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CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT.

TRIPLE SHEET. Original Christmas Tales, Christmas Legends, Christmas Pastimes and Games, Christmas Fare and Christmae Hymns, Carols and Ballads, Christmas in History, Christmas in England and Christ-

> mas in America, Choice Reading for the Christmas Season, etc., eto., eto., eto.

MILTON'S HYMN ON THE NATIVITY.

No war, or hattle's sound; Was heard the world around; The idle spear and shield were high up hung; The hooked charlot stood Unstained with hestile blood,
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng,
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by,

But peaceful was the night,
Wherein the Prince of light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds, with wonder whist, Smoothly the waters kist. Whispering new joys to the mild ocean, Who now hath quite forgot to rave, While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed

The stars with deep amaze,
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence;
And will not take their flight, For all the morning light, Or Lucifer, that often warn'd them thence; But in their glimmering orbs did glow, Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

And, though the shady gloom Had given day her room,
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed;
And hid his head for shame, As his inferior flame The new-enlighten'd world no more should

He saw a greater sun appear Than his bright throne or burning axietree could The shepherds on the lawn,

Or e'er the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustick row;
Full little thought they then, That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below:
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep;

When such musick sweet Their hearts and ears did greet.

As never was by mortal finger strook; As never was by mortal ninger strook;
Divinely-warbled voice.

Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took.
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each h enly close.

At last surrounds their eight A globe of circular light That with long beams the shamefaced night arrayed; The helmed Cherubim,

And sworded Ceraphim, Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd, Harping in loud and solemn quire, With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born

Such musick, as 'tis said. Before was never made,

But when of old the sons of morning sung, While the Creater great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung;

And cast the dark foundations deep, And bid the weltering waves their cozy channel Ring out, ye crystal spheres,

Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime melodious time: And let the bass of Heaven's deep organ blow, And, with your ninefold harmony, Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

For, if such holy song Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,

And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould And Hell itself will pass away, And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day. Yea, Truth and Justice then

Will down return to men.
Orb'd in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing, Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen;
With radiant feet the tissued clouds steering, And Heaven, as at some festival,

Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall. WICKERTOR'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

A Half-Spanish Local Goblin Story.

BY CASPER SOUDER, JR.

(Written expressly for the Christinal Supplement of the Christmas eve at Wickerton's. It was also Christmas eve elsewhere; but the particular

Christmas eve that we have to do with was at the dwelling of Mr. Godfrey Wickerton. The Wickertons were always great Christmas observers. From time immemorial they had kept the holiday with spirit; in the old time, and in the old land across the seas, before the more adventurous of them came over hither hard upon the heels of William Penn, and settled in his fair town upon the Delaware, they were strict observers of the great holiday. For 'all we know to the contrary, there may have been Lords of Misrule or Abbots of Unresson among the earlier Wickertons, and possibly they may have assisted at Christmas revels in the times of Henry VIII. or Queen Elizabeth. We cannot vouch for this, but we can safely affirm that never, so far as history or tradition discloses. did they neglect good cheer when the merry season came round. Indeed, they kept up Christmas fully as often as the law allowed, and they went at it early and stuck to it late, never failing in any portion of the performance, from the gathering in of the mistletoe, and the hauling home of the great back-log clear on to Twelfth night, when, with wassail, and Twelfth cake they inished the festival gloriously. There is a tradition among the Wickertons, that it was a rule in the family that Christmas should be kept up as long as the back-log in the big fire-plate should last. This rule had finally to be

abandoned, for the reason that the sly young

Wickertons, who loved fun better than work,

for a week or two before Christmas; and after it ! was put in service they had a way of hauling it off the coals and sprinkling the log each night after the seniors had gone to bed. Hence the back-log ceased to be the measure of how long Christmas was to last.

In course of time the American Wickertons got mixed up through inter-marriage with somebody with a hard name, whose ancestors halled from the land of Luther, and as they, also, were devoted observers of Christmas, and believed implicitly in Saint Nicholas as first and worthiest on the saintly calendar, the Christmas-observing propensities of the descendants of the blended Dutch and English reses were intensified.

