CARDOME

A ROMANCE OF KENTUCKY

BY ANNA C. MINOGUE CHAPTER XXXIV

And thus Hal came back to Car-dome and these things followed his coming: When Mr. Davidson saw that come placed where its occupant that come placed where its occupant had desired, he withdrew and drove to the Park. It lay in darkness, but he felt convinced that in the lonely house the mistress's sleepless eyes were piercing the gloom for the first streak of dawn, which, she fondly hoped, was to herald the hour of long delayed triumph. After some long delayed triumph. After some delay he stood again in the second parlor, and as he waited for her to appear his thoughts went back to other days, when he and this woman were young. The Park was not then were young. The Park was not then what it was now, for her father's love for wine and horses piled up debts against his ancestral estate; but he had continued to dispense hospitality with the lavish hand of a hospitality with the laviously a matter Kentuckiau, and it was only a matter of time until the Park would go under the hammer, when the tragic event entered his only child's butterfly life and changed it forever. By marrying ald doting Mr. Powell, she not only secured her revengeful ends, but re-deemed her father's plantation; and after her hasband's death, it was found that the debts of the Park had been transferred to Willow-wild, and the fate predicted for the home of the Kertridges came instead to the home

And the man who had so often been the guest at both houses in those long, dead years, mused over their sad stories, until the sharp, rasping voice of her whom he had travelled from Cardome to see fell on his ears,

You have come again. Is it to threaten this time, or to plead?"

He folded his arms and looked at her for a moment; then, with some pity in his voice, he said :

"To do neither. God sometimes sternly sets aside His human instruments and reaches forth His own errible hand to save the innocent and punish the guilty. Oh, woman! God's prerogative and claim for your right and power to avenge your fancied wrong, learn now, as hers in like bitterness have learned that God's words are not vain words, that vengeance is His to day, as it was yesterday, and will be forever. While you are waiting here for to morrow's dawn, to see a man die at your gateway for the offence of being the son of one you hate, by the inscrutable workings of that Power you have defled, his place has been filled by the best loved son of your only friend, that man you held, and I know you still hold, dearer than a Yes; this afternoon at o'clock Clay Powell rode from the Georgetown jail to liberty, and one hour ago Hal Todd died at your gate—shot to death by his brother's Union

soldiers." 'No! No! No!" she cried, wild, thrilling tones, womanlike hurling back her refusal to believe that which her reason told her was

Then go to Cardome, and learn how true are my words. Yes, go to Cardome! look at your work—on that boy lying dead under his mother's picture, on his brother, worse than dead, on the white haired old father. who, when all the world turned from you with the detestation you , was your friend, your advocate, your savior. When Mary Clay was dealt out, justice Heaven de-manded, that never again would I mingle with those friends of mine, that I would cut myself off from them and all society, John Todd stood here Lewis Castleton for the mercy of their silence for you. Yes; he would snap the golden chain that bound us four in a friendship that time nor sorrow nor death could sever, sooner than have the world know what you His words prevailed, but from that day we four stood apart. Lewis Castleton, when he felt his life drawing to a close, returned to the of Cardome; to-morrow, Walter Powell will go back. So will I. My yow is at last fulfilled: Mary Clay Powell's death is amply avenged!" for as he was speaking the woman flung herself on the floor, crying piteously to God for pardon and mercy, which she felt man would not, could not give. And with one more glance at her, Mr. Davidson turned

from the room.

Thus she lay through the long hours of that night, and the rising of the sun found her still crouching on the floor, her face hidden from its light. After a while the aged nurse hobbled into the room, and then the mistress arose. She looked long and earnestly on the black face, and for the first time in all her life shuddered at its inhuman ugliness. What was passing through the mind of the mistress seemed to be communicated to the mind of the negress, for she threw her apron over her head. But the black woman, old, ugly, the perpet-ual reminder of her crimes, was all on earth she had to turn to for sympathy and love; so she crept to her side and spoke to her as a child might have done. The words brought the apron from the black face ; then the nistress reached out her neatly gloved hands and said :

evil one, and they did it as his in-

"These can not undo what the wooden hands have done! she cried when the servant had obeyed the command, and the poor maimed arms showed under the flowing sleeves.
"Perhaps they can plead." And,
dressed as she was, with no shawl or head covering to protect her against the sharp November air, she rashed from the house and turned toward Cardome. Kind hands unfastened the door for her, but she knew the old house too well to need direction toward the library. Tom was still st-ting by the table, with his face bowed on i), but she did not see him; Walter Powell was walking the floor, with his head bent low on his breast, but his head bent low on his breast, but she did not heed him. She saw only one, heeded only one, the bent, white-haired, man standing on the hearthstone, with face turned toward the door, as if expectant of her coming. She tried to reach his side, but her strength failed her. She sank on her knees, and lifting toward him her carelly maked a year oried. cruelly maimed arms, cried :

