JACK PENFIELD'S **CHRISTMAS EVE**

(By Clarissa Mackie.)

"A telegram from Christopher." said Mrs. Latimer, thrusting her head within the open library door and reading from the yellow slip in her hand.

"'Snowbound. Will arrive late this evening. Don't sit up."

"Thoughtful Christopher," murmured Dick Mason, from the depths of his casy

"Poor old Chris-what luck!" cried

Amy, while Alice murmured to her lover, "I am so anxious that you should meet Christopher, Dick."

"Pray, who is Christopher? Tell me, that I, too, may be distraught at his non-arrival," drawled Penfield, surveying the love-stricken Dick and his between with the children and turning. trothed with some disgust and turning to Amy, who was viewing him with unmistakable relish.

"Christopher Browning is our cousin," she replied, with a wicked look at her sister. "The dearest fellow! Writes, you know."
"I didn't know," murmured Penfield.

apologetically.
"Well. Chris does write for the papers, magazines, or anything that will take the stuff."

Amy looked at him from mirth brimmed eyes. She was dressing a doll for the cook's little niece, and she tied a pink bow on the flaxen curls and then admired the effect with audible satis-

"Isn't she too sweet? Now I'm go ing down to the village to leave this at Mrs. Lee's, and you may come, too, Mr. Penfield, for the way is long and

the night is stormy."

Penfield arose with alectity. Anything was better than sitting before the cheery fire and staring at the photograph of the girl he loved unwisely and trying to summon courage to ask d. Didn't he know?

When they reached the front door

Amy ran back to the library, and he heard the rise and fall of her shrill girlish voice as she expostulated with her sister. It was evident that she gained her point, for when she returned she was smiling and her eyes were as bright as the snow crystals sparkling under the radiance from the

wide open door.

They plunged into the softly falling whiteness, and Penfield bared his head to the cold fresh air, and endeavored to thrust aside the burden that lay heavily upon his heart.
"Such an ideal Christmas eve!" said

Amy. "When I was a little girl"—
"Oh. WHEN!" interrupted Jack,

"WHEN I was a little girl," insisted Amy, serencly, "I used to believe that something wonderful must happen on Christmas eve. I would watch at the window and look for a messenger to arrive with marvelous news or expec a long lost uncle would appear that a long lost uncle wome appear and shower gifts upon us. But it never happened. Nothing wonderful ever does happen to me," she added, with a sigh that was mufiled in a mist of fly-

ong flakes.
"Time enough for things to happen when you are grown up, child." Jack said gravely, and then rousing him-self from the uppleasant thoughts that, vampire-like, seemed to cling to him, he added: "Come! A race to the corner!"
They reached it laughing and breath-

Later, when they had returned and were sitting before the fire, each waitwere sitting before the fire, each waiting for the other to make a bedtime start. Jack remarked legily: start, Jack remarked lezily:
"When do you expect Mr. Browning to arrive?"

Amy giggled, Dick looked amused, and Alice and her mother exchanged glances of distress.

"Oh, any time before midnight, suppose," replied Alice, with evident constraint, "We will not sit up—the arrival of the train is too uncertain. One of us will hear the bell and come down.

was about to volunteer to sit up and wait for him," said Jack. "I am in a wakeful mood to night." "Really, Mr. Penfield," began Mrs.

Latimer anxiously, when Amy inter rupted her eagerly:
"Oh, mother, let him sit up if he wishes to. We can get up and greet Chris afterward, but there is no use in

of us sitting here like owls until that train comes in. It may not arrive for hours yet, and Peters will be waiting at the station with the sleigh, so thris will be all right.

well, dear It doesn't seem to Chris," remarked Mrs. Latimer gravely, "but you may settle that between yourselves."
"Perhaps I'd better go with Peters."

d Dick. "I am ashamed that I did t think of doing so before." Oh, Peters has gone," said Mrs. Lat-

imer. "I thought it best for him to be there in case the transcript than expected. case the train should arrive

"It's not a particularly bad night, rs. Latimer," said Penfield reasons "Miss Amy and I got along sely. The snow is very light and famously. The snow is very light and soft, and it is not particularly cold. Of course down in the valley at San-derson, where the train is stalled, it has drifted and that has caused the blockade. Mr. Browning will not mind the adventure unless he is an invalid,"

