

THREE CHRISTMAS CHIMES.

Hearken! how the Christmas chime Sings on earth its song sublime!

Sing your joy, O Christmas chime! Let us keep the Christmas time.

Hearken still the Christmas chime Sings on earth its song sublime!

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A CHRISTMAS QUELUE.

BY MARY E. WILKINS.

It was three weeks before Christmas, but no snow had fallen that winter.

Now Mrs. Eaton had just taken the reins and was driving down the long hill before they came to the railroad station.

When they reached the station the train was just steaming out. A little girl stood beside a trunk on the platform and a woman with blue feathers in her bonnet was bending over her talking to her.

"Your Aunt Harriet who?" said the woman. "You're too big a girl to cry."

"I'm your Aunt Harriet," announced Mrs. Eaton simply to the little girl who looked up in her face with a responsive sob.

"There's your Cousin Hattie in the wagon," said she, "and we'll have some griddle-cakes an' honey for supper, an' mebbe will stop at the store an' get something else. Come, you get right in."

"Land, I didn't know she meant you, Mrs. Eaton," said she eagerly, "I didn't know you was expectin' anybody."

"No, I ain't said anything to anybody about it," returned Mrs. Eaton, with some dignity, and she led the little girl up to the covered wagon.

"This is your Cousin Hattie," said she, and Hattie murmured something inaudible, and flushed scarlet all over her serious little face under her brown hat.

"Mrs. Eaton lifted the little girl into the wagon. "Why, you go up like a feather," said she, "you don't begin to weigh as much as Hattie, if you be a year older. I guess you'd better sit in back. Climb right over."

"Mebbe she'd like to drive," she whispered. "I'll sit in back."

"No," said her mother, "we've got to have the trunk in here. She'll be better off in the back. She can drive another time."

Amelia Stratton dusted it carefully with her pocket handkerchief as Mrs. Eaton drove slowly up the hill. The little girl at her side peeped sadly and wonderingly up at her large head, with its tiny button of sandy hair at the back.

"This is the third time since I started that I've lost off this bonnet," said Amelia severely, as if calling some body to account. "The trouble is I ain't got any hair to fill it up, an' it jest wobbles round on my head the whole time; makes me nervous as a witch. It come off once in Whittingham; that is, it slipped down on my back. The strings was tied then, an' it come off again when I was gettin' into the cars, and here 'tis again clean off and all over dust. I untied the strings, it was so warm on the cars."

"Can you put in a pin?" inquired Mrs. Eaton. "I ain't got enough hair to hold one, I've just been over to Whittingham to see if I couldn't match my hair an' get a switch that I could braid up an' twist round mine, but they didn't have a thing like it."

"It ain't a very common color," remarked Mrs. Eaton. "No, it ain't. I know it," assented Amelia Stratton, with an infection that might have implied pride or disgust.

Mrs. Eaton drove slowly. She felt that Billy's strength might be unduly taxed with the heavy load. Hattie held tightly to the handle of her cousin's trunk. Now and then she glanced around at her with a stiff and shy smile, and the little cousin smiled back piteously. She had a very pretty face and she looked smaller and fairer and prettier in the dark recess of the covered wagon beside gaunt Miss Amelia Stratton.

"She's got curls," Hattie reflected with awe; her own brown hair fell in thick, sober locks to her sack collar. Once, after glancing at her cousin, she flung them back with a little air as if they also were curls.

All the way Miss Amelia Stratton questioned the little cousin, who answered innocently and honestly. Mrs. Eaton chafed, she jerked the horse's reins, once in a while she cried out "ge lang" when he was doing his best, she asked for Miss Amelia's mother and tried to turn the subject, but she could not. Miss Amelia found out that the little girl's name was Lucy Ellis, that she was Mrs. Eaton's brother's daughter, that both parents were dead and she had been living for two years with her Aunt Jenny, her mother's sister. That now Aunt Jenny was dead and the money which had not been hers really but only the interest of it during her lifetime had all gone to a brother of Aunt Jenny's husband, and further how he was that very day moving into Aunt Jenny's house with his wife and four children, who were all boys. "They'll spoil all Aunt Jenny's things," little Lucy volunteered with a plaintive air, and Miss Amelia sniffed angrily. "I call it a shame that your sister's husband tied up the property that way, don't you?" she said to Mrs. Eaton.