" John!" Across the space of carpeted floor the eyes of the man and woman met in a second's terrible silence, a second which, like the moment of death, was long enough for all their past and present to sweep again before them. Then he hurried to her side and litted her to her feet,

while he said, half-reproachfully :

"Did you think you need come to me like this, Angie, my dear sister?'
And she bowed her head on his shoulder and wept there, as she had wept once before, when she had told him that she had released the man she loved because his heart belonge she loved because his nears selonged to another. And that man had now paused in his walk and stood regard-ing her and his friend with deep-sunken, sad eyes. There was no trace on face or figure of the beauty and grace that had made women love, and men admire, Walter Powell; and when, at length, Mrs. Powell raised and turned once more to her former lover, she trembled at the ruin be fore her, knowing it was her werk. Yet the pride that had destroyed her own life and so many others' refused to give utterance to her soul's cry fer his pardon. She could kneel to the friend she had harmed unconsciously; she could not utter one word to the lover she had ruined deliberately. But long ago anger, hatred, and un-forgiveness had died in the heart of Walter Powell, so he went to where she stood, and said to her:

"Angie, we have been enemies so long can we not be friends for the rest of our days? They will not be many.

She bowed her head before him and said, humbly: "Can you forgive me ?"

'I have forgotten all that long ago," he interrupted. It was then the library door again unclosed and Davidson, the master of Willow-wild entered, followed by two women. His face was shaven of its heavy beard, and as the eyes of Judge Todd fell on him he started forward, cry-

Dupont, my friend! You have come back, too !" and they clasped hands, as brothers would. Tom had lifted his face at the first words spoken by Mrs. Powell, and during the one that had followed had looked on first in angry wonderment, then with fierce indignation. Now, as he heard that name spoken by his father, he sprang to his feet, but on turning and seeing the two women, he sank again into his chair and laid his face on the table. In eloquent silence the Judge clasped the hand of Mrs. Dupont, but a sob escaped him as he held the weeping Bessie to his breast. Powell lay dead—you know by whose hand!—and I vowed that, unless the justice her murderess deserved that room where their silent, beauti.

> together.
> The Duponts always kept their vow. It was the motto of the with Walter Powell and Her grandfather had kept his, and so mother had lived in poverty, their Alabama home having been destroyed and the plantation laid waste by the Union army, did Bessie know that relative was alive. But as she lis-tened to his recital of the sorrow that had fallen on Tom, she had for gotten his words and so forgiven his defection. She was an older Bessie now. All the gayety and winning girlish ways were gone, swallowed up by the early sorrow and the later misery and loss and poverty that had drained the young blood from her cheeks and dimmed the lustre of her beautiful eyes. The figure had lost all its graceful curves and was slender to thinness, which was made more pronounced by the plainness of the coarse dress she wore. There were no flashing jewels on the little hands, no string of pearls or rubies around the white neck, and that first glimps he had had of her left Tom doubtful if this strange woman were indeed Bessie. She waited a moment, when the others left, thinking he would look up or speak to her. But there was no word from the bowed figure, nor movement; and she crossed to where he sat and laid a hand on his shoulder. Then he lifted his head, and pity sprang into fullest life and in the holidays with a string of dec made her cry out her sorrow that she

once had given him pain : "Oh, Tom, forgive me!"
"Bessie!" He sprang f "Bessie!" He sprang to his feet. was a busy season. A step caused She held out her hands to him, but him to look up; then he arose and "Take them off, mammy; I shall he turned away, with shamefully need them no more. They have done bowed head, for he remembered, ed them no more. They have done with fierce hatred of himself, that had been weeping. It was the work of the li one, and they did it as his intuments always do their work. Clarisse dearer than this noble girl. "What can I do for you."

