Hercules, a Joan of Arc, a Una, a Job" and a Lady Bountiful on eight dollars and less a week!

(Copyright, 1910.)

Agnes' Prayer.
Our little five-year-old Agnes, having been reprimanded by her mamma for some slight misdeed, went and knelt by a chair and prayed as follows:

"Oh, Lord, make me a good little girl. I want to be a good little girl, but I don't know how. But, if I am naughty, please send Santa Claus just the same."

Christmas Time.
I have often thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that—as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time.—Charles Dickens.

"God With Us"

By A. D. WATSON

The world had long been waiting
The coming of the King,
When one sweet morn in Beth-
lehem,
Ere birds were on the wing,
The sons of God came singing
Down from the skyey dome,
And mortals heard the message:
Immanuel is come.

Now let the ample standard
Of righteousness, unfair,
Proclaim to every people
That God is in His world;
Let every form of evil
From earth be put away,
That all may sing rejoicing,
The King is born today.

The bright and solemn glory,
The angel harp glad ring,
The strange, sweet song of wonder,
The cherub voices sing—
These in our hearts abiding,
The Prince of Peace shall come,
Make our glad lives His temples,
Our happy hearts His home.

OLD STORIES OF CHRISTMAS

Some Have Interest. Freshness and Beauty That Keep Them Always New.

There are some so-called "old stories" that are really not old, for they have an interest, a freshness and a beauty that keep them always new. Of such are the story of Christmas and all the legends and tales that belong to the great festival.

There is a legend in Germany that when Eve plucked the fatal apple the leaves of the tree immediately shriveled into needle points and its bright green turned dark. The nature of the tree changed and it became an evergreen, in all seasons preaching the story of man's fall through that first act of disobedience. Only on Christmas does it bloom brightly with lights and become beautiful with love gifts. The curse is turned into a blessing by the coming of the Christ child, and thus we have our Christmas tree.

The visits of St. Nicholas to the homes of the people on Christmas eve as an annual custom grew out of a festival in honor of Hertha, a Norse goddess. At this festival the house was decorated with evergreens and an altar of stone was set up at the end of the hall, where the family assembled. From Hertha's stone we get our word "hearthstone." On the stones so set up were heaped fir branches, which were set afire, and through the smoke and flame Hertha was supposed to descend and influence the direction of the flames, from which were predicted the fortunes of those present.

CLOSE QUARTERS.

He eyed the Christmas tree with a look of grim determination on his face. It was a fine tree, tall and straight, with many symmetrical boughs—just such a tree as would delight the hearts of his children. But he chased them away as he prepared for his work of destruction. Taking off his coat he rolled up his sleeves, and with a hatchet ruthlessly lopped off all the branches. He eyed the result with satisfaction. Then he took up a saw and divided the tree in the middle. It seemed heartless, but what else could the poor man do? It was the only way he could make the tree fit, for he lived in a flat.

A Merry Christmas

All over the country, all over the world—a few years hence it will be also all through the air—sounds the greeting Merry Christmas! On the sea and land, in the palace and in the hovel, in the hospitals and in the prisons, in the asylums amid the orphans and in the homes for the friendless and for the aged, wherever even two persons meet who know and love the story of Christmas, the greeting is exchanged. Where can there be a parallel to the universal greeting? Is there any other sentiment that has the sovereignty of this cheerful and heartfelt word? It travels through the malls like nothing so much as the doves to the altars of which the Scripture speaks, for surely the sentiment fits from altar to altar of the hearts of men and is as gentle as the dove. Grudges and animosity vanish before the waiting of Christmas greeting, the smile of hope illumines the countenances of those under the pall of depression, the dimpled cheeks of the babies seem like veritable nooks for fairy hiding as the lips coo in response to the Merry Christmas, with the little emblem of the day that comes to the infant from its loving parent. In the days of romance hostile forces passed upon the field, sheathed their swords and clasped hands across the battle line, greeting one another with the sentiment of universal good will. Merry Christmas has brightened more hearts, has healed more grievances, has brought more happiness to the lives of men and women, has proved to be the talismanic sentiment for more home reunions than any other that has ever been heard in this old world.

