

CHRISTMAS STORY FOR 1867.

NO THOROUGHFARE.

BY CHARLES DICKENS AND WILKIE COLLINS

(Continued from our last issue.)

STREET THE HOUSEKEEPER. The wine merchant sat in his dining-room next morning. He had been requested to give up the vacant post in the establishment. It was an old-fashioned wainscoted room; the panels ornamented with festoons of flowers carved in wood with an oak floor, a well-worn Turkey carpet, and a large picture of a family, all of which had seen service and polish under Pebleton Nephew. The great sideboard had assisted at many business dinners given by Pebleton Nephew to their connection, on the principle of throwing sprigs of gold to catch whistles; and Pebleton Nephew's comprehensive three-sided plate-warmer, made to fit the whole front of the large fireplace, kept watch beneath it over a sarcophagus-shaped cellophane that had in its time held many a dozen of Pebleton Nephew's white-wine, and which was a bachelor with a pistol, whose portrait was over the sideboard (and who could easily be identified as decidedly Pebleton and decidedly not Nephew), had retired into another sarcophagus, and the plate-warmer had grown cold as lead. So the golden and black griffin that supported the candelabra, with black balls in their mouths at the end of golden chains, looked as if in their old age they had lost all heart for playing at ball, and were doing the nothing that chains in the Missionary line of inquiry whether they had not earned emancipation by this time, and were not gruff and brothers?

Such a Columbus of a morning was the summer morning, that it discovered Cripple Corner. The light and warmth pierced in at the open windows, and irradiated the picture of a lady hanging over the chimney-piece, the only other decoration of the walls. "My mother at five-and-twenty," said Mr. Wilding to himself, as his eyes enthusiastically followed the light to the portrait's face, "I hang up here, in order that visitors may admire my mother in the bloom of her youth and beauty. My mother at fifty I hang in the seclusion of my own chamber, as a remembrance sacred to me. Oh! it's you, Jarvis!"

These latter words he addressed to a clerk who had tapped at the door, and who looked in. "Yes, sir, I merely wish to mention that it's some ten, sir, and that there are several females in the counting-house." "Dear me!" said the wine merchant, descending in the pink of his complexion and whiteening in the white; "are there several? So many as several? I had better begin before there are more. I'll see them one by one, Jarvis, in the order of their arrival."

Hastily intrinsically himself in his easy-chair, at the table, behind a great inkstand, having first placed a chair on the other side of the table opposite his own seat, Mr. Wilding entered on his task with considerable trepidation. He ran the gauntlet that must be run on any such occasion. There were the usual species of profoundly unimpaired and the usual species of much too sympathetic women. There were buccaneering widows who came to seize him, and who gripped umbrellas under their arms, as if each umbrella were his, and each gripper had a right to the wine merchant's maiden ladies who had seen better days, and who came armed with clerical testimonials to their theology, as if he were Saint Peter with his keys. There were gentle maiden ladies who came to marry him. There were professional housekeepers, with their non-committal smiles, who put him through his domestic exercises, instead of submitting themselves to catechism. There were languid invalids to whom salary was not so much an object as the comforts of a private hospital. There were sensitive creatures who burst into tears when addressed, and had to be restored with glasses of cold water. There were some respondents who came two together, a highly promising one and a wholly unpromising one, when the promising one answered all questions charmingly, until it would at last appear that she was not a candidate at all, but only the friend of the unpromising one, who had glowered in absolute silence and apparent injury.

At last, when the old wine merchant's simple heart was failing him, there entered an applicant quite different from all the rest. A woman, perhaps fifty, but looking younger, with a face remarkable for placid cheerfulness, and a manner no less remarkable for its quiet expression of equanimity. Nothing in her dress could have been changed to her advantage. Nothing in the noiseless self-possession of her manner could have been changed to her advantage. Nothing in her bearing was better than her bearing, and her voice when she answered the question, "What name shall I have the pleasure of noting down?" with the words, "My name is Sarah Goldstraw. Mrs. Goldstraw. My husband has been dead many years, and we had no family."

Half a dozen questions had scarcely been extracted as much to the purpose from any one else. The voice dwelt so agreeably on Mr. Wilding's ear, as he made his note, that he was rather long about it. When he looked up again, Mrs. Goldstraw's glance had naturally gone round the room, and now returned to him from the chimney-piece. His expression was one of frank readiness to be questioned, and to answer straight.