Her womanly discernment made plain to her the meaning of that action, and she said, with a sweet dignity:

"Tom, I was wrong that day, hasty, passionate. I should hasty, possionate, known that place in your heart was secure, for your henor, if nothing else, would have been a little patient with that rival affection, believing that as you came to see the true nature of the insuled it of peasaity it. one who inspired it, of necessity it must die. I should have proven my-self worthy of the love and confidence you had in me. Instead," she went falteringly, for Tom was now on pressed against his tear-wet face, "I broke in childish anger from the tie that bound us—Tom, Tom, I have forgotten my feolish words."

And after a while Tom and Bessie hand clasped in hand, heart reunited with heart, went also into that other room, and took their place beside the kingly dead.

There was still one, missing. But she came the next day, brought from her Leuisville prison by the master of Willow wild who demanded and obtained her immediate release, and the pardon of her family. The old Judge was waiting for her at the portico steps, and in his father's greeting the little crushed heart of Lucy Menetee found the only comfort life now held for it. From that hour she took a daughter's place at

For three days Hal held court in the old house, while from far and near came friend and political fee to pay him homage. Then, at high noon on the third day, with military rite as besits a soldier and holy prayer as besseems a Christian, they laid him by his mother's side, in the George lown cometery, there to rest happily throughout time.

TO BE CONTINUED

CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE CORNER GROCERY

Will Allen Dromgoole in The Arena for Decemb The boss had not returned; in truth the probability was the boss would not return that night, inasmuch as he had generously offered the bookkeeper, who was clerk as well, permission to go to his supper True, the subordinate had declined the henor; it being Christmas eve Saturday night, close upon the heels of the new year, and the books of the establishment sadly in need of postng. The subordinate did not relish the prospect of a lonely Christmas, Sunday at that, on the tall stool behind the big desk among the cob-webs, mackerel and onion scents, sardine boxes, nail kegs, coils of barbed wire, soap smelling cotton stuffs, molasses and coal oil. So he gave up his supper, and the half hour with the cripple (he sighed for the half hour more than for the supper), contented himself with a bite of cheese and a cracker, which he forthwith entered upon the book, as he had been ordered to do, in a clear, olerical hand: "To S. Riley cheese and crackers, 07." He wrote it in his best hand, to cover up the smallness of it, perhaps, for it was a very small entry. The subordinate's face wore something very like a sneer as he made it, although he had the consolation of knowing the smallness of the transaction was upon the side of the

It was a general kind of a store was the grocery on the corner; a little out of the way, beyond the regular beat of the city folk, but convenient to the people of the suburbs. It moth concern, although ful peacemaker lay, watched by Virginia; and Tom and Bessie were left Riley, the book-keeper, ran it, with out other help than that of black Ben the porter.

Riley was both book-keeper, clerk and, he sometimes suspected, genera scapegeat to the proprietor. To-night he was left to attend to every hing, for he knew the boss would not leave his warm hearth to trudge back through the snow to the little corner rocary that night. His daughter ad come for him in a sleigh, and and carried him off, amid warm fure and the jingle of sleigh bells, to a cheery Christmas eve with his

amily. book keeper sighed as h munched his cheese. There was s little lame girl away up in the attic on Water street that Riley called She would hear the sleigh bells go by and peep down from he dingy little window, and clap her hands, and wish "daddy would come for Christmas too." There wasn't any mother up there in the attic ; for out in the cemetery, in the portion allotted to the common people the snow was falling softly on the

little mother's grave.

The clerk ate his cheese in silence. Suddenly he dropped his fist upon the desk heavily. "Sometimes I the desk heavily. "Sometimes I wish she was out there with her mother," he said. "Sometimes I wish it, specially at Christmas times. Let me see: she is ten years old to-night; we called her our 'Christmas gift,' and never a step have the little feet-taken. Poor Julie! poor little and as she saw his face, that the Christmas snowbird! poor little hand of age seemed in that one night Christmas sparrow! I always think to have smitten, all the woman's love of her somehow when the boys go by birds they've shot. Poor little

daughter ! He sighed, and took up his pen ; it went to wait upon a customer. It was a woman, and Riley saw that she

"I want to know the price of pota-toes, Mr. Riley," she replied.
"Sixty cents a bushel. How is the little boy to night, Mrs. Eikins Is he getting well for Christmas?"
"Yes," said the weman. "H
a'ready well; well an' happy.
tetched him to the graveyard to

Riley dropped the potato he had taken from the tub, and looked up to see the woman's lip quiver.
"What's the price o' them pota

Fifteen cents a peck."

She laid a silver dime upon the

countes.

