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**Christmas Bells.**  
O! that the joyful sounding bells!  
What is the tale their music tells?  
'Tis but the oft-repeated strain  
First heard on Judah's star-tinted plain.  
When shepherds, watching flocks by night,  
Saw round them shine a wondrous light,  
And trembling heard the angels say:  
"Fear not—so you are born this day."  
A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord!"  
The heavenly host with one accord  
Joined with the angel, saying, then:  
"Peace on earth, good will to men!"  
No messenger in angel guise  
Comes now before our mortal eyes;  
Nor evermore in our dull ears  
Shall sound a voice from Heavenly spheres:  
Nor need we, like the men of old,  
Wander to seek with gifts and gold,  
The babe who in the manger lay,  
In "Nativity" city far away!  
Let at our doors he waits to take  
The gift none is too poor to make—  
A heart which will His love receive,  
And humbly say, "Lord, I believe!"  
For this—the bells at Christmas ring!  
"Good tidings of great joy" they bring!  
For "whoso" will at length may see  
Him who once walked in Galilee!

**"NUGGET."**  
A CHRISTMAS STORY.

Miss Hanford's little village shop looked unusually festive just before Christmas, with its strings of cheap, but brightly painted tin toys, its gay cards, and wonderful display of wasted work, to say nothing of the evergreen bush that adorned the window, hung with a variety of tinsel ornaments that glittered like silver and gold whenever the sun struck them. To-day, however, no flattering sunbeam dances that way, for old Sol has hidden his face beneath a heavy gray veil, and a thick snow is falling quietly but steadily, as though it meant business, and Miss Hanford's face is almost as gloomy as the sky overhead, while she matches crewels, and selects needles for pretty Mrs. Pulsifer, the Doctor's wife. "It will be a white Christmas, after all," says that cheery little woman, while the materials to complete her husband's slippers, are being tied up, "which, they do say, is bad for doctors."

"Yes, 'A green Christmas makes a fat churchyard' and no mistake," sighs Miss Hanford.  
"Any sort of Christmas makes a fat pocket-book for you, I suppose," laughs Mrs. Pulsifer. "Not this year. The new shop with plate-glass windows, up the street, has cut into my trade sadly; but thank the Lord, Tom Tucker and I don't need much," and Miss Hanford patted a big black and white cat dozing on one end of the counter. "It is sort of lonesome, though, livin' all alone, specially about Christmas. Sometimes I get dreadful blue, and down in the joints." "No wonder, poor thing!" rejoins Mrs. Pulsifer, sympathetically. "You ought to have my three young rogues; you'd never have time to be dull, then. But, good-bye; I mustn't chatter another minute; all the ornaments for the stockings are to be bought yet."

"That's it!" exclaimed Miss Hanford, as the shop-door shut with a slam. "That's just it I'm an old maid, and ought to be used to livin' alone, dear knows I but, Christmas seems to stir up all the sociable feelin's in my nature, and I'd a'most be willin' to give the trade them plate-glass windows they left me, to hev a leetle critter to cuddle up, and make just such 'a Christmas' for, as Cy, and I used to hev, when we were youngsters, in the old red farmhouse. Tom Tucker, why ain't you a baby! to which pussy only responded by a blink of his green eyes, and purred harder than ever."

"Tinkle-tinkle!" rang the shop-bell, and two eyes appeared on a level with the counter, surmounted by a shock of shaggy hair, and a shrill voice piped, "Please, Miss Hanford, ma sent me over for a three-cent loaf, and wants to know if you will trust her a few days longer." The little country store was very mixed in its contents, and kept bread and cake as well as toys and worsted.

"Hey! is that you, Patsy Batt! Tell me, Patsy, my child, how's your poor, sick pa to-day?"

"Very bad! Ma, she's been up with him all night, and most cried her eyes out."

"Then you won't hev much of a Christmas to your house, to-morrow?"

"No; ma says, Santa Claus sent word he couldn't come this year; and a big sob choked the child's utterance."

"Poor little critter!" muttered Miss Hanford, under whose rather stiff exterior beat the kindest heart in the world. "There, you take seed cake over to your ma, with my compliments," and as the tiny girl opened her mouth to express her thanks, she popped in a sugar plum, and laughed heartily at the amazed face that nodded good-bye, and disappeared across the road.

