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M. L. MILLER, Editor and Publisher,

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FORTUNE IN THE MISTLETOE.

In Georgia there is a farm devoted to mistletoe and holly growing. It is owned by the Cartledge family, consisting of mother and two daughters, but the daughters do the farming. It all began through the fallure of the elder sister to make an immediate triumph in art, to study which she went to New York. She realized in the great city, as she never could have in her rural southern home, that talent for art is too general to leave much hope for special distinction, and wisely concluded to turn to something that would bring more speedy results. Being an observant young woman, Miss Cartledge noticed that holly and mistletoe brought extremely high prices and bethought her that on the 500 acres at home in Georgia both grew in wild abundance. She returned home and she and her sister began to prepare for making the neglected luxuriance of marketable value. In the months of January and February following they set out ten acres of young holly trees with their own hands. Their colored farm hands would not plant a holly tree for worlds, as they believe that if they did they would die as soon as the tree became tall enough to cast a shadow the measure of their graves. Last Christmas the sisters found the trees so grown that they required thinning out and the trees that were removed were sent north for Christmas trees and brought high prices, as they were symmetrical and covered with large, rich berries. They plant the mistletoe berries under the bark of old oak trees in a crack or hole, where they can get hold as they germinate.

THE CHRISTMAS GIRL.
(In three ages.)



THE DOLL AGE.



THE GOLFING AGE.



THE DIAMOND AGE.

A man may have many good traits and still lack the one necessary to make use of them.

No mind is so great that it cannot be influenced by a small one.

PHANTOMS OF CHRISTMAS MORN.

In the rush of the merry morning, When the red horns through the gray, And the wintry world lies waiting For the glory of the day, Then we hear a fitful rushing Just without upon the stair, See two white phantoms coming, Catch the gleam of sunny hair.

Are they Christmas fairies stealing Rows of little socks to fill? Are they angels floating hither With their message of good will? What sweet spell these elves are weaving, As like larks they chirp and sing; Is it palms of peace from heaven That these lovely spirits bring?

Rosy feet upon the threshold, Eager faces peeping through, With the first red ray of sunshine, Chanting chorals come in view; Mistletoe and gleaming holly, Symbols of a blessed day, In their chubby hands they carry, Streaming all along the way.

Well we know them, never weary Of this innocent surprise; Waiting, watching, listening always, With full hearts and tender eyes, While our little household angels, White and golden in the sun, Greet us with the sweet old welcome, "Merry Christmas, every one!"

His Revenge

A Christmas Story

It was Christmas Eve that year when John Maxwell went away to make his mark in this world. Alice Tower was just eighteen. They had been lovers for a few years and were now engaged. Something that she had said to him about the quality of the present he brought to her on Christmas Eve piqued him. "Two years from now," he said, "I will come back to claim you. Then I will be a rich man." These had been John Maxwell's last words; and there had been a fire in his eye, and certain lines of determination about his mouth which augured that he would make them good. But the two years had passed and six months more and Alice had heard no word.

Sitting under the old apple tree one warm May afternoon, she idly wondered whether his silence gave her pain or pleasure. When John had bidden her good-by the thought of his return had been the sustaining power in the moment of his departure. Though she had shed bitter tears over the story of his many failures; though she had received with gladness the knowledge of his first successes; though she had once waited with impatience for letters that did not come, she now felt it to be almost a relief—nay, quite—for two years is a long, long time, and Alice felt that in two years she had grown old not only in years but in experience. Did it not make the difference between eighteen and twenty? Surely, when one had left their teens behind them it was time to learn wisdom.

Ah! Alice would not whisper to her own thoughts that there had been another teacher; that not so easy would have been the lesson of forgetfulness had not another lesson been conned in its stead. It was all a bewildering maze in the little head under the masses of rich brown hair, with just a glint of red among them as the sun gave them its farewell kiss.

But a brighter red stole into the rounded cheek as a well-known step drew nearer; and a shadow for which the apple trees were not responsible was thrown beside hers.

"Good evening, Miss Alice," said a cheery voice. "I thought that I should find you here. The evening is too lovely for indoor life."