"Gimme them many," she said;
"There's four more lef' to feed besldes the dead one, though," she
added quickly, "I—ain't begrudgin'
of 'em vistuals."

Piley measured a neck of the note.

of 'em victuals."

Riley measured a peck of the potatoes, and emptied them into her basket. Four mouths besides her own, and one little staveling left that day, "that blessed Christmas ove." in the graveyard. He found times! the property as he went back to himself hoping, as he went back to the lefger, that they had buried the baby near his own dead. The big graveyard wouldn't feel so desolate, so weirdly lonesome, as he thought it must, to the dead baby, if the little child mother, his young wife, could find it out there among all that array of the common dead. "To S. Riley 13 of peck of potatoes 05," the blue blotter had copied, or absorbed the entry, made it double, as if the debt had already began to draw interest. had already begun to draw interest. The clerk, however, had not noticed the blotter; other customers came in and claimed his attention. They were impatient too. It was a very busy night, and the books, he feared, would not be balanced after all. It was shabby, downright mean, of the bess not to come back at a time like

The new customer was old man Murdock from across the river, the suburbs. He had been rich once, owned a house up town, and belonged to the sristocracy. He had possess the appurtenances to wealth, such as influence, leieure, at one time. still was a gentleman, since nature, not circumstance, had the care of that. Every movement, every word, the very set of the threadbare broadloth, spoke the proud, the raised" gentleman of the Old South "Good evening, Mr. Riley," he said, when the clerk stumbled down from his perch. The male customers—shey learned it from the boss, doubtless—called him "Riley." They generally said, "Hello, Riley." But the old Southerner was neither so rude nor so familiar. He said, "Good

evening, Mr. Riley," much the same as he would have said to the president, "Good evening, Mr.—"; and he touched his long, white, scholarly 'looking finger to the brim of his hat, though the hat was not lifted. Riley said, 'Good even-ing,' back again and wanted to know "what Mr. Murdock would look at." He would have put the question in the same way had Mr. Murdock still possessed his thousands; and he would have put it no less respectwould have put in close sepectively had the gentleman of fallen fortunes come abegging. There is that about a gentleman which commands respect; great Nature willed it so.

The custemer was not hurried; he

remarked upon the weather, and thawed himself before the big stove he never once broached the subject of Christmas, nor became at all familiar), pitied the homeless such a night, hoped it would freeze out the upon wool; then he asked, carelessly, as men of leisure might "What is the price of bacon, Mr. Riley?—by the hundred."

"Eight dollars a hundred, Mr. Mur-

dock," said Riley.

The ex millionaire slipped his After a moment's silence, during which Riley knew the proud old theart was breaking, though the calm face gave no sign of the struggle, "Put me up a dime's worth of the bason, if you please."

Riley obeyed silently; he would no more have presumed to cover up the pathos of the proceeding by talk then he would have thought of offering a penny, in charity, to the mayor in the city. He put the transaction as purely upon a business footing as if the customer had ordered a round ton of something. He wrapped the meat in a sheet of brown paper, and received the stately "Good evening, sir," saw the white finger touch the hat brim as the customer passed out into the snow, then climbed back to his perch, thinking, as he did so, that of all poverty the poverty that fol-lows fallen fertunes must be the very hardest to endure. There is the battle against old longings, lang in-dulged luxuries past pleasures, faded grandeurs, dead dreams, living sneers, and pride that indomitable blessing or curse, that never, never dies. pity those poor who had once seen etter dave !

To S. Riley 2 lbs. bacon, at 121 cts. 25." The book bore another entry. Riley put the blotter over it very quickly; he had a fancy the late cus tomer was looking over his shoulder. He shouldn't like the old gentleman o see that entry, not by any means.

"Chris'mus gif', marster." Another customer had entered Riley clesed the big ledger, and thrust it into the safe. The day book would take up the balance of the

evening. "What can I do for you, Aunt Angie ?" he said, going behind the counter to wait upon the old colored roman, who had passed the compli ments of the season after the old

slave custom. She laughed, albeit her clothing was in rags, and the thin shawl gathered about her shoulders bore tches in blue and yellow and white.

"I kotched yer Chris'mus gif', good

marster; yer knows I did."
"But you're a little early, Aunt ingle," said the clerk; "this is only Christmas eve."
"Aw, git out, marster. De ole

nigger got ter took all dey termorrer —bg Chris'mus dinner tur de whi' folks. No res' fur de ole nigger, not even et Chris'mus. Bress de Lord, it ain' come but onc't a year."