But, as we before observed, it was Christmas eve at the Wickertons, at Mr. Godfrey Wickerton's, who by right of seniority and for some considerations of convenience and general propriety, was considered the head of the family, at least to the extent of having it devolve upon him to keep up good old customs and have the great Christian holiday celebrated at his house with the accustomed family gathering. On this particular Christmas eve Mr. Godfrey Wickerton felt particularly happy and blessed. His little prattlers, and his older olive branches who were just aspiring to the wearing of long skirts or thinking of forcing the growth of the incipient moustache, had listened to the annual reading of Mr. Clement's

" Twas the night before Christmas, &c., and retired to their beds. Mrs. Godfrey Wickerton had got through with her accustomed routine of domestic duties and the pleasant work of active preparation for the holiday had com-"Willing hands make light work." Evergreens were speedlly twined, presents were arranged where they would meet the eyes of the loved ones for whom they were intended when the dawn of the blessed day should appear, and the thousand and one details of a Christmas eve at the Wickertons, were at last arranged.

However horrifying it may be to some of our readers we are constrained to confess that it was the invariable habit of the Wickertons to have something warm and comforting on Christmas eve. Mr. Godfrey Wickerton, unwilling to depart in the slightest particular from established enstom, brewed this "something warm and com-forting," and Mrs. Wickerton in her "kerchief" and snug in bed, soon after "settled her brains for a long winter's nap."

To Mr. Godfrey Wickerton, who lingered in the sitting-room, there was something almost weird in the Christmas preparations by which he was surrounded; a something that brought home to his mind and heart the memory of many Christmases that had sped away with the years that brought them, and that had gone forever, leaving nothing but their memories-whether sweet or bitter-behind them. He picked up a romance of Le Sage's and tried to divert his mind by its grotesque pictures and fancies; but the memories of the past were too strong to be thus easily driven away, and closing the book he resigned himself to reverle. He thought of the old joyous days when the back-log was a reality within his own experience; of how Christ Church reached them through any other channel since those days. He thought of his implicit faith in Kriss-Kingle, of his jey and wonderment over toys and well-filled stockings; he thought of the family dinners at Christmases of yore, long, long before his gray locks had lost their chestnut hue. He thought, too, of the loved ones who, one by one, had left vacant their places at the family Christmas table, and who he hoped, and believed, had gone to realize those priceless blessings that are typified in the great festival :

"Which, to the cottage and the crown, Brings tidings of salvation down."

Mr. Godfrey Wickerton thought, too, of how one Christmas time he had taken for "better or for worse" a mate who had been a genuine blessing to him; he thought of other Christmases where new comers, with chirping voices and bright, innecent faces, came to fill the places in the heart and at table of those who had ceased to attend family gatherings on this earth. He thought of his struggles with fortune, for he had been somewhat of a soldier in the battle of life: he thought gratefully of the share of success that had been secorded him; he thought of disappointed hopes and of unrealized ambitions, and of realizations that had more than met his most sanguine aspirations, and then he thought that he heard a strange sort of noise in the chimney flue.

It is sooth to say that among other thoughts in

which Mr. Godfrey Wickerton had indulged, was

one to the effect that it was about time he was going to bed; but the noise in the chimney temporarily dispelled any such idea as that, and as the flue was a modern arrangement that forbade any examination from below, he wisely concluded to wait quietly and see what would come of the fast increasing racket. There was no fice. place, nothing but a most unpoetical "register," through which a reasonably well-fed mouse could scarcely have forced himself. Greatly to Mr. Wickerton's astonishment, a foot, something like a doll's was first squeezed through the bars; this was followed by another foot, a head and a body fol-, lowed, and a queer little figure, straightening itself up; grew with marvellous rapidity into a man about four feet six inches in height. The stranger was as odd-looking a character as ever was seen. His flat face was ornamented with a long, pointed beard of snowy whiteness, and his moustache was twirled and twisted to a point at the extremities, by means of becawax. There was a glass, with a broad ribbon attached to it. at the right eye of the stranger, and with an odd inconsistency he held the stump of a clay pipe between his teeth, and huge clouds of smoke arose from its bowl. The oddity wore a fur cap with an estrich plume stuck in it; a fur vest, and pair of fur breeches that combined to cover "a little round belly" that doubtless would have "shook like a bowl full of felly," had its proprietor thought proper to indulge in laughter, which he did not. A white eatin clock which reached to his knees, and which was well tarnished with soot, completed the make-up of the strangely asserted visitor. It must not be forgotton to state, however, that his right foot was bandaged as though with the gout, and that he carried a cane in his hand to aid his locomotion. Mr. Wickerton rubbed his eyes to assure him-self that he was wide awake and the maniken, cocking his head with a knowing look, returned

