



GOOD-NIGHT, sweet year, that brought to me
Dear friends to love, rare wealth to hold.
That gave me flowers for memory
More precious far than fleeting gold.
Good-night, sweet year, wherein I read
Full many a page with rare delight:
Thy latest hour will soon have fled
O, pleasant year, sweet year, good-night!

Good-night, sad year, that left away
Some hopes I cherished; gave the pain
Of disillusion; dimmed the day
With wrecks of labor wrought in vain.
Good-night, sad year, that sometimes knew
My pillow wet with bitter tears.
Good-night, sad year, that drifted too
Far hence on Time's black sea of years.

Good-night, blithe year, that to the home
Came smiling with so gay a face,
Bade roses bloom in hall and room,
Sent small feet pattering through the place.

That woke such bells of melody
As touch the eternal chords that ring
Where evermore the ransomed be
And saints for aye behold the King.

Good-night, brave year, that gave me strength
And helped my will to overcome
In struggles, where the foe, at length
Baffled and beaten, left me dumb.
Yet thrilling with victorious song!
Good-night, brave year! I fain would keep
Thy secret still to right the wrong.
But thou art weary. Rest and sleep.

Good-night, O year most sorrowful,
Seen from the earth side, ache and loss
And clouded dawns, and dear ones gone.
Have deeply stamped thee with the cross.
Good-night, O sorrowful, sweet year,
Sweet with the promise of the day,
Where heaven's own morning shall appear
And all the shadows flee away.
—Mrs. Margaret E. Sangster, in Congregationalist.



WHAT'S that, Lucy?"

The man lying on the low cot in the light of the lamp on a table at one side of a little cabin turned his head to one side and listened.

The young girl bent over him and for a moment looked into the wan face and deeply sunken, but brilliant black eyes.

"It's the wind, Paul. It's the old year going out, you know."

"But it's not midnight yet, girl? The boys haven't come back from the ledge—"

"Not yet. There, don't let such things worry you. They'll come by and by."

He turned away and closed his eyes while the girl crossed the floor and for half a minute listened at the door.

"The boys!" she said, under her breath. "It's been that way for a week. They'll never come, and I can't tell him. I dare not tell him that he is the sole survivor of the Katydid mine disaster, for he would want to know how it happened. I'm a strong young woman, but not quite strong enough to break such news to him; no, not yet."

Half a minute later Lucy Moore came back to the cot and discovered that the miner had dropped into a deep sleep. The Katydid mine had been wiped out in the twinkling of an eye by the work of unknown scoundrels, and Paul Draper had managed to crawl from the debris to be picked up a day later and carried to the mountain home of the girl who loved him.

Lucy understood it all. She knew of the feud; she had heard of the threats made by the ruffians across the divide, and the moment she looked upon Paul's unconscious form she guessed the truth. The villains had simply dynamited the Katydid mine, and the wonder was that even one man was left to tell the tale.

New Year's day was to have witnessed their wedding, but for some time it had looked more like a burial as Paul hovered between life and death, his figure wasted away and his sufferings terrible. But she had watched over him with unceasing fidelity. She had been his constant companion since his narrow escape, and whenever his mind wandered he wanted to know when "the boys" would come. The boys would never come, for they slept on the mountain side, and Lucy had not strength to tell him the truth.

For some time that night the girl continued to sit at the cot, her gaze riveted upon the white face of her betrothed. The ticking of a clock on a rough shelf nailed to the wall sounded like the strokes of a trip-hammer, but Lucy did not look up. She watched the sleeper and her thoughts were with him.

Suddenly she heard a noise that startled her from her chair. She went to the door and put her ear against it while again she sent a swift glance toward Paul.

She had for several days expected a visit from the surgeon across the mountain and he might be there.

She listened till she heard steps outside and then, with a thrill of joy, she laid her hand on the stout barricades of the frontier door.

"The doctor at last!" said Lucy under her breath, as, without more ado, she took down the plank and opened the portal.

But the next moment she fell back with a cry that seemed to drive all the blood from her cheeks, and she stood in the middle of the room staring at the tableau before her. In the room stood a stalwart Indian and Lucy instinctively glanced toward the couch.

For a moment it seemed as if the mountain girl would sink to the floor, but suddenly she threw herself between the savage and Paul and stood like a statue there.

"They are coming," said the Indian, pointing at the door. "The wolves of the divide are out yonder."