"Yes," she answered, "it is very lovely."

"As it should be," he added, in lower, more impressive tones, "to grace your presence. Alice," he continued throwing himself on the ground beside her, "shall I tell you why I am so glad to find you here? Because it seems the most fitting place to tell you something else, which, though you must already know, it is fit that I should put into words. They are poor words, darling. I am not versed in eloquence; and even were I, here eloquence might stammer. But they are words old as the world itself. 'I love you,' I have but one hope in life, and that is, that you will share it. It is not much that I can offer you, dear. Perhaps I should say wait, before I take you from your comfortable home. But yet, why should I. If you love me, you will stand bravely by my side, and we will share whatever storms life may have in store for us, as we share its sunshine. Alice, what is your answer? Will you be my wife?"

Ah, it had come at last. Once the girl had tried to check the torrent of his words. He had cut caught the little, detaining hand in his own strong palm and held it tightly. The small head had drooped lower. A short, gasping sob was in her throat, letting no word find its way there. What was she to do? Two years ago she had given another promise; two years of toil and homesickness had been endured for her sake; but for six months she had heard nothing. Perhaps John had forgotten her—as ah, she had almost added, "as she had forgotten him." But of John, Dent Dexter knew nothing, and Dent Dexter she loved. So it was, that when, half wondering at her long silence he again repeated his question, she simply raised to him the sweet, fair face, and content with what he read there, he stooped and pressed his first kiss upon the young red lips.

Curiously enough, their wedding day was set for Christmas Day, the third anniversary of John Maxwell's leave-taking. Dent wanted the event fixed for a nearer date. Alice was persistent. Perhaps she had a special

reason for fixing the time so far ahead. Poor John Maxwell! Maybe she thought of him.

In all these weeks she had told him nothing of John. Somehow she could not gather courage to frame the words. And John had forgotten her. He would never know. It was better that he should not. Love is ever jealous, and he might upbraid her, or think even while he had won her that she might prove inconstant to him as to her first lover. Some day when she was his wife, his very own, she would whisper the story into his ear, and then they would bury poor John together.

Somebody has said it was bad luck for a bride to don her wedding dress before the wedding day. It was all nonsense, Alice thought, as later, she stood before her mirror and saw reflected there her own form clad in its white silken robes.

Poor John! She wished she had not thought of him, as she stood in her wedding dress. The air was very heavy tonight. It was this which oppressed her so.

"Come in," she called to the knock at her door.

The little maid entered. "Oh, Miss Alice! law, Miss, how beautiful you do look. The gentleman is downstairs and wants to see you immediately, Miss."

The gentleman! Of course she meant Dent. She had a great mind to run down just as she was, to hear if he would echo the little maid's verdict, and say that he, too, thought her beautiful. The impulse of vanity was not to be resisted, and gathering up her silken skirts she ran lightly down the stairs. The room was in shadow, the large, old-fashioned lamp on the table burning dimly; but sitting in a corner on the sofa she saw a man's form, a man who rose impetuously to his feet as she entered.

With a smile upon her lips and in her eyes, and a bright spot of scarlet in her cheeks, she tripped across the floor and turned the lamp so that its light streamed full upon her, then looked up into Dent's face to see the look of love and admiration gathering there—looked to find it not Dent, but some one who, for a moment, seemed a stranger—some one whose face was bronzed and bearded, but with a strange pallor gathering on it as he looked in vain for the words of love and recognition which did not come—looked from her own paling face, from the dying spots of scarlet in her cheek, to the silken train which swept the floor in its purity, and the orange flowers she had fastened in her breast. Yes, she knew him now. It was John, come home to claim her for his very own. His voice was very hoarse when he spoke.

"I came for my bride," he said. "Is she here? Is this dress for me?"