of the asionished Wickerton The latter at length spoke: "I beg pardon Mr. 'Nicholas Asmodens Kriss Kingle, or whatever your name may be-" Here he was interrupted by the stranger, who emphatically remarked, and with a decided bringing down of his cane upon the floor, "God-

through his eye-glass and with Interest, the gaze

frey Wickerton you are an ass!"

Mr. Wickerton was about to protest against this rather strong language to a man in his own house, when the saint, or demon, again, eat him short. Yes, an ass, Godfrey Wolcotton! As ses to be moping about here on Christmas eve, had a way of giving the back-log a good soaking getting up pathos to the damage of the color of

dunce of yourself generally, when you should either be in your night-cap and in bed, or out of doors and looking at the fashions. Now what do you say to a lark?"

Godfrey Wickerton stammered out something sbout the pleasure a "lark" would afford him, but for previous engagements, the lack of an introduction to his visitor, &c., &c.

"Gammon!" ejaculated the queer little dwarf. "As for an introduction, I know who you are, and as for myself, you can call me Mr. Nicholas Asmodens for want of a better name. Now, for your boots and overcoat!" And before Mr. Wickerton could realize the situation in which he found himself, he was hurried out of the house, doors and door-fastenings seeming to melt away before him. In an instant after, he was hustled into a sleigh, in waiting, and Mr. Nicholas Asmodeus, putting whip to the horses, they flew like the wind over the frozen ground. The driverensed voice as well as hands in urging forward his fleet team and he shouted vocife rously at them, calling them promiscuously "Donder and Blixen," with enough Spanish names to set up a Castilian princess at her christening. Mr. Wickerton was stunned and astonished at his rapid flight, and his surprise was by no means lessened when he found that the team and the sleigh were mounting by deorees from one eminence to another until they stopped upon a roof, and the queer old driver stepping out, assisted Mr. Wickerton to land himself in a sort of balcony. The astonished Wickerton gazed about him for some time before hecould realize where he was. Snow-covered roofs were spread out for miles beneath his feet, long lines of glimmering lights were seen stretching away into the distance; while from below him came ringing up through the clear wintry air the shouts of roystering blades and the screams of tin horns. Mr. Wickerton, utterly unable to make out anything intelligible, from his observations of what was to be seen below, cast his eyes upward, and there, just above his head, was a great round disc of glaring light. "By George! we are at the nearest station to

the moon," exclaimed the astonished citizen. "Godfrey Wickerton, I told you once before to-night, that you are an ass, and I repeat it.

Now listen!" A clanging sound struck upon the ear of Mr. Wickerton; it was followed by another and another clanging sound. When the sounds ceased, Mr. Wickerton said with a chap-fallen air: "This is the State House steeple, and the clock has just struck eleven. I guess I must be

"Not so fast, Mynheer Wickerton," remarked his guide. "Not so fast, Don Godfrey. We are out for a lark you know, and the fun has scarcely vet commenced.

Mr. Wickerton would have plead that it was Christmas eve, and that the morrow busy day him, and that he wanted a good night's rest, and that Mrs. W. would be uneasy at his absense; but his strange guide silenced him with words and acts more forcible than polite. "Now, bells had chimed sweeter music to his ears on bon Wickerton," said he, "prepare to be aston-each succeeding Christmas eye than had eyer ished!" With these words he waved his cane in the air, and the snow-covered roofs of all the houses seemed gradually to melt away, leaving the interiors clear and distinct to the eyes of the amazed Mr. Wickerton, as were the insides of those houses in Madrid clear and distinct, which the Demon exhibited to the chivalrous Don Cleofus Leandro Pérez Zambullo.