"Aren't they satisfied with their work?" cried Lucy. "Haven't they done enough? They blew up the Katydid—"

The interruption was a sudden spring by the Indian and the door, left slightly ajar, was hurled to with almost crushing force. At the same time something seemed to fall against it from the outside, but the palms of the Indian were against the planks and with his whole strength he was holding the enemy at bay.

Lucy watched the red man as he pitted his powers against the horde at the door, and for a little while she feared that the portal would be broken down by the foe.

"Lucy! Lucy!"

Her name came from the couch and as the girl turned she saw Paul sitting bolt upright, his gaze riveted upon her.

"Why don't the boys come?" he asked.

With a sharp cry Lucy threw herself upon the floor beside the miner.

"They don't care for me. What's the matter with the K. did mine, Lucy?"

"It's all right," was the forced answer from the mountain girl. "The boys will come. They can't get away just now—"

Crash! came something against the door, and the Indian seemed lifted from the floor as he recoiled away, but for a second only. Again he braced himself and his eyes seemed to emit sparks of fire.

"We want Paul— Paul, the mine boss!" came from outside. "We have come for him and—"

Lucy turned back and caught up the barricade, but the Indian swept the proffered plank aside.

His feathers touched the door; the heron plumed his long hair brushed the planks, but his muscles did not quiver.

"The boys! the boys! I say, Lucy," came from the sufferer's couch. "I'm going back to the Katydid myself and find them."

"No, no! You can't go," and Lucy again threw herself beside Paul and pushed him gently back. "They are out there."

"The boys, Lucy?" asked the victim of the plot.

"Yes, yes!"

A strange light came into Paul's eyes and his long fingers fastened themselves about Lucy's white wrist.

"What's to-morrow?" he asked, catching her eye.

"It's New Year's day."

"I—I thought so. And the boys are coming to the wedding?"

The girl looked away afraid to let him see her troubled face; but his hand tightened its grip at her wrist.

The stoical Indian at the door did not stir. He had braced himself like an iron post and seemed oblivious to everything but the act he was performing. Lucy wondered how long he could hold the door against the men outside. She did not hear them now, but she did not doubt that they still stood on the steep ready to take advantage of anything in their favor.

Suddenly a heavy blow struck the door and Lucy heard her name spoken.

She left Paul and went forward.

"We've come to the wedding, girl," said a voice and there was a half suppressed laugh on the outside.

Lucy did not speak, but her heart came into her throat unbidden and with a thrill of terror.

"We know he's here. Something spared him—spared him for you, girl," continued the spokesman of the band. "We only want to see him and ask him a few questions."

"But your mission means more than that," spoke Lucy, clasping her hands as she spoke. "You are the men from across the divide—you are from Death Valley camp."

"She's located us squarely," she heard a rough voice say. "You can't fool the girl in there. Tell her something else."

Lucy's face seemed to flush at these words and she looked at the Indian.

"White girl no believe the wolves," said he, his dark eye falling upon her for a moment.

The mountain maid shook her head.

"White wolves no tell the truth," the Indian replied. "They want scalp. They can't come in while the Elk is at the door."

Silence prevailed for a moment and then the blow was repeated.

"Two minutes, miss," said a gruff voice. "We are coming in!"

The Elk heard as well as did the girl and in another instant he let one foot slip a little behind its mate. That movement, slight as it was, meant preparation for the worst; but the Indian did not speak.

"Let the boys in, please do, Lucy," came from the couch in the corner. "I want to know what's kept them away. The old Katydid—"

Once more with a cry Lucy sprang to the couch and bent over the attenuated figure thereon.

"It's not the boys of the Katydid, Paul. Pardon me. I told an untruth before. They're the men from across the divide. They want you, you!"

With frightened face the fair speaker threw a look toward the door and saw the figure braced there, a living barricade of flesh and blood.

As she looked the assault came. One of the men outside threw himself against the door, the portal shook from top to bottom and the moosecased foot of the Indian seemed to slip half an inch—that was all. Lucy caught halfway the cry that welled from her heart and watched the human barricade. The lips of the Indian were compressed and his eyes watched the door before him. He seemed in his element, but not a sound escaped him.

winter mountains his sleep vanished and his eyes unclouded.

Paul turned his head and caught the radiant face of the gentle watcher and in another moment his gaze fell upon a darker face near by.

"Who's that, Lucy?" he asked. "You didn't let that redskin in last night, did you?"

"He came in without asking, Paul. Fortune sent him," she whispered, bending over the wounded man. "But for our red brother you would not have seen the dawning of the New Year."

"And consequently have lost my little sweetheart, eh?"

