

By Hilda Richmond.

The weather certainly was queer for the last day of December. The sun shone brightly down on leafless trees and brown fields, and a fresh warm breeze blew from the south making it like a day in late September. The wide expanse of meadows and wheat fields stretching away back of the dozen farm-houses that composed the tiny village seemed to be basking in the mellow, hazy sunlight that covered the whole landscape as with a garment. With a sigh Miss Julia Hunt hung the yellow almanac behind the shining stove in the kitchen, where yellow al manacs had hung for more than fifty years, and then went to the diningroom to pack away her precious china and ornaments.

'There's one thing," she said to Mary Finnegan, the maid of all work, 'those boys are not going into the parlor. I'll lock the door to-night and not open it till they are gone. I'm not going to have my mother's furniture scratched and spoiled by a lot of city boys. It was very foolish of me to promise Louise that I would entertain part of her mission class of newsand bootblacks, but she begged so hard that I couldn't help it. She says one day in the country is like a glimpse of Heaven to those half starved creatures, but I'm afraid it will little not be like a glimpse of Heaven for us. I had planned to have Mike take them for a long sleighride in the bob sled, but here the weather must turn as warm as May and spoil my plans. we get through the morning, we shall be all right, for I have tickets for the entertainment at the school-house in

to Miss Munt's big pasture field, and said, "Hully gee! Ain't that a bully place for a game?"

Miss Hunt was shocked at the language, but hope rose in her heart. It might be possible that the exquisite, cloudless weather favored her after all. She looked at the thin clothing of her guests, and rejoiced that the almanac had truly predicted yellow "fair and warmer" for this New Year's day.

"I say, missus, is they any boys round here? Lame Jimmy, he can't play an' we'd like to strike some kids fer a match game," said one of the boys eagerly.

"Certainly, there ar, boys in the village. If you go out and start a game, I guess it won't be long till they will all be with you," said Miss Hunt, who had very little acquaintance with boys, but had noticed that they were not long in finding out if anything new was going on.

Before the location of the bases had been settled, three recruits joined the ranks and were soon offering to hunt "Dear me, Mary," lamented Mi is Hunt, as a new difficulty stared her in the face, "I was just going to run out with the saching and some applies for with the cookies and some apples for the boys, but there are ten or twelve extra ones playing with them. They must be hungry after their long ride this morning, but what can I do?" "Sure an' I'd run to Mrs. Brown's

and get the batch she made yisterday Her Mollie said their company couldn't come to-day." "The very thing!" And with a load

off her mind Miss Julia hastened across the street.

"Sell them! I guess not. My Joe and Ned are screaming out there as loud as the rest. You may have them all, and these pies, too, for Sister Jane can't come to-day. I'll help you carry them to the pasture field," said Mrs. If Brown.

"Ten minutes for refreshments," yelled Lame Jimmie, who had by common consent been chosen umpire,



"Hully Gee! Aint That a Bully Place for a Game?"

the afternoon, and they return on the | since, as a shrewd newsboy remarked, six o'clock train. Louise said all that was necessary was to feed them well, would have no trouble.'

"Maybe it will snow yet," said Mary, examining the little house out of which an old man was said to appear in case storm was brewing. But the smiling little old lady was on guard, and that is a sure sign of fair weather. "No such luck," exclaimed the mis-

"The almanac says 'fair and r' for to-morrow. Do you tress. Do you warmer' for to-morrow. Do you think you will have time to hunt up the checker board and dominoes in the attic. Marv'

"No feller'd hit a cripple even if his decisions was foul."

In less than half the time Jimmie had alloted, the cookies and apples disappeared, and the game was again in progress. On the way out Miss Hunt had said: "We'll let them eat all they want, and then put the baskets by the fence where they can help themlves whenever they get hungry. Mrs. Brown, who was the mother of

four healthy boys, said nothing to this, but thought her friend would have her eyes opened as to boys' appetites beore ni oht.

was overcome with remorse to think she had neglected her guests, and sev eral pies soon followed the crullers as "Now, boys;" she said as the proces-

sion started, each boy with a huge pumpkin pie triangle in one hand and a rosy apple in the other, "dinner will be ready in an hour or two and we want you to have good appetites." "We'll be there," sang out the cap

tain, briefly, leading the way back to the field.

