

CHRISTMAS MORN

ALMAY at the close of day Bethlehem in beauty lay. When ere long a star arose That with strange effulgence glows, While the joyful angels sing: "We from Heaven glad tidings bring!"

CHRISTMAS IN THE PROMISED LAND

"What now?" asked Bessie, smiling over her fancy work. "Why, nothing," replied Veva, "except that she's taken it into her head to spend Christmas with that queer, old-fashioned aunt of hers up in the country instead of here in town where there's going to be so much fun."

"I believe the child intends to go up into the Promised Land as a regular Christmas fairy," she thought, smilingly, as she descended the stairs. "All those mysterious little bundles in her room mean something."

But later in the day Joyce slipped her mother's wrap upon that lady's shoulders, brought her hat and gloves and made her go out with her for a little shopping. And on the way she revealed her plans.

"I've made up my mind that there shall be a Christmas tree in the Promised Land this year," she began. "I wrote to Aunt Isabel some time ago and asked some questions. She's written back that the young folks in the Promised Land have never had a Christmas tree and if I want to go into it I may have her big front room and Uncle Ben will see about the tree. So I've been buying and making these little things, you know, to put on it and now I'm after candy to finish off with."

Mrs. Baxter looked affectionately at her daughter. "You're a good girl, Joyce," she said, softly, "and mother's proud of you." And then she opened her own purse and purchased some choice gifts for Aunt Isabel and Uncle Ben. "You can smuggle them onto the tree without their knowing a thing about it," she said. "I declare, Joyce, I do wish I was going to the Promised Land, too!"

"But you can't, you know," laughed Joyce; "there's the Christmas dinner to be looked after and papa to take care of. I'm the only one who can be spared. But won't it be nice? I'll write you all about it the very next day."

The Promised Land is the name given to a narrow valley which runs up among the hills which form a spur of the Allegheny mountains. It is an isolated region, "three miles from nowhere," as some of its inhabitants say, but fruitful farms and comfortable homes are scattered along its length on either side of the straggling road which forms its only street.

cheerfully tugged it into the old sleigh. "Seems kind o' queer she'd bring along a trunk for just a few days," he thought to himself, "but maybe she's going to stay quite a spell." And as the old man tucked the blankets in snug and warm he found himself hoping that she would.

There was seldom a strange face seen on that familiar road which led up into the Promised Land, and Joyce caught fleeting glimpses of interested faces peering out at them as Uncle Ben's old horse jogged heavily along. Two or three of the young girls she had become acquainted with during the preceding summer, when she had spent a week at the farm, and now she gayly waved her hand to them as she caught sight of them at the window or door. And so swiftly does news travel, even in the Promised Land, that before night-fall everyone knew that Joyce Baxter, Aunt Isabel's niece, had come up to spend the holidays. Somehow the very knowledge of this helped to content some dissatisfied girl hearts with the prospect of the usual dull Christmas in the valley.

But when next day Uncle Ben's well-known horse and cutter stopped at every gate in the Promised Land and pretty, stylish Joyce came up the path to the front door, followed a moment later by Uncle Ben, who never missed the chance of a neighborly visit, there seemed to come all at once into those quiet lives a new something of delight and interest which had not been there before. And when Joyce in her own pleasant way had given her invitation "to come up to Aunt Isabel's to-morrow evening at seven o'clock," they all thought it was lovely and promised to go, but not one of them even suspected a Christmas tree. And it was not only the young people who were asked to come. Not one was slighted. Every family was invited, from grandma down to the long-dressed baby. Aunt Isabel had said: "Ask 'em all, my dear, the house is big enough to hold 'em. I guess, and anyhow it'll do us good to crowd up and be neighborly." For the truth was that the widely-scattered families were not at all noted for their "neighborliness." All had grown into a stay-at-home habit, or when they went at all it was generally to the village.

A busier household than Uncle Ben's



UNCLE BEN MET JOYCE AT THE TRAIN.

could not be imagined than was his on the day before Christmas. Very early in the morning he and Joyce had driven off up into the hemlock woods and brought home in triumph a beautiful tree, tall, shapely and stout of branch. And it was Uncle Ben who set it firmly in a block of wood and bore it into the big front room. And it was Belinda, the "help," who popped great handfuls of snowy corn, and Aunt Isabel who sat in her red-covered rocking-chair and strung it into long festoons for the tree. And it was Joyce who filled the generous bags of laces she had made at home with candy, raisins and cracked nuts. And it was Joyce who twined long, spicy-smelling ropes of hemlock to swing from the ceiling and around the walls.