"You will excuse my asking you a few questions?" said the modest wine merchant. "Oh, surely, sir, or I should have no business here." "Have you filled the station of housekeeper before?"

"Only once. I have lived with the same widow lady for twelve years—ever since I lost my husband. She was an invalid, and is lately dead, which is the occasion of my now wearing black." "I do not doubt that she has left you the best credentials?" said Mr. Wilding. "I hope I may say the very best. I thought it would save trouble, sir, if I wrote down the name and address of the lady, and she brought it with me"—laying a card on the table. "You singularly remind me, Mrs. Goldstraw," said Wilding, taking the card beside him, "of a man and some one else, who were once acquainted with me. Not of an individual—I feel sure of that, though I cannot recall what it is I have in my mind—but of a general bearing. I ought to add, it was a kind and pleasant one." She smiled, and she rejoined—"At least, I am very glad of that, sir."

"Yes," said the wine merchant, thoughtfully repeating his last phrase, with a momentary glance at his future housekeeper. "It was a kind and pleasant one. But that is the most I can make of it. Memory is sometimes like a half-forgotten dream. I don't know how it may appear to you, Mrs. Goldstraw, but so it appears to me."

instructions which her master might wish to give her. The wine merchant received Mrs. Goldstraw in the dining-room, in which he had seen her on the previous day; and, the usual preliminary civilities having passed on either side, the two sat down to take counsel together on the affairs of the house. "About the meals, sir?" said Mrs. Goldstraw. "Have I a large or a small number to provide for?" "If I can carry out a certain old-fashioned plan of mine," replied Mr. Wilding, "you will have a large number to provide for. I am a lonely single man, Mrs. Goldstraw; and I hope to see all the persons in my employment as if they were members of my family. Until that time comes, you will only have me, and the new partner whom I expect immediately to provide for. What my partner's habits may be, I cannot yet say. But I may describe myself as a man who regulates his dinners with an appetite that you may depend upon to an ounce."

"About breakfast, sir?" asked Mrs. Goldstraw. "Is there anything particular?" "She hesitated, and left the sentence unfinished. Her eyes turned slowly away from her master, and looked towards the chimney-piece. If she had been a less excellent and experienced housekeeper, Mr. Wilding might have fancied that her attention was beginning to wander at the very outset of the interview.

"Right! I'll have it at ten o'clock," he resumed. "It is one of my virtues to be never tired of broiled bacon, and it is one of my vices to be habitually suspicious of the freshness of eggs." Mrs. Goldstraw looked back at him, a little divided between her master's chimney-piece and her master. "I take tea," Mr. Wilding went on; "and I am perhaps rather nervous and fidgety about drinking it within a certain time after it is made. If my tea stands too long—"

He hesitated, on his side, and left the sentence unfinished. If he had not been engaged in discussing a subject of such paramount interest to himself as his breakfast, Mrs. Goldstraw might have fancied that the wine merchant was beginning to wander at the very outset of the interview.

"If your tea stands too long, sir—" said the housekeeper, politely taking up her master's lost thread. "My tea stands too long," repeated the wine merchant, mechanically, his mind getting further and further away from his breakfast, and his eyes fixing themselves more and more inquiringly on his housekeeper's face. "If my tea stands too long, Mrs. Goldstraw, I will be the manner and tone of voice that you remind me of! It strikes me even more strongly to-day than it did when I saw you yesterday. What can it be?"

"What can it be?" repeated Mrs. Goldstraw. She said the words, evidently thinking, while she spoke them, of something else. The wine merchant, still looking at her inquiringly, observed that her eyes wandered towards the chimney-piece, more than they did on the portrait of his mother, which hung on the wall, and looked at it with that slight contraction of the brow which accompanies a scarcely conscious effort of memory. Mr. Wilding remarked—"My late dear mother, when she was five-and-twenty."

Mrs. Goldstraw thanked him with a movement of the head for being at the pains to explain the picture, and said, with a cleared brow, that it was the portrait of a very beautiful lady. Mr. Wilding, falling back into his former complexity, tried once more to recover that lost recollection, associated so closely, and yet so undecipherably, with his new housekeeper's voice and manner.

"Excuse my asking you a question which has nothing to do with me or my breakfast," he said. "May I inquire if you have ever occupied any other situation than the situation of housekeeper?" "Oh, yes, sir. I began life as one of the nurses at the Foundling."