"I am sorry all the boys can't stay to dinner," said Miss Hunt. "Do you sup pose there would be enough for all?" "I am afraid not," said Mrs. Race surveying the contents of pots, kettles and pans. I am sorry, too, for they are having such a good time together. "I'll run down and see if Mrs. Laka has anything to spare. Perhaps we can arrange for all to stay," said Mrs. Brown. "Now don't object, Julia. There are six little Lakes out in your pasture field and their mother will be

delighted to help." "Of course she will," said Mrs. Lake at the door. "Nellie told me what is going on down here, and I came right away to offer my services, for of course boys are out there with the rest. I'll be back in a few minutes with my contribution." "The dinin'-room only holds twelve,"

announced Mary Finnegan, red-faced from a struggle with the table.

"Let's set one table in the sitting oom," said Julia, forgetting that she had intended to lock up her parlor and sitting-room.

When dinner was finally ready, not a boy was in the pasture field. The bats were thrown aside, the catcher's mask dangled from the fence, and the barnroof reserved seats for spectators were empty. Far away faint shouts an-nounced that a lively chase was going Miss Hunt was in despair but not on. the mothers.

"They have seen a rabbit or a squirrel," said Mrs. Lake, calmly, rang the big old dinner bell that had been silent for twenty years. "My dear Julia, if you had ever lived in the same house with six youngsters, you would be surprised at nothing. I see Mrs. Brown filling a tub with warm water. She knows what condition their hands and faces will be in."

The squirrel hunt was abandoned at the first sound of the bell, and across the fields streamed the visitors and besides all the well boys that the vil. lage boasted. Nearly every one of the dozen houses in the group was repre-sented in the motley crowd of dirty urchins. Under the direction of Mrs. Brown, the whole party was soon scented with soap and scrubbed to that lady's satisfaction. They could scarcely restrain themselves under her rigid inspection, for near at hand stretched the long tables loaded with all sorts of delicious things foreign to the city waifs. Country boys take good food as a matter of course, but three hours of baseball and chasing the nimble squirrel had made every body ravenous. "Golly," said Lame Jimmie, taking in

the turkey, chicken, bread, vegetables, ellies, pickles, cake, pie, and fruit with which the long table was filled. wisht every day was New Year's."

How they all enjoyed that dinner! Miss Hunt buttered bread till her fingers ached. Mrs. Brown ladled out quarts of gravy. Mary collected a ck of bones to make room near the oaded plates for her dishes of apple sauce and peaches, while the other women, who had been joined by two more mothers, sliced ham, and answered calls for more turkey and everything else on the bill of fare.

"If you ladies will come to the game, we'll give you the best reserved seats," said the captain of the city nine, when a plate of delicious plum pudding was placed before him. As the best re-

served seats were on the roof of Miss Hunt's cow barn, the ladies declined with thanks. are very much obliged," said "We

Miss Hunt, "but the dishes must be washed and preparations made for supper." "Does we git supper, too?" asked a

ootblack, lavin "For pity's sake," said Miss Hunt, frosted cake with a sigh. "I'se been Your clothes are too thin to go out a eatin' enough fer supper now." "Corse we does," said another. "Dese ladies is de real ting." in this wind. I cannot, cannot let you go!"



T WAS a bare, desolate room in a tenement house in a southern city. On a rickety table in one corner stood a broken vase,

which still showed remnants of its pristine beauty as the light of a stray sunbeam shone through its ruby depths. A longstemmed, withered rose which it held was doubtless a reminder of some appier hour. The occupants of the oom were a mother and her three aildren, a puny babe, a little girl, perhaps three years of age, and a boy about seven years her senior. There was nothing about the room to suggest that the family had ever teen comfortably placed as regards this world's goods, save the broken Venetian vase, but the face of the mother as she bent over her wailing babe, trying to soothe and still its cries, bore the traces of what once been the most refined type of beauty.

Only a short year ago, Mary Derwent and her little family had been living in comparative comfort, but uddenly her husband lost his position as head clerk in a large establishment, which, owing to the pres



Meanwhile Hugh Derwent Had Dragged His Weary Way Homeward.

sure of the times, had failed. Unfortunately, he fell seriously ill of a fever, which completely prostrated him. By degrees their small savings were expended, then the best of the furniture was sold, for they were too proud to isk help, and so they went from bac to worse, until they only had the poor bed, the stove, the table and two chairs, which now furnished scant measure the little room in the tenement they called home.

