

# Intelligencer Christmas Supplement.

LANCASTER, PA., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1881.

## Lancaster Intelligencer.

SATURDAY EVENING, DEC. 24, 1881.

### CHRISTMAS EVE ON THE FARM.

FOR THE CHRISTMAS INTELLIGENCER.

The Christmas eve and all the farm has settled for the night. The stars are twinkling brightly.

"May be," the farmer often thinks, "those stars are loved ones."

That thought keeps, or loved ones here, a vigil from the sky.

And may be that's the reason why he does his work so well!

May be his mother's eyes are there, the brightest, best, who can tell!

The rooster gives a loud-out crow—then dreaming, I'll be out!

And from each barnyard the wakened roost the answering cry.

The golden blinks upon the tree and tries to pick his neighbor.

And losing balance, wildly flaps, and keeps his perch with labor.

And then he falls to thinking why the farmer grows so gracious.

And is so proud of corn that once he held so precious.

"I grow quite fat," he self-communes, and sticks his breast so proudly!

Through all the country round my fame is being soundly.

And now he floats to dream-land's yard with-out the least endeavor.

And dreams that there a lord he struts forever and forever!

Ah! there his ever-hoping hope has reached its full fruition.

He finds in dreams, as we men find, an acute sensation.

He doesn't know what farmers say first first treat kind and later.

Like that high head would sadly droop and that proud crest would flatten.

For present and future he watches the watch-dog's gleam in borrow.

And in their dreams snarl over bones that they will chew tomorrow.

And in the kitchen, white and clean, by work and love united.

Each pan and spoon and chair in place—for old Kris they are righted.

The wide, old chimney still stands there, as Kris so proudly.

And where for near a hundred years, he has found the stockings round it.

The farmer never loses the friends who of that chimney speak so proudly!

"A fine would do and take less room, tear that great thing away."

He never tells that round that hearth, that great room-taking thing.

A cycle, joy and sorrow, like Christmas stockings cling.

And there to hang the stockings hang, and out of each a voice.

Will ask old Kris for some nice thing to make your hearts rejoice.

There Tom's and Mary's, Charles, Ben's all hang, a step-like row.

While baby Ben's tassled socks are hung above below.

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Brownell that she is nothing. The idea of her presuming to be a rival of mine!

That's just why I shall marry me!"

With this she hastened to her room to prepare for the evening's gay party, at which she now was determined to complete the conquest of the young millionaire Lawrence Droad. He was of an old family; belonged to the highest circle of society; and withal accounted one of the most handsome men—what though he was a little too dashing and gay, there was no ambitious mother who would not have thought him altogether a desirable match for her daughter.

Christmas evening came—a model Christmas. Softly the pure white snow came floating down, flake upon flake, mellowing the sound of the bells which sent forth through the frosted air peal upon peal, to every soul wishing a Merry Christmas!

Merry Christmas!

Light and music, laughter and dancing are within the doors of the Droad mansion. Every detail of that night is brought vividly before her! She even remembers the poor beggar woman whom she had sent from the door out into the cold, and it was a colder night than this.

It is long since she hastens on, through the snow as fast as she can, while the tears come welling up, and will not be stopped.

"Luddy, Luddy! won't yer plase gi' me a nicker!" "Cause it's Christmas, yer know!"

It is a wee little girl that has come from the street, her hands stretched out, her little, thin body towards her, with a piteous, weazen face, and great sad eyes that go straight to Maude's heart.

"How queer it is," she thinks to herself, "that I pity people now. I never used to!"

She looks at the girl, who asks her name and where she lives?

"Back here in the court," she replies.

"Will you give me the money to your mother or spend it yourself?" asked Maude, strangely interested in the young beggar.

"I'm agin' ter buy some medicine with it."

"No, no, my dear, but Miss Droad, she's a daisy, and her baby's cryin'!"

"I can't give you more than a shilling, but I'll give you a nicker."

"Where is the sick lady?" anxiously inquired Maude. "Will you take me to her?"

"Right over here," she replies, as the little girl turned at once to obey.

"Come on after me, mum. Take keer you don't fall though, here on this ice. This is where we 'mave our sidin' place."

They reached a tenement back in the court. They climbed up five flights of rickety, dirty stairs. Never before had Maude seen or imagined such a place. The girl opened a door without knocking, and said:

"There she is. You jes' wait here now till I get the medicine, then I'll show yer down stairs agin," and the young girl was about to hurry off, when Maude stopped her.

"No, no, you keep that money for yourself. The baby does not need any paregoric."