"It's mighty curious, how queer things are arranged in this world!" so illoquized Miss Hanford; "Not that I want to question the ways of Providence; but there is Mrs. Batt, with four youngsters, and not so much as a peppermint-dreap to put in their stockings; and here am I, with a lot of knick-knacks gettin' stale on my hands (thanks to them plate-glass windows), and pinin' to make 'a Christmas' for somebody, and not a kith nor kin belongin' to me, that I know of, for I brother Cy, had a hen in the flesh, he'd a turned up like a bad penny, long be-

fore this, surely! It's a mystery, and no mistake!"

At that moment her eye fell upon a card lying on the top of a pile of paste-board souvenirs, and took it up. It represented a lady and child feeding a flock of robins, and below was printed, "At Christmas, open wide my heart!" "That's purty!" said Miss Hanford. It makes me think of the Christmas sheaf we used to hang out for the birds. They were no kith nor kin, and if to birds, why not to batts? Yes, I'll do it! and the happy thought fairly irradiated the rugged face, even as the gleam of sunlight that just then shone through a rift in the clouds made the tinsel ornaments in the window sparkle and glitter like a hundred Christmas candles. The new idea was more fully developed that evening over Miss Hanford's solitary cup of tea and plate of hot buttered toast in the wee parlor back of the shop, while Tom Tucker sat by, like his namesake, 'singing for his supper' and keeping up a duet with the kettle that hummed and spluttered on the stove, and to the good woman their song seemed to be,

Christmas comes but once a year,  
But when it comes it brings good cheer.  
And when the rush of Christmas Eve  
Business was over, the shutters barred,  
and the quiet of night had descended upon the little snowbound village, the evergreen was removed from the window to the back parlor and made more gorgeous than ever with red, white, and blue tapers, cornucopias, and a veritable St. Nicholas, with reindeer and pack.

"I feel 'most as if I were makin' it for one of my own," said Miss Hanford, as she surveyed the result of her labors and tried on her nightcap; there was a happy glow at her heart as she said her prayers and went to bed, that lasted into the Christmas dawn and all throughout the service in the old, gray, vine-covered church, although few had wished her the season's greetings and no gift graced her lonely morning board.

The overland express from the Pacific Coast, comes steaming and thundering along over a wide, snow-ey expanse of flat country, and draws up at a snort at a desolate little wooden station, standing almost alone in the middle of a great prairie. Eager passengers crowd to doors and windows, glad of anything to break the monotony of their long journey, and the sight that meets their eyes is novel enough to keep them there. A group of miners in rough attire, with bronzed faces and unkempt beards, are clustered about the little girl of some eight or nine years, clad in a costume strange to the petted darling of fashion, but warm and comfortable for that bitter winter weather. A gown of coarse scarlet flannel, such as men's shirts are formed of, and a rudely-fashioned fur coat and cap, made by loving but unskillful fingers. Nothing, however, can mar the winsome beauty of the little maid, whose brown eyes are dewy with tears, as she circles round the neck of one of the men, and holds up her lips, to be kissed by all the others.

"You will look after my gal, and take her safe," says the tall man who holds her, with a break in his voice, to the conductor, as he presses a generous fee into his hand.

"And give her the very best of everything," puts in another, while he draws a sleeve across his eyes; "nothin'! I reckon, is too good for our Nugget."

"The luck of the camp will go with her, I'm afraid," groans another; and then the engine blows the signal for departure, and amid sobs and hand-shakes the child is lifted to the platform and waves farewell, while the group of men shout, "Give the little 'un a send-off—Hurray! for the Nugget of Gold Ore Camp!" and loud cheers awaken the echoes as the conductor enters the pullman car, leading the wee girl by the hand.

The passengers are deeply interested and crowd round, to inquire the history of the new-comer. "She is not exactly a passenger," says the gentlemanly official, "as she is sent by express; but I can't put her in the express car. There is her label," and he pointed to a card tacked on the sleeve of the little fur coat, and addressed to