"I ain't got anything to say about it," replied Mrs. Eaton coldly, and she slapped the reins. Miss Amelia's house was quite near Mrs. Eaton's. There was only a wide field between and they were the only houses for quite a distance. Mrs. Eaton said "whoa!" at Miss Amelia's gate and slewed the wagon around with alacrity for her to get out. Hattie had to get out first and Mrs. Eaton had to slip the trunk to her side and stand up so the front seat could be folded over and Miss Amelia clamber out. It was quite an undertaking, and the blue feathered bonnet came off and Hattie picked it up and dusted it.

"There won't be nothin' left of that bonnet," scolded Miss Amelia. She did not put it on again, but still scolding carried it defiantly in her hand up the path to the square white house. A yellow old face in a black cap watched her from one of the front windows.

Mrs. Eaton nodded to this old face with forced politeness, then she slapped the reins again and went on. "I call it a pretty good round," she said. "There's Melia Stratton with a horse an' covered wagon of her own an' a hired man that could have come for her, to say nothin' of havin' plenty of money to hire a team, a quarterin' on us an' gettin' every bit she could out of us; not that I hadn't just as soon give her a ride, but I don't want her pokin' her nose into all my affairs. I like to feel sometimes that I keep my affairs to myself."

Hattie nudged her mother. "She didn't know you didn't want her to tell," she whispered, jerking a slender shoulder towards Lucy on the back seat.

"Oh, I ain't blamin' her," returned Mrs. Eaton quickly, and she looked round at the little cousin with a kindly smile. "She didn't know. Mebbe I hadn't ought to speak so about Melia. I s'pose she means well, but she's dreadful curious and an awful talker."

Mrs. Eaton's house was a low white cottage, with a long stretch of gray barns at the left.

"Here we are," she announced cheerfully as the old horse went slowly around the corner into the yard. The little cousin peeped wonderingly out of the back of the wagon.

When Mrs. Eaton and Hattie had unharnessed the old horse and fed him, and they were all in the warm kitchen, Lucy sat close to the stove and put her feet in the oven, as her aunt bade her.

"I don't believe but what they're cold," she said. "Then I forgot to stop at the store and get those sweet crackers. Well, I guess I've got enough. You like griddle cakes and honey, don't you?"

"Yes ma'am," replied Lucy. Now that her hat and saque were off her head and Hattie could see more plainly how very pretty she was. They kept glancing at her and at each other as they moved about preparing supper. "She's just the image of her mother at her age," Mrs. Eaton whispered to Hattie in the pantry, and her eyes

were red. "She was a good six years younger than I was and the prettiest little thing. Her hair used to curl just as this child's does."

"Can't we have some strawberry preserves for supper?" Hattie asked anxiously. "I don't care, if you want it. I'm going to cook an egg for her; she looks as if she needed hearty victuals."

Hattie, passing through the kitchen on her way to the cellar, looked back admiringly at her fair haired cousin by the stove, whose delicate face was flushing pink in the heat.

"Say," said she, and Lucy looked at her inquiringly. "You like strawberry preserves?" Lucy nodded with a half smile.

She looked gently cheerful at supper and ate the griddle cakes and honey with relish. There was a masterly motherliness about Mrs. Eaton which soothed and sustained her, and Hattie was all admiration and love. Nobody knew how much love she had stored up for this cousin, whom she had never seen before. She had never had a girl friend in her life.

After supper the girls played checkers and Lucy looked pleasantly triumphant when she won. "She's goin' to be contented here," her aunt thought happily. She was knitting and watching them. She had said they might have just three games of checkers, then Lucy's trunk must be unpacked and she must go to bed and rest after her journey.

But there was trouble when the trunk was unpacked. Mrs. Eaton and Hattie could not imagine why, when the bottom was reached, the little cousin sat suddenly down on the bed and hid her face in her hands. She did not seem to be crying; she sat perfectly still, as if her woe was to deep for expression. Mrs. Eaton and Hattie looked at each other. "What ails her?" motioned Mrs. Eaton. Hattie shook her head.

"What is the matter, Lucy?" Mrs. Eaton asked. Lucy made no reply. "You haven't stuck a pin in your finger or anything, have you?" Lucy shook her head.

"Was there anything of your Aunt Jenny's in there that made you feel bad, child?" Lucy shook her head again; then she began to sob.

"Now, child, I can't have you doing this way. You must speak right up and tell me what the matter is," said Mrs. Eaton.

"I've left—my doll," the little cousin said, as if her heart were breaking.

Then Mrs. Eaton and Hattie looked at each other again. "Your doll?" repeated Mrs. Eaton wonderingly. And the little cousin nodded. Hattie Eaton had not played with her doll since she was ten, and here was this beautiful cousin at fourteen weeping for hers like a mother bereft of her child. She was full of pity and amazement, and she watched her mother's face for help.

