

## Polly and the Mistletoe

By OLIVE HARPER.

"WELL, Mrs. Li Hung Chang, I believe I will," said Polly Adams to a ridiculous china doll that sat on the chimney staring fixedly before her.

It was nearly midnight, and the house was still. The Christmas tree stood all decorated and with the gifts hung upon it in the library, back of the parlor, and Polly had been sitting beside the fire in her pretty yellow elderdown pajamas. Pajamas were a fad that season among all her girl friends, and Polly always, as she said, "kept right along with the procession."

Polly was tired, for she had been busy all that day. They were not rich, and so much of the running devolved upon Polly, and the three boys were home from school, and they had two visitors to remain till New Year's. One of them was Archie—it is enough to call him just "Archie." So, while Polly braided the heavy mass of rich brown hair into one long loose plait, she glanced at the mistletoe and then at the sphinxlike face of the Chinese doll as she said:

"Now, Mrs. Li Hung Chang, who shall I do? Archie loves me. I know it from a dozen—yes, a thousand—



HE WRAPPED THE SHRINKING LITTLE FIGURE IN ITS FOLDS.

things, but he is so shy and timid. Minnie Blake is engaged, and so would I be if only Archie had the courage of a—ah chipmunk," she hastily added as she thought of her bare feet and possible mice. "Now, if I could hang this mistletoe to the chandelier tonight in the excitement of seeing our gifts I could manage—I know I could—to get him under it beside me, and the boys would do the rest, and then—well, the ice would be broken. I will if you say so. Why don't you speak?"

Saying this, the dainty little beauty stamped her foot, now in its slipper, which jarred the room ever so slightly, and the doll did nod its head. Polly laughed, half-startled, but with new courage. She took the night light in one hand and the bunch of mistletoe in the other, with its grappling wires, and stole downstairs to the library door and on into the parlor, not noticing that the library door had shut to with the spring lock.

Polly did not wish to awaken any member of the family, so she did not switch on the lights. Her own tiny light but made the darkness visible. It was fearsome down here all alone in the dark, so she hurried and pushed the side table over into the middle of the room under the chandelier, with the mistletoe on it, and then brought a delicate, long-legged, gold-painted chair, on which she climbed thither, listening all the while for a sound.

The chandelier was high and Polly not tall, so do her best, standing on her tiptoes, she could not reach the fixture. "I must get up to the table," she said to herself, "and I hope I'll not fall and break my neck and rouse the house."

Just as this very courageous little maiden stepped to the table with one foot, while the other was still resting on the insecure chair, there was the sound of a latchkey in the front door and then a blast of wintry wind and two voices in the hall. They were those of her oldest and most unbearable brother Fred, and the other voice belonged to Archie Steadman. It was too much for Polly. It would be awful if Fred discovered her.

She tried to step down from her insecure perch, but the treacherous ornamental chair tilted, and Polly came down suddenly, striking her head against the table. She was too frightened to feel the hurt, for the noise was great enough to startle Fred into saying:

"What's that? Burglars! I'll bet. Come on, Archie."

Saying that, Fred bounded forward and switched on the light and, seizing a heavy cane from the hatrack, sprang into the parlor. But Polly had managed to get on her feet and scamper to the library door, dropping one of her slippers as she went and leaving the lamp behind her; but, try as she might, she could not open the library door, and stood there pulling with a strength born of desperation, while Fred said:

"Burglars! Here's the light. They're after the gifts on the tree. Come on!"

With his cane swinging like an Indian club, Fred sprang into the library, while Archie, with his umbrella, followed, and both advanced upon the burglars. They could hear the rattling of the doorknob, and Fred shouted:

"You may as well give up. You're caught!"

And then the library was also flooded with light, which was reflected from a thousand gilded ornaments on the tree, and by the illumination Fred and Archie saw a miserable little figure in yellow pajamas, huddled up like a cold duckling, with one bare foot and with its head down, in the corner of the door frame as though trying to hide.