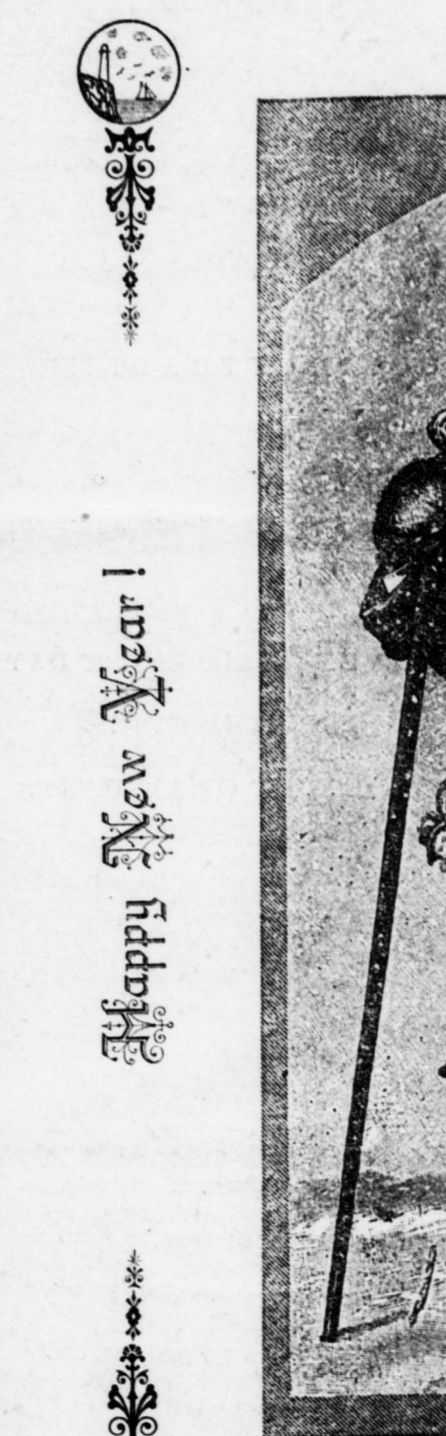
"Miss Hannah Hanford,  
Hollywell,  
N. Y."

"That's my aunt!" and I am her Christmas present from Pop. Poppy Sam says, I can get there in time for Santa Claus to fill my stocking."

"What is your name, little dear?" asked sweet-faced Mrs. Farnsworth, drawing the little stranger to a seat beside her. "Nugget!" "Nugget! But that is not a name; have you no other?"

"Prize Nugget of Gold Ore Camp! That's all. The men gave it to me, 'cause they say, I'm worth my weight in gold. Never had any luck at the mines till I came there. Sometimes they call me 'Nug,' for short."

"What is your father called; for I suppose, one of these men is your father?"



"They are all my Poppies: Poppy Sam, Poppy Jack, Poppy Kit, and Poppy Peter; but big Pop Cy, is my real true one; and oh! I don't know what they will do without their Nugget!" And the bonny little face grew very sober at the thought.

"Have you no mother?" asked Mrs. Farnsworth.

"No. She went to Heaven three years ago, when the partridge berries were ripe, and Pop Kit says, it's a nicer place than even Redskin Canon."

"And you have lived with these rough men ever since?"

"They are not rough!" cried the child, flashing up in an instant; "they are Nugget's dear, darling Poppies, and I love them, and shall go back to cook for the 'mess,' just as soon as I learn to read and write, and keep house like a lady; and she burst into a wild fit of weeping, and was only pacified by many gentle words and a sight of the little curtained berth in the sleeping-car, which she was to occupy during her trip."

The pain of parting over, however, Nugget became as happy as a lark, and the pet and plaything of all on the train. Her little red gown flattered up and down the narrow aisle, like some bright tropical bird; her golden head peered into every crack and corner, and her quaint speeches were a constant fund of amusement, while her brown eyes opened in surprise at all the new things she was constantly seeing and hearing, for she was as simple and ignorant, as well as fresh and sweet, as a prairie flower transplanted from Western wilds. The great cities they passed through were a perpetual wonder, and she was never weary of gazing out of the window, until just as they left Chicago, a heavy snow-storm set in, so thick and dense as to shut out all the scene.

It was very strange, whirling along through this white mist, and gradually the train moved slower and slower, the engine seeming to have to work its way through deep drifts, until on rising one morning, the passengers found themselves at rest, and were informed they had come to a stand-still in the dead country, and could go no further until the snow-plows which had been telegraphed for, should come to dig them out.

"We should be in New York to-night," said the conductor, "but it looks very much as though we should spend our Christmas on the road."

"Oh! oh! oh!" came a chorus of disappointed voices.

"To-night is Christmas Eve, sure enough!" said Mr. Grundy, a jolly-faced old bachelor, and then looked down to see a dismayed little face peering up into his. "Well, Nugget, what is it?"

