

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE AT NIGHT

By ALICE E. ALLEN.

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It seemed to Ruth as she flew for the dozenth time to her telephone that dreary afternoon of the day before Christmas that she had friends in the grim old city of which she had never known until then—true friends, even if they were humble and too poor to do more than telephone their good wishes.

This special message was from Ruth's proprietor. Could he call that evening? Ruth's "Of course not, Mr. Mayne," was firm. Could he take her out, then—a dinner somewhere, the theater? Just this once, for Christmas' sake? Ruth's refusals as transmitted by the telephone were all firm and relentless. But as she came away and sat down in her chair by the window her eyes were wistful.

"It will never do for the proprietor to call upon his stenographer," she said, with a sorry little smile. "To be sure, there was a time"—when he was her father's clerk—"but times have changed."

Perhaps because it was Christmas eve, when memories, no matter how well behaved at other times and seasons, will walk abroad; perhaps because other things—such as love, joy, peace and good will—were thronging heaven and earth below; perhaps only because Ruth was tired and perplex-



HER REFUSALS WERE FIRM AND RELENTLESS.

ed and lonely—whatever the reason—sitting there in her little window, looking down upon the street, with its throng of gay, good natured shoppers, Ruth did what she had sternly forbidden herself to do—she went back over the years which had made such changes in her life. There was her father's business disgrace, the loss of everything, followed by his death. Then came her own beginning in business. In spite of herself, Ruth smiled to think of what her old friends would say could they know what a capable little business woman necessity had made of her. But not one of them all knew where she was. Not one had traced her to this great city—that is, except Jack. Jack? As soon as Ruth admitted that name into her thoughts, it dominated all else. It brought back its owner—strong, manly, insistent—one of the won't-take-no-for-an-answer kind. Ruth found herself wondering—almost—that Jack had taken her no as final. Apparently he had. It had surely been as strong as she could make it. And he had gone away—and had not come back. With the many friends who had rung up to ask how she was and to say "Merry Christmas" there had been no Jack—Jack of the strong face, the loyal heart, the tender eyes and voice. How had she ever let him go?

"Some time you will want me, Ruth," he had said. Above the rush and roar of the great city Ruth heard the words again just as she had heard them every day and every night since Jack had gone away. "I could urge you now, but I want you of your own free will, dear. And you will come some day. I do not even need to ask a promise—I know. What is ours does come to us, if we wait. I can wait."

That was three years ago. At first Ruth had half expected his return. But he never came. And he never sent her a word. Ruth was tired of watching the mails now. And her proud little head told her eager little heart that it was not fair to call Jack back just because life was hard and lonely and almost unbearable sometimes. So she toiled away until toil became work—work that she enjoyed. She had her little rooms by herself, her books, her pictures, enough to eat and wear. What more need any one ask? Nothing—except at Christmas. At Christmas, to a woman, love is a necessity.

That night, in the middle of the darkest hour, Ruth sat up straight in bed. She was absolutely sure that the telephone bell over her desk had just rung. All was still, so, after a minute of waiting, she lay down again, laughing to herself. The telephone had been so busy all day bringing her messages that she had heard it in her dreams. It could not really have rung. After a little she drowsed off, only to hear its shrill jingle again and again. It no longer awakened her. But in her dream she went to the tele-

phone, took down the receiver and listened. Out of the darkness and distance a voice spoke—Jack's voice. "Merry Christmas" was its only message. But so strong and clear were the words that when Ruth finally awoke to a sunny Christmas morning, she still tingled to their memory.

Perhaps, when one first awakes, the heart has more control over one than the head. Anyhow, when Ruth sat up and looked out of her window at the already busy streets far below her, her heart was doing the talking.

"Jack is waiting for you—some-where," it said. "And he belongs to you. Why not claim your own?"

After a minute Ruth's heart spoke again. "What if you are poor? What if he is not rich? Can't two work together better than apart? Why not give Jack a Christmas gift? The only one he wants?"

Ruth did not give her head time to argue with her heart. As soon as she was dressed she was at the telephone giving Jack's business number. After she had waited what seemed a long, long time her head did remind her.

"Why, of course," she said slowly, "he will be up country today." She was just about to hang up the receiver.

"Wait a minute," cried her heart. Hearts do know things, especially at Christmas. And then—

"Hello!" said a big, hearty voice out of the distance.

"Oh, Jack!" cried Ruth. "Is it you, really you?"

"Yes, Ruth," said the voice. "Who else? You wanted—"

"To—wish you a merry Christmas, Jack," Ruth faltered.

"Thanks. That all?"

"Yes," said Ruth, listening to her head. Then: "No—not quite. I—I wanted to hear your voice; that's all."

"Is it?" asked the voice Ruth wanted to hear.

"You see, Jack," Ruth hurried on, "I dreamed about you last night. I—I thought you called me up, and—and it was only a dream."

