

A CHRISTMAS CRIME

A Yuletide Tale of Two Homes

RIDGEWOOD had a thief! When I, Detective Martinet of the metropolitan secret service, was called out there, I found the town in a state of excitement over the robberies. The principal ones had taken place in the mansion of Colonel Payne, the richest man in Ridgewood.

There had been four burglaries at the Payne mansion. The first night silver was taken—small pieces consisting of spoons, forks, after dinner coffees and knives.

The second night a small rocking chair disappeared and several velvet covered footstools and nice little articles of bric-a-brac designed for Christmas gifts. The third night all the children's Christmas toys that had been carefully stored away in a Santa Claus cupboard by Colonel Payne and his wife, ready for Christmas eve, disappeared, and the fourth night the cellar was pillaged of its wine and fruits.

"Looks as if it was somebody inside the house," said the colonel after we had been over the ground pretty well.

"Not exactly," said I, "or why would they take a rocking chair?"

The party that accompanied me through the house consisted of the



"I NEVER SAW ANYTHING SO LOVELY," colonel and his wife, the oldest daughter, a girl of fifteen, and the colonel's private secretary, William Winter.

"This is the window they got in at the first night," said Winter, pointing to a bay window on the ground floor leading out of the dining room. "And this is the one they got in at the other nights," pointing to another big window that was in the staircase hall alongside the front door.

"Why didn't they always enter at the same window?" I asked carelessly.

"That's what bothers me," said Winter, "but you can go see for yourself that they didn't," pointing to trampled places under both of the windows.

"You see it was this way," said the colonel. "We were greatly alarmed the first night when the silver was taken, and we set a watch over the things. From that night to the present this house has been steadily guarded from the inside every night, from dark until daylight. And yet we have had three robberies during that time. It is the strangest thing I ever saw, and I'd give \$500 to catch the burglars."

"Are they operating anywhere else in Ridgewood?"

"Yes," said Winter promptly, "they tried to steal some things out of the church last night, and a week ago they broke into the office of the gas company."

"Are you familiar there?" I asked.

"Yes," said Winter.

"One thing more, colonel, before I go," I said. "Will you tell me the name of the person who was on guard in your house the last three nights?"

"I was the person," said Winter.

"All right, colonel," I said. "I am going back to the city today to stay about a week, but I will be back Christmas eve, and then I will look up your thief for you. And, by the way, you might get ready for your Christmas tree, for I expect to give you all your things back in time for your Christmas celebration."

The colonel looked skeptical and Winter shook his head sadly.

"Don't you think you had better stay here if you are going to look for him?" asked the colonel.

"No," I said. "It isn't necessary. Good day, you can look for me Christmas eve."

I said goodbye, but I didn't leave Ridgewood after all. I only went away far enough to hide myself in a certain little hotel in the little town, and there I waited and watched—did as slick detective work as I ever did in my life, even in a big city on the biggest robbery I ever had.

Christmas eve found me, not in the colonel's home, but out in the cold, frosty air, looking into the window of a little cottage. The cottage was the end one in a row of wooden houses, each with a grass plot around it. It belonged to William Winter, private secretary to Colonel Payne; and in the cottage lived Winter and his wife and Winter's wife's mother; also six little

Winters varying in age all the way from four to twelve years.

"I never saw anything so lovely in all my life, papa," the oldest Winter girl was saying as I pressed my nose against the glass and peered in through the narrow strip between the window sash and the casement.

There inside of the room stood a little Christmas tree upon a big box, and upon the tree and all around the foot of it stood dozens of beautiful Christmas gifts. Such a Christmas tree you never saw! There were little things in silver—spoons, forks, after dinner coffees and knives, and there was a rocking chair, also several little footstools and little articles of bric-a-brac, all newly covered with cheap chintz. And there were toys. Oh, so many toys! And upon the table at the side of the tree stood the best of wines and Christmas fruits.

"How sweet of you, Will!" Winter's pretty wife said as she threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. "How did you ever guess that I wanted all those silver things for the table?"

"And did you any one ever see such a son-in-law?" cried the old lady as her eyes fell upon the table with the wine and fruits.

"I have got the goodest papa in the world," yelled the six year old, while the others chimed in "Yeth" as they made a dive for the toys.