Mr. Wickerton cast his eyes over the miles of blocks of houses which had thus been thrown open to his gaze. Naturally enough he looked in the direction of his own home. All was quiet and serene there; the household was wrapped in sleep, and his conscience smote him as h gazed upon his unsuspecting, slumbering wife while her spouse was up in the State House steeple for a "lark" with a very questionable character. He would have again suggested the propriety of going home, but his guide again cut

"If Mynheer," he said, "will look about him, he will see some sights and scenes that are calculated to instruct, astonish and amuse him. Look at those roystering blades, who are drinking and carousing almost at our very feet. There are sons among them who are bringing home a rich harvest of disappointment to loving hearts, and husbands and fathers who are wasting the substance that wives and little ones greatly need. Cast your eyes to the westward and see there within a stone's throw of us those magnificent apartments, all aglow with light and resplendent with mirrors and fine furniture. Look at the men who sit around the tables, nervously clutching at the cards which they hold in their hands and who tremblingly await the cast of the die which decides whether they are utterly ruined or whether they are to still have means left them to try another bout with fortune!"

Mr. Wickerton looked as he was desired to do and he saw in those splendid dens many familiar faces that were growing pale with unnatural and unwholesome excitement, as the players tottered upon the brink of ruin; and he saw too, how they were plucked and swindled by the professional harples whom he had so often encountered as they sauntered along Chestnut street, clad in broadcloth and fine lines. While he was gazing at this scene, and musing upon the folly and wickedness of mankind, the big bell above his head tolled twelve.

"Now, good Mr. Nicholas Asmodeus" exclaimed the startled citizen, "I really must be go-

ing, my wife..." The goblin cut him short with, "Don Godfrey. hang your wife, and do not make an ass of yourself. Now, if Mynheer will have the goodness to look in the direction of the hotel yonder he will see a party of men sitting around a table upon which champagne bottles and glasses are freely scattered. They are politicians who made money during the war by prating of patriotism and then cheating government, soldiers and people through shouldy and rascality. They are plotting new villanies, and they will probably be heard from in

Harrisburg during the winter.". "Now," continued Mr. Nicholas, "look at that livering wretch who is creeping along the sidewalk toward Fifth street. That is a poor fellow who went into the army through the promptings of the most earnest patriotism. He sacrificed means and health in the cause which he espoused and he is now seeking a lodging for the night in the city lock-up. Look at the filthy and noisome hole, not fit for a dog to stay in, where he must spend the night. Champagne and spring-beds for knaves and cheats; a mouldy crust and a hard board to the worthy unfortunate. Such is

The queer little dwarf now directed the atten tion of Mr. Wickerton to the thousand homes scattered around; that were the abodes of purity and happiness, and which afforded a cheerful charrast to the gross in uniformed of successful vice and scoundrelism and the wratchedness of unsuccessful patriotism and hemesty.

your eyes and the tip of your nose and making a | at these thousands of homes where loving hands are preparing new surprises for sleeping innocents. All these men and women whom you see at work upon stockings and Christmas trees are my deputies. It is a little late for them to be about their labor of love, but there is no help for it. Since I have been attacked with this infer nal gout, I have had to give over active work, and leave these stocking-filling expeditions to be performed by deputy."

Just then the clock struck one. "Really, Mr. N. Asmodeus," protested the hapless Wickerton, "this is somewhat too much of a good thing." I declare, I must bid you good night. Mrs. Wickerton will..."

"Once more," interposed Mr. Nicholas very emphatically, "will you have the goodness to refrain from making an ass of yourself? Now, Mynheer Godfrey, cast your eye over towards the Southwest."

Mr. Wickerton glanced in the direction spoken of by the goblin, and which he more specifically indicated with his cane. He saw there a fou blot upon the surface of the fair city; a locality where vice plotted mischlef and sallled forth to work it; where poverty was the rule, and comfort the exception; not the poverty that suffers from the mere absence of an accustomed luxury; but "the poverty of rags and hunger." There was no Christmas in that blighted region.

