

THE BACHELOR'S CHRISTMAS EVE

(By Eugenie Clench)

(Written for The West.)

"Hello! Campbell; going my way? Bestly weather; makes a fellow glad to see his jolly good home, don't you know? Mind, be careful don't bump against it—something for Edith; and the significant twinkle of his eyes and the cheery tones spoke for the love he bore for this same Edith.

"Walthall, you're a lucky beggar—blast those kids!" This sudden blurt was to a group of youngsters who had touched off a package of fire crackers, that had exploded with horrible suddenness under the feet of these peaceable citizens. Fizz, fizz, crackety, snap, they go, shooting their sparks in every direction.

It is Christmas eve, and through the city's street the hurrying crowds come and go—beggars in saskin and beggars in rags. The bitter blasts sweep around the corners almost carrying one off their feet. Little spits of snow dash in the eyes, and white hats and shoulders; the ground is already white; and the soft feathery flurries that descend are dimming the footprints, covering like charity, the soiled and beaten track, throwing over all a mantle of spotless purity.

John Campbell draws the visor of his saskin cap further down to protect his eyes, and shoves his hands deeper in his pockets, while Charley, Walthall throws his fine shoulders back in defiance of the heaving cold. A wreathed cigarette, with a shawl huggo around her, stands covering against a wall, as they approach, then ventures to accost them. She puts forth a hand to touch Campbell, but he involuntarily shrinks; then with a rush of intense pity he draws forth a handful of loose change, and thrusts it into her palm.

"Take that, and for God's sake get off the streets. Heaven forbid that any creature should be out this night, above all a woman." There is no harshness, but an infinite tenderness, a sympathy that comes like a shock to this man of the world and floods his entire being with gentleness.

How unequal the world is! Why should there be such contrast? "Come Jack, my boy, and I will never see this world an Aredia, so don't be morose over it, make the best of what we have. "Yes, wise philosophy, you jolly dog, can well afford to give advice to a lone beggar like me. Tell you what it is—I never felt so awfully downcast—don't know what's the matter with me."

"You're not in love, Jack?" A pang of pain twitches the handsome face, but in an instant he answers with a reckless laugh.

"Noneless!" "So you always said, but you know you could never get me to agree with you. There we are, and Edith is at the window. Too bad—she'll see the package, ah, I have it—you take it. Come in and dine with us, no don't refuse. You have no one to disappoint and Edith will be glad to see you."

"None to disappoint!" Never before did his loneliness so strike him. Rich, handsome, petted, John Campbell was the last person one would have thought of pitying; and as he steps within the rosetate glare of the hand of his beautiful hostess, he seems a man to be envied of all men. All gloom had dropped from him as a garment, and he is once more the cheerful, magnetic fellow that has made him a favorite in the charmed inner circles.

It was a positive charity to Charley, to ask me to dinner. Mrs. Walthall, half an hour ago, dipping alone at the club seemed a more dismal prospect than ever before. The glowing fire throws its rich light upon them; as they sink into luxurious chairs, earth seemed to have these pampered favorites. The French nurse brings in two lovely children for a short romp before tucking them into their downy nests, dream in talking with Edith, Walthall; his eyes often wander to his old chum as he plays with the babies, cuddling, caressing and kissing his little faces.

What has come over him; he wonders a strange softness, a strange sweet feeling that is akin to sadness penetrates him. Never before has he felt like this. Dinner is announced by the stately butler, the trim maid removes the children; and laughingly talking in brilliant spirits the troop enter the dining room. He is again the John Campbell of society, gifted, nonchalant, happy, and when he leaves, as he leaves it is with a merry jest on his lips, a gay sparkle in his eye. The night has moderated and the snow is falling steadily. The wind is less keen, and biting, he throws his broad shoulders back and strides briskly along whistling a cheerful air. And his sumptuous bachelor quarters, never before has he looked truly his valet is a treasure. Out of cumbersome coat and shoes; into velvet dressing gown and slippers; more coat is heaped on till the fire cracks and leaps; the flames chasing one another into the black throat like downy spirits. Wine and cigars are placed on a table at his elbow, and the man stands waiting for further orders.