"Oh, Chris is quite "obust," replied Alice, sweetly, "Now that it is settled Mr. Benfield is to remain up to greet our cousin suppose we loang the steckings and go to bed. We must deposit our gifts on the table here, and mother will fill the stockings at some wee sma' hour, as usual. When Chris arrives mo-Chris arrives mother and I will come down and give the child something to eat. You must keep up a rousing fire, Mr. Penfield." "Depend on me for that." returned

There was much remained to and She turned away suddenly, and her fro and a great deal af merriment as the stockings were hung in the wide old chimneypiece. Then dealed one brought gifts carefully wrappet he and labeled, with many attention at carefully wrappet he are severely at the stocking were believed by the stocking with many attention and provide the stocking with many attention and provide stocking with many attention and provide stocking with many attention and provide stocking with many attention. and with many attering at secrecy they were heaped upon the library ta-Finally, with wasin exchanges gitts," she

of Christmas wishes, Mrs. Latimer and her daughters withdrew, leaving the two men alone before the fire. When Dick Mason had finished his

when Dick Mason and Hillshed his cigar he, too, sought his room, and then Penfield kept his lonely vigil. It was 11 o'clock, and the storm was abating. The soft spat of snow against the window panes had ceased, and there was an occasional tinkle of sleigh hells from the highway which probells from the highway which pro-claimed that belated Christmas shop

pers were venturing out.

Penfield stared moodily at the picture of the girl he loved. It stood on the mantelshelf, framed in silver. It portrayed a girl in riding dress with one arm thrown over the neck of a horse, whose near muzikal her. one arm thrown over the neck of a horse, whose nose muzzled her other hand. She was a wide eyed, soft featured girl, with dark hair parted in the middle and topped by a broad felt hat. Her round chin was lifted above the low collar of her white blouse, and low collar of her white blouse, from the crown of her hat to the of her riding boots she appeared embodiment of life, health and Yet love she had withheld from Jack Penfield. He was thinking of that now as he sat there—thinking how strange as he sat there—thinking how strange it was that she should have found he picture in the home of his cousin's fiancee, among people whom he had never before met, but who had greeted him warmly as Dick Mason's cousin and had taken him into their midst as one of themselves. He had come out one of themselves. He had come out of the west a fortnight before—out of the west where he had made his ho for years—away from the open life of the plains, the free air of Montana where he was king on his own ranch to the overcivilized east, where to simple hearted Jack Penfield God to the overcentages are simple hearted Jack Penfield God seemed shut up in the stuffy brick and stone churches. In the wild free west God was everywhere. That was his fancy.

He had come east because a girl had implanted the germ of restlessness within him-a restlessness that forbade him peace of mind until he could per suade her to reconsider her decision. The picture before him was an enlargement of one he had taken himself with a poc-ket camera. Its duplicate in miniature was folded in his letter case next to his heart. In the spring Kitty Brown had to come to the west to visit his neighbors, the Clarks. She was a writer, on who was tired and whose body and soul needed relaxation. She found it under the free blue sky as she skimmed over the ranges side by side with Jack Pen-field when the day came for her to re-

"You do not understand," she had told him. "I could not give up my work, and I do not love you as much as I love that. You can see," she had added with that frank smile of hers, "that my love is a divided one, and you cannot accept that?"

"No," he had replied gravely, "I can not accept a divided love." And so they had turned their horses' heads homeward, and their parting had been a warm and clasp and that was all.

That was all Jack Penfield had to think and dream about. The great think and dream about. The great eastern city swallowed her up. He had not asked for her address, but as the months went by and brilliant auplain and distant ranges changed color under her hard, cold touch, he grew restless, and finally in December he arranged his affairs, and, leaving his foreman in charge of the Bar T out-fit he had come to New York to find Kitty Brown. He had been too proud quest for the girl he loved had been quite hopeless. Then he had dropped in upon his cousin, Dick Mason, who had picked him up and carried him off for the holidays to the country home of the Latimers, and here he was, with the first clew to Kitty Brown staring him in the face. He felt no ela ion now, for with the nearness of he discovery came the thought that she would send him away again. Nevertheese he determined that he would osom himself to sweet, motherly Mrs. Latimer in the morning.