Godfrey Wickerton's sense of justice and humanity revolted at the sight of so much misery upon the one hand, and of such vile scoundrelism noon the other hand. He thought society was at fault, and that if he had the arranging of things he would manage them differently, and he was about proceeding to expatiate rather learnedly and very earnestly upon the subject when his half-Spanish familiar cut him short by saying: 'Don Godfrey, you are an a...."

Two o'clock! "By George, this won't do, Mr. Asmodeus Nicholas! My wife will miss me: my wife will be as mad as a March hare; my wife

"Now, Mynheer Wickerton, do have the goodness not to act the donkey. What is the use of going for a lark unless you make a lark of it?" Poor Godfrey Wickerton! Silenced but not convinced, he had to yield to the superior powers of his entertainer and tormentor.

"Now Don Godfrey, just look over into the little house in the poor but reputable district which lies in that quarter." Godfrey looked in the direction indicated by the stick of the eccentric gentleman with the white beard, and al though almost all the rest of the town was at rest, there sat a poor woman who lived by her needle and who still plied the polished little shaft that was at once her bane and her support. Her health was giving way under severe toil. but without it she must starve.

"She is a widow and she has an afflicted son," said Mr. Nicholas. "She is working late to get holiday toy for the poor cripple; she will have it for him before he wakes in the morning, and I

will get the credit of it." Mr. Wickerton again inveighed against the world: he thought it a shame, an infamous shame, that poor and worthy women, who were espable of such noble sacrifices, should be left to while unworthy women, who were not only incapable of making any sacrifice at all, are not content with the good things they enjey in luxurious comfort. Mr. Nicholas quietly remarked that "it was that way all the world over. and that it had been so ever since the world began, and that there would probably be no radical change so long as the world shall endure." He was about to continue the theme, when the iron hammer fell upon the big bell above his head and

announced three o'clock! The emergency called for determined action and Mr. Wickerton at once made up his mind to be equal to the said emergency. With as much force as he was capable of giving to his utterances, while his teeth chattered like castanets, he commenced in language more forcible than elegant. "Now, look here Mr. Nicholas Asmodeus, this thing is somewhat overdone, in fact it is 'played out.' I am going home, and it will be the worse for anybody who attempts to hinder me. Mrs. Wickerton, if she knew of this sort of thing, would feel greatly outraged, and with great justice too. Oh! you need not tell me that , Godfrey Wickerton, am a jackass. Jackasses kick sometimes, and I can kick upon occasion and sufficient provocation. There, now, since I come to look over in the direction of my own house. I see that Mrs. Wickerton is shout awakening, and when she misses me, there will be a

startling excitement." Somehow or other, and by some process that we have never yet been able to understand or explain, Mr. Nicholas Asmodeus melted gradually out of the way and out of sight as Mrs. Godfrey Wickerton loomed up into a substantial reality clad in a white night-gown and the orthodox Christmas eve kerchief which all right-minded mammas are expected to wear upon their heads upon that occasion.

Mrs. Wickerton, with a look of profound surprise, broke silence by exclaiming, in a most emphatic tone, "Godfrey Wickerton you are an as-!"

"Come, Mr. Nicholas Mamma-I-I-mean Mr. Mamma Nicholas—that is, Mrs. Asmodeus -hastily and rather stupidly, interposed Mr Wickerton "I have been called that often enough to-night. He called me it here in our own room and then up in the State House steeple, and I don't want you to call me names." Mrs. Wickerton began to comprehend the position of things: "And, Godfrey," she said, "Godfrey dear, did Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Mamma Asmodeus say up in the State House steeple that Godfrey Wickerton was an astonish ing man? Because if Mrs. Asmodeus did say so she was about right I think!"

Mr. Wickerton began to see light. "Astonishing!-Oh, yes! yes! I see; you think me astonishing; but, but, you too would have been astonished if you had seen all I saw to night." Mrs. Wickerton resumed: "Godfrey, what

in the name of common sense induced you to go to sleep in a chair, here in the sitting room instead of going comfortably to bed? And what do you mean by looking so foolish and talking so wildly about Mr. Nicholas Asmodeus, and the State House steeple and all sorts of impossible and improbable nonsense?"
"Oh, I see it all," said Mrs. W., as she picked

up the book which Mr. Godfrey Wickerton had been reading, "I see it all. You have got the Devil on Two Sticks' mixed up with our own honest old Kriss Kingle, and between High-Dutch and half-Spanish you have made a bad muddle

Mr. Godfrey Wickerton feebly admitted that this probably was the real state of affairs, and he went shivering to bed; and thus ended Christmas

ove at the Wickertons.