"Have pity," she wailed, in answer. "Two years were such a long while. For six months I had not heard. I thought you were dead, or had forgotten me—"

"Men do not forget," he answered. "We leave that to the women who undo us. Six months! And it seemed to you a long time to wait. Child, do you know what I have endured for the reward of this moment? What was hunger, toil, privation, homesickness to me? I almost welcomed them, for ever behind them all was the thought that all were for you, for the day which was slowly, slowly creeping on, when I might stand before you and say: 'Alice, I have proved my love with a price. You may accept it, darling, without fear. It has been purified through fire.' And when, six months ago, my crowning success came, I started in search of you; but the long hardships had done their work. For months I was at Death's door, unable to write, or to let others write. Then, when I grew stronger, I said: 'I will wait until I can go to her.' You were sheltered, cared for, happy—aye, I was so mad as to think praying for me—I even thanked God that your prayers had restored my life and reason. I am as the man who toiled all his life in search of a glittering diamond, and when at length he picked it up triumphant, he discovered it to be a piece of shining glass."

"John, John! Forgive me," she pleaded, clinging with both hands to his arm, her face upturned in its pale beauty to his. I loved you then. Believe me, I loved you then."

Through the open window stole her words, paralyzing the form of an unseen listener, who had at that moment appeared upon the scene. What did it mean?

He heard not the man's answering words—"Forgive you? Never!"—but saw only his last, mad, passionate embrace as he snatched her unresisting form in his arms and covered her face with kisses which seemed half hatred and half love, then released her and went out into the night.

The next day a little note was put into John Maxwell's hand, and, as he tore it open, the strong man trembled like a child. He had grown calmer since the night previous, though all the joy and lightness had died out of his life.

"You have had your revenge," she wrote. "The man I was to marry saw you take me in your arms, and heard me say that I had loved you. Perhaps I deserved my punishment, but it is very bitter. You left me two years. If you had loved me you would not have done so. I was a child, and I forgot you and learned to love another. I no longer ask you to forgive me, since you have wreaked upon me your revenge."

His own life stretched bare and blank and desolate before him. For a moment he felt a wild joy that so hers might prove. The next, after a brief struggle, his manhood conquered. His revenge should be something nobler than a girl's wrecked life—something which, after long and lonely years, he might recall without a blush of shame.

Dent Dexter was alone in the cottage he had prepared for his bride, sitting with bowed head, when John Maxwell sought him out. The interview between them was very brief; but for an instant, as they parted, their hands met in a long, silent clasp. One man had given happiness—one had renounced it. So the wedding day was not postponed, but Alice's fingers trembled as she again fastened her wedding dress, and tears dimmed her eyes as she bent to fasten the orange blossoms in her breast on Christmas Eve.

She knew that Dent had taken her back to his heart and home, that somehow all had been explained to him; but quite how it all happened she never knew until, a year later, her husband bent over her where she lay with her baby boy sleeping on her breast, and told her all the story, ending with a proud glance at the child. "He gave us our happiness, darling. We will name our boy after the man who wreaked on us such a revenge."

CHARLES DICKENS' "CAROL."

Tremendous Work Done by the Author in Less Than Two Months.

Pre-eminent among Christmas books may be placed the "Christmas Carol" of Charles Dickens, which has always ranked among the most popular of his works. Rarely has a book which made so great an effect and took so high a place in public favor been produced under circumstances of such high pressure and in so short a space of time. The "ghost of an idea," which, as Charles Dickens said in his preface, gave birth to "this ghostly little book," came to him during a visit to Manchester in October, 1843, and the story was completed before the end of November, the time available for its composition being such spare hours as were not actually needed for the two numbers of "Martin Chuzzlewit," then in progress. It was a tremendous piece of work, and was not without a remarkable effect upon its author, young and vigorous as he was.

Writing to Professor Felton after the book was published, he said: "Over which 'Christmas Carol' Charles Dickens wept and laughed, and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner in the composition; and thinking whereon he walked about the black streets of London fifteen and twenty miles many a night when all the sober folks had gone to bed. . . . To keep the 'Chuzzlewit' going and, to do this little book in the odd time between two parts of it was pretty tight work."

The Christmas Pudding.

