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UNCLE TOM'S PRESENT.

BY MATTIE EYER BRITTS.

NCLE TOM was taking off his overcoat, by the blazing fire in the sitting room, and Hetty's mother was helping him, and making a great fuss over him; so Hetty went into the kitchen, and

busied herself in dishing the hot sausages, and flaky biscuits and fragrant tea, and putting them on the table beside the bright green pickles, golden honey and crimson jelly, which were already waiting to furnish the weary traveler a supper. It struck Uncle Tom, while they sat bright green pickles, golden honey and crimson jelly, which were already waiting to furnish the weary traveler a supper.

It struck Uncle Tom, while they sat at the table, that there was a grave turn to the corners of his favorite Hetty's "Oh reaches to go out riding.

Hetty gave a startled glance at her mother. That lady promptly spoke up.

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"Hetty gave a startled glance at her mother. That lady promptly spoke up.

"Hetty cannot go out this afternoon."

Both the young folks' countenances fell, but Uncle Tom put in a word:

to the corners of his favorite Hetty's red mouth, and a sad look in her eyes, which were not there at his last visit, and which were not there at his last visit, and he missed her bright joyous ways, exceedingly.

"Very well, if you go, I have no objections," said Hetty's mother.

And Hetty said: "I dare say we can

And after supper he noticed that, while they all chatted so merrily, Hetty sat silently knitting and gazing thoughtfully into the fire. Now Uncle Tom loved Hetty so much that he could not be very happy himself while she was sad, so his first thought was to find out the

trouble, that he might apply the remedy.

He said nothing that night, but the
next morning he was standing alone by the sitting-room fire when Hetty swept the hearth, and as she finished, he put his hand under her dimpled chin, and raising her sweet face said kindly

" Hetty, what is the matter with my little sunbeam?

Hetty dropped her blue eyes, and answered: " Nothing, Uncle Tom. What should

be ?"

"I don't know," he said, dubiously; "but I'm sure she doesn't shine as bright as she used to do." "All imagination, my dearest Uncle."

said Hetty, as she disengaged her face and went away. But not before Uncle Tom had seen the tears fill her eyes, and the grieved

look deepen about her rose bud mouth. Now Uncle Tom was a sharp old fellow and sometimes, he knew, the surest way to a discovery is to keep still. But he kept his eyes open, and that evening, when old Squire Parker came to see Het-

ty, he saw that fletty was dreadfully vex-ed, and her mother greatly pleased. He thought he knew half the difficulty. Later in the evening Wallace Curtis came in, and then Uncle saw the light come to Hetty's eyes, and the bloom to her cheeks, spite of the half frightened glances she cast at her mother. He glanced at his sister too, and saw that she sat upright as a post—as stern and grim as she always looked when she was awfully displeased; so he concluded he

knew the other half too. He saw Hetty jerk her hand away from Squire Parker, when the visitors departed, and, standing purposely between his irate sister and the younger ones, he saw Wallace Curtis take the same little hand and raise it to his lips in the

And after they were gone, he saw that Hetty kept the other little hand clasped over the one which had received the ress, as if she would keep the sweet impress there as long as she could.

Uncle Tom had half an idea that after she had shortly dismissed Hetty to bed, his sister Maria meant to consult him regarding the affairs. But sister Maria knew soft-hearted Uncle Tom too well for that. Besides, she was provoked at him for not telling her more about his own affairs. Many times she had tried to find out whether or not his business in the city was prosperous, but beyond saying "he made enough to eat and wear," he would tell her nothing. So, as he would not confide his affairs to her, she would not confide hers to him, and he saw that any agency he had must be through Hetty herself.

Next day he watched for another chance to speak to Hetty, and as he stood beside her at the parlor window, Squire Parker passed by Seeing Hetty, he made a smirking bow which she only answered by a cold nod, and then Uncle Tom asked:

"Well, Hetty, girl, which is it to be?" With a look which showed she understood him, Hetty passionately answered:

"It shall never be old Parker!" "What is the objection to young Cur-

tis?" asked Uncle Tom.

"He's poor," replied Hetty.
"And Squire Parker is rich, is he?" "Yes; and fifty years old, and as ugly as sin, as you have seen yourself." "And mother approves Squire Parker?"

pursued Uncle Tom. "Yes, Oh, uncle, what shall I do? They have determined that I shall marry him at Christmas, and that is only a week off, what shall we do, Uncle Tom?"