"That is all Perkins, you may go, but were these no letters?" "Here they are sir," placing a tray of them on the table.

"Humph," all invitations I suppose, running them over carelessly; then as the door softly closes after the model Perkins, he draws forth sheet after sheet from the daintily perfumed envelopes, only to lay them aside with equal indifference.

Ah! With at last some show of interest, Mrs. Van Brogie returned, and will I lend my presence at her ball?"

He gazes steadily at the creamy sheet, then leaning back in his chair contemplates the ceiling, blowing ring after ring of smoke into the air. Puff, puff, the soft blue clouds, rising and filling the room like the gentle mist from the fisherman's box through the vapor veil there comes the face of a woman; the swimming light of her blue eyes like a lake beneath a summer sky, the sheen of her hair like waving, sun-kissed water. She leans her supple length along a couch, and as the soft eyes meet his they tell their story of love and trust.

The lips like ruby wine wreath themselves into a slow smile that, preceding would bid the soul to follow. Campbell is on a low seat beside her, his eyes look into hers, and he tangles his hand in the silk meshes of her glittering hair; the long strands falling from his fingers wave after wave, are raised tenderly to his lips, then with a sudden accession of tenderness he buries his face deep in the perfumed mass that has enmeshed his very soul.

"O, you tangles my life in your hair, Jeanette. Do you know darling that no chain could bind me to you as does one thread of your hair."

"Fond, foolish boy!" and a white arm steals around his neck till some soft fingers touch his cheek, drawing his head against her till she can kiss her forehead. "You should not loogie in my hair like that, see how messy it makes me appear. You fancy me like that other Jeanette of the poem; is that it my pet?" and once more the white arm contracts, pressing his cheek against her white throat as her warm lips linger on his forehead. He crushes her to him: "No, no love; don't say that, she did you know, if you—"

His throat seemed paralyzed, tugging at his collar as if to choke him, he sprang to his feet, paced the length of the room and then back again to her side. At his agitation she had half arisen, and as he sat down beside her he said not a word, but took to his arms and laid her head with all its beautiful hair against his breast.

"And I'd were to die?" There is a smile on the lip, but she shudders from a chill and cuddles closer to him. He does not answer in words but strains her closer to him, pressing his lips with convulsive breath to her warm young mouth.

A moment in repose of blissful inertia, from which the sound of a halting carriage arouses them. "It is Caroline! they will be in," she says and in a moment has gathered her hair into a loose knot, confining it with the jeweled pins her lover had withdrawn.

Mr. and Mrs. Van Brogie are returning rather early from the opera— The hot ashes from his cigar falls on Campbell's hand and he awakens with a start to stare vaguely before him; but only dancing shadows flicker on the walls or lurk in the shaded corners.

"My God! that dream!" rising and wiping the cold perspiration that had oozed through his swilling temples. Fair face, caressing arms, kisses, all had vanished, and he was alone—awake to his misery. The touch of those warm dream lips yet tingled through his veins; the pressing magnetic fingers hallowed his cheek, the intangible sweetness of the thrill melted his strong soul and poured its overcurrent through his eyes—eyes that had not known a tear since manhood. Only a moment had he slept; but in that moment he dreamt of his life had been dreamed anew, and as he awakes the fierce current of sweeping grief rushes to his throbbing heart, and his nostrils have ceased their nervous quiver.

"Jeanette, this was real, an old friend, renew his acquaintance while I attend to my other guests, I have already wasted too much time on him," and as he brings them face to face she nods him a gay adieu, and to whom he could turn for sympathy, the not one in all that gilded circle to whom he could bare his bleeding heart; not one that could understand his desolate grief. John Campbell unhappy! Preposterous! Why his was rolling in wealth—everything at his command. Everything—yes—that is almost—but love. Gods could not melt into the aching void of his heart, it could not soften into a woman's touch, nor woe from tortured thought with her seductive breath. Christmas eve. How many black pictures, traced themselves in the soothing fragrance as the smoke rolled cellward. The years rolled back, and he was a boy at his mother's knee, prattling credulous, then studious, dreaming youth, with half-formed hopes and dim ambitions; then, manhood with its fires and fevers quenchless and burning as Etna's

something heart; its strivings for an imagined goal; its loves with all attendant strong hopes and shaking fears, the spell of women's eyes and charming lips, and sweet, seductive whisperings free from guile. Then far up, above all these there came a vision through the smoky haze; a dream, a picture of the night, have been—a house. Not a silk and gilded shelter, a refuge from the world and all its caveling cares; with a wife and babies smile to greet his face, and touch of lip and tiny hand to lure away the frown.