There was a tinkle of sleighbells draw ing nearer, the faint sound of an arrival at the door, and he hastened to his et to greet the coming stranger, whom he had almost forgotten. The hall doo losed softly, and then the door of the ibrary was pushed gently open, and a slim, dark clad figure, with arms brimming over with packages, slipped into room and then paused abruptly as Penfield advanced.
"Mr. Browning"—Jack stopped short

and stared with unbelieving eyes.

The girl laughed softly, and there was joy in her eyes as she raised them t

"Where did you come from?" she asked, dropping her asked, dropping her parcels to the table and extending both gloved little

"From the Bar T," he replied laconically, holding her hands firmly on his great brown palms.

Explain why you are nere for an places. I left you riding the ranges in Montana, and I see you again in the country home of my cousins, and you call me Mr. Browning!" she said, withdrawing her hand and heavy cloak that enveloped her.

"I was expecting Christopher Browning. I was sitting up for him. I was am Christopher Browning." she

said saucily. "Don't dare to tell me 'I didn't know it," he admitted hum

"I knew you as Kitty Brown-"
i, the Clarks always abbreviated "Oh it. And so you did not know you were waiting for me?" she said musingly waiting for me?" she said musingly drawing nearer the fire and holding her hands to the comforting warmth.

"I've been waiting for you ever since you left the ranges, Kitty," he said She turned away suddenly, and he

her.
"You may help me distribute my recovering her

What Christmas Means

Right now; in the midst of the busy Christmas season, is as good a time as any to sit down, and give over a few thoughts as to just what would be the condition of affairs in this country and in this age, if the Universal God had left Christmas, its festival and celebration, and all its pleasant associations out of the general Scheme of Things, and given us a Christmas-less Creation. would the Twentieth Century and the American people do without a Christmas?

By Christmas-less is not meant Christ-less. This is not intended to be a treatise in the higher criticism or the deeper theology. By Christmas-less, is meant, an absence in this world of the spirit of Christmas. Leaving its deeper significance and its real importance out of the question, where would this old world be without

the spirit of the Twenty-fifth of December.

It can easily be reckoned the greatest and most important celebration of the year, and is unrivalled by any festival, anywhere. The spirit of Christmas is unique. It imparts a general feeling of good will and happiness that if not absolutely lacking in, can never be approached in intensity and ardor, by any other holiday. The spirit of giving and doing good permeates the very air, the moment November gives place to December on the calendar, and sadness is as foreign to the general order of things as beef at Musselman's dinner. The love-labor of buying gifts and preparing them for the recipient is one of the pleasant associations of the season, and cannot be duplicated in satisfaction by any other action or undertaking. The spirit of Christmas is an extremely infectious thing and effects everybody more or less-the rich and the poor, alike. The rich are happy because they are able to celebrate it in style. The poor rejoice, mainly just because it's Christmas, and it's the time for rejoicing.

There are many creeds who do not believe in Christ and the celebration of December 25th as a religious festival, but they take unto themselves the spirit of the day, and make as merry as the most devout believer. It's the spirit of the season that grips them and grips them hard. They may question its significance, but they simply must yield to its charm and influence, and give themselves over to its celebration. It may not be the sublimest of motives, this were materialism-but the fact remains.

Christmas always seems to be the big milepost on the course of the year. Looking forward to the beautiful season and the celebration of it; seems to form a most agreeable break in the cycle of the 265 days, and take the monotony out of the years. For at least a month before, it exerts its influence, and perhaps half of that time afterwards. Sweet anticipation; delightful period of enjoyment; pleasant recollections-that's the sum total of Christmas and Christmastide.

