

MISS EVELYN'S NEW YEAR'S CALLS

By KATE NEELY HILL.

Hope Evelyn stood at her window away up in the top of a stately New York mansion, looking down upon the broad avenue that was already in the full tide and whirl of New Year's Day.

She was only a little country girl, who had never been in a city during the holiday season before, and the panorama presented by the spacious street, marbled white by the feet and snow of the winter, and all alive with the gleams of every luxurious style, filled with elegant-looking men, and drawn by satin-coated thoroughbreds glittering in gilded harness, and prancing to the music of their own silver bells, fascinated her with its splendor, and kept her at her window gazing out until her eyes grew fairly dizzy by the ceaseless glitter and whirl.

Poor girl! these dazzling glimpses were the only share she was likely to have in the universal New Year glee. She was not the daughter of that aristocratic house, but only nursery governess to its two young darlings. Her employer, Mrs. Snydam, had been very kind; she had remembered "the very lady-like girl, quite a treasure-trove, my dear," who took such good care of her precious pets, and had graciously offered the use of the small reception-room on the first floor in case Miss Evelyn might perhaps have a friend who would like to call.

"Dear Lily and Angela have a friend to be allowed to come into the parlor, and they are really such an attraction, the little ladies! I have at last consented," she explained. "So when you have dressed them you will be quite at leisure for some time, and I should be glad to know you were enjoying yourself."

Miss Evelyn was very grateful for what she knew was unusual graciousness, but there was no one in whose behalf she might avail herself of the kind permission; and she felt strongly alone and lonely as she looked wistfully down upon the ever-moving spectacle below.

"So many people, all so gay and happy, and not one to give a word or a wish to me!" she had said little thought as she was turning away, but just at that moment her glance fell upon a group moving along the sidewalk which was as empty as the drive was thronged, that arrested her steps; and made her look with a yet more direct gaze down upon the brilliant street.

It was a strange-looking party to appear upon such a scene; a dark foreign-looking woman with an infant tucked up under a miserable shawl, and two other children in tattered garments clinging to her scanty skirts. The sunlight glittered with blinding radiance upon the hard white snow, but the wind swept none the less keenly through the long street; and the poor creatures shivered as the icy blast pinched through their worn clothing and chilled them to the very heart. The woman stopped for a moment and stared about her as though bewildered at the unaccounted scene in which she suddenly found herself, and then sank down, apparently benumbed and helpless, with her children cowering beside her, upon the broad steps of an unoccupied house directly opposite Miss Evelyn's window.

"Oh, that will never do!" was the young girl's instant thought. "A policeman will come and drive them away from there in no time. Poor creatures! how miserably cold they look! and those poor little children! how I wish this was my home, wouldn't I bring them in and warm them, and feed them, just for once anyhow!"

And then there flashed into her mind Mrs. Snydam's gracious offer of hospitality to any and of her!

"Of course she didn't mean this kind of people, but then of course she didn't think of this kind, and I know she is very charitable herself," argued Hope eagerly in her own mind. "It is cold, they could hardly possibly have anything to eat, and if they have, their need is a real one. I am going to do it, and take the consequences afterwards!"

And yielding to the urgent impulse of pity, she darted from her room and sped swiftly and noiselessly down the long flight of stairs to the bottom of the house, and through the basement door out into the wide, stone-paved area. The sharp air struck her like a blow, but she stood still, heeding neither the icy wind nor the cotton gaiters that came from more than one passing outer, and beckoned to the group of "misérables" across the way, until the woman recognizing that it was she who was summoned, rose slowly, and made her way, her children still clinging to her skirts, in and out amongst the horses to the other side of the street.

As soon as she was within reach, the little governess took her by the arm, and laying her finger on her lip in token of silence, hurried her along the basement hall to the furnace-room in the centre. The lamp and kitchen were beyond at the rear, and both were closed, so that there was no one within sight or sound, so she opened the door and ushered the shivering wretches into what seemed a very Paradise, after the life of the four streets. Such a great glowing mass of warmth and rest and comfort! When had they known the like before!

Miss Evelyn drew forward a couple of empty wood-boxes, and motioned them silently to sit down. Then she sped lightly up the stairs again to the reception-room which had been placed at her disposal. Arrived there, she touched the bell, and to the colored elegant who answered it, she said with a pretty assumption of impatience: "Am I to be served to-day, Howard, because no regular meals are to be served? Bring me some luncheon, do; enough for two hungry people, Howard!" Howard smiled benevolently; the "pleasant spoken" young governess was a special favorite with his high-mightiness.

"With pleasure, miss," he replied, bowing gracefully; "I'll accommodate you immediately—had to give her a square meal, too, for once, he said as he bowed himself out. "She never gets half a chance at the table between them two little children."

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