She laughed again, but under the strange merriment Riley detected the weariness that was thankful; aye, that thanked God that Christmas,

the holiday of the Christ-child, came "but once a year."
Christmas! Christmas! old season of mirth and misery! Who really enjoys it, after all?—Lazarus in the gutter or Dives among his coffers?
The clerk ran his eye along the counters, the shelves, and even took

in the big barrels, pushed back, in the rear, out of the way. "Well, Aunt Augie, what shall the gift' be ?" He could see the bare toes where her torn old shoss fell away fre

stockingless feet. She needed shoes;

he was about to go for a pair when "Dem as things, marster," she said, pointing to a string of masks—gaudy, hideous things, festooned from

ceiling. "I wants one o' dem ar. De chillan'll lack dat sho." He allowed her to select one; it was the face of a king, fat, jovial, white. She enjoyed it like a child. Then, unwrapping a bit of soiled muslin, she took from it three pieces of silver, three bright, precious dollars. They represented precisely three-fourths of her month's wages. She purchased a tin horn "far de baby, honey"; a candy sheep "fur Ephum, de naix un"; a string of yellow beads "fur Jinny. Dat yallor gal ain't got no reason—mint she am dat set on habin' dem beads"; a plug of tobacco "fur de ole man's Chris'mus"; a jew's harp 'fur Sam; dat chile gwi l'arn music, he am"; a dell "fur Lill Ria; she's de po'ly one Lill Ria am"; and last, "a dust of corn meal to make a hoe cake fur dey alls Chris'mus dinner.

he had been lavish, poor beggar without stint she had given her all foolishly, perhaps, but she apologized in full for the folly: "It am Chris'mus,

marster."
Aye, Christmas! wear your masks poor soul's fancy that you are kings, kings. Dream that pain is a myth and poverty a joke. Make grief a phantom. Set red folly in the seat of grim doubt, pay your devoirs one day! To morrow the curvain rises on the old scene; the wheels grind on the chariots of the rich roll by, and your throat is choked with their dust ;

your day is over.

The clerk made his entry in the day-book," To S. Riley, one mask, 20, before he waited upon three news boys who were tapping the floor with their boot heels, just in front of the counter. The largest of the trio took the

role of spokesman :
"I want a pack o' firecrackers, mister; an' Jim wants one, an' so does Harry. Can't we have 'em all for 10 cents ?" The clerk thrust his pen behind

his ear. "They are 5 cents a pack," h

said. "Can't you come down on three packs? They do up town, an' we aint got another nickel."

Riley read the keen interest of the But he had orders. "Couldn't do it, boys, sorry."
"Well then,"—but a half sigh said

it wasn't "well"—"give us gum. can divide that up anyhows."

It was a poor compromise—a very poor compromise. The voice, the very face of the little beggar expressed contempt. Riley hesitated. "Pshaw!" said he, "Christmas without a racket is just no Christmas to a boy. I know, for I've been a boy too. And it only comes once a year Here, boys, take the three packs for 10 cents, and run along and enjoy

yourselver. And as they scampered out, sighed, thinking of two poor little feet that could throw off their weight and run, as only childhood runs, not even at the Christmas time.

To S. Riley. 1 pack of fire-crackers,

Then it was the clerk took himself to task. He was a poor man on a small salary. He had a little girl to look after, a cripple, who would never be able to provide for hersels, and for whom, in consequence, som one else must provide. She would expect a little something for Christ mas too. And the good neighbor in the attic who kept an eye on the little one while Riley was at work— he must remember her. It was so pleasant to give he wondered how s man with a full pocket must feel when he came face to face with suffering. God! if he could feel so once ! just once have his pockets full! But he would never be rich the boss had told him so often : he didn't know the value of a dollar The head of the establishment would think so, verily, when he glanced over the night's entries in the day

"Ob, well, Christmas comes but once a year !" he said, smiling, as he dopted the universal excuse. Some one came in and he went

torward again. "No, he didn't keep liquor ; he was outside the corporation line and came under the four-mile restric-

"Just a Chris'mus toddy," said the ustomer that might have been. Don't drink reg'lar. Sober's any body all th' year, cep—Chri'mus. Chris'mus don't com—don't cum but once a year."

He staggered out and Riley stepped to the door to watch him reel sately beyond the boss's big glass window.