"Isn't that the night Santa Claus comes?"

"I believe it is! It's lucky he didn't travel by this train."

"But he won't know where to find me!" cried Nugget, in alarm; "he will never think of looking for me in a snow-bank!"

"Sure enough; but I guess Aunt Hannah will tell him you are coming, and have the stocking filled."

"No, she won't; for she don't know it herself. I don't believe she knows there's such a little gal as me in the world. Pop said, she didn't."

"Well, that's strange; but, never mind, Nugget will be as merry as she can, even if we are snow-bound. I'm going out now, to explore, and may be I'll see a snow-bird, to send a message to Santa Claus by." And the cheery old fellow tramped off, leaving his little friend somewhat comforted.

He came back an hour later, with his arms full of pine, laurel, and holly, and the ladies amused themselves in decorating the parlor cars, hanging wreaths, in the windows, and festooning garlands along the sides, until it was transformed into a perfect green bower.

But Nugget was unusually quiet all day, although she helped to bunch the 'greens,' and when she had hidden her friends good-night, and was tucked away in her berth, sobbed herself to sleep, overcome with disappointment and homesickness.

"See, isn't that pathetic!" It was Mrs. Farnsworth who spoke, pointing to a little red stocking pinned to the curtain of the child's bed, which she had hung there in the faint hope that the snow-birds might tell St. Nicholas of her whereabouts.

"Can't we fill it with something?" asked Mr. Grundy. "I'll drop a bright silver-dollar in the too." And he smiled the action to the word.

"They gave me some rosy apples and a few nuts over at yonder farm-house to-day," said Fred Howell, and they rattled in after the silver.

The conductor, who was a Yankee, and handy with the knife, carved some funny little animals out of wood, and a young lady contributed a pretty blue hair-ribbon, while, to crown all, Mrs. Farnsworth made her way to the baggage car, and managed to open her trunk, and bring out a beautiful wax-doll that she was carrying to her own niece. "I can buy Ellie another, in New York," she said, and fastened the doll to the top of the stocking.

Christmas dawned in a flood of sunshine, and the occupants of the second sleeper on the eastward-bound train were awakened at an early hour by glad shouts from section 7, where Nugget was sitting up in her bed, investigating the treasures hidden in her Santa Claus stocking, and "Merry Christmas!" resounded from behind the curtains on all sides.

"He came; the good Santa Claus came, after all!" cried Nugget, in wildest glee; "and I am sure, the snow-birds sent him and—good news—the conductor told them that the track had been cleared and that they would be off in ten minutes."

So this railroad Christmas was not so bad, after all; for the travelers gathered together in the pine-decked parlor car, where merry games and sweet carols made the hours fly. Nugget was the guest of the gay, the blue snood binding her soft yellow hair; and, hugging her first real doll closely in her arms, never realized that she was an express package, until Hollywell was reached just after dark. More sad good-byes had then to be said, and she was turned over to the tender care of an expressman, with a covered wagon and pair of prancing horses.

The cosy parlor behind Miss Han-

ford's shop was a vision of comfort and homely cheer on that Christmas night, with the crimson curtains drawn, and a glorious fire crackling merrily on the hearth. And the well-washed faces of the four little Batts reflected all the brightness that they gathered around the simple Christmas tree twinkling with tiny lights, and made their mouths into round O's with delight. Miss Hanford bustled about like a motherly old hen, passing doughnuts, filling mugs of sweet cider, and distributing the little gifts of which she had robbed the store, to gladden the occasion.

How the tongues ran! How Tommy Batt beat his big drum, and Mat tooted his tin trumpet! How Fletty hid behind the sofa, to read her new fairy book, and how Patsy expressed a coveted doll, with rose cheeks, wild with delight! While Christmas cheer and charity reigned over all.

"It is a shame!" exclaimed Mat, as he set down his mug, drained of the last drop; "every one has a present, except Miss Hanford; it isn't fair!"

"It is enough for me to see you so happy at my little party," their hostess opened her mouth to say, when she was interrupted by a tremendous knocking at the front door, and hurried off in a flurry, to open it.

There stood a very large man and a very small girl, looking like the big bear and the little bear of the old fairy story, wrapped in their fur coats.

"Here, Miss Hanford, I've brought you a jolly Christmas-box this time, and no mistake," said the big bear; "express charges all paid."