Belinda and Aunt Isabel retired to the kitchen, while Joyce was busy with Uncle Ben in the front room, and presently Belinda's cake-making skill was announced by delicious smells from the big oven, and Aunt Isabel sliced the pink ham and sandwiched it in between the daintily-thin buttered bread.

"We'll have tea and coffee both, Belinda," said Aunt Isabel, "and pass the things around." And Belinda, smiling broadly in pleased anticipation of the unusual thing which was about to happen, deftly spread the snow-white frosting over the big fruit cake she had allowed to cool. "It will be nice, that's a fact," she said, energetically. "It's wonderful, ain't it, what just one girl can set a-going when she takes a notion!" At seven o'clock the Promised Land people presented themselves at Uncle Ben's front door. The old man, shining with hospitality, beamed upon his guests and welcomed each one with a hearty handshake. And next came Joyce with a bright word for every one and a smile and a happy welcome for each and every child. The young girls looked at Joyce in bashful admiration. How pretty she looked in her soft blue dress, with one of Aunt Isabel's geranium blossoms in her hair! They came and came and Uncle Ben overflowed with genial warmth, while Aunt Isabel, whose rheumatism kept her closely to her chair, smiled peacefully upon them all and never once thought of her bright rag carpet under all those snow-dampened feet. Uncle

Ben had made a fire in the big sitting-room fireplace, and around this the older folks gathered for a friendly visit.

At half-past seven Joyce opened the front door and ushered the children and young people into the blaze and glory of the first Christmas tree some of them had ever seen. Right proudly did Joyce view the pretty scene, the hemlock-garlanded room, the wreaths above the pictures, but over all and crowning all the lovely tree, towering to the ceiling, aglow with the soft light of dozens of candles, agleam with snowy festoons of popcorn, golden oranges and bags of candies. Joyce had worked hard all day and was tired—at least she had been tired before the people came—but now as she looked into the happy faces and wondering eyes she felt that it had paid.

Who could tell of all the joys of that wonderful Christmas Eve! How astonished each boy was when Uncle Ben loudly read his name and handed down to his eager hands some mysterious parcel! How radiantly happy was each small girl who received some pretty thing from that wonderful tree! And no child was forgotten. And then how they all shouted when Uncle Ben peered through his glasses at the parcels he found on the tree for himself! And how they all exclaimed when Joyce undid Aunt Isabel's bundle and laid a beautiful, soft, fleecy, white shawl about her shoulders! And then when Uncle Ben, who had privately invited a minister from the village, asked for a few Christmas remarks, they all listened reverently while that sweet old story of the Babe of Bethlehem was told once more.

And after the candles had burned down, sputtered and gone out, the front room was deserted in favor of the big kitchen, where all sorts of gay, romping games were played. Joyce, flushed and merry, wondered once or twice if the girls at Jean's Christmas party were having as much fun as she.

Presently Belinda, important and smiling above her snow-white apron, passed plates and napkins, and Joyce helped her serve the delicious cake and sandwiches and pour the tea and coffee. What a royal good time it was, and how jovial the old men were, and how vivacious the old ladies! Aunt Isabel and Uncle Ben were plainly happy, and so

was Belinda, and if the guests were one-half as happy as Joyce they were happy, indeed.

When it was all over and all the guests had departed for their respective homes in the Promised Land, Uncle Ben drew Joyce down upon his knee. "Little girl," he said, "you done well—you done nobly! The true Christmas spirit is in your heart, 'peace and good will.'"

And Aunt Isabel smiled across at her. "You've brought the Christmas feeling into my heart, child," she said softly. "I can't bear to have you go home day after to-morrow."

Joyce laughed gleefully. "I'm not going, auntie," she said. "I've three weeks' vacation, and I'm going to spend it all with you." Uncle Ben chuckled to himself. "That's the way to talk," said he. "I wondered when I see that trunk of yours if you maybe wasn't going to stay with us a spell, and so you be. We'll try to have some sleighrides and candy-pulls up here in the Promised Land while you're here and I don't doubt a mite but what we'll all have a good time."—Harriet Francene Crocker, in Union Signal.

COMPARISONS NOT MADE.



Smythe—Was your Christmas a success? Brown—I don't know; my wife hasn't heard from the neighbors yet.—Up To Date.

A BOER VICTORY.

Burgbers Whip Methuen's Army at Magersfontein.

Desperate Assaults made by English Troops on the Enemy in Trenches Were Unsuccessful—Losses on Both Sides Were Large—Other War News.

Pretoria, Dec. 12.—Six hundred and seventy-two British prisoners were taken at Stormberg.

