

# And His Name Shall Be Called Wonderful

## THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

By M. K. Rutledge.

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I had taken advantage of the absence of the children on an errand to drag the Christmas tree out of the cellar and set it up in the parlor. It was Christmas eve. My wife had left me alone with the tree for a few minutes while she went to get a spool of green silk which she thought would be an improvement for tying purposes on the white cord which I had begun to use.

Presently the room darkened as if filled by a cloud, and the cloud gathered into a compact mass near me, startling me. Much more was I frightened as it gradually assumed the shape of a tall, long bearded old man, but when the figure grew still more distinct and I saw the benignant smile and the hands full of ornaments fit for my tree my fear subsided.

"Here," said the spirit, handing me a little box, "is something which you should not dress your tree without. It is the observance of all good old Christmas customs. Too many have been neglected in the past. Within are instructions for making vassail, for composing carols, for mumming, for the game of snapdragon and indeed for all the ceremonies where-with good folks were wont to honor Christmas before we fell upon these degenerate days."

Reverently I took the box and hung it up.

"This," said he, handing me a small lamp, "you should fill and trim at each Christmas tide, but keep lighted all the year around for your children's sake. It is the lamp of good example."

With a mental vow I took the lamp and set it lighted among the sweet smelling fir branches.

Out of a bag he shook a heap of spangly, shining ornaments on the floor.

"The wit, the song, the story and the loud laughter which ought to garnish your Christmas," said he, "do not hang them up yet. The box of ancient custom will show you how to arrange them on the tree. But here is something indispensable."

Another bag was emptied. Sweetmeats in all forms and of all sorts, I thought.

He read my mind. "All of one kind," he said—"all the sweets of cheerfulness—though they have a varied look. Yet they never pall on the taste. Hang them up at once. They are magical sweets, never disappearing no matter how freely they are partaken of if you only desire them to remain. Keep them in the house all the year. Let each member of your fam-



REVERENTLY I TOOK THE BOX. Ily carry some always, but never forget to put the whole board on the Christmas tree."

I had been hanging them while he spoke. He now stopped me with:

"There is not much more time for me to stay here, so I will trouble you to attend to the rest of what I say, doing no work meanwhile. Here are the apples of plenty. You gather them by persistent endeavor during the year. Never fail to garnish your tree with them, one for each member of your family and one for the wayfarer.

"I give you lastly this golden taper. You are to set it lighted on top of the tree, and when the time for present giving comes you are to present it to your good lady. You are both to keep it lighted all the year around. It is the taper of love and loyalty.

"And who are you?" I asked, seeing that he began to fade away.

"The true spirit of Christmas," replied he faintly and was gone.

### One Chance Left.

"I know why you always sit up so late on Christmas eve, Miss Oldgal."

"And why do I, Freddy?"

"You think mebbe you'll see Santa Claus and he'll ask you to marry him."

### CHRISTMAS DAY.

I. The times are changed, the world grows old; We have no more the age of gold. Perchance it is decline; perchance 'Tis but the tokens of advance; But nowadays we hold no more That once good fellowship of yore. It may be that the strain and stress Of our mad times bring joylessness; It may be that our feverish days Forget the old, good, genial ways.

II. But, thanks to one persistent spark, Unrest and haste and care and dark Not yet shall strip our aging hearts Of all its old congenial art. Aye, thanks to that still jovial day, We shall forget and make our way With dance and frolic, friends and rhyme, Back through grim ages to the time When 'laughter, holding both his sides,' Turned all men's days to Christmas-tide.

ARTHUR J. STRONG.

## Counselor The Mighty GOD



## POLLY MARTIN'S CHRISTMAS EVE

A Story of Country Life at Yuletide by Eliza Archard Conner.

[Copyright, 1901, by Eliza Archard Conner.]  
She was only sixteen, pretty Polly Martin, with round, soft cheeks the color of apple blossom buds and eyes as blue as the skies of her own native Canada. She had six brothers and sisters, all like herself born in the beautiful country.