"Bless us, and save us!" cried Miss Hanford, feeling for her spectacles; but the man had disappeared and the little bear was clinging to her skirts and stammering out, "You're Aunt Hannah, I know, and please, I'm Nugget, from Gold Ore Camp. Pop says, I'm to live with you, and go to school; and here is a paper to tell you all about it."

Three minutes later, Miss Hanford was reading a letter from her long-lost brother Cy, in which he begged her to care for his motherless girl, crying and laughing over Nugget, while she warmed the child's hands at the fire, and feeling that she was no longer all alone in the world.

Now I know why I wanted so to make a Christmas tree, she thought, as the graceful little figure danced round the evergreen, exclaiming with delight, "It is ever so much prettier than the trees in Redskin Canon, and must have grown in Heaven, I am sure," while the quartette of Batts sat by in surprised silence.

And then the quaint little child drew from beneath her scarlet gown an old blue woolen sock that was fastened about her waist. It was filled with rich gold dust and ore, a gift from 'Cy Hanford to his dear sister Hannah.'

So Miss Hanford had her Christmas present after all, and said it would more than make up for all she had lost by the new store, while visions of a plate-glass window in her own little shop, danced through her head.

It was a perfect evening to all, except Tom Tucker, who considered his nose out of joint, and sang in vain for his supper, until Hettie took compassion on him and gave him half a doughnut.

"Nugget said, she was 'so glad she

had come in time for a little bit of Christmas, and the lovely tree, and when at midnight Miss Hanford bent over the golden head, nestled in the center of her big feather pillow, she was sure no one in Hollywell had so sweet a Christmas-box as her precious little Nugget from Gold Ore Camp. From the American Agriculturist.

**IT IS CHILDREN'S DAY.**

It is children's day. Heap high the grate and send the sparkles streaming up the chimney. Let the roaring flame out roar the chilling blast and melt with Christmas warmth the frosty breath of winter. Bring forth in generous store good cheer; fill up the cup to overflowing with wine or joy, let mirth break bounds, and give free reign to all that booms and lifts the spirits to above the shocks and weights of the experience of other days. Where'er the family takes sanctuary let God's love pour its blessed light in radiance brighter than in other days. Through the wide land may a thousand times ten thousand hearts fire's glow on happy faces, and in the genial glow may the world of child-life ring with a music born of happiness unwonted. For one day let the better angels of our natures take the harp and make their sweetest melody. Let not one strain be lost nor one discordant note be struck. Let all that may make merry with gift and game, and greeting and cheer and kindly deed. One day out of the year is not too much, but all too little to give to joyous ministrations, but however much it may and should be made to be to others, its chief felicity is for young hearts yet unwrung by the cares of life. The green wealth of the Christmas holly and mistletoe harmonizes with the freshness of life's springtime, and every memory and association make this a May-day of young experience. For joy and innocence are sisters, and they are childhood's angels. The Christmas day can be in its fullness what it should be only as the children's day, and only thus can all its meaning be unlocked to older hearts. Give up the day to childhood, and giving thus receive its richest gifts. Make her a day to hang in memory's halls a picture ever bright. Enwreathed in evergreen, brightenous with smiles of joy, thrilled with the surprises of loving ingenuity, crowned with gifts and tenderness, that is the only Christmas which is illumined by the beams of gladdened eyes and made musical by the silvery chimes of childhood's laughter. Give it to the children, then, and make it all the heaven that heaven-born love can make it.

**WOMEN.**

Women always show by their action that they enjoy going to church; men are less demonstrative.

When a woman becomes flurried she feels for a fan; when a man becomes flurried he feels for a cigar.

Women jump at conclusions and generally hit; men reason things out logically and generally miss it.

Some women can't pass a millinery store without looking in; some men can't pass a saloon without going in.

A woman never sees a baby without wanting to run to it; a man never sees a baby without wanting to run from it.

Women love admiration, approbation, selfimmolation on the part of others; are often weak, vain and frivolous. Ditto men.

A woman always carries her purse in her hand so that other women will see it; a man carries his in his inside pocket so that his wife won't see it.

A woman can sit in a theatre for three hours without getting all cramped up, catching the toothache or becoming faint for want of fresh air; a man can't.

A woman, from her sex and character, has a claim to many things beside her shelter, food and clothing. She is not less a woman for being wedded; and the man who is fit to be trusted with a good wife recollects all which this implies and shows himself at all times chivalrous, sweet spoken, considerate and deferential.