"Oh, Jeanette, Jeanette, better could I have heard it had you died and left me, for I could have loved your memory, but even this is denied me, that others claim, made my fond thoughts a sn. Oh, God, is there in all our world tonight a man as sad as I."

Twelve o'clock, the strokes peal forth slow and solemn; and Christmas day creeps into the world with its wondrous hush of peace and calm. A great stillness seems to enter the heart of the man, the music of the holy songs upon him like a benediction, his soul stood still, and to his listening heart there came across the night the echo of an angel's voice against the Rock of Ages.

"Buck of ages cleft for me Let me hide myself in thee; Let the water and the blood From thy side of healing flood, Be of sin the double cure, Save from wrath and made me pure."

Lights gleamed on "sheen of satin an gleam of pearl" and Mrs. Van Brogie's ball is a success. "Soft eyes looked love to eyes that spoke again," and the beauty and fashion of the vast metropolis was gathered there.

John Campbell is fashionably late, and as he enters many bright eyes are turned expectantly, and siren glances seek to lure him to their owner's side. He threads his way to where his hostess stands, and "Mr. Campbell, so good of you to come, though shamefully late, Oh, yes, you signs are social despote banteringly, and seek to enhance your value by the rarity of your presence."

Then in a lower voice, "Have you seen Jeanette?" "Your sister—she is not with you?" "Of course, have you not heard?" "Will you let me conduct you to a seat away from this crush? I am not feeling very well and the confusion unsteadies me." The voice is calm, but his pale face alarms her, and with tender solicitude she readily agrees. "Now you take the table unlooked—what a fit I have not seen!" "Of Westbourne's death, he died in Rome of that horrid fever, and really I can't understand Jeanette, she is so awfully calm under it all, she seems stupefied, moves as one in a dream. Jack and I can't fathom her, she was awfully uneasy, nothing in my memory, at the time you were out west, or some other unwholesome place, and rumor had it that you were gone to California to marry the heiress that was such a belle here last season, you know, I had been coaxing Jeanette to marry Westbourne, but she was oh, so obstinate, until the last time, it was soon after you left I believe, and by the way she told me that you and she had quarrelled about some trivial thing and she became engaged to him. Well she was married and gone when you returned. I remember because I wrote and told her she was all talk about you and the heiress, that you had never seen or heard of her since she went home. They had reached Rome and it seems she had not been very well and there she was sick several weeks. They stayed too late in the season and Pam took the fever and died. Jack and I went to her—but I see her coming now," and the volatile little lady arose to stand near the parted curtains awaiting the approach of a tall and slender figure in dead blue; her coffee hat gleaming like a crown with the lights shining through it. Straight on she comes, her face beautiful in its pale radiance, her blue eyes, shining black in the shadow of her hair. Well for Campbell that his hostess is so unobtrusive, little chatterbox so that his emotions at her recital had been unnoticed. The face was still pale but breath came less pantingly, and his nostrils had ceased their nervous quiver.

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his heart, too happy for words, too blissful met to even wish his lips to leave hers to which they cling. Twelve o'clock, once more the bells peal forth the hour, this time the requiem of the dying year, mingling their tones in the joy bells of the new.

With a heart of gratitude they sit, ten, sweetest peace fills their souls, as soon as he got the first parade of their being, and looking into the eyes he caresses the tangle of curls about her temple, and whispers "Oh, happy new year! Oh, happy new life, to us both, Jeanette, my pet."

T. J. How, of Ottawa was in the city Monday on route east after spending ten days in the west on business. Mr. How moved to Ottawa in the early fall from Rouleau, as soon as he got the first parade of western air again he longed to stay and he will return in March to look after his business interests on the Soo line.