Christmas stands for love and for charity, for hope and for joy at the fruition of that long-made promise of the prophet of the coming of one who should bring peace and good will to earth; so the churches hold their services and the people congregate to join in singing or to listen to the rendition of carols, some of which have come down from the early ages of the church. The children have their Christmas treats, and they are the very merriest of the merry in their participation in these annual school festivals.

HIS VISITING LIST.



Old Santa—My, my, how this list does grow. No wonder I occasionally miss one.

HER IDEA.

"The custom of hanging mistletoe on the chandelier is foolish."
"I think so, too. It ought to be hung in the cozy corner."

BOB-FOR-SHORT'S Christmas

by Louise Dunham Goldsberry

NOW, our baby had never encountered a locked door. The loveliest pit-pat of his busy feet was herald at whose coming every door in the house swung open and over thresholds he went into assured welcomes. But we were planning a tree. And the library door was locked. He paused in his ascent of the stairs to button in a button that would not stay buttoned. It required much time and he sat down on the step and with all his ten fat, wee fingers labored. Then, "Das a doodie boy," he obfuscated himself as he resumed his climb of the stairs, the button buttoned; "Das a daryin' yittle gentleman!"

He shook the knob. Waited, juggling on the toes of him and discoursing to Nicodemus. The door remained closed. Two fat palms smote it wrathfully. "Open," he commanded; "pease open dis door."

Nobody answered. "Po-o-yittle boy," he wheedled at keyhole; "zere ain't nobody loves 'im."

Nicodemus yapped and made feints at desertion when a dog barked outside. Fawned back, and licked the fingers where bread and honey aroma lingered. Sat up and waved an affable paw at him.

He sat down on the floor and gathered his yellow dog into his pinafore and hugged.

"Cept Nitodemus an' myssel," he said.

Great-grand came up the hall. "Is you been a bad boy, dreat-dran?" he said. "Is you all shutted out?"

Great-grand sighed. "Seems like this horse just will run away," in doleful tone, "and I've got a bone in my foot and I can't run after him."

In a wink he was after the rampant steed. Captured and mounted, rode it lordly lither and yon, and when at last he came back from the breathless miles he had slipped down the back way and at stairfoot waited.

Slowly, with dignity, he dismounted, put his steed in stall, came back to stair-head, and, legs astride and head thrown back, surveyed us from the heights of remembered injury. Beside him, perky, tongue lolling out, Nicodemus squatted.

Long legs gathered to his chin, great-grand ranged himself on the top step and twinkled.

"Yes, sirs," quoth great-grand; "shutted us all out!"

Our baby nodded confirmation and Nicodemus yawned in our faces. "Me'n mys Nitodemus an' mys dreat-dran," he said. "An mys dreat-dran is dot a bone in his foot an' I needed to kiss mys muvver."

But for three long days the library door remained locked.

And regularly, after each morning's breakfast, he mounted the stairs and tried the knob and cogitated to Nicodemus, and poked broom straws under the door.

Christmas eve we sat about a great open fire. Great-grand loved to dig and delve in the red-charred logs and imprison the swarms of rosy bees. Fascinated, I would watch the swirling upfed sparks, wondering what phantasms of youth he saw as beautiful in them, what faces went past in that rosy mirage that his own should wear so tender an answering look into eyes he alone was seeing. Sometimes our baby would come to stand between his knees, head leaned against his shoulder, and from within the encircling arms watch. Sometimes he would straddle one old knee and snug his head under the down-jeaning old chin, gold hair and white hair commingled, and hand over the old hand, help the poker that prodded and piled the embers. And the wide eyes seemed to be seeing with the old man's visioning, so united he would sit.

Christmas eve we sat about the great open fireplace. Great-grand sorted and piled his red-charred logs. Grandmother was watching, lost in idleness. Grand father had gone down cellar for apples and in my lap my baby was telling me secrets. We listened beyond the singings of the flames; beyond the delicate soft singing and the sighing and the laughter of them, the wind in the chimney. From the end of the new back-log the saps distilled, all the summer's rains and dews and green growings in their whicker-whicker. We had hated to shut out the skies, so divinely near they closed in upon earth, with their starry strands garlanding the rim of hills. Our baby had seen his first meteor—a feathered trail of ethereal fire and a soundless splendor as the meteor burst and biggened into a globe of slyssian azure, and went out. And the black violet skies seemed yet deeper black with that blue glory memorial against them, and the stars pallid and cold. And my baby wondered if there might not be another Christmas baby, in that blue glory. He wondered whether, if we'd go out, we might not find a few boys and girls and babies that got left over, when God forgot who had asked to have some left at their houses. He wished he'd been there that night at the oxen's inn, to see the little child. So's he could have brought it home to his own sef's house. He wanted a baby so bad. And even his sweets-freighted