"Why, that's it!" cried the wine merchant, pushing back his chair. "By Heaven! Their manner is the manner you remind me of!" In an astonished look at Mrs. Goldstraw, who changed color, checked herself, turned her eyes upon the ground, and sat still and silent.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. Wilding. "Do I understand that you were in the Foundling, sir?" "Certainly. I am not ashamed to own it."

"Under the name of Walter Wilding?" "And the lady?" Mrs. Goldstraw stopped short, and looked at the portrait which was now unmistakably a look of alarm.

"You mean my mother," interrupted Mr. Wilding. "Four—mother?" repeated the housekeeper, a little constrainedly, "removed you from the Foundling? At what age, sir?" "At between eleven and twelve years old. It's quite a romantic adventure, Mrs. Goldstraw."

He told the story of the lady having spoken to him while he sat at dinner with the other boys in the Foundling, and of all that had followed. "My poor mother could never have discovered me," he added, "if she had not met one of the matrons who pitted her. The matron consented to touch the boy whose name was 'Walter Wilding' as she went round the dinner-table—and so my mother discovered me again, after having parted from me as an infant at the Foundling door."

At those words Mrs. Goldstraw's hand, resting on the table, dropped helplessly into her lap. She sat, looking at her new master, with a face that had turned deadly pale, and with eyes that expressed an unutterable astonishment.

"What does this mean?" asked the wine merchant. "Stop!" he cried. "Is there something else in the past time which I ought to associate with you? I remember my mother telling me of another person at the Foundling, to whose kindred she owed a debt of gratitude. Was she first parted with me, as an infant, one of the nurses informed her of the name that had been given to me in the institution. You were that nurse?"

"God forgive me, sir—I was that nurse!" "God forgive you," said Mr. Wilding. "We had better get back, sir, (if I may make so bold as to say so), to my duties in the house," said Mrs. Goldstraw. "Your breakfast-hour is eight, or you lunch, or dine, in the middle of the day?"

The excessive pluckiness which Mr. Blintey had noticed in his client's face began to appear there once more. Mr. Wilding put his hand to his head, and murmured some incoherent confusion in that quarter, before he spoke again.

"Mrs. Goldstraw," he said, "you are concealing something from me!" The housekeeper obstinately repeated, "Please to favor me, sir, by saying whether you lunch, or dine, in the middle of the day?" "I don't know what I do in the middle of the day. I can't enter into my household affairs, Mrs. Goldstraw, till I know why you regret an act of kindness to my mother which she always spoke of gratefully to the end of her life. You are not doing me a service by your silence. You are agitating me, you are alarming me, you are bringing on the singing in my head."

His hand went up to his head again, and the pink in his face deepened by a shade or two. "It's hard, sir, on just entering your service," said the housekeeper, "to say what may cost me the loss of your good-will. Please to remember, how it may, that I only speak because you have listed on my speaking, and because I feel that I am alarming you by my silence. When I told the poor lady whose portrait you have got there the name by which her infant was christened in the Foundling, I allowed myself to forget my duty, and I regret the consequence. I am afraid, have followed from it, I'll tell you the truth, as plainly as I can. A few months from the time when I had informed the lady of her baby's name, there came to our institution in the country another lady, a stranger, who, I was afraid, have followed from it, I'll tell you the truth, as plainly as I can. A few months from the time when I had informed the lady of her baby's name, there came to our institution in the country another lady, a stranger, who, I was afraid, have followed from it, I'll tell you the truth, as plainly as I can. A few months from the time when I had informed the lady of her baby's name, there came to our institution in the country another lady, a stranger, who, I was afraid, have followed from it, I'll tell you the truth, as plainly as I can."

Mr. Wilding started to his feet. "Impossible!" he cried out, vehemently. "What are you talking about? What absurd story are you telling me now? There's her portrait! Haven't I told you so already? The portrait of my mother!"

"When that unhappy lady removed you from the Foundling, in after years," said Mrs. Goldstraw, gently, "she was the victim, and you were the victim, sir, of a dreadful mistake." He dropped back into his chair. "The room goes round with me," he said. "My head is my head!" The housekeeper rose in alarm, and opened the windows. Before she could get to the door to call for help, a sudden burst of tears relieved the impression which had at first almost appeared to freeze his mind. He stood, as if he were treating to Mrs. Goldstraw not to leave him. She waited until the paroxysm of weeping had worn itself out. He raised his head as he recovered himself, and looked at her with the angry unreasoning suspicion of a weak man.