Hugh had been out since morning hunting for work, and his wife was growing momentarily more anxious about his prolonged absence What could keep him? It began to grow dark. Pressing her pale face against the panes, she peered out into the street.

"Mamma, I'm so hungry," pleaded : weak little voice from the bed. "Can't have something?"

"Oh, Harry, what shall we do? Sister wants something to eat?" cried Mrs. Derwent, putting her arms around her little boy's neck.

"Mamma, don't cry. 1'll go out again; perhaps 1'll get something this time, and pr'aps I'll meet papa. I won't come back without something this time," cried Harry. "Now.

see, mamma, if I do. Please don't erv! "Oh, where will you go, my poor

Company? Looking at the huge, seven-story building, with all its win-dows ablaze with light, you would wonder what purpose the child had in mind.

Nearly a year before, Mary Derwent, when the beginning of their troubles had come, had mailed a story to the Manhattan Magazine, entering the competition for a prize of \$500, which had been offered. Mary Derwent, in her happier days, had written verse which had been accepted and published. The prospect of despair to hope. They sat as if coming trouble had stimulated her, dazed. Mr. Derwent came forward as it has many another, to literary effort, in the hope of giving her family the helping hand. Poverty had knit this little family into a closer and more intimate union than ordinarily exists in families, and they had talked things over together, but long since Mary had ceased to wonder about her story, giving it up for lost.

The thought of it came as an inspiration to small Harry, and he meant to beg money for the story; that was his errand. "Surely," that thought the child, "the good editor will buy it if he knows how hungry we all are."

Harry's tired little feet at 'last eached the large building where the Manhattan Magazine was published, dren?" and through his earnest solicitation he was admitted to the editorial cooms, where he told his errand. purse back to Mr. Mayo. After some questioning, he was informed that Mary Derwent's story had won the first prize, and as she had sent no address except "City they had forwarded the check to the eneral delivery office.

It was so far to the post office, but that letter would buy bread, so Harry trudged bravely on. At last he was there. There were two letters, one for his father. He clutched them tightly in his thin, small hand and started for home. How far it was! If he could just hold out to ge there! A pain came in his head and verything turned dark around him, despite the electric lights.

There was an elegant gentleman sauntering leisurely along, looking almost bored by the mere fact of existence. Harry stopped a moment, passing his hand over his eyes as if to clear away the mist, before atempting the muddy crossing.

What made everything turn around Suddenly there was an outcry 0? as a little form went down in the mud and slush, right in front of a carriage dashing furiously onward. A moment more and the cruel hoofs of the madly driven horses will

rample the brave little life out But no, a strong arm clutches them, and with almost superhuman strength forces them back on their haunches as the little child struggles to his feet. It was the listless gen-tleman, a Mr. Mayo.

"Oh, thank you, sir," gasped Harry. "Ah, don't mention it, sonny; let me help you across," and he grasped the muddy, ragged sleeve in his daintily gloved hand, and nearly liftslight form, swung him over ing the The child reeled and would have fallen, but he caught and held him.

"I can't go on, and they are so hungry at home. Please take this letter mother-I-I can't see.' The gentleman signaled a hack and

lifted Harry in, taking a seat beside him. "Now, where do you live?" he in-

quired. Harry roused sufficiently to give directions, but immediately sank back almost fainting.

Mr. Mayo suddenly exclaimed, as if a thought had struck him which was very surprising:



There Were Two Letters, One for His Father.

"Well, bring them," and a generous supply was brought forth.

A slow smile dawned on the face of the gentleman as the child ate.

"Mary Derwent-sounds familiar,

contraction and

what a remarkable appetite!

"I believe the boy is starving," and

Conception and

"I don't care for thanks, but I would like to see the owner name-must be someone I have known." "Mother!" called Harry,

Here's mother, I bring good news money; your story won first prize, and here's a kind gentleman who saved me from being run over. Now Mary and all can have something to eat

Mr. and Mrs. Derwent could not realize the sudden transition from at last, and in a broken voice tried to speak his thanks.

"Why, haven't you a light?" inquired Mr. Mayo.

"Oh, sir," said Harry, who had re-vived wonderfully since eating, "we had no money to buy anything Mr. Mayo stared. He had never

come in contact with poverty before. "Here, take my purse and get light and, ab--something to eat."