Her father was a tenant farmer in a new settlement in western Canada. Pretty Polly milked the cows, fed the pigs and chickens and helped her mother with the children. When she could get employment away from home, she went out to service. Being brought up with so many children had made her very useful about a house; patient, too, and she was naturally sweet tempered, so people were glad to have her with them. And then they liked to see her in their houses because she was so pretty.

The Martins' nearest neighbor was three miles away. This was not because neighbors were so few, but because Mr. Martin's employer, Thomas Valentine, owned all the land between his own house and the log cottage where the Martins lived. But Polly was not lonely. She never thought of being so. On the contrary, she was very happy. Polly loved nature. If she raised her eyes a moment from her work and looked toward the west, she saw the grand green forest flashing and ringing with the bright winged, sweet voiced birds that civilization had not yet killed out.

If she glanced toward the northern horizon, there was the undimmed sky, radiant blue, with a marvelous gleam of silvery brightness in it that stretched away—away to the north pole itself. Eastward there was the crystal pure brook dancing to the music of its own everlasting little tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, even as the ice of winter was able quite to subdue. Polly thought it was the sweetest music that is or ever was, and I am not sure she was wrong. To the south there were the sleek heifers wading and feeding in the clover, the white coats of the sheep shining out against the emerald pasture, and beyond, miles on mile, stretching far as eye could see, the great grainfields already charged from green to gold. Polly's heart leaped with gladness when she looked.

At Christmas time, the year Polly was sixteen, Mr. Valentine's family sent for her to come and help them for a week. Mr. Valentine lived in a handsome house surrounded by vineyards and orchards of apples, peaches, plums and pears. Near the mansion was the shining white dairy house, with the big power churn that they made the Jersey bull work by walking on a treadmill, to his intense disgust. Polly he showed by patting the ground and bellowing, with his tail in the air, so soon as he was released from the humiliating treadmill.

Farmer Valentine reared grand draft horses large as small elephants and shining Christmas beeves every year for the market. Two days before Christmas that year he made his annual sale of beeves and got unusually good prices for them. It was too late to put the money he received into the bank that day, so Mr. Valentine brought it home with him, \$500 in gold and silver, and locked it in a bureau drawer. Polly did not know it was there.

On the evening of the 24th of December the farmers of the county gave their annual Christmas ball. It was a great event, bringing together socially friends widely separated who did not see one another often during the rest of the year. Polly was wanted to keep the Valentine house while the family should be away at the ball. They went early, for there was a ten mile sleigh ride between them and the town where the ball was. The great sleigh, with its big, handsome horses pawing the snow and shaking their massive necks to make the bells jingle, was drawn up before the carriage door of the farmhouse, and one after another the family took their places in it. Those fine, intelligent horses looked as if they enjoyed the prospect of the sleigh ride as much as any one.

After they had gone Polly went around the house to see that all was in order for the night. She peeped into the fruit-house first just to glad her eye with the sight of the long shelves loaded with red checked apples and with shining green and yellow pears wrapped in tissue paper to make them keep till Christmas. She

looked down into the box where lay a few bunches of late autumn grapes, the down still upon their fat, purple cheeks. They pleased Polly's artistic eye.

Next Polly fed the pigs and locked the poultry houses. Then she went indoors. The house was a modern built one, with large double plate glass windows to keep the cold out and with a great furnace in the cellar from which hot air pipes carried warmth into all the rooms. Many a king's palace was less comfortable than this house. Polly looked to see that doors and windows were fastened; then she sat down in the warm dining room to read and knit and think by turns.

Polly was not lonely or afraid. The country neighborhood was considered quite safe, and, besides, pioneer girls are not the kind to scream at a mouse. She remained up till 11 because she did not like to leave the warm fire. Then she felt sleepy and prepared to go to bed. The family would not be back till 3 o'clock in the morning. The guests at the ball danced till midnight; then they had supper, then a farewell cotillon. Then for the Valentines came the ten miles' sleigh ride.