In the fighting at Modder river Sunday evening Gen. Cronje maintained his position and captured 50 British soldiers.

The Boers captured three British guns in the engagement with Gen. Gatacre's force at Stormberg. The sortie at Kimberley on Saturday was an attempt to take the Boer position. London, Dec. 13.—The war office publishes the following dispatch from Gen. Buller: Dispatch from Gen. White, dated December 11, says: "Last night Col. Metcalf and 500 of the Second rifle brigade sortied to capture a Boer howitzer on a hill. They reached the crest without being discovered, drove off the enemy and then destroyed the howitzer with gun cotton. When returning Metcalf found his retirement barred by the Boers, but he forced his way through, using the bayonet freely."

London, Dec. 14.—Each important battle seems to bring a worse reverse for the British, and the papers this morning sorrowfully admit that Gen. Methuen's check at Magersfontein on Monday is the most serious event the war has yet produced.

It is estimated here that Methuen's forces amounted to 11,000 men. No reliable estimate of his losses has yet been received. They are believed to have been at least 450.

Julian Ralph, describing the battle at Magersfontein, in a dispatch to the Mail says: "The Boers were entrenched at Magersfontein, four miles north of Modder river. At dawn Monday the Highlanders, advancing across the valley, were suddenly subjected to a murderous fire from the trenches about 200 yards in front. The greater part of the fearful loss of the day was thus suffered in a minute. Startled and overwhelmed, the brigade retired quickly, but soon rallied and retained its position. This was on the left. On the right the guards brigade advanced across the trenches and fought an invisible foe for 15 hours. At 11 in the morning the Gordon Highlanders were sent forward. The Boers allowed them to pass one line of trenches with artillery, and then entailed them. We raked the Boer trenches with artillery throughout the day. The fighting only ceased with nightfall."

The British casualties included Gen. Wauchope, the Marquis of Winchester, major of the Coldstream guards, who was killed, and Col. Downham of the Gordon Highlanders, who was mortally wounded. When the Highlanders met the murderous point blank fire of the Boers about 200 were mowed down. The Black Watch regiment on reforming was able to muster only 160 men. The Boers lost heavily in the trenches and also in the wire entanglements when they came into the open in an attempt to make a flank attack on the British. The terrific British artillery fire provoked no response except from the Boer rifles until nearly 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when the Gordon Highlanders formed to renew the attack on the entrenched kopje.

The enemy opened with a heavy shrapnel fire as the British advanced and it was found physically impossible to take the Boer trenches. The British got within 200 yards, but could not get nearer. It was here that Col. Downham fell. The Boers had had free recourse to barbed wire entanglements, which offered great obstacles even after the damage inflicted by the British artillery fire. Tuesday morning both sides occupied the positions they held before the battle.

London, Dec. 15.—The war office is still without news from Ladysmith other than that already published. The general belief is that the large Boer forces Gen. Methuen encountered at Magersfontein were partly drawn from Natal, and that Gen. Buller will strike a blow before these have time to return.

A revised list of the total casualties to the British troops at Magersfontein places the number at 832.

The war office has received the following dispatch from Gen. Walker, at Cape Town: "Gen. French views under date of December 13, reporting a skirmish at 4 o'clock in the morning with 1,800 Boers who were advancing southward toward Naauwpoort. The skirmishing continued all the morning, Boers fighting on a front of 14 miles. The enemy retired with a loss of 46 killed and wounded. Our casualties were one killed, seven wounded, including one officer and two missing."

Modder River, Dec. 15.—Ambulances started Tuesday under a flag of truce to collect the wounded and bury the dead who fell at Magersfontein.

Gen. Wauchope, who led the Highland brigade, was found dead near the trenches, shot in the chest and thigh. A few wounded were found near the trenches. Several wounded Boers were taken to the British hospital. The side of the hill and neighborhood of the trenches showed dead bodies all about. One wounded Boer informed a correspondent that their loss was terrible. The Boer losses must exceed 500. The destruction wrought by the naval guns was enormous. Word was passed along the Boer lines to prepare to retreat at nightfall.

Four Trainmen Killed.

Allentown, Pa., Dec. 14.—Passenger train No. 18 on the Jersey Central railroad, eastbound, due here at 8:57 last evening, ran into the rear end of extra coal train No. 423, also eastbound, opposite Laurys. Engineer Yeomans, Fireman Smith and Baggage-master Herth, of the passenger train, all of Easton, Pa., and Flagman George Hann, of the coal train, of Bergen, N. J., were buried under the wreck and killed. The wreck caught fire and the engine, smoker and baggage car of the passenger train were burned.