"I came so near it," said the voice, "that I stood here by my phone for an hour. But it was late, and—well, Ruth, I wanted you to call me up this time."

"You're not in the country?"

"Not yet. We go tonight."

"We?"

"Mother and I. She's spending part of Christmas in the city. But we miss the snow and the sleighbells and the home folks."

"It sounds lovely," cried Ruth, "and so Christmasy. Give your mother my love, Jack, and wish her the merriest Christmas."

"She'll be glad to hear from you."



SITTING IN HER LITTLE WINDOW.

Ruth; we've been talking of you. Anything else?"

"No."

"Sure, dear?"

Ruth's eyes were so full of tears that, as she said afterward, she couldn't see to talk.

"Sure, dear?" asked the voice again.

"That's all," she said bravely, "only—are you well?"

"Perfectly. And you?"

"Oh, yes! Wasn't it strange I heard the bell when you didn't really ring up last night, Jack?"

"No," said Jack firmly. "Your heart heard mine, little girl. If only you would listen to it oftener."

"I can't always hear it," laughed Ruth. "My head is such a good talker."

"Time's up," said a strange voice somewhere.

"Goodby, Jack, dear!" cried Ruth. But there was no answer.

The next minute she again took down the receiver.

"Get 3896 again; quick!" she said.

"Hello!" said Jack's voice.

"Is that you, Jack?"

"Of course. Something you forgot, dear?"

"No; I didn't forget. I wouldn't say it, but I must. Don't look at me, Jack, but listen. I'm listening to my heart now. There is something I want, Jack."

"Yes."

"It's a big something. Guess. No; don't guess. Wait. It's you." Ruth hung up the receiver and ran to the chair by the window quite the other side of the room.

It was not quite a minute when the telephone bell rang shrilly.

"Is this Miss Hazen?" said the operator's voice.

even that long suffering, much enduring wire. Sure it is that Ruth's cheeks flamed like red holly berries.

And even before she ran to put her clothes in her suit case, to do her hair and to put on her one good gown, from above her bookcase she took a sprig of scarlet holly. With a red ribbon she tied it over the telephone.

"If ever anything deserved a merry Christmas," she cried, "you do!"

HARVARD SCIENTISTS ON SHIP FROZEN IN ARCTIC ICE

Unlikely to Get Away From Herschel Island For Many Months.

With no hope of getting back to civilization before next July, a party of scientists, most of them Harvard graduates and Boston men, are on board the schooner Polar Bear, frozen in the ice of the arctic.

Telegrams say that the vessel is in the ice at Herschel Island, with plenty

of supplies and "all well on board." In the party, which is commanded by Captain Louis Lane, are Samuel Mixer, Jr., Dunbar Lockwood, Eben S. Draper, Jr., John Heard and George S. Silsbee; W. Sprague Brooks, representing the Harvard zoological museum; Joseph Dixon, representing John E. Thayer of Lancaster, Mass., and Will E. Hudson of Seattle.

The purpose of the expedition was to study the fauna of the northern regions, both on the American and Siberian sides of Bering sea.

The Polar Bear left Point Barrow July 25, and the party figured on being back at Seattle by the latter part of October.

Captain John A. Cook of Provincetown, Mass., a whaler, who has passed many winters in the north, does not believe that the party will have to undergo any hardships.

"There are probably several vessels wintering at Herschel," said Captain Cook. "It is a favorite place for the whalers to winter, and a vessel of

eight or nine feet draft can easily find lagoons in shallow water where grounded icebergs will protect them from the pressure of ice. If these young men don't lose their ship by being pinched in the ice they should get along all right.

"It will be sunset by Nov. 23, and the ships won't get out much before next July. They may move eastward before that.

"Of course, if they wanted to, they could get a guide and make a small party to go with sledges by Fort Yukon and Eagle City, which is about ninety miles from Dawson. But it would mean a march of about 1,200 miles the way they would have to go.

Amundsen, who made this trip from our ship, started Oct. 22 and got back early in April."

—The Citizen, the paper of the hour—the year—and all the time, and it will be improved during the coming year. Subscribe for it now and don't you DARE to forget to, either.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE.
Estate of
JOHN B. LEONARD,
Late of Scott Township.
All persons indebted to said estate are notified to make immediate payment to the undersigned; and those having claims against the said estate are notified to present them duly attested for settlement.
W. B. RAYMOND,
Executor.
Sherman, Pa., Oct. 30, 1913.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE.
Estate of
EDWARD B. WHEATON,
Late of Buckingham.
All persons indebted to said estate are notified to make immediate payment to the undersigned; and those having claims against the said estate are notified to present them duly attested for settlement.
NELLIE E. WHEATON,
Executrix.
Starlight, Pa.
December 8, 1913. 99w6

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