C. W. Blackstock is driving a pretty little team of Welsh ponies. He had them shipped here from Toronto a few days ago by express. Their combined weight is 750 lbs. This team took first prize in harness at the Toronto exhibition and are regarded as pure bred. In their neat little set of oak tanned harness and new cutters they are certainly very dainty. Their own buggy in which they were shown at Toronto was bought with the team. Mrs. Blackstock will get a great deal of pleasure out of her new drivers which she had out Monday for the first time.

FOREIGNERS IN THE WEST

Weyburn Dec. 4.—A representative of the Herald had an interesting conversation with Norman P. Black, M. A., Inspector of schools for Regina district, on the subject of the social life of foreigners in his inspectorate, and on their attitude toward the home of their adoption.

A man of keen powers of observation and interested in these subjects Mr. Black is in a position to offer an opinion with considerable authority. In addition to these qualifications, he is able to converse in the German language and in the various dialects used by the Austrians, Hungarians and Russians and could better obtain their views and an insight to their manners and customs than a person without these qualifications. Invariably the subject of conversation among foreigners, he found were contrasting conditions in their new home with those in their native land, and to the great advantage of Canada. Many of these foreigners are ex-soldiers and others fled to escape a warfully uneasy, nothing in my memory, at the time you were out west, or some other unwholesome place, and rumor had it that you were gone to California to marry the heiress that was such a belle here last season, you know, I had been coaxing Jeanette to marry Westbourne, but she was oh, so obstinate, until the last time, it was soon after you left I believe, and by the way she told me that you and she had quarrelled about some trivial thing and she became engaged to him. Well she was married and gone when you returned. I remember because I wrote and told her she was all talk about you and the heiress, that you had never seen or heard of her since she went home. They had reached Rome and it seems she had not been very well and there she was sick several weeks. They stayed too late in the season and Pam took the fever and died. Jack and I went to her—but I see her coming now," and the volatile little lady arose to stand near the parted curtains awaiting the approach of a tall and slender figure in dead blue; her coffee hat gleaming like a crown with the lights shining through it. Straight on she comes, her face beautiful in its pale radiance, her blue eyes, shining black in the shadow of her hair. Well for Campbell that his hostess is so unobtrusive, little chatterbox so that his emotions at her recital had been unnoticed. The face was still pale but breath came less pantingly, and his nostrils had ceased their nervous quiver.

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Hand Bags and Purses

Such a nice and useful thing to give and we have them in such a variety, from 25c to \$5.00.

Fancy Combs

To crown a lady's beauty give her a set of fancy combs, up to \$3.00 a set.

Toys

Hundreds of fancy toys, from 5c up.

Cushion Tops

Dozens of fancy Cushion Tops, new designs, from 25c up. Beauties.

Groceries, Crockery, &c.

Sweet Meats and all that pertains to the eatables of Yuletide, and dishes to display them to advantage is here in abundance, all at prices and assortment to make your teeth water.

Candied Peels

Lemon, Orange and Citron at 20c, 25c and 30c.

Raisins

Select Valencia's at 15c lb; Sultanas 12c lb; Layer Table, 2 lb packet for 50c.

Evaporated Fruits

Apricots, 25c lb; Peaches, 20c lb; Pears, 20 lb; Pitted Plums, 2 for 35c.

Prunes

25 lb box Prunes, all sizes, \$1.75 to \$3.25 per box.

Oranges and Lemons

Sweet Navels at 40c, Lemons at 40c doz, Japanese Oranges just in.

Apples

Table Apples at \$5.00 a barrel; No. 1 Baldwin's and Ben Darris at \$5.50 per barrel.

Nuts

Brazil Nuts 25c lb; Almonds, 20c lb; English Walnuts, 20c lb; Hickory Nuts, 20c lb; Pea Nuts, 15c lb.

Confectionery Dep't.

Big assortment of McCormick's Fancy Box Chocolates and Bon Bons, from 25c a box to \$1.50. Chocolate Cream 25c per lb., Mixed Fancy, 2 lbs. for 25c.

Figs and Dates

Figs in 1, 5 and 10 lb. boxes, at 25c per lb. for table use. Dates, choice, 2 lbs. for 25c.