"I could sit in this rocking chair for my life," murmured Winter's wife, rocking herself back and forth with her feet on the gayly covered footstool.

"If it wasn't that I felt as if I wanted to get up and kiss you again," she said to Winter for the twentieth time as she looked around.

"Now go to bed, all of you," cried Winter, "and something extra for the one who starts first. Don't let me hear a word from you again until tomorrow morning at breakfast, and then we'll have Christmas all day."

He hustled them out of the room, and when I tapped on the door there was no one left downstairs to open it but he.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" I asked, stepping into the room and pointing to all the Christmas things.

"I don't know," said he, dropping down by the table and hiding his face in his hands. "I don't know, I am sure. It will kill her if you tell her."

"What made you take them?" I asked.

"Because he's got so much he doesn't know what to do with it," said Winter. "So I took them all easy like and thought it would blow over in a few days. You see, we have so many babies in our family," he added, "that there wasn't much left this year for Christmas, and the children have been talking about it every day for the last three months. It broke my heart to think I'd have to disappoint them, so I did the best I could for them."

"You watched the house all night for the colonel, did you?"

"Yes, except for about an hour; long enough to slip over here with an arful."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"God knows; I don't," he repeated. "It will kill her if you tell her."

"Do you want me to arrest you tonight, or will you wait until morning?"

"Christmas day!" he exclaimed, breaking down and beginning to cry like a baby. "I know I'm a wretch. Only kill me—do anything; but don't tell her."

It might have been that the spirit of Christmas was in the air. Perhaps the thought of those six little children and that sweet faced wife had a stronger influence than they should have had over a detective's heart. But I said to him, "Well, bundle up the things and come along with me, and we'll see what we can do about it."

We looked like two Santa Clauses ourselves as we slipped along the streets, choosing bylanes and cross paths to the Payne residence.

We got into the triangular lawn by a rear path and stole softly up to the house. There was the dining room brilliantly lighted and in the middle stood a tree all bare and waiting for gifts, just as I told the colonel to arrange it.

There was no one in the room, and after I had pried up the sash we stole in together. There was only just time to drop our packages on the floor at the foot of the tree and to rush away again before the colonel's daughter came in.

"Oh, papa," she cried, "here are some presents for us."

But I heard no more just then, for I was busy helping poor Winter get away. An hour later I rang the colonel's front door bell. He opened the door himself.

"Come right in," said he. "I guess you are a wizard tonight. Just after we got the Christmas tree set up and while we were upstairs getting our presents together to hang on the tree the thief came back and left the Christmas presents."

"Everything there?" I asked.

"Everything," said he, "down to the last teaspoon. We have counted them all. Poor fellow, he must have had a guilty conscience, and when it came Christmas eve he squared it with himself by sending back all he had stolen."

"Strange," said I.

"Very strange," said the colonel. "I'd like, if I knew who the thief was, to send him something for a Christmas present, just as a reward for his conscience. As it is I ask you, detective, not to look him up. He has evidently turned over a new leaf this Christmas eve."

"Evidently," said I.

"Now, detective," said the colonel, "I am going to ask you to stay with us over Christmas and enjoy a nice holiday. And so that we can all have an extra fine day I am going to send one of the boys over to Winter's house tonight with these things so that he can have a merry Christmas as well as the rest of us."—Minneapolis Tribune.

HOW BABGUSHKA FOUND THE CHRIST CHILD

By...
JEANNETTE H. WALWORTH

Copyright, 1902,
By Jeannette
H. Walworth

NIGHT was falling fast, and the snow was piled high against the outer walls of the hovel where a poor moujik (peasant) named Katoma lay dying in a little village in far-away Russia.

Katoma knew that he was going to die. It was Christmas eve, but there was no gladness in the season for him. His wife, whom he had loved very dearly, was already gone. For three consecutive years now his crops had failed. A few weeks before the wolves had devoured his last cow. If he had been entirely alone in the world he would have said to death, "Come; thou art welcome!"

But there was one other, his boy Ossip. The idea of death became terrible when he thought of leaving his boy all alone with not a copeck to bless himself with.

When I tell you that it takes 100 copecks to make a ruble and that a ruble is less than 60 cents, you will understand how dreadfully poor Katoma was.