And in fact the little babe had stopped its crying the moment Maude had entered the door. It was a miserable domicile. No furniture, but one backless chair, a wooden table and a low bedstead, on which was lying the emaciated, ghastly form of a young woman, evidently in the last stages of consumption. Upon her bosom lay the little babe, its large eyes wide open, looking straight at Maude, its long, black hair mingling with the mass of even darker curls that lay in wild luxuriance round the mother's head. It was a sweet looking child, a bright, beautiful boy.

Maude's first impulse was to take him up. But she feared to disturb the mother, who seemed dozing or in a stupor. When, however, the little one, with a bright smile, stretched out its chubby hands towards her, she could not help reaching down and gently lifting him to her arms. Instantly the mother was wide awake. She looked wildly around, until her gaze fell upon Maude; there it rested, with an expression of recognition in the deep-sunken, coal-black eyes that almost frightened Maude. With a gasp she raised her head, and with glazing gaze still burning into Maude's soul. Then she abruptly spoke in a deep, startling tone:

"Did you marry him?" Lawrence Droad, did you marry him?"

The question fairly shocked Maude. What did this woman know about her engagement? About Mr. Droad? Wait! Did not the little girl call her Miss Droad? Who was she?

"I know you, Miss Herrington," continued the consumptive. "A year ago you didn't know me. And I know Lawrence Droad—better than anyone else, unless you married him—did you? I never heard of him. I have been too sick to get out of my house since last Christmas night, when you had me driven from your back door. Here a violent spell of coughing stopped her.

"No, I did not marry him," said Maude.

"But why do you ask such a question at this time? Can I help you in any way, my good woman? I have a little money, my nicker, last Christmas, if you will let me."

"Nothing can help me any more. Thank God that you did not marry him. Ah, yes, thank God! For he has been wonderful good and kind to me—and you, Miss Herrington; for it must have been God that kept you from marrying Lawrence Droad—don't interrupt me. I have only a little strength left me, and I must tell you now what I came to tell you last Christmas."

How affectionate the little babe was becoming, and how good! He was crawling and patting Maude on the cheeks, and clinging to her most lovingly.

"Sit down, Miss Herrington," continued the woman, and then, when she had come to your house a year ago to tell you that before God Lawrence Droad was my husband—yes, he married me two years ago, almost—I was beautiful then; but foolish. Otherwise I might have known that one like him was not to be trusted, and no other can be! There in your arms—how sweetly the darling sleeps!—is the pledge of our marriage. O, I thank God that he kept you from committing the sin of marrying my husband, and kept him from the sin too—I am ready to go home now. I am convinced again that God loves me; else he would not have sent you here to-night. O, Miss Herrington, has not God been good to you? Ought not to trust him to take care of my boy, too? Somehow or other I never felt his goodness and love like I do now. I always tried to serve him, but you know how often a body becomes dissatisfied and ungrateful, even when He is blessing us all the while. But He has forgiven us all, I know; and

felt it in my soul! Everything seems quiet and peaceful now."

The tears that flowed down those hollow cheeks were tears of humble trust and deep peace and gratitude.

But what caused the tears to flow from Maude's eyes, as she pressed the sleeping babe closer to her breast?

She was comparing her lot with this poor woman's. She was thinking, if this poor creature could be grateful and happy, how ungrateful and wicked she had been, when God had blessed her so abundantly more richly in every respect. They were tears of penitence that rolled, for the first time in her life, down Maude Herrington's cheeks.

The woman rallied once more to say:

"Miss Herrington, to leave your comfortable house such a night as this, and come to see one like me—Christmas night it is too! I am sure you must be worthy of all the many blessings God has given you. Blessed be the name of our Father in heaven, to-night! He is going to take me home to myself soon, very soon! Hark, are those the Christmas bells? Or are they the bells of heaven ringing over yonder? O, how sweet and joyful they sound! He is going to take me home to myself one favor while I am going? You are so pure and good; won't you kneel down and pray with me? I can go in peace then—perfect peace!"

Yes, Maude did kneel down, right there by the sick woman's bed, and pray, oh, so earnestly, oh, so fervently, as she had never prayed in her life before. From a penitent, broken and contrite heart she poured forth such a flood of petitions and prayers, that Maude's eyes were dim with tears. She prayed not for the dying woman alone, but for every who had spoken peace to this soul, might make even her, the ungrateful, discontented, spoiled child of the world and of sin, like unto his women in humble faith and trust in God. She poured out her whole soul there.