"Yours is upstairs in the garret, ain't it?" Mrs. Eaton whispered. "Yes'm."

"Well, jes' take the lamp, be real careful, and get it."

Mrs. Eaton went close to the little sobbing figure when Hattie had disappeared and smoothed the fair head with a firm, motherly hand. "Now don't you cry," she commanded. "You'll make yourself sick. Hattie's gone to get a doll for you."

But Hattie's doll quite failed to comfort the weeping little girl. It had a hard china head, with painted china hair, and was little like her own, and besides, it was not her own. One can as well convince a mother there is no difference in children as convince a sincere little girl there is none in dolls. Lucy was almost resentful. She pushed the doll away.

"When you have gone to bed and the light is blown out, if you take her you can't tell the difference if you make believe," pleaded Hattie pitifully extending the doll, whose cloth arms and legs dangled limply and whose china blue eyes stared blankly.

am afraid those Pennypacker boys got her and they would be terrible rough with a doll. Cousa Sarah Pennypacker packed my trunks, and she forgot to put her in. I'd laid her on the bed all ready, too, while I went to say goodby to one of the neighbors. I know those Pennypacker boys got her and she was all I had left in the world."

"You've got us now," said Hattie. "Yes, I know I have," replied the little cousin sobbing, "but she was all I had left of the old, and I know those Pennypacker boys got her."

Indeed it proved that the little cousin was right, for Mrs. Eaton wrote to Mrs. Pennypacker to inquire for the missing doll, and received in reply the news that the Pennypacker boys had in truth got her without their mother's knowledge and treated her much after the manner of North American Indians with their captives. Her beautiful golden hair was gone, so were the sweet blue eyes that could open and shut, so were the waxen roses in her cheeks and her delicate kid legs and arms.

"There is nothing left of her to send," wrote Mrs. Pennypacker. "I am sorry and I would buy Lucy another doll, but I can't afford it. It would cost as much as \$2.50, and it's all I can do to make both ends meet with all these boys."

"I call it rather small potatoes," Mrs. Eaton said confidently to Hattie. "Here's that Jenny Pennypacker got all Jenny's money that poor Lucy ought to have had and now she can't so much as buy her a doll when her great rough boys have spoiled the one she had."

"I think it's mean," said Hattie, and her voice seemed to fairly stamp with indignation at the last word. "Mother?"

"What say?" "Can't we buy her a doll for Christmas next week?" "No, we can't," replied her mother decidedly. "I wish we could, but I ain't got any \$2.50 to lay out on dolls. You know that as well as I do, Hattie. The insurance is coming due and we've got to have a barrel of flour and that's going to leave us precious little for things we can't do without."

"I guess I've got as much as \$1 in my saving's bank," said Hattie. "That don't make any difference. I ain't got any \$1.50 to spend and she wouldn't think anything of a doll that was as nice as the other one. No, we can't buy her a doll, but I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll go to Whittingham one day next week and see the stores and I'll buy for each of you a white apron; that is something you really need."

Hattie looked overjoyed and so she was for herself; her pleasures had been so simple that a visit to Whittingham, the sight of the Christmas show in the stores and the new white apron seemed wonderful treats. She talked so much about it to Lucy that she also was full of joyous anticipations although her heart was still sore over the doll. The harrowing details in Mrs. Pennypacker's letter had been spared her, but she knew the abstract truth that the Pennypacker boys had indeed got her.

Christmas came on a Thursday. The Sunday before was stormy and Lucy had a cold so Mrs. Eaton went to meeting alone and left the girls to keep house. Lucy sat close to the kitchen fire smiling desolately and Hattie tried her best to amuse her.

"I'll tell you what we can do," she said suddenly, when she had been reading aloud to her, and Lucy's attention had flagged.

"What?" returned Lucy, languidly. "We can look in the desk drawers. That was my grandfather's desk you know, and there's lots of things in the drawers just as he left 'em."

Lucy brightened up. "Wouldn't your mother care?" said she. "No, she always lets me look 'em over when I want to."

There was the debris of a past generation in the drawers of that desk. There were useless relics of old men and women who had long since been laid in their graveyards, treasures as dead as their former owners. The two little girls pulled out one drawer after another set it on the floor and delved in it. They investigated old wallets and deers, old buttons whose garments had long since mouldered away, old keys to forgotten locks, old knives and worn spectacles. It showed Mrs. Eaton's respect to her father's memory, that with all her neat housekeeping she had never cleaned out those ancient drawers and thrown away some of the contents. When she had been a child at home there had been a stern household mandate that father's desk was not to be meddled with and she had never forgotten it. The old desk stood in her kitchen as sacredly regarded as the relics of Chinese ancestors. Some times she eyed it uneasily and said to Hattie "I kinder feel as if these drawers ought to be weeded out, but I can't bear to throw away any of father's things," and she never did.

