

THE TRIFLE. [By Harry Irving Greene.]



HERE was a time when Wallington had generalbeen conceded to be ly a brand new genius in the financial world-a marvelous being who could change stones into bread and serpents into fowl; then all at once he found himself in the throes of bankruptcy. He had exhausted his resources and was for

the time being hopelessly insolvent. Day by day his little handful of remaining change vanished in steadily diminishing ratio as his meals became cheaper and further apart, until finally he had but a dime left. This coin he resolved to save for some last and most desperate extremity, and he even determined to fast for days before parting with it. And fast for days he did, while oft times the days came much too fast.

When Christmas eve came he had not tasted food for three days. He



felt that he could endure it no longer, that the last and most desper- Be'n to church, and's goin' to be ate extremity had arrived and that Chris'mas purty soon .- we went now he must spend his dime. He was plunged deep in meditation when he felt someone touch his arm and And Sir! When we're turned about.

Beside him there stood a gaunt man with cavernous cheeks, feverish, wildish eyes, and a stomach that curved the wrong way. The apparition addressed him in a croaking voice.

"For God's sake, stranger, buy me something to eat. I am penniless and upon the verge of committing crime. I have worn out my shoes looking for work, and while I have a job promised Got no coffee but ist me it will be a week before it is open. And meanwhile I am starving, friend, starving. In the name of Christianity spare me enough for a meal out of your plenty."

Wallington stared into the evening dusk as he fingered his last and smoothly worn dime. He knew well enough what this other man was suffering, for had he not been in the same stage twenty-four hours before! And to give a man a dime in such a

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case was so grossly inadequate. Yet And my Ma she telled her we

Little Mandy's A Yuletide Christmas Home-Comins By Charles M Cabe 120 HE club looked just the very thing Gerald Mannersley was craving for -a sense of home. by A few lines read accidentally in an out-of-

JAMES

RILEY

Lived in poorest house

saw!

Where the fence 'uz all tore down.

And no front-door steps at all-

Ist a' old box 'g'inst the wall;

And no door-knob on the door

Wuz no winder-shutters on,

And some of the winders gone.

And where they 'uz broke they'd pas'e

'Spec' they'll freeze to death some day.

Ist brown paper 'crost the place.

Tell you! when it's winter there,

Wunst my Ma and Me---when we

There-like the Committee sent.

in the door.

the floor.

ed in bed.

my Ma she

bad.

Wus no carpet on

And no fire - and

Little Mandy's tuck-

And her Ma telled

And fried mush-

Sense her health

and's all they had

broke down so

Nen Ma hug and hold me where

And she kiss her, too, and nen

Little Mandy's layin' there;

Mandy kiss my Ma again.

heels-and-head

And the snow ist ever'where.

Little Mandy's Ma she say

Outside,---My! but they 'uz poor!

in town,

date newspaper had made him restless with longing for the old WHITCOME scenes. And so he had traveled two days and nights in a sleeper, vaguely connecting his journey's end with all the love and friend-ITTLE Mandy and her ship his starved nature was demanding. 'S poorest folks you ever When he arrived at his old club on

a chill, grey Christmas morning, it was only to find that fifteen years' silent absence had been too severe a test for friendship. The place was empty of all but servants, and they wore strange, unwelcoming faces.

He stood at the club window, looking out on the desolate, deserted street which he had always remembered as being thronged, and a great sadness swept over him.

This was not what he wanted. From his pocket he drew out the scrap of paper which had really brought him so many miles, and looked at it bitterly. It was only a death announcement cut from a paper of a year ago, and ran in the usual way-"Michael Townley, at his residence," etc. In fancy he saw a sweet-faced

maiden, who sought her happiness only in the eyes of the youth by her side. There were joybells there, too, as they left the church with the fragrance of mutual love about them.

The bells pealed on outside,

and willing fancy led him still further into the realm of "might have been." In an instant he made up his mind to visit once more the old-fashioned cottage not many miles away, to which he had hoped fifteen years before to take a bride. He would go and see it, even if its neglected condition only added to his loneliness and pain.

Two hours later he was striding through the crisp country air along a winding path which led to a rambling, ivy-covered cottage. As the last turn brought him in

sight of the house he stopped in surprise. He had expected to see dirt, ruin, and decay, but instead he looked upon a trim, well-kept cottage, and a soft, crooning song, in a voice which reawakened the tender memories of long ago, came floating through the unlatched door. Half believing that it must be fancy

leading him still, he entered the house softly, and, following the voice, went into the inner room, and stood in the glow of the warm firelight.

The sweet, tired-faced, middle-aged singer turned as his shadow fell across the light, and then stood white and trembling. "Gerald!" she whispered. "Gerald!

have you come to reproach me? Not today! Not today!" The strong man's voice broke as he

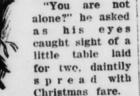
held out his arms. "Nance!" he cried joyfully.

