

years of waiting she had never doubted his sincerity of purpose. So each Christmas eve she decorated the little cottage in which she and her niece lived in the hope that he might come. This night the pale sweet face looked really beautiful, in contrast with the dark dress trimmed in rare old point lace.

A step sounded on the gravel walk outside. A faint flush rose to the wan cheek, and a look of eager expectancy filled her eyes. Then the great knocker sounded its summons, and Barbara rose to answer it. Only the postman with a letter. But the letter bore a foreign postmark. Alternating between hope and fear, she hastily tore open the envelope and took out the enclosed sheet. As she did so a card fell from between the leaves and fluttered to the floor. Wonderingly, she picked it up and glanced over it. It read:

" Mrs. Burton Shepard
invites you to be present
at the marriage of her daughter
Helena
to
Mr. Philip Sidney Lansford
on —— "

Barbara read no further. With a bitter cry she flung herself into her armchair and burst into tears. Outside in the street she heard some one cry "Merry Christmas," but to her the words were only mockery. The world no longer held any joy for her.

It was late in the evening when her niece returned. But Barbara Ford never moved as the girl entered the room. The fire had long ago gone out, and the chill of the night was beginning to make itself felt. One look at the sad sweet face, one glance at the card so tightly clutched in one small hand, and the girl understood.

"Come, aunt," she said, gently touching Barbara on the shoulder to awaken her. "The room is growing cold. The fire has gone out."

"Yes," repeated Barbara, laying her hand on her heart with a pitiful little gesture, "the fire has gone out." S.

POINTED.

The angry man is apt to speak
In sentences disjointed,
And, just because his tongue is sharp,
His terse remarks are pointed.—*Trinity Tablet.*