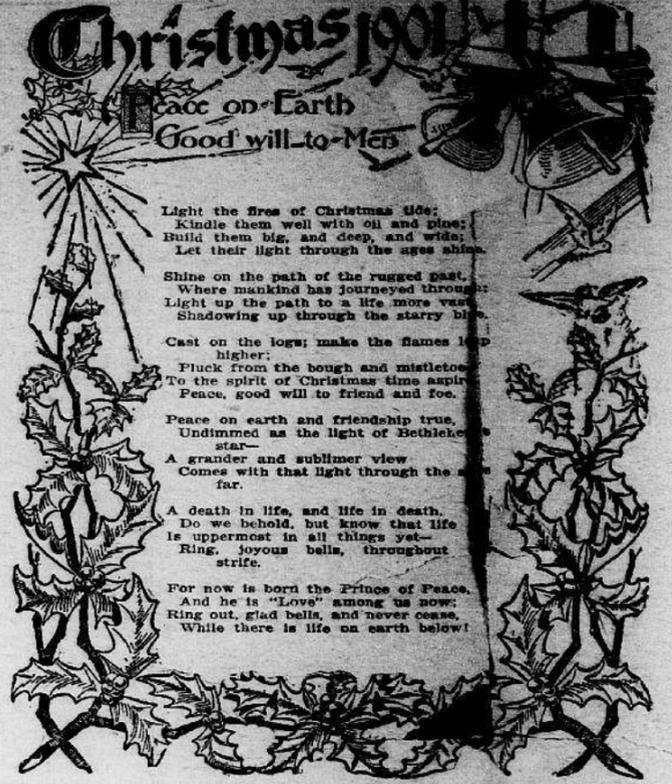
Provident housewives are now preparing their Christmas plum pudding. Plum pudding is much improved by standing several weeks before it is used. An excellent recipe for Christmas pudding consists of three-fourths of a pound of suet chopped very fine. Mix with it while chopping a tablespoonful of flour; three-fourths of a pound of raisins, seeded; three-fourths of a pound of currants, three-fourths of a pound of fresh bread crumbs, the grated zest of one lemon, one-fourth of a pound of candied orange peel and citron cut into thin shavings, one-half teaspoonful each of ground cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and allspice. Mix the dry materials together thoroughly and then add six eggs, one at a time, and one-half cupful of brandy. Add another egg if too stiff and more bread crumbs if too soft. Wet a strong cloth in cold water, wring it dry, butter it and dredge it with flour. Turn the mixture into the center and draw the cloth together over the top, leaving room for the pudding to swell a little, and tie it firmly. Give it a good round shape. Put it into a pot of boiling water, having it completely covered with water. Cover the pot and boil for five hours. Do not let the water fall below the pudding and in adding more let it be hot. After it is removed from the water let it rest in the bag ten minutes to harden a little. Then cut the string and turn it carefully into a dish. Before serving pour a little brandy, if you like, over the pudding and touch a match to it just before serving.

The Christmas Traveler.

When Christmas day dawns many a traveler will be unfortunate enough to find himself far from home with no prospect of getting there for the celebration of the greatest holiday of all the year. To many of these this necessary absence is a bitter misfortune, but there are others who have not the good fortune to deem it such a misfortune. They have perhaps no settled home or no relatives or no especial friends with whom they yearn to be on the festive day. But these people are comparatively few in numbers. Most of the people who are traveling on Christmas day are doing so because circumstances make it necessary. They are longing every minute of the day to be where they could join in the merriment and festivities with those who are dearest to them.

Time's New Leaf.

A new leaf is about to be turned in the Book of Time, and each one of us is almost a page nearer to the Finish which concludes life's history. The well-thumbed pages of the past—here illuminated with the prismatic pictures of hope, there blotted with the tears of sorrow—are turned down forever. Their contents are beyond revival. The items have been transferred to the records of eternity, and what is written there is written—there can be no erasures. But the white leaves of Futurity are before us—a new page is immediately under our hand.



Light the fires of Christmas tide; Kindle them well with oil and pine; Build them big, and deep, and wide; Let their light through the ages shine.

Shine on the path of the rugged past; Where mankind has journeyed through; Light up the path to a life more vast; Shadowing up through the starry sky.

Cast on the logs; make the flames leap higher; Pluck from the bough and mistletoe; To the spirit of Christmas time aspire; Peace, good will to friend and foe.