He could not die peacefully for thinking of Ossip's future. His dim eyes turned fondly toward the pillow by his side, which the boy's thick black hair almost covered. Ossip lay motionless in sleep. The sick man put one feeble hand upon his boy's smooth forehead and silently commended him to heaven's care.

The house was very still. The hour was late. Ossip's healthy, regular breathing was the only audible sound. If only kind heaven would raise up one friend for his boy out of the millions of good people this big world swarmed with, Katoma felt that he should not mind how soon he was laid away under the frozen sods.

While his hand rested on Ossip's head and his heart was filled with these anxious thoughts the door of the hovel opened softly. The moujik turned wondering eyes in that direction, and there, coming noiselessly toward him across the beaten earthen floor, was a tall woman with soft brown eyes full of pitying tenderness.

She came close to the bed, on Ossip's side of it, and looking down upon the sleeping child, she muttered:

"Perhaps this is the one at last."

Katoma looked at her anxiously.

"Whence came you, good mother, and what seek you?"

Across the sleeping boy she answered softly:

"I have come for Ossip. They told me in the village that thy days were numbered, and I knew that Ossip would need a friend. I will love and

name, little one, and what doest thou here alone in the bitter nighttime?"

At which the child's tears flowed afresh, and between her sobs she told the kind, soft eyed woman how she had been traveling with a great company of men and women who were leaving their own village to seek a better land across the seas—our own blessed America, I make no doubt—and how, when they had encamped for the night, her aunt, who was the only relative she had in the world, had sent her into the woods to gather fagots to put under their soup kettle, and how she had wandered so far that she had



SHE TOOK THE CRIPPLED BOY IN HER ARMS, not been able to find her way back to the camp, and how she feared the wolves would devour her before any one should come to look for her. Then she told Baboushka that her name was Vasilissa.

Baboushka clasped the little wanderer to her great motherly heart.

"That, indeed, the wolves shall not, my dear little Vasilissa. I cannot give thee back to thy aunt, for I know no better than thou dost where this great company of men and women may be camping for the night. But thou shalt go home with Ossip and me. Thou shalt share our fire and our porridge, and all that is mine thou shalt share with Ossip. I can keep the wolves of hunger and cold away, and if any hunt comes to claim thee she shall find thee rosy and happy."

Then Vasilissa quickly dried her tears, and with her hand clasped in Baboushka's she trudged cheerfully forward until they came to a tiny little cottage set back from the road a short distance. In its one window a lamp was burning brightly.

The window and the lamp belonged to Baboushka's cottage. She pushed its unlocked door open, and the children entered with her into a clean swept, well warmed room.

A large chair was drawn close up to the hearth. As Baboushka entered she glanced eagerly at this chair, and again she muttered under her breath:

"I had hoped he might have come while I was out."

"Good mother," Ossip asked, "why do you leave a lighted lamp in the window when you go away?"

"So that," she answered, "should any one go astray in the cold and the dark he might find his way to my poor cottage. And now let us see if the bean broth has kept warm all this time. I made it before I left home in the early morning hours so that if any wanderers found their way hither they might not leave my roof hungry."

The bean broth had kept warm. She bade Ossip throw a few more fagots under the pot and set Vasilissa on a stool in the warmest nook. Then she brought three bowls, filled them with the bean broth and put them on the table. Over them she asked a blessing.

Before her own wooden spoon had made two journeys from bowl to lip she heard a timid knock at the door. She ran quickly to answer it. A tall, pale lad stood outside. In his arms he carried a small mite of a boy, about whose shoulders was wrapped a worn and soiled woman's shawl.

The tall, pale lad looked into the fire lighted room with longing eyes. His teeth chattered with the cold as he asked: "Good mother, may we ask shelter for the night? The cold bites bitter hard, and my little brother Petruska is but a sickly cripple."

Then Baboushka opened wide her door with an eager hand and fast beating heart. Perhaps, at last, this was the child. What she said aloud was:

"That indeed thou mayest. But why art thou abroad on such a bitter night with the little one?"

She took the crippled boy in her strong, loving arms and carried him



"I HAVE COME FOR OSSIP," care for him as though he were my very own. I am called Baboushka, and I keep my promises."