"Well perhaps we will see what can be done," said Uncle Tom slowly. "Keep quiet, Hetty, and if I can help you, I

Hetty gave him a thankful glance, for her mother coming in, she dared do no more. But she sighed as she thought that only money could help her, and Uncle Tom probably had none to spare.

Uncle Tom's sympathy did not, indeed seem likely to do much good, for the day before Christmas came, and he had never even said another word to Hetty. Early in the morning, uncle went over to the village. He met Wallace Curtis, and told

in the afternoon and take her a sleigh-

riding.

Wallace looked very much surprised, for Hetty had never made such a request of him before; but he promised to come, and then Uncle Tom went home.

At three o'clock accordingly, up drove Wallace, in a handsome sleigh, with two strong bay horses. Hetty could not quite the habit of giving large wine suppers conceal her surprise, at which Wallace among his brotherhood of the church, conceal her surprise, at which Wallace among his brotherhood of the church, looked much puzzled, but only repeated and as a general thing, the guests would his invitation to go out riding.

"Oh, yes; let her go, Maria. I should like to go, with them myself."

make room for three." And Wallace thus urged, could not help

saying: "There are two seats in my sleigh," though he did not look very well pleased with the arrangement. " Put on your prettiest dress," whisper-

ed Uncle Tom, as Hetty passed him, going to dress; and Hetty wonderingly yet willingly obeyed.

When they drove off, Unele Tom and Hetty occupied the back seat, and Wallace the front, at which sister Maria looked well pleased.

But her expression would have changed had she seen them just after they left the town, for then Uncle Tom said:

" Mr. Curtis, I have a fancy for trying your team. I can handle a horse if I am a city man. Please change scats, won't

Wallace, nothing loth, immediately did so, looking very much delighted with the It was astonishing to see how deeply Uncle Tom instantly became absorbed in those horses, and as for the lovers, they really were so absorbed in each other that they did not even notice which way Uncle Tom was driving, until he stopped at a large white gate, leading up a snowy lane to a pretty farm-house.

Then Hetty asked: "Why, Uncle Tom, where are you

going? "Going to take you in here to see a

"Why, this is Preston's place!" ex-claimed Wallace.

"Twas. Its mine now. I bought it to-day," replied Uncle Tom, with a smile. And Wallace and Hetty both sighed,

and said nothing.

They saw fires blazing through the windows of the pretty farm house as they drove up. Uncle Tom fastened the horses, and led the party into a cosy, bright parlor, through a cheerful sitting room, and out into a great cheerful kitchen where the kettle was humming away on the hissing stove, the tables spread for supper, and a smiling maid in readiness to receive them.

"This is Mr. Curtis and his wife, Mollie," said Uncle Tom, at which the girl courtesied prettily, and Wallace and Hetty blushed, while Hetty said:
"Why, uncle!"
"Well, if you are not, you soon will

be," said Uncle Tom; "for the parson will be here in ten minutes. They are determined up at home to make you marry Squire Parker to-morrow, and the only way I know of to prevent it is to have you marry Wallace Curtis to-day. He won't object I'll be bound."

"That I won't spoke up Wallace. And Hetty, through her crimson blushes, made out to ask :

"But-is this really your place, Uncle Tom ?"

"No; it's yours," said Uncle Tom, smiling. "Ours!" cried Hetty and Wallace, in

a breath. "Yours. My Christmas present to you," said Uncle Tom.

"But—I thought—mother thought—you were not rich," stammered Hetty.

"Well I happen to be quite able to afford this," laughed Uncle Tom: "and, if I choose to make my money help two young people to be happy, whose business is it? Come Hetty choose! Wallace to-day, or the fat old squire to-morrow-

which is it? "Oh, Wallace, certainly!" cried Hetty.

And that young gentleman instantly took her in his arms, and kissed her, right before Uncle Tom.

"Come, come, now! Here's the parson; so Wallace, we'll make it fast and sure, in ten minutes more," said the good old uncle.

And so they did. And then Uncle Tom and the parson stayed to supper with them; and Molly, the smiling maid, whom Uncle Tom had sent to the city for, and whose father was one of his own workmen, waited upon them.