From her baby days Polly had had a queer habit of hopping from one foot to the other without moving from her place when frightened or angry. Now one slipped little foot and one pink bare one kept up the familiar hopping movement. Fred looked at the culprit a moment and then sprang forward and, seizing one shoulder and the long braid of hair, turned her around to the light, while the miserable girl covered her face with her hands. Fred laughed loud and long, saying:

"Well, I'll be jiggered if it isn't Polly!"

Archie said nothing and was trying to pretend that he did not know anything at all until he saw the tears streaming through the fingers, and then he said hoarsely:

"Fred, I am ashamed of you. You are not treating your sister right at all. Here, Pol—I mean Miss Adams," continued he, at the same time jerking the big maroon cover from the old-fashioned square piano, to the instant destruction of two plaster ornaments. "Here, Miss Pol—Adams."

Saying this with a lordly air, he wrapped the shrinking little figure in its beneficent folds, while her heartless brother lay on the carpet in convulsions of laughter. She sobbed out:

"I—I forgot—something—and that is why—"

"Ah, bosh! You just wanted to see if Archie had put a present on the tree for you."

"Oh, Fred, don't!" she cried, while tears trickled down her hands.

"Mr. Adams, I consider your treatment of your sister very harsh—very cruel."

"Well, I suppose she can't help being a little fool," continued Fred, laughing still.

"Sir, another such remark concerning this ang—ah, your sister—under the circumstances will sever our friendship. Pol—Miss Polly. I have your present here. I was going to give it to you tomorrow, but under the present circumstances I shall ask if you will accept it now and here, as with it you will have a protector."

With a malevolent look at Fred, Archie fumbled in all his pockets until he found a small box. Then he reached for one of Polly's wet little hands. Archie looked very imposing to Polly, and little by little her sobs ceased, and by the time he had opened the box she could see through her dimmed eyes that he had a superb solitaire ring for her—one to make the heart of any girl proud, and one in keeping with his wealth. So she even smiled a little as Archie, with one last look of defiance at Fred, placed the sparkling ring on the proper finger and then folded her in his arms proudly and with a look of ineffable happiness, though Polly did look something like a noble squaw.

### Christmas With the Mokis.

The whole affair has the character of what we should call a mystery play, the dramatic action representing the fight of the sun god to return northward from his home in the mountains. Malevolent geni are trying to drag him back, while friendly divinities aid him in the struggle. He wins, of course, and comes back to Moki Land to warm the earth with his rays and to cause it to smile with fresh harvests. When those harvests are ripening in the following summer the snake god, which controls the water supply so urgently needed in that arid country, must be appeased by another ceremony specially devised for his glorification, the principal feature of which is the famous snake dance, concerning which so much has been written.—American Family Magazine.

### Christmas Post Cards.

The favorite Christmas post cards have very little room for writing. The entire back of the card is covered with a "Madonna and Child" by Murillo, Raphael, or, to come to more modern times, Gabriel Max or Bouguereau. The coloring is most artistic, and these cards are quite worth framing as little works of art. Some of these Madonnas—for instance, the Raphael "Madonna of the Chair"—are framed in a wreath of glowing holly, which contrasts vividly with the colors in the Roman scarf flung over the back of the chair. Other subjects are to be had in these truly artistic post cards, notably portraits of fair women by Romney and Lely, Reynolds and Gainsborough, Greuze and Le Brun.—New York Globe.

### Turkey Which Ended Long Fast.

An odd incident of the last Christmas celebration in St. Louis was the breaking of a month long fast by James Barrington, who had been in custody two and one-half years on a charge of murder. Barrington expected turkey for dinner Thanksgiving day, and when the jail rations were served minus the national bird he refused to eat and promptly went on a strike. He declined his provisions consistently until Christmas, when he got the pinhead for turkey.

### The Gladsome Bells.

"Do you enjoy hearing the gladsome Christmas bells?" we ask of our friend who has retired from business pursuits.

"I did last year, and that's the truth."

"They had a joyous sound then?"

"I should say they had. They were the fire bells, and my stock of uninsured Christmas stuff was burned."—Judge.

### IN A GERMAN HOSPITAL.

Where the Christmas Angel Visits Suffering Children.

In one of the German hospitals of our country is observed a custom quite in accordance with the beautiful sentiment the Germans weave about Christmas.