She never knew how long she had remained upon her knees by that bedside. But when she arose it was as a new creature. A calm and sweet peace filled her soul. A calm and sweet peace filled her soul. A calm and sweet peace filled her soul.

"Medicine! Why child, are you crying?"

"No, no, my dear, but Miss Droad, she's a daisy, and her baby's cryin'!"

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Bill Slocum came in on tip-toe. He had formerly been one of the most notorious roughs and criminals of the city, now he was a sober man, honest and industrious, and supporting his family quite comfortably. He was followed by another man, lately reformed by Maude's influence. Still others followed, both men and women, all sober and clean; and with an almost reverential air each came near the bed of the sufferer to press her wasted hand, and murmur a heart-felt greeting on this Christmas eve.

What a grateful smile of joy lit up the face of the patient! The next instant he looked upon this rich harvest of immortal souls whom God had allowed her to glean for His glory! They had come thus in a body "to surprise Miss Herrington," they said; and some had even brought flowers and laid them on her bed, silently, solemnly—all had brought some trifling gift—"Miss Herrington's little boy." But there was a great sadness pictured on each face, low down upon the forehead form there on the bed, for they knew she was not to be with them long any more.

Unnoticed in the slight bustle of the "surprise," a carriage had driven up before the house. And now another knock was heard at the door. The next instant an elegantly dressed gentleman entered, all muffled in furs, and asks in a respectful voice:

"Does Miss Herrington live here?"

As he spoke he removed his fur cap from his head, and bowed, as he was seen on his forehead. It is the man whose life Maude had saved in the court gutter three weeks ago. It is—can it be possible? Yes, it is Lawrence Droad!

But he has changed very much. He has grown years older since this evening two years ago! Still Maude recognizes him. She holds out both her hands to him.

He takes them, kisses them; his knees bow, and he falls upon his knees by that humble bedside.

Maude feels the tears from this strong man's eyes falling hotly upon her hands. She only looks more happy, more saintly than before, as she lifts her eyes upward to heaven and murmurs a prayer to the Father of love there.

At length the penitent—for Lawrence Droad is penitent, yes, and pardoned too, is able to speak.

"And for thus I find you, Miss Herrington!" he exclaims, in tones of bitter remorse. "I could not believe them when they told me it was you who had saved my life. I did not know then that it had been at the sacrifice of your own! Miss Herrington, can you ever forgive me?"

"Lawrence," solemnly, but with feeble tone, asked Maude, "Lawrence, has God forgiven you?"

"Yes, blessed be His name, yes! But had it not been for you, you, who above all on earth had cause to hate me, I should have died in my sins, a miserable, beastly drunkard! That fall, and that rescue brought me to my senses, showed me my true condition, and brought me to repentance and redemption, and faith in Jesus Christ, by whose grace I am saved."

"Yes, Lawrence; to him belong all the glory. He has pardoned you. I have nothing to forgive, but only to thank and praise Him for His marvelous goodness, mercy and love."

An expression came over her face, too pure, too gloriously transfigured for any mere earthly being. All they that saw her then, declared ever after that she had become an angel even before her soul left its body.

She looked again at the man, kneeling by her bed, and with a sweet, blissful expression, said:

"So you are a Christian; saved at last, Lawrence?"

He humbly bowed his head in reply and murmured, "By God's grace I have renounced sin and the world, and belong to Christ and Him alone, henceforth and forever."

"Amen!" solemnly said several voices in the room.

After another pause, Maude withdrew her one hand from his, and gently drew back the covers from the sleeping boy, as she said:

"Lawrence, will you accept a Christmas present from me this blessed Christmas night? And will you keep it and cherish it, care for and love it as long as you live, for the holy Christ's sake, for your dear wife's sake, for my sake?"

The man gazed a moment at the lovely child. He snatched him to his breast, while a flood of tears, tears of sacred gratitude, once more burst from him as he exclaimed:

"O my God! Miss Herrington; this too! And this too! O, I owe you too much! Yes, for your sake, for my own son's injured mother's sake, for the holy Christ's sake, I do accept this precious gift from your hand, but as given by God himself to whom be glory alone, glory in the highest!"

Maude's head sank upon the pillow. A sweet smile wreathed her lips, from which as she closed her eyes, came the same words:

"Glory to God in the Highest!"

Then all was still. A purified soul had fled from earth, was winging its way upward to the throne. But as the peary gates above swing open to receive Maude Herrington that solemn Christmas night the little fourth-story room was suddenly filled with a wondrous melody and marvellous light.

Did those redeemed men and