"Mistake?" he said, wildly repeating her last word. "How do I know you are not mistaken yourself?" "There is no hope that I am mistaken, sir. I will tell you why, when you are better fit to hear it."

"Now! now!" The tone in which he spoke warned Mrs. Goldstraw that it would be cruel kindness to let him comfort himself a moment longer. She turned to her, and said, "A few words more would end it, and those few words [she determined to speak.]

"I have told you," she said, "that the child of the lady whose portrait hangs there was adopted by us as certain of what I say as that I am now sitting here, obliged to distress you, sorely against my will. Please to carry your mind on, now, to about three months ago, when I left London, waiting to take some children to our institution in the country. There was a question that day about naming an infant—a boy—who had just been received. We generally named them out of the door, on this occasion, one of the gentlemen who managed the Hospital, happened to be looking over the Register. He noticed that the name of the baby who had been adopted (Walter Wilding) was scratched out, for the reason, of course, that it was not to be named for our care. 'Here's a name to let,' he said. 'Give it to the new foundling who has been received to-day.' The name was given and the child was christened. You, sir, was that child."

"If my tea stands too long," repeated the wine merchant, mechanically, his mind getting further and further away from his breakfast, and his eyes fixing themselves more and more inquiringly on his housekeeper's face. "If my tea stands too long, Mrs. Goldstraw, I will be the manner and tone of voice that you remind me of! It strikes me even more strongly to-day than it did when I saw you yesterday. What can it be?"

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"—and do the best you can in the house—I can't talk about it now." The door opened as Mrs. Goldstraw advanced towards it, and Mr. Jarvis appeared.

"Send for Mr. Blintey," said the wine merchant. "Say I want to see him directly." The clerk unconsciously suspended the execution of the order by announcing "Mr. Vendale," and showing in the new partner in the firm of Wilding & Co.

"Pray, excuse me for one moment, George Vendale," said Wilding. "I have a word to say to Jarvis. Send for Mr. Blintey," he repeated—"send at once."

Mr. Jarvis laid a letter on the table before he left the room. "From our correspondents at Neuchatel, I think, sir. The letter has got the Swiss post-mark." [To be continued.]

CITY ORDINANCES.

A N ORDINANCE To make an appropriation for the use and support of the Girard College for Orphans for the year 1868.

Section 1. The Select and Common Councils of the City of Philadelphia do ordain, That the sum of one hundred and thirty-five thousand five hundred and fifty dollars (\$135,550), be and the same is hereby appropriated out of the income of the real estate and the Girard Estate for the year eighteen hundred and six, and six, for the use and support of the Girard College for the same year, said appropriation to be applied as follows:

- Item 1. Subsistence, forty-four thousand dollars (\$44,000).
Item 2. Clothing, bed clothing, and outfit, twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000).
Item 3. Salary of matron, six hundred and fifty dollars (\$650).
Item 4. Salary of steward, one thousand dollars (\$1,000).
Item 5. Salary of six governesses, fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500).
Item 6. Salary of four Prefects, two thousand four hundred dollars (\$2,400).
Item 7. Salary of superintendent of manual labor, two hundred dollars (\$200).
Item 8. Salary of two physicians, one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200).
Item 9. Salary of dentist, three hundred and fifty dollars (\$350).
Item 10. Wages, eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000).
Item 11. Furniture and repairs to furniture, three thousand dollars (\$3,000).
Item 12. Fuel, three thousand dollars (\$3,000).
Item 13. Gas, two thousand two hundred and fifty dollars (\$2,250).
Item 14. Repairs and improvements of buildings, ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).
Item 15. Grounds and improvements, four hundred dollars (\$400).
Item 16. Filling in and repairing culvert, five hundred dollars (\$500).
Item 17. Incidents, six hundred dollars (\$600).