Mr. Derwent was again thanking him, while Mrs. Derwent was weeping tears of joy and thankfulness. "God sent you to save my children

from starvation. This evening I begged for bread, begged it, and the baker refused me. But what wouldn't a woman do for her chil-

Harry soon came back with a light and a basket of food and handed the

"I only took enough for to-night, for mother has money, now."

Mr. Mayo emptied the purse on the bed, where Mrs. Derwent was already feeding little Mary, who ate raven-

The mother had less to eat than any, but, mother-like, thought of self last.

Mr. Mayo bowed himself out, promising to call on the morrow, silently wondering that he, of all others, should be the one to play Providence te a poor family.

The second letter which Harry brought proved to be an urgent invitation from Mr. Derwent's aunt in the country for him and his family to spend New Year's with her, the second day from this. How gladly they left the close, comfortless room for the spacious old farmhouse among the hills!

The day was glorious, the air balmy as if Indian summer had come again.

When they reached the home station and crowded into the large family carriage, she threw wide the windows to let in the golden sunlight and health-giving breeze from the pine lands.

Was ever a day more royal than this?

Mr. Mayo, having called to see the Derwents the day previous, Mrs. Derwent took the liberty, in her great happiness, to invite him out. too, presented himself, to his own and her astonishment, as they were going out to dinner in the large, handsome old dining-room.

There was just enough frost in the air to make the wood fire acceptable, yet the musk roses looked saucily in at the wide windows and nodded welcome, while large vases full of flowers breathed out their hearts in fragrance.

The crowning event of the day came when Mr. Derwent was giving a second helping to turkey. The dear old aunt announced that, as he would be her heir, it was his duty to remain there and keep up his property; she was tired of living without children in the house. "And what is more, I'm not going to any longer," she declared with emphasis.

"Ah, Mrs. Derwent," said Mr. Mayo, after dinner, as he swung lazily in a hammock under a large oak tree, found out why your name sounded so -ah, familiar; there was a little mistake. My cousin wrote a story for that competition, and took a to sign her name 'Mary Derwent, having heard it somewhere, perhaps. She told me about it and-

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"Sure an' I'll do that as soon as the

bird is stuffed."

If I thought they wouldn't break it, I'd run over to Mrs. Brown's and bor-row the boys' magic lantern. I could darken the sitting-room and show off the pictures, but perhaps I'd better not risk it. How many ginger cookies did you bake this morning?" "Four dozen," replied Mary prompt-

ly. "Let me see. Ten boys are coming. That will be plenty for each to have three or four for lunch. Louise laid such stress on having plenty to eat that I am glad you baked too many rather than not enough. You need ot make the tarts if we have mince and pumpkin pie.

"How do you do?" said a brisk voice at the open door. I just stopped to tell you that the entertainment for to-morrow is all off. Two of the Gray childven are down with the measles as they had the leading parts. ing money to the people who bought tickets "

"Troubles never come singly," ob-served Miss Julia as she exchanged eleven bits of pasteboard for a hand-ful of small coins. Mary I'll be back in half an hour. I'm going to the store for some candy, and on the way back I'll stop for the magic lantern. This house will look as if a whirlwind had struck it by to-morrow night, but It can't be helped, I suppose. I'll have more sense next time," she added grimly.

As the train stopped at the little station the next morning, ten boys rang-ing from ten to fifteen years, were met by Miss Julia and escorted home much if she were in charge of so many Indians. They were armed with balls come to the house ostensibly to get a and bats, and before they were half drink, but really to see if more cookies

looking at the empty baskets. "I never saw the like. I must go right in and tell Mike to kill some young chickens. My turkey and the roast beef will never be enough at this rate I'm sorry I declined your pies, Mrs. Brown.

go right home and bring them," said Mrs. Brown. "I have some fresh cake that I can spare, too. My Mollie an look after our dinner if you need ny help. Perhaps I can do something

"Indeed you can," said Miss Julia fer-ently. "It's only nine o'clock, but I shall begin peeling potatoes at once. No wonder Louise said over and over

again to 'prepare plenty of food.' " "I saw you going out with a lunch for the boys," said Mrs. Race, coming to meet them with a large basket. suppose my three are out there, so it s only fair that I should help. Do you think they will like these?" and she displayed a lot of warm, sugary

"Like them!" laughed Mrs. Brown "They ate every thing we had in five minutes. Don't take these out now. Wait till we have a chance something. It is always well to have

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Hunt. "If you can come in and make up about a bushel of cookies, I shall be indebted to you forever, Mrs. Race. I thought I had enough dinner for twenty boys, but I am afraid not now."