P. S. — We are predibly informed that in epite of whole Spanish students, half-Spanish Saints and High-Dutch cut upon higher steeples the Wickertons woke up on Christmas moraling none the worse for wear and worriment, and that "Look," said the maniken, with pride. "look, they made a most glorious day of it.

JOHN GOURLAY'S DAUGHTER.

A Christmas Story. BY CHARLES HEBER CLARK.

It was Christmas Eve. The earth had put on her purest robe of white, in honor of her coming Lord. In the town the rude feet of irreverent men had trampled upon it and defiled it, but away out beyond the long rows of houses it stretched away over hedges and fences and broad fields, in unsullied whiteness. Nature, undisturbed by man's profane touch, had decked herself in her most glorious apparel, and, with the cunning aid of her hand-maidens, the winds, had arranged it fantastically and beautifully. Whirling and tossing in the keen north wind, the snow eddied about in wreaths across the level lands, piling up in huge drifts against the fences, crowning the brown hedges with white garlands, and covering each tiny twig and branch of the trees with a ridge of snow, and so reproducing it in white, that it seemed as if each plant stood there in the wintry weather, interlocking branches with the ghost of itself.

Here and there the bare earth lay peering through its snowy cloak, as if to keep watch upon the anniversary of its one great day. The snow birds hopped about upon the frozen crust, twittering, and looking for their food; the great lazy crows winged their way slowly along from field to field, or stood searching for the buried grains of corn, forgotten at their summer's repast; and beyond the road which ran through the low marshes into the ancient town of Oldcastle, the great river beat up with the ebbing and flowing tide upon the icy fringe which covered its shores. Over all this landscape, upon this Christmas eve, the starlight shone, and, perhaps, the radiance of the very Eastern star, which, eighteen hundred years before, in that far off land by the Mediterranean, led the way to the first Christmas scene, was now faintly reflected from the snowy bosom of the planet that has been hallowed by the coming of a descended and incarnate God.

In the town of Oldcastle the scene was different The lights glimmered from many a window, beyond which, there were happy households making merry with the kindly observances of the Christmas season, or preparing pleasures for the little ones; or, from the stores, which were thronged with customers purchasing toys and candies for the stockings, hung with implicit and childish confidence in the personality and goodness of Kriss Kingle, by the side of the fire

The Gourlay mansion contributed its share of the general illumination, for the shutters stood wide open, and from each window came a flare of light, which outlined from the darkness the houses opposite, and made every brick, and every twig upon the trees in front, perceptible. This famous old house was the wonder and admiration of all the children of the town. They verily believed it to be the largest and grandest edifice in the world, and it was strange, when they had wandered off, and grown into manhood and womanhood, and came back to the old place, how the great house seemed to have shrunk up into nothing more than a very ordinary edifice after all. But it was the great house at Oldcastle, and its greatness was completed by the goodness and hospitality of its owners, the Gourlays, who possessed moderate wealth, but with it, that gentleness and kindliness of demeanor, without which riches are unblest and hateful in their effect upon the possessor.

Upon this occasion there was revelry and merriment within its walls. Old Gourlay was a great hand for keeping all the pleasant and ancient observances of the Christmas season, and upon this night he had gathered beneath his roof a host of his friends, young and old, and bade them enjoy themselves freely and unrestrainedly. The walls were decked with cedar and laurel and holly, with its bunches of searlet berries, while, pendant from the chandelier, was another bit of the thorny-leaved holly, serving in the steap of the Druidical mistletoe. Most of the Christmas sports were over. "Snapdragon" had been carried in in a flaming punch-bowl, and many a delicate white finger had boldly plunged into its flery depths to drag away the raisins. The carol had been sung by the children. More than one fair lass standing, it may be, inadvertently beneath the holly, had been slyly kissed; the mummers had robed, played their part, and re-appeared in their Christian attire. The paper-bag of sugarplums had been hung from the ceiling and aimed at by the blindfolded children with a cane, until it had showered its sweets upon the door amidst the scramblers: and the Lord of Misrule had waved his wand and been obeyed, when he commanded everyone to forsake wisdom and give themselves up to folly.