babble picked up that blue sky-mystery and wondered about it. And his eyes were wide and fathomlessly sweet in the firelight, and his hand clung all the while to my face and deared it, and wove heavenly weave into my life in every least little touches of it to my lips, my cheeks, and in the comings home of it to slip into my bosom and there nest.

Then we told him that it was going to be the Christmas baby's birthday tomorrow, and because we so love God's little son we give, year after year, all life long, gifts to him and to each other on that day. And the library door, tomorrow, would be unlocked, and a surprise inside for us each and all.

"Draculous!" was his sole comment; and slowly the happy eyes slipped from us behind their curtain-fringes, the little warm body lay heavy in my arms. Slowly Great-grand unbudded the house of red embers, and coming over took the little sleeper into his arms, rocked and crooned and hugged and God-blessed him. And with grandmother's kisses on the wee feet that never were still save in slumber, and grandfather's proud look into the unwitting face following after, I bore him away to his crib; so loved, so loved!

"Is Trismus tum?" I wakened with the words breaking the crystal of my dreams and kissing themselves against my lips and a fat white body embracing my head. "Yes, sir," I managed to say through the strangling arms of him. "Happy Christmas, Bob-for-Short!"

"Happy Christmas, Bob-for-Short!" echoed from the doorway; and "Happy Christmas, Bob-for-Short!" floated in from beyond the east and west shoulders of great-grand.

He shouted. He danced. Never before had he been met by all the family at crib-side. He jigged all over the bed, trickling barnenymets and laughter at the three gray heads that wagged in unconscious tune to the prancings of him.

Then, all his yellow body apart with haste, Nicodemus hustled his fat self up the stairs into the fun he was missing, and in his wake, Katy from her kitchen.

And with a "Happy Christmas to yez, Mlister Bob-fer-Short," she set a gray kitten on the floor.

We were all very still, as he slipped from the bed and approached the kitten. He had never owned a kitten. He eyed it in raptured silence. "Meou," said the kitten.

Into his cheeks the red crimsoned. "Oh!" he gasped; "wad you tall, titty; pease wad you tall!" And she wagged her tail and arched her back against his feet and cajoled him, and as he gathered her into his nightgown and the white fat bare legs ran with their treasure, she broke into loud silken purrings. And Nicodemus sulked and fell into a helpless yellow bunch of



He Had Never Owned a Kitten.

protest, when the gray kitten was-held to his nose for a kiss.

And we all dawdled until Katy's bell rang third summons to breakfast. He went up the stairs alone. Then Nicodemus. Then Great-grand. Then I. And then the rest of his adorers.

He stopped at the door. "Open the door, sir," said grandfather.

"Tum on, muvver," he said, reaching hand into my hand. So we stepped over the threshold together.

The room was darkened. The firelight dulled behind a screen. In the center of the room a low, fair-branched young cedar tree gleamed like a great jewel. My hand forgotten, he circled the tree.

"Round and 'round. And we after. 'Das a mo' bu-ti-ful drum," we caught the murmur as he inventoried. "Das a yittle 'tend horse." He paused to jog it and in ecstasy watch it tail go up and down. "Das a yittle toad-frod in dat bid marble. How you s'pose it dot in?" He tarried to investigate, and set it rolling for the kitten to chase. Nicodemus thought it was meant for him, and when he collided with the kitten, cowed and scared and muttering, he fled to a distance and yapped at ball and kitten.

And the inventory went on: "Das a dold waths, yike mys Dreat-dran is dot." He tarried to hunt a pocket, and deposit his watch therein. But first he held it to ear. And the murmur resumed: "Dat waths is def an' dum, too. Das a piture-but an' das a piture-but an' das a piture-but. . . . Draculous!"

And Christmas was on for Bob-for-Short.—New York Independent.

One thing is impossible to love; the intensest and most fervent love is powerless to evoke love.

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