All three women were so busy pre-paring dinner that an hour slipped past before anyone thought of the baseball players. Even then it is doubtful if they would have been re-membered if the whole there been the membered if the whole troop had not

way so the house, one of them pointed would not be forthcoming. Miss Hunt broke on presents a week ago?

"And to think," said Miss Hunt to herself as the train pulled out and the cho of the cheers her guests had just given for her was still singing in her

"I was afraid to have the poor little souls come into my house. They said it was the happiest day they ever spent, and I'm ashamed of my selfishness. They behaved like gentlemen —every one of them, and would not

have injured a thing in the house. When they come back next Fourth of July I'll give them a pienic that is worthy of the name, and do it without calling tenance. Mary listened for his foot all the neighbors for help, too.-Ohio Farmer

HAD NO USE FOR IT.



Mr. Wit-I heard that you received a eautiful pocketbook for a New

Year's present." Mr. Nit-That's right, but what use s a pocketbook to a fellow who went

But Harry was off; he had no time to lose. He had no time to lose, in deed, if he meant to reach the great publishing house in Broad street. It was fully five o'clock, and he must be there before six, and it was such a long, weary walk for a little fellow. Meanwhile Hugh Derwent had dragged his weary way homeward. He had met the usual rebuffs, some rudely uttered, some gently worded, for there were men who were touched by his pallid face and the steps, for it was now too dark to see passers-by on the street, caught a faint, uncertain sound as of one tottering on the stairs. Opening he stopped the hack in front of a res-taurant and ordered a glass of milk, a glass of sherry and some brandy and water, the only things he could door she discerned the figure of her husband coming wearily up, step by step, but oh, so slowly. Soon she had him clasped in her arms. No think of just then. The hackman said, dryly

need for him to repeat the sad story of failure again; she knew it when he touched her cheek with his cold

"That ain't no fitten stuff fur folks whut's starvin'! The milk'll do, but bread and meat's whut he needs." "Where is Harry?" were the first words he spoke after regaining his breath, for he was quite exhausted by the exertion of mounting the steep staircase

"He's gone out, dearest; I couldn't stop him. Mary cried for something to eat, and the little fellow rushed out, determined to do something. Don't be frightened, Hugh, God will take care of him, and of us, too. We must not hide our trouble from your aunt any longer; it isn't justice to our children.

They arrived at the mean tenement, Where, meantime, was little Harry, and Harry asked Mr. Mayo upstairs. and what was his object in visiting For mother will want to thank the great publishing house of Ford & you," he said.

mine which won the prize

"Her story was called 'Evelyn,' I think.' LETTER

"That accounts for it; the letter that contained the check said 'Evelyn, by Mary Derwent.' Mine was 'Evan-geline,' but I thought they had made a mistake."

"Ab, quite a coincidence," said Mr. Mayo, "but you shan't lose by it." "I can't lose now. Had Harry not

gone to the post office, he would not have met you, and had you not succored us at that critical time we would have died, and but for the check we could not have come out here.

'So you stole your New Year's, Mary," said her aunt, as she shook her fat sides in laughter, "but the heir to 'Pinelands,' your farmer husband (as he is to be), can easily replace it."

Would you believe that that gay young fellow driving the cows the pasture with Harry, helping little Mary make mud pies, swinging the baby in the hammock, peeling potatoes with a checked apron on, was the dandy who stood at the street crossing with his cane in his mouth, almost refuting the statement that "God made man in His own image?" Well, he is the identical young well, who has been out at Pinelands several weeks, and says he intends

staying there several more. "In fact, Mr. Derwest," he said, "I m in love with Pinelands, and I intend you shall adopt me as a brother. Let me put my money in improve-ments on the plantation, and instead of making 'ducks and drakes' of my capital, i'll buy ducks and drakes and quit making a goase of myself." Soon he gave the world "assurance of a man."-Ladies' World, New York.

·Ah

comehow.

I feel surfeited myself just watching Harry's appetite appeased, they proceeded. Mr. Mayo scanned the addresses or the letters which he had taken