There was another figure occupy-

ing the sheltered nook about window. Riley discovered the pale pinched little face pressed sgainst the pane before he opened the door. the pane before he opened the door.
The little waif was so utterly lost in wonder of the Christmas display set forth behind the big panes that he down at the little slesper. There down at the little slesper. There are its upon the baby lips, as if wonder of the Christmas display set forth behind the big panes that he did not hear the deor open or know that he was observed until the clerk's voice recalled his wandering senses. "See here, sonny, you are marring the glass with your breath. There will be ice on that pane in less than

ten minutes.'

ten minutes."

The culprit started, and almost lost his balance as he grasped at a little wooden crutch that slipped from his numb fingers and rolled own upon the pavement.
"Hello!" The clerk st

into the night and rescued the poor little prop.
Humanity! Humanity! When all is told, thy great heart still is

"Go in there," the clerk points d to the door, "and warm yourself at the fire. It is Christmas; all the world should be warm at Christmas."

The waif said nothing; it was

enough to creep near to the great stove and watch the Christmas display from his warm, safe corner.
"There's that in the sound of

child's crutch strikes way down to my boots, the clerk told himself as he made an entry after the boy had left

the store. "Whenever I hear one I
— Hello! what is it, steep?"
A little girl stood at the counter.
A flaxen-haired, blue-syed little
maiden; alone, at night, and beautiful. Growing up for what?
Crippled feet, at all events, are no

swift to run astray. The clerk sighed. The Christmas eve was full of shadows—shadows that would be lost in the garish days of the morrow. He leaned upon the counter. do you want, little one?

Only a beggar understands that trick of asking simple bread. Ah, well! Christmas must have its starvelings too! The big blotter lingered upon the last entry. And when he did remove to go and wait upon some new customers he quieted the voice of predence with the reflec tien that his own wee one might stand at a bread counter some pitiless Christmas eve, and this loaf, sent upon the waters of mercy, might ome floating back; who could tell since .- and the clerk smiled,-

'The world goes 'round and 'round Some go up, and some go down.'

The counter was crowded : it was nearing the hour for closing, and business was growing brisk. And some of the customers were provok-ingly slow, some of the poorer ones keeping the richer ones waiting. It isn't diffi sult to buy when there is no fear of the funds running short. There was one who bought oysters, fruit, and macaroni, \$10, ail told, in less than half the time another was dividing 25 cents into a possible pur chase of a bit of cheese, a strip of bacon, and a handful of dry beans. And old Mrs. Mottles, the shop girls' landlady at the big yellow tenement, up town a bit, took a full twenty minutes hunting over cheap bits of steak, stale bread, and a roast that They do up town, an' we another nickel."

They do up town, an' we another nickel."

They do up town, an' we another nickel."

They do up town, an' we sought to go mighty low, seeing it was tolerable tough and some gristly."

He glanced at the clock: eleven ten; he had permission to close at

eleven, and it was ten minutes after. He went out and put up the shut-ters, came back, and began putting

the books. The big ledger had been scarcely touched; he had been too busy to post that night. "Mr. Riley? Mr. Riley? Just a

minute before you Riley." He went back to the counter, impatiently; he was very tired. A woman with a baby in her arms

stood there waiting.
"I am late," she said, "a'most too late. I want a bite for to morrow. Give me what will go farthest for that

She laid a silver quarter upon the counter. "How many of you?" said Riley

'It might make a lunch for one" The woman shook her head. " A drunkard counts for one when it

comes to eatin', any hows," she said, and laughed—a hard bitter laugh. 'He counts for somethin' when he's drur k," she went on, the poor tongue made free by misery that would repent itself the morrow. "May be man, brute likely. I've got the proofs o' it."

She set the child upon the counte and pushed back her eleeve, glanced a moment at along, black bruise that reached from wrist to elbow, then quickly, lowered the sleeve again.

"Give me somethin' to eat, Mr. Riley, for the sake o' your own wife, sir,-sn' the Christmas."

His own wife! Why she was safe afe forever from misery like that. He almost shricked it to the big blue blotter. And then he looked to see what he had written. He almost trembled, lest in his agony he had entered upon the master's well-ordered beak his thought: "safe Elizabeth Riley, under the snow-Christmas." He had written somewhere, upon his heart, perhaps, but surely somewhere. The entry in the boss' book was all right; it read, a trifls extravagantly, however :

To T. Riley shoulder, 10 lbs. at 10 cts. Dr. 2 lbs. ceffee at 80 cts. 2 lbs. sugar at 12½ cts.

and the Christmas time. Then he thrust the book into the safe, turned the combination, looked into the stove, lowered the gas, and

home.