In their home at 11 o'clock Polly, the cool headed, strong armed border girl, went down to the cellar to get the furnace a last feeding and shake up for the night and to see that it was not hot enough to set the house on fire on the one hand and that it should give out heat enough on the other hand to make the rooms warm and cozy for the family when they arrived. Then she went back to the dining room. To Polly, who lived in a cabin, but who nevertheless liked pretty things as well as any one, that room looked beautiful, with its crimson painted walls and the handsome silver-ware sparkling upon the sideboard. She had heard that silverware was worth \$400, and she eyed it with something like awe. What a lot of money!

Admiring the silverware, Polly did not notice how time passed till she looked up with a start and saw it was half past 11. She jumped to her feet, and at that moment exactly she heard the sound of a sleigh and the horses' hoof beats upon the snow. What had happened to bring the Valentines home three hours and a half sooner than they expected to come?

But, no! Listen! Where were the sleigh-bells? They did not ring. They were muffled—the bells on this sleigh. What did it mean? It might mean harm, danger, terror, if the sleigh with the muffled bells stopped in front of the farmhouse. It did stop.

Polly's breath almost stopped, too, a moment later when she heard two men approach the door and talk together in a low voice. The next moment they hammered on the door tremendously, making all the noise they could to scare the girl the more, and one of them ordered her in a thundering voice to open the door.

"Open this door, Polly Martin! We know you are in there all alone, and we brought home yesterday, and we're going to have it."

But Polly said never a word, only sat still, so still she might have been carved out of stone.

"Open this door!" roared the men again. But the beating of Polly's heart was the only sound in answer, and they could not hear that. Then they pounded harder than ever and kicked the door and shook it in a rage. But it was of brave oak, strong and well seasoned, and would not yield. The robbers were in a fury. Once again they called to her, cursing her horribly. They said:

"If you open the door, we will let you off alive. If you don't, we'll get in anyhow, and then we'll shoot you dead for sure."

Still little Polly would not open. The noise at the door ceased. What would the next terror be? Polly soon understood. The robbers went to a window. It was easy enough to force the shutter. Then there was a faint grinding sound. The burglars were cutting the large, new fashioned window pane with a diamond. And yet Polly would not open the door. Indeed it would have been no good to do so now, for the robbers would soon be in the room anyhow. Polly only sat still and waited for her doom. Her tongue felt dry in her mouth. She felt so cold her teeth chattered, and she could not even hear her heart beat now, for it seemed to almost stop.

Crash went the outer pane. The grinding, cutting sound began on the inner one. It was quickly loose on two sides; only a matter of five minutes more for Polly, and then—

And then, in the very nick of time, in the last moment, there came a sound of sleighbells, merry chiming, sweet and

clear, tinkle, tinkle, like the fairy bells she had heard tell in her childhood sounded in the air above people's heads sometimes. Yes, thank God, it was bells, but real sleighbells, and very, very near! The robbers took to their heels and to their sleigh with the muffled bells and drove off as fast as they could lash their horses to go.

But it was not the family returning. Nobody came into the house. No sleigh stopped in front, neither did any move past with its merry tingle-ling of music, though Polly certainly heard the bells a moment or two longer. Then all quieted down. But Polly was too shaken up now to go to bed at all. She sat there alone, frightened and trembling, three hours longer till the family came home. She was kept to destroy the rats and mice. She seldom left the harness house and had a warm bed made for her in a barrel of hay. That afternoon a careless stableman had thrown a set of sleighbells across the barrel where pussy's bed was. The noise the robbers made disturbed her, and she had jumped out to see what it meant. In doing so, being a large, heavy cat, she shook the bells and jangled them, and that was what scared the burglars off.

Polly took a fine, big, honest husband a few years later and is living in a pretty country home of her own, with the radiant skies above her, the woods and orchards and green fields around her, the very scenes to her so well beloved. There she will probably live to tell her grandchildren how she and Farmer Valentine's \$500. After all, which is the real heroine of the story, Polly or pussy? One question more:

Was it a mere accident that the cat shook the bells and made them ring at the particular moment she did or was it something else?

### Too Much For Her.

Mrs. Pinchcent—I had a terrible dream last night, I dreamt you did something that made me drop dead.