Peace on earth and friendship true, Undimmed as the light of Bethlehem star— A grander and sublimer view Comes with that light through the star.

A death in life, and life in death, Do we behold, but know that life is uppermost in all things yet— Ring, joyous bells, throughout strife.

For now is born the Prince of Peace, And he is "Love" among us now; Ring out, glad bells, and never cease, While there is life on earth below!

SANTA CLAUS, V. S.

His big blond mechanic looked awkward and out of place in the crowd of women shoppers at the toy counter. He seemed painfully conscious of the sharp contrast between his old working clothes and the stylish dresses of the ladies who jostled him on either hand. One given to studying the faces of Christmas shoppers would easily have read the question which makes Christmas the most pathetic as well as the happiest holiday in the year—the question, "Can I do it with the little money I have?"

At length the man caught the eye of a sales girl, and leaning over the counter said in a low voice:

"Say, miss, I've got a little feller at home that's been talking for months about Santa Claus bringing him a horse. I'd like to get him one if I can afford it. How much is this?" and he pointed to an equine paragon in front of him.

"That is three dollars," said the sales girl. "Best grade we've carried. You see it's covered with real horse hide and has a real hair tail and mane."

The mechanic shook his head hopelessly.

"Yes," he said, "it's a fine horse, all right, but I can't pay that much. I thought p'raps I could get something for a dollar—a smaller one, mebbe."

"I'm sorry," said the girl, sympathetically. "but we cleaned out every one of the cheaper kind this afternoon and this is the only one that's left of the three-dollar lot." Then suddenly her face lighted up. "Oh, say," she exclaimed, "wait a minute."

She dived under the table and came up with a counterpart of the horse they had been discussing; a counterpart, but with a broken leg and minus that very useful appurtenance, a tail. "There," she said, "I just happened to think of this! Somebody knocked it off the counter yesterday and broke the leg. The tail kept coming out anyway, and I guess it's lost now. You could have this for a dollar. Mebbe you could fix it all right."

The man examined the fracture seriously. "Why, that's easy," he said. "All it needs is to peel the hide up a little and splice the leg and then put on some of old Peter Cooper's saliva. Make it as good as new."

"And perhaps you can get some horsehair and make a tail. They're just tied in a bunch and put in with a plug."

"Oh, I'll fix that all right, miss. I've got an old bristle shaving brush that I can use. It'll be real stylish one of them hobnobbed coach horses, you know."

They both laughed.

"You're mighty good, miss, and I'm obliged to you."

"Oh, that's all right," said the girl. "I know how it is Christmas times myself," and she sighed as the customer turned happily away to play his part of Santa Claus, veterinary surgeon.

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tors on the model of the ecclesiastical polity of Calvin, having taken such firm root in Scotland the festival of Christmas, with other commemorative celebrations retained from the Roman calendar by the Anglicans and Lutherans, is comparatively unknown in that country, at least in the lowlands. The tendency to mirth and jollity at the close of the year, which seems almost inherent in human nature, has in north Britain been for the most part transferred from Christmas and Christmas Eve to New Year's day and the preceding evening, known by the appellation of Hogmanay. In many parts of the highlands of Scotland, however, and also in the county of Forfar, and one or two other districts, the day for general merry-making is Christmas.



Twine the bittersweet and holly Arched above the hearthstone's glow, Joy, not melancholy.

Came, inditing down the snow; In each face the frost's a-tingle, And afar on flying wing Comes the sleigh bell's rhythmic jingle Through December journeying.

Set the board and ask the blessing For the bounty surely spread, In the simplest words expressing "What a loving father said— 'Peace on earth—for this is nearest When the snows with us abide, And the winter air is clearest In the hush of Christmastide."

Bring the old musician's fiddle, Relic of the bygone days, Send the fiddler down the middle While the lulling music aways; Light of foot and quick of laughter Swing the dancers, toe and heel, As they pass or follow after In the quaint Virginia reel.

Deck the tree and light the candles, Let the stockings all be hung, For a saint with furry sandals Over the housetops high has swung; And his reindeer steeds are prancing Through the star-bespangled rime, And the moonbeams pale are glancing In the merry Christmastime.

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