Then Katoma, the moujik, died happy, for he knew that Baboushka was a friend to all little children, and when she gathered Ossip close into her motherly arms when the end came the child ceased weeping for his dead father.

When Baboushka and Ossip were well on their way to the old woman's home, in the next village, they heard a pitiful sound of weeping somewhere on the tree shadowed side of the road.

The old woman stopped at the sound.

"We will go and see who is in trouble, Ossip. Our eyes and ears should always be kept well opened so that no sign of distress may escape us."

Guided by the sound, they came to a stone where, wailing and shivering in the darkness of the winter night, they found a little girl scarcely as large as Ossip, who was not at all well grown for his eight years.

Baboushka knelt down by the child and, gathering her cold little feet into a warm clasp, muttered:

"Perhaps this is the child."

Then she said aloud, "What is thy

"SAN MATEO"

It's all Florida.

The Nation's Best Cigar.

Why buy imported cigars, made from heavy tropical tobacco, doctored with opium and other drugs, when you can have the pure Florida leaf at a five-cent price?

Box of 25 \$1.00
Box of 50 \$1.75

FREE BY MAIL TO ANY ADDRESS.

S. W. ROWLEY, SAN MATEO, FLORIDA.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD
To St. Louis and Chicago

Pullman Palace Sleeping Cars from Jacksonville to St. Louis and to Chicago leaving Jacksonville daily at 8 p. m., via the famous

Dixie Flyer Route

Via A. V. & W. Ry., G. S. & F. Ry., C. of G. R. R., N. C. & S. L. Ry., and Illinois Central R. R. via Martin, Tenn.

For further information, rates and tickets apply to nearest ticket agent or

FRED D. MILLER, Traveling Passenger Agent, Atlanta, Ga.

DAYTONA TRANSFER CO.
PELLEGER & RIX, Proprietors.

Livery

Rubber Tire Carriages Fine Horses Careful Drivers

We are well equipped for "Straw Rides." The finest turnouts in the city. Buses meet all trains and take passenger to any part of the city. Trunks delivered promptly. Stables opposite Public School.

Telephone 27

FOUNTAIN CITY PHARMACY.
NORTH BEACH STREET

Has a Stock of.....

DRUGS FOR PRESCRIPTIONS, PATENT MEDICINES, BRUSHES, COMBS AND TOILET SOAPS.

Perfumery and Fancy Toilet Articles.

DR. J. M. JONES, proprietor, can be consulted professionally during business hours; office hours: Sundays, 9:00 to 10:30 a. m.; 2:30 to 4:30 p. m.

Northern Meat Market,
J. L. ODUM, Proprietor.

The Largest and Finest Market South of Jacksonville.

We keep a complete stock of all kinds of Fresh Florida and Western Meats.

113 North Beach Street.
Phone 37.

HALIFAX WAGON WORKS
J. A. GODWIN, Proprietor

FINE WAGONS CARRIAGES

Horse-Shoeing and General Blacksmithing and Repairing.

Near Bond Lumber Yard Daytona, Fla.

NORMAN S. DAYTON, LUMBER

Fully Kiln Dried Pine and Cypress Finishing Lumber, Flooring, Ceiling, Novelty and Bevel Siding.

Mouldings Shingles and Lath, Brick, Lime and Cement and Plaster of Paris.

Phone 17.
Magnolia Ave. and P. E. C. Ry. (West of Postoffice)
DAYTONA, FLORIDA.

BUNNELL'S
Saw and Planing Mills

are now prepared to furnish all kinds of

ROUGH AND DRESSED PINE

LUMBER

ON VERY SHORT NOTICE.

WE MEET ALL COMPETITION.

WORMS! VERMIFUGE!
White's Cream Vermifuge

Full supply of all kinds of electrical appliances and supplies always on hand.

Dr. Fine and Fortetaine Fund

Nov. 1, 1902 To Apptmt. 1902 Tax \$105.91

A. C. HAGERTY, East'n Pass. Agt., F. MIRONMONGER, Jr., Asst. Gen. Pass. Agt., 19 State St., New York, 204 West Bay St., Jacksonville, Fla.

THOS. D. HALEY, Local Frt. Agt., C. P. LOVELL, Asst. Supt., Foot Hogan St., Jacksonville, Foot Hogan St., Jacksonville.