They had come to the last drawer and Lucy pulled a long parcel nicely tied up in brown paper and looked at it curiously. "What's this, Hattie?" said she.

Hattie knew the contents of the old desk almost as well as she did the alphabet and indeed they were like curious hieroglyphics of past lives. She did not need to unroll the parcel. "Oh, that's grandfather's queue," said she. "He used to wear a queue when he was a young man and when they went out of fashion he had it cut off and it was laid away here. Mother told me about it."

Lucy looked awed. She unrolled the parcel and held up a long tight braid of faded sandy hair tied with a black ribbon. "Why," said she, "it's just the color of that woman's hair that rode home with us the day I came—what made you jump so, Hattie?" "Did I?" "Yes, you jumped awfully. It is just the color ain't it?"

"Yes, I guess 'tis about the color," said Hattie. There was a deep blush on her sober face. She took hold of one end of the drawer. "I guess you'd better take hold and we'll put this back before mother comes home. It's most time she won't want the kitchen all mused up."

Childish little Lucy tugged painfully at her end of the drawer, and it was slid back into place. She did not see Hattie slip her grandfather's queue under her gingham into her pocket, although she went on talking innocently about it. "How funny men must have looked with queues," she observed and Hattie assented.

Always on a Sunday afternoon Hattie was sent with Zion's Herald to old Mrs. Stratton Mrs. Eaton, in spite of her limited means, took Zion's Herald just as her father had always done. She did feel as if the Strattons could afford to take it better than she, but she always sent it over to Amelia's mother, who liked to read it on Sunday afternoon.

Hattie was gone rather longer than usual that Sunday afternoon. When she got home, her mother was boiling some molasses, butter and vinegar together for Lucy. "She won't be fit to go over to Whittingham this week, if her cold ain't any better," said Mrs. Eaton. "I thought maybe we'd go Tuesday."

However, it stormed Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, two days and a half of rain and mist and then half a day of snow; so although Lucy's cold was better, they could not go to Whittingham. Thursday the day before Christmas was pleasant, but then Mrs. Eaton had a cold. Colds were epidemic in the neighborhood. She was very hoarse and could scarcely speak on Thursday morning and did not quite know what to do. She was not quite able to go to Whittingham herself and did not quite like to send the little girls alone.

Finally she decided to she wrapped them up warmly and made them draw on some old stockings over their shoes to protect them from the snow, as they had to walk to the station, then she gave them enough money for their fares and 25 cents apiece besides with which to buy aprons.

"Be sure and pick out some good cambric," she charged in her hoarse voice. "I don't hardly trust you to buy 'em alone, and be careful about gettin' on and off the cars."

Mrs. Eaton worried a great deal after they were gone, although she told herself that she was foolish and they were quite old enough to go to Whittingham alone. She felt a great throb of relief when they came in sight late in the afternoon. "There they are safe and sound," she said to herself, with their aprons, but what is that Lucy has got? She's got a big bundle a carryin' it like a baby."

Mrs. Eaton went to the door and stood there waiting in spite of her cold. "Well, you've got back all safe, haven't you?" she called out. Lucy smiled back happily, but Hattie had an odd sober look. They came in and Hattie laid two small parcels on the table.

"What are these?" asked her mother. "The aprons," replied Hattie meekly. "What's that she got?" said Mrs. Eaton pointing at Lucy. "A doll," replied Hattie. "A doll?" "Yes ma'am."

Lucy took the doll out of the wrapping and held it up. She and the doll looked alike, they both had yellow curls, pink cheeks and blue eyes, and expressions of innocent delight.

"It's real handsome," said Mrs. Eaton. "Now you'd better go up stairs and put on your other dress, Lucy." The minute Lucy had disappeared with the rosy doll-face peeping back over her shoulder, Mrs. Eaton turned to Hattie. "Now," said she, "tell me where you got that doll."

Hattie's face was quite white and her eyes were bewildered, she had a feeling as if she had only calculated on one step down to wrong doing, and there were five which had brought her up with a sudden shock.

"Tell me this minute," said her mother sternly in her hoarse voice. "I shook my savings bank," said Hattie, and I got out \$1.03, and then—Oh, mother, I didn't think you'd care, she wanted the doll awfully."

"Then what?" "—sold—grandfather's queue for—\$1.47, to Melia Stratton for—a switch. It was just the color."

"She didn't buy that of you Harriet Eaton." "You needn't tell me that; you told a lie to her about it."