Uncle Tom would not let them go back that night, saying he would ride in with the parson, and bring sister Maria to see them in the morning. So "Mr. Curtis and his wife" took possession of their pretty home at once, and everybody, except Squire Parker, was well pleased.

mas there, and trotting the youngest boy lage. He met Wallace Curtis, and told on his knee, while two other children him that Hetty wanted him to come out rummaged his pockets for candy.

### SUNDAY READING.

#### THE BRIDAL WINE-CUP.

N 1851 there lived in a small town in the State of New York the deacon of a certain Christian church, who was noted for his liberal qualities, who was in return home rather more than slightly inebriated; or rather more intoxicated than they would have been if they had staid at home and enjoyed the pleasure of their own families, and saved themselves the trouble of carrying the big head upon their own shoulders on the following day, as was the case. The scene which I wish to represent was one of a similar kind.

Upon a Christmas day of 51—it was the marriage of the only daughter of the deacon—it was a night of joy and glee. After the marriage ceremony had been performed, the bottles of wine were brought forth; all present filled their goblets full of the poisonous nectar, ex-cept one, who stood like a marble statue. It was the bride; while the words were spoken from one of the crowd, "Pledge with wine." "Pledge with wine," cried the young and thoughtless Harvy Wood; "Pledge with wine," ran through the crowd.

The beautiful bride grew pale; the decisive hour had come. She pressed her hands together, and the leaves of her bridal wreath trembled on her pure brow; her breath came quicker, and her heart beat wilder.

"Yes, Marion, lay aside your scruples for this once," said the deacon in a low tone, going toward his daughter; "the company expect it; do not so infringe upon the rules of etiquette; in your own home act as you please, but in mine, for this once please me."

Every eye was turned toward the bride, for Marion's principles were well known. Henry had been a convivialist, but of late his friends had noticed the change in his manners-the difference of his habits-and to-night they watched to see, as they sneeringly said, if he was tied down to a woman's opinion so soon.

Pouring a brimming goblet, they held little place I bought to-day," answered It with tempting smiles toward Marion.
Uncle Tom springing out and throwing
Curtis the lines to drive through the she gracefully accepted the crystal tempter and raised it to her lips. But scarce ly had she done so when every one was attracted by her piercing exclamation of, " Oh, how terrible!"

"What is it?" cried one and all, thronging together, for she had carried the glass to her arm's length, and was fixedly regarding it as though it was some hideous object.

"What?" she answered while an inspired light shone from her eyes; "wait and I will tell you. I see," she added, slowly raising one of her fingers at the sparkling liquid, "a sight that beggars all description; and yet, listen-I will paint for you, if I can; it is a lovely spot; tall mountains, crowded with verdure, rise in awful sublimity around; a river runs through, and bright flowers grow to the water's edge. There is a thick, warm mist, that the sun seeks vainly to pierce. Trees, lofty and beautiful, wave to the motion of the breeze. But there a group of Indians gather, and flit to and fro with something like sorrow upon their dark brows, and in their midst lies a manly form-but his dark cheek, how deathly -his eyes wild with the fitful fire of fever. One friend stands beside him, I should say kneels, for see, he is pillowing that poor head upon his breast. in ruins on the high, holy-looking brow -why should death mark it, and he so young! Look how he throws back the damp curls! See him clasp his hands; hear his shricks for life; how he clutches at the form of his companion, imploring to be saved ! Oh, hear him call pitcously his father's name; see him twine his fingers together, as he shrieks for his sister -his only sister, the twin of his soulweeping for him in his distant native land! See!" she exclaimed, while the bridal party shrank back, the untasted wine trembling in their grasp, and the deacon fell overpowered into his seat-"see, his arms are lifted to heaven; he prays, how wildly for mercy. But fever rushes through his veins. The friend beside him is weeping. Awe-stricken, the dark men move silently away and leave the living and and the dying togother.

There was a hush in that princely parlor, broken only by what seemed a smothered sob from some manly bosom. The bride stood yet upright, with quivering lip, and tears streaming into the outward edge of her lashes. Her beautiful arm had lost its extension, and the glass, with its little troubled waves, came slowly toward the range of her vision. She spoke again; every lip was mute; her voice was low, faint, yet awfully distinct. She still fixed her sorrowful glance upon

the wine cup. "It is evening now: the great white moor is coming up, and her beams fall gently on his forehead. He moves not; his eyes are out of their sockets; dim are pt Squire Parker, was well pleased. the piercing glances. In vain his friend And the last I knew of them, their whispers the name of father and sister; beloved Uncle Tom was spending Christ- no soft hand and no gentle voice bless and soothe him. His head sinks back one convulsive shudder—he is dead."