The evening was half gone, and now they were to have some Christmas charades and plays to close the festivities. Mr. Gourlay had two pretty daughters. Mary might have been twenty three or four, a tall fine looking girl, with dark brown hair drawn smoothly back from her low white forehead, and fastened in a simple Grecian knot behind. She was not beautiful, but she had beautiful brown eyes, through which looked a pure and gentle soul, and by which one could read a charecter of the noblest quality. She wore adquiet and pleasant smile upon her face, and while she entered into all the pleasures of the evening with heartiness and earnestness, she was not bolater ous or demonstrative. Her sister Katy, her junior by two or three years, was of a different temper ament and disposition. She was a beauty with a glowing cheek, malicious, and mischievous black eyes, and hair as dark as night. She was enthusiastic in everything she did, and her exubecaut spirits made her a valuable acquisition to any gathering where fun and frolls were to be the order of the evening. But somehow, she did not appear to be so full of vivacity this evening. Her cheek wore its twin roses, and her eyes sparkled with their old light, but she participated in the sports listlessly, and without apparent enjoyment, and even betrayed a nervousness that excited her eldest sister's apprehension.

Both of these girls had trains of admirers. Mary had pledged her troth a year before to Dick Hale, who was Katy's equal in vivacity and animation. Richard was a wild young tellow of five and twenty, who went away many a time from the pure presence of his betrothed, into tion of which her pale cheek would have grown whiter. But he was a rockless, dissolute fellow, who could not perceive the atmosphere of purity which surrounded her, and would not have been influenced, by it, if, he had, though many a youth would have felt the presence of his com panions to be contagion after having breathed t. Katy was still free, but there were many rival contestants for her hand, who regarded each other with terrible feelings of lealousy and fear, and whom she loved to tease and aggravate, by displaying partiality first to one

and then another. One of the most ardent of these was Tom Simpson, a good, whole

Katy, and kindly feeling

souled fellow, brimming over

with love

everybody but his rivals, whom he regarded as very impertment fellows, much better out of his way than constantly in it. Tom had entered into the games of the evening with his accustomed heartiness, and had watched carefully for every opportunity to get to Katy's side; and whisper a word or two of soft nonsense into her ear, or tokiss her under the mistletoe. or to endeavor to raise her spirits to their usual level, for her despondency reacted upon him, poor fellow, and as she seemed unhappy. so he felt a vague and undefinable wretched at his heart. But she was heedless of his nonsense this evening, and seemed loth to trife with, or to torment her bevy of admirers, or to do anything, in fact, but follow Mr. Dick Hale about the room with her eyes, or to get into corner with him whenever she had a chance Mary, I am afraid was sadly neglected by her promised husband that night.

Well, the dramas were to commence. The curtain had been hung across the upper end of the room, and the candles placed in front of it, behind pasteboard reflectors. The company arranged the chairs and sofas so that they could face the stage, and in front of all eat Mr. and Mrs. Gourlay, a gray-haired couple, who had come pleasantly through life together, and who now found intensest enjoyment in the happiness of their children and their friends. Mary and Katy, Tom Simpson and Dick Hale, with one or two others, were the histrionic artists of the evening, and a multitude of rehearsals had demonstrated their ability to perform their respective parts creditably. The drama was of the good old kind. Katy was the fair maiden, beloved of Richard the Cavaller, who, in slouch hat and feather, with a circular cloak over his shoulder, boots topped with loose folds of buff paper, and guitar in hand, stands beneath the window and serenades her, much to the annoyance and disgust of the heavy father (Mr. Thompson), who appears at the side scenes with a blunderbuss and orders the Cavalier off