Christmas belongs to the children—everybody knows that—but it belongs to them in a deeper, more beautiful sense than "everybody" knows. One is reminded of it, however, if he witnesses such a scene as is portrayed in this hospital on Christmas eve. One of the nurses dresses in a long, soft flowing robe of white, bearing in her hand a fir bough covered with snow. The snow is cotton sprinkled with diamond dust. This is the Christmas angel.

The children are told of the gentle visitor and wait in their little cots. When darkness is outside they hear the strains of sweet music in the distance. The nurses are singing Christmas carols, and the sounds come through open doors. Then the Christmas angel comes. She goes to each little cot, bending over each little form to listen to the whispered secrets. Each one tells her what he wants on Christmas day. Then, with a tender word, she passes out, and to the sound of the carols they all fall asleep—those who can slip away from pain.

When the day dawns all the children are taken into the kindergarten. Some are carried, some are rolled, and some can walk. Sure enough, each finds there what he asks for—drums and dolls and trumpets and books. On a long, low table is a plate for each one, filled with candies and queer little German cakes. On one wall is a tableau of the Nativity made of small wax figures, and a painting on the wall completes the perspective of hills and shepherds and the guiding star. Hanging from the wall in the center of the ward is a large hoop covered with laurel. At intervals around it are set lighted candles. It is suspended from the ceiling by four wide ribbons.

In the fever ward, where the contagious diseases are cared for, the little patients of course cannot leave, but they have their Christmas too. Two large, fine spruce trees stand in each end of the ward, brilliantly illuminated by tiny, many colored electric lights.—Philadelphia North American.

### A LOST ILLUSION.

Sadie's Santa Claus Was Only Johnny Smith's Papa.

The loss of part of Santa Claus' disguise at a Christmas Sunday school entertainment and the consequent discovery that "he was only a man after all" caused one little girl at least acute distress.

Santa Claus was one of the cherished ideals of Sadie's childhood, and Sadie parted with her ideals reluctantly. She was sure she heard the reindeers scamper over the roof every Christmas eve, and the fact that even the gas logs were a pretty tight fit for the chimney did not dispel the illusion that somehow Santa Claus, despite his corpulence, managed to slip through the tiny slit with his pack and leave presents on tree and in stocking.

So when she saw on the Sunday school platform his hoary head and beard, fur-trimmed coat, fat stomach and short legs—and, above all, his pack—she greeted the familiar figure with enthusiastic applause. Unfortunately for Sadie's peace of mind, however, the hoary hair and beard became entangled in the branches of the Christmas tree when Santa Claus began to hang up the contents of his pack, and when he withdrew his head, sans hirsute adornment, he revealed the familiar features of a prominent churchman. Then the assemblage was startled by a desolate wail that suddenly rent the air.

"Oh," sobbed Sadie, "there ain't any Santa Claus! He's only Johnny Smith's papa!"—New York Press.

### True Christmas Charity.

Last Christmas, says the Des Moines Register, clad in rich raiment, Mrs. Arthur Hyde, the handsome wife of a Des Moines millionaire, faced a bitter wind from noon until 5 o'clock in the afternoon holding in her hand the regulation Salvation Army turkey contribution box, which she took from the hands of Captain Mary Taylor, after telling the latter to return to the barracks, eat her dinner and remain indoors until sent for. Attracted thither by the strange spectacle, money of all denominations was dropped in the box, and when Captain Taylor came to resume her work at 5 o'clock, besides a well filled contribution box she received a large roll of bills from Mrs. Hyde's own pocketbook.

### A Strangely Wrought Reunion.

A joyful Christmas celebration in the home of Adolph Gebhardt of Lincoln, Neb., over the return of a long lost brother was brought about through the medium of a moving picture exhibition. Adolph was watching the entertainment one night when he was struck by the strange familiarity of one of the figures. He returned a second and a third night before he was able to recognize the features, and then he startled the spectators by shouting, "It is George; it is George!" It was learned that George was an actor in a New York theater. Telegrams passed, and George arrived in Lincoln on Christmas day. They had not seen each other for nearly ten years.