In a moment she was crushed, sobbing, to his breast.

"Oh, Gerald! is it really you? God is very good. I thought you must be dead.'

For several moments they stood thus, the strong

man's tears falling on her greytinged hair. Then he gently put her into a chair.



"Yes," she answered. "I am quite alone. I have often come down here." "But you are expecting somebody?" he said, calling attention to the table.

She flushed prettily, looking almost as young as she had in his dreams of the morning, as she replied:

"I was expecting you, Gerald." He smiled happily at her; then the smile faded, and he sighed as he sank

"This is all foolishness, Nance," he said sadly. "You could not live here in the old days, you could do so less now, and I could not live here on another man's thousands."

A smile hovered over the woman's face as she flitted here and there, busily preparing things for a meal. Then she slipped behind a chair, and leaning over whispered with burning cheeks: "Perhaps you do not know, Gerald,

that-that Mr. Townley's money goes back to his family if--if I marry again.'

The man sprang to his feet and took her into his strong arms again. "It is not too late," he cried. "We are still young. Will you let me try

to make you happy?" Her answer was drowned in the burst of Christmas bells that pealed from the village church close by. But he did not need her words; he could see her eyes.

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Pleasant Pellets, the most effective cure for this aggravating malady.

-'And afterthat eloquent appeal of the missionary to arrest the heathen on the downward path, all you put in the box was a cent. Well, I thought if they wanted to ar rest the heathen, the best thing to send in that direction was a 'copper.

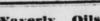
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TIME 1

what could he do? He turned about. Goin' to have a Chris'mus-Close before him was, a restaurant At the Sunday School, at's fer where he had spent hundreds of dol- All the children, and fer her. lars in his palmy days and whose pro-

prietor he knew well. Yet he owed a Little Mandy think-nen she bill there for his last big after theater Say, "What is a Chris'mus-Tree?" dinner party of many months ago, and Nen my Ma she gived her Ma he had never had the courage even in Somepin' 'at I saw. his semi-starvation to go in and ask for more credit. Yet now it must be done, for here was a human being starving upon the streets. Wallington shuddered. It was plainly his duty to fill this man's stomach, and for the last time he would exert those powers of persuasion which once up



on a time few men had been able to resist. He took the stranger by the "Come with me." he commandarm.

They entered the restaurant and Wallington walked straight up to the proprietor. "Bob," said he, "I owe you a pretty stiff bill, but I am going to go to work in a week and then I will begin paying you off. Now I want you to do me a last favor. I owe you about forty dollars, and a couple of dollars more won't make much difference to you. It is Christmas eve and my friend over there is starving. Now I want you to fill him up to the chin on good, solid food and charge it to me. I will not ask you for any favor

again if you will do this last thing." The proprietor looked at his old patron thoughtfully.

"All right." he announced at length. "Being's its Christmas eve I'll take a chance on you even if you are down and out. Tell your friend to order what he wants." So Wallington and the stranger sat down together and Wallington watched his companion fill himself with good things until at last with his stomach again curved the right way, the droop gone from his shoulders and the feverish light vanished from his eyes, the gorged one arose

"My friend," said the stranger. "I could not have endured it another day -but of course you have never known what it is to go two days without food. And when tonight you go home and sit down to your table to your feast, remember that there is an outcast fellow being upon the streets who is blessing every mouthful that you eat. Good-by, Christian."

Wallington held out his hand. "Goodby, stranger, and good luck to you. It was a mere triffe. Happy to have been able to give you a lift." Then he went up to Frenchy's hash house and had his dime's worth of coffee and



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ike it is. Nen we comed away . . And nen When its Chris'mus Eve again,

derns be

hid away

word.

where

ever heard!

And all git our toys and things

'At old Santy Claus he brings

The big Tree 'us standin' there.

And the childerns, all in town,

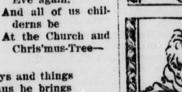
Got their presents-nen we see

They's a little Chris'mus-Tree.

And it's all ist loaded down

And puts on the Tree; -- wite where

And the things 'uz all tooked down,





Wite behind the big Tree--so We can't see till nen, you know,-With the purtiest things in town! And the teacher smile and say: This here Tree 'at's It's marked 'Little Mandy's 'Tree!'

Little Mandy Where is she?" Nen nobody say Stillest place you Till a man tiptoe

Teachers' still waiting there. Nen the man he whispers, so Ist the Teacher hears, you know. Nen he tiptoe back and go Out the big door-ist as slow!

Little Mandy, though she don't Answer-and Ma say "she won't Never, though each year they'll be 'Little Mandy's Chris'mus-Tree.!'

Fer pore children"-my Ma says-And Committee say they guess "Little Mandy's Tree" 'ull be Bigger than the other Tree! (Copyright, by Bobbs-Merrill Co.)





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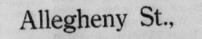
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