Home to the little attic and the crippled nestling. She was asleep, but a tiny red stobking, worn at the

was a smile upon the baby lips, as if in dreams the little feet were made straight, and were skipping through sunny meadows, while their owner's hand was classed fast in the hand of the hero of all childish aderation,-

the mythical, magical Santa Claus.
The little hands were indeed clasped tightly upon a bit of card-board that peeped from beneath the delicate fingers, upon the breast of the innocent sleeper. Riley frew it quietly away. It was a Christmas card the neighbor woman has picked up in some home of the rich where she had gone that day to carry home some sewing. It bore a face of Christ a multitude, eager, questioning, and underneath a text :

"Insemuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye did it unto Me."

He sighed, thinking of the hungry horde, the fainting multitude at the grocery that Christmas eve.

His heart had sched for them ; he understood so well what it was to be wretched, lonely, hungry. Not one of those he had helped had thanked him, in words ; not one had wished him a Merry Christmas. Yet, for what he had done, because of it, the what he had done, because of it, she little red stocking by the chimney-place would be half-empty. He hadn't missed their thanks, poor starvelings, and to say "Merry Christmas," would have, been to meek. Yet he faucied a smile touched for an instant the lips of the pale Nazarene—those lips said to have never smiled, as he slipped the card to its place under the wee hands folded upon the child's heart.

And after a little while he was ly ing by her side, too tired to sleep, and the books that must be nosted before the year should end.

Atlast he slept. But the big ledger refused to leave him; even in dreams it followed to annoy him, and drag him back to the little subsrban grocery. And when he unlocked the sate and took it out, lo! he was surrounded by a bost of basgars : boys without money wanting firecrackers; women with starving babies in their arms; little girls crying for bread; old men, young men, white, black,— all the beggars of the big round world. They seized the bess' big book and began to scribble in it, until a little girl with a crutch began to beat them off. And when they were gone he could still hear the noise of them-a mighty rustle of wings; and he saw they had gathered all about him, in the air; and they no longer begged,
—they laughed. And there was one who wore a mask; and when it was removed he saw that it was Christ.

Then he took back his old ledger, and lo, upon the credit side where the balance was not made, a text had been entered. It filled the page down to the bottom line :

"Insemuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto Me. And full across the page, as plain as if it had been writ in blood, ran the long red lines that showed the sheet

HINT TO HEADS OF FAMILIES

At a season when recreation is largely confined to reading, it beamine into the sort of literature that comes to their homes. No father or mother with the least sense of responsibility would allow a child to sociate with criminals. And yet the secular papers, which are acc the secular papers, which are accessible to the youngest members of the family, are filled with reports of all sorts of crimes. In many cases these reports are so detailed as to corrupt the minds of youthful readers and incite tham to note of immerality. incite them to acts of immorality. As for books, some of the most popular are at least dangerous reading. Parents who desire to have their sons and daughters "unspotted from the world "instead of followers of its fashions will put a ban on all such literature as they would exclude criminals from their homes. If it be dishonorable and demoralizing to associate with dissolute men and women, it is certainly to no one's redit or profit to form their acquaintance in books and newspapers which reveal their minds and describe their deeds.—Ave Maria.

XMAS DECORATING

Why not start a rose day in your city or town for patriotic or church purposes. We are headquarters for same. Rose Buds will cest you \$1 50 a 100, and retail at 10 cents each; Carnations \$1.50 a 100; Violets \$8 00 a 100 bunches; they all sell at 10 cents each; Chrysanthemums 50 cents a dez.; Jack Roses with buds 75 cents a doz.; Carnations 15 cents a dez.; Waxed Roses 50 cents a doz.; Poinsettia Vines \$2 00 a doz. yards; Holly Vines \$1.00 a doz. yards; Rose Vines \$1.00 a doz. yards; White Holly Vines \$1.25 a doz yards; Poinsettias 50 tents a doz; Easter Lilies 50 cents a dez.; Crape Roses 50 cents a dez.; Xmas Bells 2 for 5 cents. We will pay pestage or Express on all orders of 8 doz. eggs at 15 cts.

"For the sake of the dead wife," he told the blue blotter,—the dead wife Flower Co., Brantford, Ont.