"Yes, Paul," and Lucy took the thin hand of her lover and placed it in the strong one that had saved both of them from the hands of the divide, making bright for them the New Year which was to witness the fruition of their fondest hopes.

T. C. HARBAUGH.

CHRISTMAS GIVING.

It Has Upon It the Stamp of the Divine and the Spiritual.

The fact that Christmas giving is an exchange of things often not needed, and that it tends to mutual loss rather than mutual gain—which is the law of barter—elevates it far above trade. The perennial benevolence which finds its expression in Christmas giving has the stamp of the divine and the spiritual upon it, and it argues that there is something more in man than the mere materialist sees there.

look; and behold! the hay is all gone, and the shoes are brimming over with toys and sweetmeats! Then the children clap their hands with glee, and wish they could only have waked in time to see the pony munching his oats. That would have been such fun!—Ella F. Mosby, in St. Nicholas.

A BOGUS SANTA CLAUS.

A Change in Blinky Bangs' Christmas Programme.

Blinky Bangs chuckled and confided to himself that he was a genius as he started forth that stormy Christmas eve. Under his long ulster he wore the familiar uniform of Santa Clans, perfect in every detail.

At the big house overlooking the river only the children and one "trusty" servant were at home, for the others of the household had commenced the festivities of the merry season. Blinky was to be admitted by the servant, and, as good Kriss Kringle, entertain the little ones while securing all the valuable plunder to be had.

When they saw this perfect counterfeit of the jolly reindeer driver, they at first stood in wide-eyed wonder till the sturdy little Ben advanced with extended hand and quaintly welcomed the hoped-for guest. This did not disturb the trusted guest, but had so long imprisoned Blinky's better nature, but when the fairy-like Ruth, with her crown of waving yellow hair and glistening blue eyes, rushed forward and from the vantage point of a chair threw her arms about the neck of the bogus Santa Claus, Blinky felt that there was a breaking up in his chest. When she kissed him and told him how they all loved him, Blinky used his sleeve with its snowy coating of wool to relieve the dimness of his vision.

As they clung to Blinky and chorused their greetings, he was confused as never before in his professional career as a burglar. His first impulse was to go out and loot some toy store and deliver a wagon load of the proceeds at the big house. But, for some reason he could not understand, this was utterly repugnant to his new feelings. He took the "trusty" servant into the hallway, said something that put that unworthy in a tremble, slipped him a bill and sternly told him to be back in half an hour.

When the children should have been asleep in bed, the older members of the family returned to find them in the midst of a romp that filled the great house with merriment. Blinky was making good time around the room on all fours with the children on his back, not playing horse, as Ben proudly announced, but elephant. About them was a profusion of gifts that the servants had brought and Blinky, in his assumed role, had distributed in a way to win the hearts of the youngsters. The master of the house was surprised, but not so much so as Blinky, whose instinctive impulse was to jump through a window. But the little ones were clamorously singing his praises. To them he was Santa Claus, and he looked the part. He was accepted as some good-hearted eccentric and again made welcome. He took on an immense amount of self-respect that night, and now for several years has been in charge of the stables at the big house, looking after the premises and the children with a faithfulness that makes him invaluable.—Detroit Free Press.

St. Nicholas.

St. Nicholas, as the patron saint of the children, now termed Santa Claus, was canonized, died, according to tradition, at Myra, Italy, and was there buried in the cathedral crypt. Six hundred years later his body was taken to Bari, and there in the eleventh century the great priory of San Nicholo was built. It is at that priory that on May 9 each year the festival of St. Nicholas is held with great rejoicing by pilgrims from all parts of the world.

Mamma's Fault.

"Mamma, I'm afraid that money you gave me to spend for Christmas won't go round."

"Not go round?"

"No, mamma, not after I get what I want myself."

"Why, you extravagant little scamp!"

"It's all your fault, mamma; you shouldn't have encouraged such expensive tastes in me."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Don't Make a Mistake.

Just because your wife tells you to buy her something useful, don't think she will be satisfied if you send her home a barrel of flour.—N. Y. Truth.

HOPE FOR HIM.



"You know what will happen if I catch you under the mistletoe," simpered Chumpley.

"Yes, and I'm so hopelessly absent-minded," she simpered in response.—Detroit Free Press.

A Suggestion.

If you find it so difficult to keep your New Year's resolutions, perhaps it would be a good idea to make a few bad ones this time, for a change. For instance, you might resolve to be cross to your wife (if you have one) every day during the year, and then give her gentle words and loving kisses instead. You can thus be consistent with your past record, and may possibly be a better man when another year rolls around.