"No, I didn't mother, not really. She thought you sent it I guess, and she put it up to see if it matched, and she looked in the glass, and she talked about how much it was worth, and where it came from, but she talked so fast she didn't know when I didn't answer her."

with the wind blowing in her tear-stained face. She crept around to the side door of the Stratton house, opened it softly, and disappeared within. They were such near neighbors that she never knocked at the Stratton door. She was gone some time; at last the door was opened and she and Miss Amelia stood there in the clear cold glow of the winter sun set.

Miss Amelia had a little green shawl over her head. She was waving a piece of changeable blue and orange silk like a flag and she was talking fast.

"Yes," said she, "it was dreadful naughty for you to steal that and sell it to me I never heard of such a thing. It makes me fairly sick to think I wore it. I'd rather leave my bonnet off the whole time. I'd a good deal rather do the way Mrs. Carr said I could; wear a little skein of yarn under my bonnet to keep it on. But if you promise never to do such a thing again as long as you live I won't say any more about it and you needn't worry about the money. That poor child has had a hard time losin' all her folks and that Pennypacker woman ought to be ashamed of herself letting those boys get hold of that doll. You can have this piece of silk to make a dress of, but you'd better let your mother show you about it so you won't waste it."

"Yes, ma'am," said Hattie. She started off with the queue in one hand and the roll of orange and blue changeable silks in the other, but Miss Amelia stopped her. "Stop a minute," said she. She had a curious nervous up look in her face and she held out a great, bright, silver dollar which caught the low sunlight and gleamed out of the dark entry like a small moon.

"There you take this, Harriet," she said, "We have to be pretty prudent, but it's Christmas an' you've brought over the Home Missionary to mother real steady you take it and buy your self something you want with it and—you tell your mother not to mind about the other. That it's all—a Christmas present from me for you children."

The Stratton door shut and Hattie went up the road with the queue, the silks and the silver dollar. Her heart was so full of gratitude, repentance and Christmas joy, that her feet almost trembled into a dance. She never knew that she had not even thanked Miss Amelia Stratton and Miss Amelia never knew either.

Tell the Truth. The blanket and cloth mills of John and James Dobson were shut down Saturday. The reason assigned is the lack of trade, on account of the tariff uncertainty.

This is no doubt the truth; but why not tell the whole truth? Why not tell the known fact that the Messrs. Dobson feel enough certainty in the tariff to enter now into contracts in England for large quantities of woolen waste to be imported as soon as the new tariff shall go into operation admitting this important material free of taxation?

In other words, the mills are closed, not in fear of the Wilson tariff, but to wait for its greater advantages. And yet the workmen are told that it is because Congress is threatening their industries and that they must expect a reduction of wages.

Everybody can understand why woolen manufacturers do not wish to go on under the present tariff when there is a prospect of better conditions in the near future. But why not tell the truth about it.—Phila. Times.

Bleed Her Time. "Mr. Goodlive (to his boarding-house keeper). "Yes, madame, we leave to-day to go to housekeeping. My wife and I can't stand tough steak, strong butter, sloppy coffee, and blue milk a day longer. We want tender porter-house, gilt-edge butter, pure Java coffee and rich cream, and we are to have it."

Mrs. Slimdick. "Very well. I shall be glad to have you again when you wish to come back."

Mr. Goodlive (a year later). "Good morning, Mrs. Slimdick. My wife and I would like to have our old rooms, if they are vacant."

Mrs. Slimdick (pleasantly). "What was the matter with porterhouse steak, gilt edge butter, pure Java and rich cream?"

Mr. Goodlive (dolefully). They cost too much."

Christmas times are coming, and the gayety and merriment which belong to them will have full expression, regardless of circumstances, though no one who is favored in this world's goods will fail to do something to make brighter the homes where little Christmas cheer will enter.

Many kind words, many sweet sentiments will be uttered in the shadow of the mistletoe bought this Christmas-tide, but the spirit that will reign amid all the festivity will not be one of selfishness but that which is the essence of the festival, "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

A Steel Company will be Kept Busy. HARRISBURG, Pa., December 25.—Word comes from Steelton to-night that the Pennsylvania Steel company has booked enough orders to keep the plant in operation until the 1st of January; that the contemplated shut down on December 23rd until February 1st was postponed a week. It may be postponed in definitely if sufficient orders are received.

He Wouldn't Do. Friend—Wouldn't you like to have me sit here and shoot at the poets when they come in? Editor—No. You are too poor on a shot.—Brooklyn Life.

—The restaurants of Paris sold in 1891 18,000 dozen frogs legs.