Mr. Pinchcent—What was it I did, Maria?

Mrs. Pinchcent—You gave me a present for Christmas.

### Some Christmas "Never's."

Never "mark down" a price-mark on a Christmas present. If the mark doesn't indicate that you are properly extravagant, rub it out or, still better, mark it up.

Never give your dear wife a cord of wood or a ton of coal for Christmas just to show her that you have money to burn.

Never tell your little boy that there isn't any Santa Claus. The older boys will do it for you all too soon.

Never buy more Christmas presents than you can afford. This is very good advice, and, of course, you won't follow it.

Never give a minister a pair of slippers if there is a small boy in his family, for smart boys ought to be happy on Christmas.

Never ask a girl for a kiss when she's under the mistletoe bough. Take it.

Never try to give your wife a \$500 sealskin sack if you are somebody's cashier on an income of \$7 a week.

Never give your husband a box of cigars. Give him a big box of Schuyler's bonbons, and some of it may come your way.

Never get mixed and give Mrs. Jones the present she sent you last year. She may recognize it.

Never warn a woman that she is standing under the mistletoe. If she's homely, she will be your enemy for life; if she's pretty, she'll think, not without reason, perhaps, that you're a fool.

### Hard Luck.

Johnny Bug—Why, what are you crying about, Willy?

Willy Centiped—Boo-hoo! I hung up my stockings, and Santa Claus only put presents in thirty-nine of 'em! Boo-hoo!



## The Delighting Father The Prince of Peace

## XMAS FEASTING IN OLD ENGLAND

By J. P. Donn.

[Copyright, 1901, by Hamilton Musk.]

When, in 1647, Puritan sentiment caused the parliament of England to abolish Christmas formally, on the ground of pagan origin and what it deemed pagan observance, most of the people grieved sorely and yearned with such good effect for the return of the old custom that today the season is kept as their chief festival by English speaking people.

About that period there was published at Oxford a document entitled "An Hue and Cry For Christmas" which reveals quaintly the popular yearning.

"Any man or woman \* \* \* that can give any knowledge or tell any tidings of an old, very old, gray bearded gentleman called Christmas, who was wont to be a verie familiar ghest and visite all sorts of people, both pore and rich, and used to appear in glittering gold, silk and silver in the court, and in all shapes in the theater in Whitehall and had ringing, feasts and jollity in all places, both in the citie and countrie for his coming \* \* \* whosoever can tel what is become of him, or where he may be found, let them bring him back againe into England."

So back again he came, but not to the same honors as of old. Never again was there to be such feasting as in the old days, all the public ceremonial which used to greet him was gone forever. Today the Christmas celebration is an event of the home and the children among related families instead of the gay street pomp of old.

The English lore of high Christmas feasting goes back beyond history into the banquet hall of King Arthur, and having read it the reader wonders no more at the mighty deeds performed by the lance of Launcelot or the broad Excalibur. Whistlercraft thus sets the legend in rhyme:

They served up salmon, venison and wild boars By hundreds, by dozens and by scores, Hogsheds of honey, kilderkins of mustard, Muttons and fatted beeves and bacon swine, Herons and bitterns, peacocks, swan and bustard, Teal, mallard, pigeons, widgeons and, in due, Plum puddings, pancakes, apple pies and custard, And therewithall they drank good Gascon wine, With mead and ale and cider of our own, For porter, punch and negus were not known.

In the middle ages, beginning with the king, every one feasted during the two weeks of Christmastide to the very best of his physical and financial ability, and none was too poor to have his fill of the Christmas cheer. Open house was the absolute rule. The wayfarer was welcome anywhere, the wassail bowl passed from the hand of the king to his nobles at large, every one feasted during the two weeks of Christmastide to the very best of his physical and financial ability, and none was too poor to have his fill of the Christmas cheer. Open house was the absolute rule. The wayfarer was welcome anywhere, the wassail bowl passed from the hand of the king to his nobles at large, every one feasted during the two weeks of Christmastide to the very best of his physical and financial ability, and none was too poor to have his fill of the Christmas cheer. Open house was the absolute rule. 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