### The Fast Flier.

Time a-flyin' on so fast  
O'er the frosty ways;  
Christmas comin' all too soon  
These here later days!  
Scarcely end one Christmas song  
Fore the next one comes along.

Yet, what matter? Let 'em come!  
Speed you down Time's river!  
Welcome Christmas horn an' drum:  
We'll be boys forever!  
Time is flyin' on so fast,  
Maybe we'll get wings at last!  
—Atlanta Constitution.

## Christmas at Yum

ON the Island of Yum, where the weather is fair

And the children are always at play,  
They never have neat little stockings to wear,  
So they run about barefoot all day.  
And when it is Christmas and Santa Claus comes

He almost goes out of his mind  
He searches in vain for some stockings to fill  
When there aren't any stockings to find.

ON the Island of Yum, by the tropical sea,  
Where people live right out of doors,  
They sleep in the shade of the cocoanut tree

And cook on the sand covered shores.  
But when it is Christmas and Santa appears  
He's sorry he made them a call,  
For how can he slide down the chimneys, my dears,  
When there aren't any chimneys at all?



POPCORN AND CANDLES HUNG TO A PALM.

ON the Island of Yum there are thousands of trees.

The mango and banyan and date,  
So the children of Yum eat the fruit that they please  
And enjoy it, it's needless to state.  
But when poor old Santa comes every year  
He struggles in vain to keep calm,  
For popcorn and candles look awfully queer  
When hung to a cocoanut palm.

I on the Island of Yum were to live,  
The children I'd merrily teach;  
I'd build 'em all chimneys, and then I would give

A nice pair of stockings to each,  
And I'd send out a shipload of Christmas trees, too,  
Addressed to the children by name,  
And then you would see what a time there would be  
When Christmas and Santa Claus came.

—Wallace Irwin in New York Globe.

### The Christmas Lesson.

The Christmas lesson celebrates the birth festival of our Lord. The incarnation of Christ is the central thought in the history of the world. His birth has exalted the poetry, the music and the art of the centuries. It has changed all social customs and religious rituals. It has given a new glory to human life and a new trend to eternity. This is the time when all bitterness should be forgotten, all family feuds reconciled and all life glorified. God grant that the day may speedily come when the song of the angels celebrating the birth of the Christ may find its fulfillment throughout the whole world.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Dr. Robert Stuart MacArthur, Pastor Calvary Baptist Church, New York City.

### Caught Santa on the Street.

A Santa Claus from the Salvation Army was ringing his bell beside his iron pot in Fourteenth street, says the New York Mail and Express, when suddenly a little girl broke away from her mother in the passing throng and, rushing up to the pseudo Santa, grabbed him by his gown and began rapidly to tell her wants. First she gave him her full name and address, with many injunctions not to forget. Then she rattled off a list of things she wanted, regardless of the attempts of her mother to induce her to come away and not bother Santa. The little girl was persistent, the crowd gathered around to hear her little invocation, and for awhile she blocked traffic on that side of the street.

### A Santa Claus Party.

As the once popular "donkey party" no longer holds forth for novelty, here is something new—a Santa Claus party. Take an old sheet and paint or draw on it a Santa Claus. Have a number of red caps cut from medium weight water color paper and distributed among the guests. Taking turns, let each one be blindfolded and, walking toward the sheet, try to place the cap on Santa's head. The person succeeding is the winner and receives the prize of a toy Santa Claus. The two who also come the nearest might be given prizes of reindeers.—Bee Hive.

### Christmas In the South.

In the south Christmas is celebrated as we observe Fourth of July. The presents may be of the most inexpensive character, but there will be a bountiful supply of firecrackers, torpedoes and roman candles, not forgetting the tin horn, which begins to toot on Christmas eve and continues till midnight of Dec. 25. The cry of "Christmas gift!" resounds, and never once does one hear "Merry Christmas."—Chicago Record-Herald.



If it's for

Man or Boy

you will find it at

Faibles'

We will help make  
your Christmas  
shopping a

Pleasure.

FAUBLES'

the Best and Big-  
gest Store for

Men and Boys

in Central Penna.