THE JOLO TREATY.

Text of the Agreement Between Gen. Bates and the Sultan is Made Public.

Washington, Dec. 14.—The following is the text of the agreement between Gen. Bates and the sultan of Jolo, better known as the Jolo treaty, which has been sent to the senate by the president, it being understood that this agreement will be in full force only when approved by the governor general of the Philippine islands and confirmed by the president of the United States, etc. It is subject to future modifications by the mutual consent of the parties in interest.

Article I.—The sovereignty of the United States over the whole archipelago of Jolo is declared and acknowledged.

Article II.—The United States flag will be used in the archipelago of Jolo and its dependencies on land and sea.

Article III.—The rights and dignity of the sultan and his datus shall be fully respected; the Moros shall not be interfered with on account of their religion; all their religious customs shall be respected, and no one shall be persecuted on account of his religion.

Article IV.—While the United States may occupy and control such points in the archipelago of Jolo as public interests seem to demand, encroachment will not be made upon the land immediately about the residence of the sultan unless military necessity requires such occupation in case of war with a foreign power, and where the property of individuals is taken due compensation will be made in each case. Any person can purchase land in the archipelago of Jolo and hold the same by obtaining the consent of the sultan and coming to a satisfactory agreement with the owner of the land, and such purchase shall immediately be registered in the proper office of the United States government.

Article V.—All trade in domestic products of the archipelago of Jolo, when carried on by the sultan and his people with any part of the Philippine islands and when conducted under the American flag, shall be free, unlimited and undisturbed.

Article VI.—The sultan of Jolo shall be allowed to communicate with the governor general of the Philippine islands in making complaint against the commanding officer of Jolo, or against any naval commander.

Article VII.—The introduction of firearms and war material is forbidden, except under specific authority of the governor general of the Philippine islands.

Article VIII.—Piracy must be suppressed and the sultan and his datus agree to co-operate with the United States authorities to that end, and to make every possible effort to arrest and bring to justice all persons engaged in piracy.

Article IX.—Where crimes and offenses are committed by Moros against Moros, the government of the sultan will bring to trial and punishment the criminals and offenders, who will be delivered to the government of the sultan by the United States authorities if in their possession. In all other cases persons charged with crimes or offenses will be delivered to the United States and authorities for trial and punishment.

Article X.—Any slave in the archipelago of Jolo shall have the right to purchase freedom by paying to the master the usual market value.

Article XI.—In case of any trouble with subjects of the sultan, the American authorities in the islands will be instructed to make careful investigation before resorting to harsh measures.

Article XII.—At present Americans or foreigners wishing to go into the country should state their wishes to the Moro authorities and ask for an escort, but it is hoped that this will become unnecessary as we know each other better.

Article XIII.—The United States will give full protection to the sultan and his subjects in case any foreign nation should attempt to impose upon them.

Article XIV.—The United States will not sell the island of Jolo or any other island of the Jolo archipelago to any foreign nation without the consent of the sultan of Jolo.

Article XV.—The United States government will pay the following monthly salaries: To the sultan \$250 (Mexican money), to Dato Rajah Muda \$75, to Dato Atik \$60, to Dato Calbi \$75, to Dato Joankin \$75, to Dato Puyo \$60, to Dato Amir Hussin \$60, to Hadji Batu \$50, to Habib Mura \$40, to Serif Saguin \$15. Signed in triplicate, English and Sulit, at Jolo, this 20th day of August, A. D. 1899.

Advance Guard of a New Service.

New York, Dec. 14.—Five marine hospital doctors sailed yesterday on the steamer St. Louis for Southampton. They are the advance guard of a new service of the government which is to be established abroad. The doctors are to be attached to the United States consulates at different large ports in Europe and will look after the steerage passengers coming to the United States. They will go aboard of all vessels leaving for our ports and examine the steerage passengers. After having made an examination and finding everything all right they will give the ship a clear bill of health.

They Walked on the Track.

Tarentum, Pa., Dec. 14.—Bethor Lanish, aged 29 years, and Miss Ella Mengel, aged 18, started out last evening from the home of the young woman to do some shopping together. To shorten the distance they took the route of the railroad track. They were caught by the Butler express and killed.

A New Combine in Sugar.

Dover, Del., Dec. 13.—Preparations were begun here last night for the incorporation of the Colonial Sugar Refining Co., capital \$100,000,000. Large sugar making companies now outside the American Sugar Refining Co. are concerned in this new Delaware corporation.

Another Strawboard Trust.