A Last Request.

Her father had said it could never be. They both sat in the parlor—also in tears.

After long searching and a desperate effort she found her voice. Then, in despairing tones, she cried: "Oh, Charley! If we must part, let us wait till after Christmas."—Philadelphia North American.

SERIOUS CONTEMPLATION.



The Conventional "Old Year"—To think I looked like that twelve months ago!

What She Will Do.

Maude—Oh, Clara, I've just bought the loveliest pink shawl for a Christmas present.

Clara—Yes; whom are you going to give it to?

"I don't know. It's so pretty I think I will keep it myself."—N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

The True Spirit.

Gift giving at Christmas time is, or ought to be, nothing more than a manifestation of the Christmas spirit, which is unselfish, seeking only to make others happy. Every one who has been moved by this spirit has realized the truth of the saying: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The Next Want.

"There!" she said, with a sigh of relief. "I've got a locomotive, a wagon, a mechanical acrobat and a hose reel. That ought to satisfy the dear little angel!"

"It ought to, but it won't," said her husband. "The little villain will want a hammer to smash them with."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Sacred Trees.

The oaks upon which the mistletoe grew were sacred to the Druids in days of old, and they used to worship under them in the most solemn and devout way. When hung up in a room or hall, the beautiful pearly berries were thought to possess the power of keeping away evil spirits and influences.

Sensible Jimmie.

"Jimmie," asked his mother, "why are you so persistent about going to your Uncle John's for Christmas?"

"Cause he ain't got none of them smoke consumers on his chimbleys. Santa Claus kin git inter his house."—Detroit Free Press.

Why Not for a Whole Year?

"Christmas comes but once a year," said Uncle Eben, "but dar an no 'jections ter anybody's makin' de cheerfulness an' jinnosity ob it hold ovah fo' 12 months, ef he wants ter."—Washington Star.

Shared the Common Lot.

"Were you ever held up?"

"I should say so."

"When?"

"Every Christmas."—Chicago Record.



HE HAD BRACED HIMSELF LIKE AN IRON POST.

A strained silence of half a minute elapsed when again the door was charged. The man outside threw himself against it with the same result, only this time the moosecased foot did not slip. It kept its place.

The Elk seemed made of iron; his veins stood out on his half naked figure like whipcords, and, giant-like, he kept his self-assigned post.

"Take down the barricades, girl," said the leader of the band.

In spite of herself the mountain girl smiled. They did not know that the Elk was the barricade.

"Twice more the door was assaulted with the same impetuosity; but the defender of the pair did not move.

At last the Elk looked down into the face beside him and caught Lucy's eye.

"The wolves have gone, girl," said he. "They could not break the Indian's arm."

Gone? No. In another second a fist struck the portal and a voice exclaimed:

"A happy New Year to you, miss. We guess you've won him fairly. You've nursed him through and you kin have the last survivor of the Katydid disaster. Good night, girl," and then Lucy heard footsteps as the band retreated, but the Indian still kept his strong hands at the well guarded planks.

It was a long night for the mountain girl, but she had a companion in her vigil, for she would not let the redskin depart. Slowly over the wild landscape broke the first morning of the New Year, and Paul slumbered, dreamless of the shadows that engulfed him during the night just passed. At last as the sun kissed the tips of the



THE DAY IS GONE, THE BIRDS ARE STILL;
CALM FALLS THE NIGHT, AND CLEAR AND CHILL;
THE STARS SHINE OER THE FROSTY HILL.

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS ARE PEALING LOW,
FAR OFF, BUT AS THE NIGHT WINDS BLOW,
THEY BEAR THE SOUND IN ESS AND FLOW.

THE LONG AGO.

SWEET MUSIC FILLS THE PEACEFUL AIR,
AND DREAMS THAT ALL ALIKE MAY SHARE
HAVE CHASED EACH ANXIOUS THOUGHT AND CARE.

DREAMS OF OUR DISTANT CHILDHOOD'S HOME,
OF FAITHFUL HEARTS AFAR THAT ROAM,
OF MEETINGS IN THE DAYS TO COME.

RING, SWEET-VOICED BELLS, AFAR AND NEAR;
SPEAK TO THE HEARTS WE HOLD MOST DEAR
ASSURANCE OF GOOD FAITH AND CHEER!

FOR CHRISTMAS COMES WITH GENIAL GLOW,
AND BEARS ALIKE TO HIGH AND LOW
FOND MEMORIES OF THE "LONG-AGO."