A groan ran through the assembly.

So vivid was her description, so unearthly her look, so inspired her manner that what she described seemed actually to have taken place then and there. They noticed, also, that the bridegroom had hidden his face and was weeping. "Dead!" she repeated again, her lips

quivering faster and her voice more broken-"and there they scoop him a a grave; and there, without a shroud, they lay him down in the damp, recking earth-the only son of a proud father, the idolized brother of a fond sister; and he sleeps to-day in that distant country, with no stone to mark the spot. There he lies—my father's son, my own twin-brother, a victim of this deadly poison! "Father," she exclaimed, turning suddenly, while the tears rolled down her beautiful cheeks-" father, shall I drink the poison now?"

The form of the old deacon was convulsed with agony. He raised not his head but in a smothered voice he faltered

No, no, my child, in God's name, no!" She lifted the glittering goblet, and letting it fall suddenly to the floor, it was dashed to pieces. Many a tearful eye watched her movement, and instantaneously every glass was transferred to the marble table on which it had been prepared. Then as she looked at the fragments of crystal, she turned to the company, saying:

"Let no friend hereafter who loves me, tempt me to peril my soul for wine, or any other poisonous venom. Not firmer are the everlasting hills than my resolve God helping me, never to touch or taste the poison. And he, to whom I have given my hand-who watched over my brother's dying form in that land of gold-will sustain me in this resolve. Will you not my husband?"

His glittering eyes, his sad, sweet smile was her answer. The deacon had left the room, but when he returned, and with a more subdued manner took part in the entertainment of the bridal guests, no one could fail to see that he, too, had determined to banish the enemy at once and for ever from that princely home.

Render, this is no fiction. I was there and heard the words, which I have penned, as near as I can recollect them. This bride, her husband, and her brother who died in the gold regions of California where schoolmates of mine. Those who were present at that wedding of my associates never forgot the impression so solemnly made and all from that hour forswore the social glass.

### Klosernot.

A travelling agent put up at a hotel, and, having a bundle of clothes that needed the operation of the laundry, he delivered them over to the washerwoman, tied up with a cord which had done service before in the same business, and had upon it the name of the former possessor; but, thinking that it was as good a name as any, he let them go, intending to claim them by the assumed name. When they came back from the wash, he presented himself to the clerk and demanded his

" Name, sir ?" asked the clerk. " Peter Johnson," was the prompt re-

" No such name on the list."

"Oh !--ah !--yes! That is not the name. I remember. It was another man's name on the bundle !" "What was the other man's name?"

"Well, it was—well, what was it?— Hang me if I can tell." " How, then, shall we know which one is yours?""
"Well !-hem !-that is the question

-what was it?" " Was it Jackson?"

"No, it was not Jackson."
"Thompson?" " No, nor any other son."

"Well, if you assume a fictitous name, and can't remember it, I do not think it is much matter whether you get your clothes or not.' "That's it !-that is it, sure !" exclaim-

ed the bummer "That's it-Klosernot! I knew it was no son! Klosernot-look for Klosernot!" And he did look for it, found it, and passed over the clothing to Klosernot,

alias Peter Johnson. Which of these roads lead to the village of W-?" inquired a traveller, as he came to a place where the road he was travelling forked in different directions, of an urchin who sat upon a log near by, and whose appearance indi-cated that he was evidently a specimen.

"Any one of 'm, sir," answered the boy. "Which is the best, my lad?" inquired

" Ain't nary one on 'em the best." "Which is the nearest?"

"Ain't much difference." "Which do you think I had better

"You may take any one on 'em, and afore you get half-way thar, you'll wish you had tuck t'other one." ser A lazy dyspeptic was bewailing

his own misfortune, and speaking with a friend on the latter's hearty appearance.
"What do you do to make you strong and healthy?" inquired the dyspeptic.
"Live on fruit alone," answered the friend.
"What kind of fruit?" "The fruit of industry." industry; and I am never troubled with indigestion."