Olives

Big variety of Bottled Olives, stuffed and whole, from 25c up to \$1.50 a bottle.

Cocoanuts

Shredded Cocoanuts at 35c per lb. Jelly Powder, 3 for 25c; Icings, colors 2 for 25c. In Bulk—Pickles of all kinds, Catsup, Worcester and Mushroom Sauces at low prices.

McCARTHY'S CHRISTMAS BARGAIN SALE

Four Days of Wonderful Selling from Dec. 20 to Dec 24 Open each Evening, except Sunday, till 10 p.m.

A Christmas Box awaits all at our store in saving on their holiday purchases. We have started a Sale to last during the real time to buy, and as we want to reduce our heavy stock and you are looking for useful and pretty presents and at reasonable prices, WERE IT!

Dry Goods Department

This Fairyland of Xmas beauties arranged to make choice easy and we invite you to look through and we will help you all we can. Handkerchiefs—Hundreds of varieties of fancy handkerchiefs, in plain silk with lace or fancy worked, from 5c up to \$1.50. Just lovely.

Men's Furnishing Boots & Shoes, Clothing, Etc.

This department is replete with all that appeals to the present hunter for men or the young ladies' or all. Xmas Neckwear—Men's strong Ties in Silk and Satin /all colors Xmas price 25c. Men's Silk Bows in all colors at 25c. Men's four-in-hand or teek Silk at 35c. Men's beautiful range of four-in-hand or Puffs in all colors, Xmas sales 50c. Men's flowing ends in Silk a range of style we never had before at 50c and 75c.

Xmas Braces

New assortment of braces in fancy colors worked and plain for 35c to \$2.00 a pair.

Xmas Handkerchiefs

25 doz. Men's Excelsior Handkerchiefs with fancy border special Xmas sale 3 for 50c. 30 doz. large Excelsior Handkerchiefs with fancy border or initiated at 25c.

Ways Mufflers to Clear

10 doz. Ways Mufflers to clear 25c. 15 doz. Ways Mufflers up to 75c for 50c. 6 doz. Ways Mufflers up to \$1.25 for \$1.00.

\$1.00 Underwear 50c

20 doz. Men's Shirts and Drawers some all wool and worth \$1.00 any for 50c each.

\$1.00 Fur Lined Caps at 50c

23 doz. Men's Fur Lined Peak Caps in fine freeze or Beaver up to \$1.00, Xmas sale 50c.

Boots & Shoes

Ladies Fancy Felt Slippers all colors at \$1.25. Men's Fancy velvet or leather Slippers from 75c up to \$2.00. Men's Boots and Shoes in all kinds at holiday prices.

Groceries, Crockery, &c.

Sweet Meats and all that pertains to the eatables of Yuletide, and dishes to display them to advantage is here in abundance, all at prices and assortment to make your teeth water.

Candied Peels

Lemon, Orange and Citron at 20c, 25c and 30c.

Raisins

Select Valencia's at 15c lb; Sultanas 12c lb; Layer Table, 2 lb packet for 50c.

Evaporated Fruits

Apricots, 25c lb; Peaches, 20c lb; Pears, 20 lb; Pitted Plums, 2 for 35c.

Prunes

25 lb box Prunes, all sizes, \$1.75 to \$3.25 per box.

Oranges and Lemons

Sweet Navels at 40c, Lemons at 40c doz, Japanese Oranges just in.

Apples

Table Apples at \$5.00 a barrel; No. 1 Baldwin's and Ben Darris at \$5.50 per barrel.

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BRANDON

A meeting of the Brandon Winter Different Live Manitoba, was week, to discuss holding a show in that After visiting the proposed show, the com were adopted this object. February 1907. There will of all breeds, the different s will offer pres ed in their re In addition provided for both grades a ter these have they will be s cases judged, ers and feder ation of the required by the for each class. The show a location have cy to offer pres ers or lamps. No, some some having killed and the Arrangement have all the on the last da amount remitt Recognizing need is to the offered the sum as last year. The province held under the local committee of the Dominion riculture. The Manitoba had also decide at the same tim a most inter one that will p No doubt the partment of the stock judging, ants will judge draft horses, get their awards, prizes there will bronze medals. There will be but in this early the names