

MATTY'S CHRISTMAS PRESENT

have just time to slip out and buy that doll and dress before the train pulls out."

Though it was midnight when the roan mare pulled up to the snubbing-post, Matty came running out to greet the sheriff. Her arms were about his neck before he had half finished his news, and for a minute thereafter he stood in imminent danger of suffocation. Fathers there are who would have accepted the cow-puncher's offer to stable the horse, but out of a consideration that had its roots in the long past the sheriff refused.

And coming in from the stable he saw enough to justify refusal.

It was not his fault. Matty had forgotten to pull down the blinds. She was standing on a chair by the Christmas-tree that the cow-puncher had set up the day before, and had just finished hanging the big wax doll to the topmost bough. The cow-puncher was handing her the bolt of silk.

"Just enough for a wedding-dress," he said.

The sheriff did not hear the words, but he saw the look, and—considerately turned his back.

THE END