Item 18. Salary of President, three thousand dollars (\$3,000).
Item 19. Salary of Professor of Industrial Science, two thousand two hundred and fifty dollars (\$2,250).
Item 20. Salary of Professor of Rhetoric, two thousand two hundred and fifty dollars (\$2,250).
Item 21. Salary of Professor of Drawing, two thousand dollars (\$2,000).
Item 22. Salary of Professor of French, two thousand two hundred and fifty dollars (\$2,250).
Item 23. Salary of Professor of Mathematics, one thousand six hundred dollars (\$1,600).
Item 24. Salary of Professor of Music, four hundred dollars (\$400).
Item 25. Salary of three Teachers, nine hundred dollars (\$900).
Item 26. Salary of three Teachers, one thousand one hundred and twenty-five dollars (\$1,125).
Item 27. Salary of two Teachers, eight hundred and fifty dollars (\$850).
Item 28. Salary of two Teachers, one thousand and fifty dollars (\$1,050).
Item 29. Salary of two Teachers, one thousand three hundred and fifty dollars (\$1,350).
Item 30. School and Chapel furniture, five hundred dollars (\$500).
Item 31. School and Philosophical apparatus, four hundred dollars (\$400).
Item 32. School and Library, one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500).
Item 33. Chemical Laboratory Utensils and Chemicals, three hundred dollars (\$300).
Item 34. Expenses of printing, seventy-five dollars (\$75).

Item 35. Salary of Secretary and Superintendent of binding-out, two thousand dollars (\$2,000).
Item 36. Salary of Messenger, six hundred dollars (\$600).
Item 37. Printing, newspapers, and advertising, five hundred dollars (\$500).
Item 38. Books and binding, four hundred dollars (\$400).
Item 39. Expenses of binding out, one hundred dollars (\$100).
Item 40. Premiums and awards, two hundred and fifty dollars (\$250).
Item 41. Expenses of admission, fifty dollars (\$50).

MANUAL LABOR.
Item 42. Tools, machinery and materials, two thousand dollars (\$2,000).
Section 2. That warrants for the payment of said appropriation shall be drawn in conformity with existing ordinances.

JOSEPH F. MARCER, President of Common Council.
Attest—BENJAMIN H. HAINES, Clerk of Select Council.
JOSHUA SPERING, President of Common Council.
Approved this eighteenth day of December, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and sixty-seven (A. D. 1867).

MORTON MCMICHAEL, Mayor of Philadelphia.

NOTICE—THE UNDERSIGNED would call attention of the public to his NEW GOLDEN EAGLE FURNACE. It is constructed so as to combine itself to general favor, being a combination of wrought and cast iron. It is very simple in its construction, and is perfectly self-cleaning, having no pipes or drums to be taken out and cleaned. It is so arranged with upright flues to produce a larger amount of heat from the same weight of coal than any furnace now in use. The hygienic condition of the air as produced by my new arrangement of evaporation will at once demonstrate that it is the only Hot Air Furnace that will produce a clean and healthy atmosphere.

Those in want of a complete Heating Apparatus would do well to call and examine the Golden Eagle. CHARLES WILLIAMS, Nos. 112 and 113 MARKET Street, Philadelphia.

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INSURANCE COMPANY OF NORTH AMERICA. OFFICE, No. 222 WALNUT ST., PHILADELPHIA.

INSURES MARINE, INLAND TRANSPORTATION AND FIRE RISKS. DIRECTORS: Arthur G. Coffin, Samuel W. Jones, John A. Brown, Charles Taylor, Ambrose White, Richard W. Wood, William Welch, Morris Wall, John Macmillan.

GIRARD FIRE AND MARINE INSURANCE COMPANY, (No. 639) N. E. COR. CHESNUT AND SEVENTH STS., PHILADELPHIA.

LIVERPOOL AND LONDON AND GLOBE INSURANCE COMPANY. ASSETS OVER \$10,000,000. INVESTED IN THE U. S., OVER \$1,500,000.

FIRE INSURANCE. PHILADELPHIA BOARD. Lemuel Coffin, Esq., Joseph W. Lewis, Esq., Henry A. Smith, Esq., Charles S. Dearing, Esq., John W. McLaughlin, Esq., Charles J. Dupont, Esq., John F. Kenney, Esq., JAMES B. ALVORD, Secretary.

PROVIDENT LIFE AND TRUST COMPANY, OF PHILADELPHIA. CAPITAL, \$1,000,000. PAID UP, \$200,000.

PHENIX INSURANCE COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA. INCORPORATED 18th CHARTER PERPETUAL. No. 224 WALNUT STREET, opposite the Exchange.

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