CHRONIC CATARRH—I was troubled with chronic catarrh and gathering in head, was deaf at times, had discharges from the ears, unable to breathe through nose. Before the second bottle of Ely's Cream Balm was exhausted I was cured.—C. J. Corbin, 923 Chestnut St., Philadelphia. 48-3t

**New Year Bells.**

Now from every tower and steeple  
Clang, the bells are ringing loud,  
Showering down on the hearts of the people,  
The things glad of a new year found.  
Biting at sorrow and the old year away,  
Demons that brood o'er the lives of men,  
Let not the sound of a world's despair  
Fill our hearts with a deeper pain.  
Welcome and greetings of new year,  
With thy fair white page on which to write  
The most ideal character that ever us here,  
Which our hearts in sorrow or joy invite.  
Write them down with a golden pen,  
Blessings many and joys a few,  
Seek thy thoughts from the hearts of men,  
Who have dared to do right and lived to be true.  
Set thy hand to redress each wrong,  
And never falter in doing right,  
If to help a fallen comrade along,  
Or do each duty with all thy might.  
Duties and cares will never cease,  
Scorn them not if they seem but small,  
From God no action is hid away,  
And He a recompense finds for all.  
So write thy deeds with a golden pen,  
Write them down for the book of life  
Write them down in the heart of men,  
And be a hero in every strife.

**JOSEPH GOLDING'S CHRISTMAS.**

It was very strange, thought old Joseph Golding, that he couldn't be master of his own mind. He had lived a great many years, and neither remorse nor memory had ever been in the habit of disturbing him; but now it seemed to him as if the very foundations of his life were breaking up. He was well through with his day's work—he had dined comfortably—he sat in an easy chair in a luxurious drawing-room, whose crimson hangings shut out the still cold of the December afternoon—he had nothing to do but enjoy himself. Mr. Golding liked to enjoy himself at this season as much as others did, for it was Christmas Eve. What though he was in the habit of spending it solitarily?—he liked solitude.

For many years on Christmas Eve he had sat balancing in his mind the great accounts presented in his ledgers, the accumulating coffers at his bankers, the strokes of business he would make in future. Not so now. The year was drawing to a close; some intruding voice kept whispering that in like manner so was his career. He could not put it from him, try as he would. The voice reminded him of a coming time when his life's work would be all done—even as his day's work was all done now—when he would be ready to sit down in the evening and look over the balance sheet of his deeds, good and evil. Curiously the old days came trooping in slow procession before him. And he had been able to forget them for so very long!

His dead wife. He had not loved her much when she was with him, but how vivid was his memory of her now! He could see her moving round the house, noiseless as a shadow, never intruding on him after he had once or twice repulsed her gruffly, but going on her own meek, still ways, with her face growing whiter every day. He began to understand, as he looked back, why her strength had failed; and she had been ready, when her baby came, to float out on the tide and let it drift her into God's haven. She had had enough to eat and drink, but he saw now that he had left her heart to starve. Heaven! what a hard man he had been! He seemed to see her white, still face, as he looked at it the last time, with the dumb reproach frozen on it; the eyes that would never plead vanity any more, closed for ever.

He recalled how passionately the three-days-old baby had cried in another room just at that moment, moving all the people gathered together for the funeral with a thrill of pity for the poor little motherless morsel. She was a passionate, willful baby, all through her baby-hood; he remembered that. She wanted—missed without knowing what the luck was—the love and sustenance which her mother would have given her, and protested against fate with all the might of her infant lungs. But as soon as she grew old enough to understand how useless it was, she had grown quiet, too; just like her mother. He recalled her, all through her girlhood, a shy, still girl, always obedient and submissive, but never drawing very near him. Why? Because he would have repulsed her as he repulsed her mother. He could see it now. It was very strange these facts should come back to him to-day, and their naked truth with them. He had been a cold, hard, ungenial man, without sympathy for any one human being; absorbed utterly in the pursuit of money-making. And so the child, Amy, had grown up without him.

But suddenly, when she was sixteen, the old, passionate spirit that had made her cry so when a baby must have awakened again, he thought; for she fell in love then, and wished to marry. To marry in defiance of his wishes. He remembered her standing proudly before him after one of their quarrels, where he had been harsh and bitter, and abusive of the man she wanted to call husband. She had borne in silence reproach of herself; but not of him who had become to her as her best existence. Her words came back to the old man now.

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