Indianapolis, Dec. 13.—A new strawboard trust will be launched the first of the year in opposition to the old trust. The mills in the new combination are at Terre Haute, Anderson, Joliet and Lima.

NOW IT'S BULLER.

Another English General Reports a Reverse.

LOST ELEVEN BIG GUNS.

Attempt to Cross Tugela River was a Failure.

BOERS' FIRE WAS DEADLY.

Gen. Buller Tells a Humiliating Story of How His Soldiers Walked Blindly Into a Trap Set for Them by a Cunning Enemy.

London, Dec. 16.—The war office has received a dispatch announcing that Gen. Buller has met with a serious reverse. Gen. Buller was attempting to cross Tugela river. Finding it impossible to effect his object, he ordered a retirement in order to avoid greater losses. He left 11 guns behind.

The following is the text of Gen. Buller's dispatch announcing his reverse: "Chieveley camp, Dec. 15.—I regret to report a serious reverse. I moved in full strength from our camp near Chieveley at four o'clock this morning. There are two fordable places in the Tugela river and it was my intention to force a passage through at one of them. They are about two miles apart. My intention was to force one or the other with one brigade, supported by a central brigade. Gen. Hart was to attack the left road, Gen. Hildyard the right road and Gen. Lytton was to take the center and to support either. Early in the day I saw that Gen. Hart would not be able to force a passage and I directed him to withdraw. He had, however, attacked with great gallantry and his leading battalion, the Connaught rangers, I fear, suffered a great deal. Col. I. G. Brooke was seriously wounded.

I then ordered Gen. Hildyard to advance, which he did and his leading regiment, the East Surrey, occupied Colenso station and the houses near the bridge. At that moment I heard that the whole artillery I had sent to support the attack—the 14th and 66th field batteries and six naval 12-pounder quick firers, under Col. Long, had advanced close to the river in Long's desire to be within effective range. It proved to be full of the enemy, which suddenly opened a galling fire at close range, killing all their horses and the gunners were compelled to stand to their guns. Some of the wagon teams got shelter in a donga and desperate efforts were being made to bring out the field guns. The fire, however, was too severe and only two were saved.

Of the 18 horses 13 were killed, and as several drivers were wounded I would not allow another attempt, as it seemed that they would be a shell mark, sacrificing life to a gallant attempt to force the passage. Unsupported by artillery I directed the troops to withdraw, which they did in good order. Throughout the day a considerable force of the enemy was pressing on my right flank, but was kept back by mounted men under Lord Dundonald and part of Gen. Barton's brigade. The day was intensely hot and most trying on the troops, whose conduct was excellent. We have abandoned ten guns and lost by shell fire one. The losses in Gen. Hart's brigade are, I fear heavy, although the proportion of severely wounded is, I hope, not large. The 14th and 66th field batteries also suffered severe losses. We have retired to our camp at Chieveley."

The news of Gen. Buller's reverse was received so late that morning newspaper comment is confined to perfunctory expressions of extreme regret and disappointment, and of the necessity of calmness and redoubled efforts to retrieve the position. This latest check is regarded as the most serious event in England's military history since the Indian mutiny.

The Standard says: "Gen. Buller's dispatch is a deplorable reading. It is the now familiar story of concealed Boers and of British troops marching up blindly almost to the very muzzles of the enemy's rifles. It cannot be doubted that the moral effect will be to aggravate our difficulties over the whole field of operation. The country has discovered with annoyance and surprise that subduing Boer farmers is about the hardest work we have entered upon since the Indian mutiny. Their commandants have shown them selves able to give our generals useful, but expensive lessons in modern tactics."

A Destructive Fire.

Phillipsburg, Pa., Dec. 16.—A number of buildings containing nine machinery were destroyed by fire Friday at Morrisdale, Pa., the plant being known as No. 1 shaft of the Morrisdale Coal Co. The value of the buildings and contents is estimated at \$30,000. Four hundred men have been thrown out of employment. It is also reported that the fire has reached the inside of the mine and that the loss will amount to \$75,000.

Failed for \$3,000,000.

Boston, Dec. 16.—John P. Squire & Co., engaged in the meat and provision and meat packing business, assigned Friday to Lawyer Herman W. Chaplin. The liabilities are estimated at \$3,000,000 and the assets at \$5,000,000, the latter including a recent appraisal of the plant at East Cambridge and Somerville at \$2,000,000. The company was incorporated in 1886 and has a paid up capital of \$8,000,000, stock being largely held in the Squire family. The business will be carried on without any change by Mr. Chaplin as assignee.