the premises, and threatens Katy's Duenna (Mary) with instant dismissal if she does not exercise greater watchfulness over her charge. As this does not seem possible, the adamantine-hearted parent determines to remove Katy to a convent, and for this purpose they proceed on foot over an imaginary mountain, only to be attacked by a party of brigands, the chief of whom (Mr. Simpson) seizes the fair maiden, and is about to my to his fastness in the dining-room just as the Cavalier runs him under the arm with a sword cane, and clasps the malden to his heart, while Simpson expires in awful agony upon the carpet. The other brigands, meantime, alarmed at the death of their leader, dash through a rocky pass into the entry, while the heavy father, out of gratifude consents to abandon the plan about the convent and give his daughter to the cavaller. Whereupon, the happy couple fall upon their knees, and the conciliated parent, with tearful eyes, gives them a father's blessing, and the curtain goes down amid shouts of applause.

Then there was an intermission of a few minutes, during which the pent-up flood of conless stream, until the tinkling bell announced the rising of the curtain. Mary, as "Mrs.Moffat," sits at her work, talking

of the expected arrival of her husband (Dick) with his niece (Katy), who, further on, is to fall in love with, and, eventually, marry young Wild Oats" (Mr. Simpson). While she is talk ng, two figures steal down the back staircase. out through the long garden, whose snow-covered paths are fringed with boxwood, and covered here and there with tangled bushes, out through the garden gate, to the street, where there is a cutter sleigh, into which they enter and fly swiftly over the earth. The musical jingle of the bells rings out on the frosty air, just as Mary n the parlor finishes her sollloguy. It is down n the books, that the expected husband is to enter at this juncture, and she is to rush to his embrace. She pronounces her cue loudly, and looks toward the door. No one appears. She smiles, and feels embarrassed, thinking he has not been attentive. She walts a moment or two more, and motions to Tom Simpson to hurry up the dilatory ones. He stands there looking be wildered, and signifying by his gesture that he cannot divine the whereabouts of either Dick or Katy. Mrs. Gourlay goes out to ascertain the cause of the delay, and ascends to Katy's room. Everything is in disorder, and the costume of the play lies in a heap upon the floor. Mrs. Gourlay catches sight of a note upon the dressing case, and tears it open. It reads thus: Dear Father and Mother:

"I have left you forever. Richard Hale loyes me, and as I cannot love him at home, where Mary is, we have gone away where there will be one to come between us, or to separate us. Paron me for the pain I cause you, and ask Mary orgive me.
"Your distracted daughter, KATY, 10:01 to try to forgive me.

Amazed and overwhelmed by this unexpected announcement, Mrs. Gourlay stood for a moment completely stunned, then, obeying her first impulse, she rushed down stairs, across the stages where Mary was sitting, and flinging her arms around her astonished husband, burst into toars. while Katy's note fell to the floor. There was an instant hush in the conversation, and the comof this singular scene. Mary was at her mother er's side in an instant. She picked up the note, read it, handed it to her father, and would have fallen, had not Tom Simpson caught her in his arms. When Mr. Gourlay realized the contents of the paper, his face turned ashen pale, his brow contracted, and, holding the letter at arms length, he said;

Friends, this is the record of my daughter. dishonor. She has flown from my house with Richard Hale, and here, before you all. I outed her and her betrayer, and call upon a rightoone Heaven to deal with him, and her as they have dealt with me, in striving to bring my grow Hairs down in sorrow to the grave."

And the old man turned away without a transbut with the lines in his face grown deeper and harder in a moment's space. But as the com-pany slowly began to disperse, all ellently and some with tearful eyes, Mrs. Gourlay looked up. and with trembling voice said:

"Please do not say anything about this; Kati is not bad, and we will tell Richard he may have
her if she loves him. May be she is only jesting
with us, she will be, back. I, am sure she will
The poor stricken woman's voice faltered as the
tried to say more, and her eyes grow white
her weeping. Surely, in all nature, there is anothing
ing so pititul and touching as the speciacle of all
mother pleading the cause of an asgratum of
child, who has made her life soprowful and
mourning. If there is anything great and
withdraw, and the old man and woman, with the
solltary child, eat down in their density
in the room where, but an hour better, was beared
the sound of merriment and rejecting the
memory of which, made their grief store bitter. is not bad, and we will tell Richard he may have memory of which, made their grief more hitter,