Take the festive spirit of Christmas out of the world and this old terrestrial ball will worry along somehow, but figure on a great big, aching void.



omposure, "and while we are filling the stockings you must tell me how you came to make the mistake in my name and why you, instead of my af fectionate cousins, are waiting for me

Jack told the story while the girl dis ributed the story while the girl distributed the parcels she had brought among the limp stockings. There was even a gift for the capacious sock that represented Dick Mason's Christmas. "I have nothing for yours, Mr. Pen-eld," she said, regretfully surveying field," she said, the remaining empty sock.

"A little note saying that you had changed your min-" he began.
"But I haven't changed my mind," she murmured faintly.

"Are you sure?" he insisted. "Your eyes, Kitty, betrayed you when you came into this room. You were glad came into this room. 100 were glad to see me. Say that you will go back to the Bar T with me in the spring." She hesitated. "Oh, there is some-thing in the sock," she said evasively. and she stepped forward, and, thrust-a small hand into the toe, brought forth a small card, which she extended t ward Penfield.

te side. He uttered an exclamati surprise. Then he held it out to her. ed a warm flush spread over her fac "Explain why you are here for all and she cried impulsively, "Why, that"

> It was a snapshot of the master of the Bar T ranch standing in the corral, surrounded by hundreds of horned "Did you take that picture, Kitty?"

asked Jack eagerly.
She nodded shamefacedly.
"How did it get in there?" he asked,
with a puzzled look.
A merry voice called from the door-

way: "I found it on the floor of your room, Christopher Kit, carefully wrap ped in tissue paper, after you went home at Thanksgiving. Of course I recognized Mr. Penfield when he arrivd yesterday, and—and I wanted some thing wonderful to happen on Christma eve, and for the first time in my life it has happened. And that's all, except merry Christmas both!"

"Bless the child!" murmured Jack happily, rathering the abashed Christopher in o his arms. "That's what I say, too," she whis pered softly.

What's the use of Christmas if you forget it by New Year's?-Manchester

TWO LITTLE STOCKINGS.

Close to the fireplace, broad and wide Two little stockings hung side by "Two?" said St. Nick, as down he came loaded with toys and many a game.

'I'll have no cheating, my pretty one I know who dwells in this house my dea There's only one little girl lives here. So he crept up close to the chimney place And measured a sock with sober face, Just then a wee little note fell out, And fluttered low, like a bird, about "Aha. What's this?" said he in surprise As he pushed his specks up close to his eyes.

eyes, And read the address in a child's rough plan.
"Pear Saint Nicholas." so it began.
"The other stocking you see on the wall

l have hung for a child named Clara Hall She's a poor little girl, but very good, S' thought, perhaps, you kindly would S' thought, perhaps, you kindly would S' have been stocking too to-night, And help to make her Christmas bright. If waye not enough for both stockings

If Trave not enough for both stocking there. Please put all in Clara's. I shan't care. So'nt Nicholas brushed a tear from hi eye, And "God bless you, darling," he said with a sigh.

Then softly he blew 'throug': the chimney high
ney high
note like a bird's as it soars on high.
When down came two of the fuuniest When down came two of the fuuniest mortals

That ever were seen on this side earth's

portals.
"Hurry up!" said Saint Nick, "and nicely prepare
All a little girl wants where money is

All a little girr wants where the tare."

Then, oh, what a scene there was in that room!

Away went the elves, but down from the gloom

Of the sooty old chimney came tumbling low. Of the sooty ord chimney came tumbing low
A child's whole wardrobe, from head to toe. How Santa Claus laughed as he gathered

them in And fastened each one to the sock with guess"
Said Saint Nicholas, smoothing the folds And tying the hood to the stocking too When all the warm citches were fastene on, And both the socks were filled and done Then Santa Claus tucked a toy here and

there and there and there and there and hurried away on the frosty air. Saying, "God plty the poor and bless the dear child who pities them too, on this night so wild." wild."
The wind caught the words, and bore them on high
Till they died away on the midnight sky, while Saint Nicholas fley through the icy air.

ging "peace and goodwill" with him everywhere. Bringing -Sarah Kebbles Hunt.

THE STORY OF A **CHRISTMAS GIFT**

Two children were sitting in front of | children in those days dreamed of askthe bright fire one evening the week before Christmas not long ago. They were tired of play, and mother and father and the oig sisters and brothers had gone to town. Jennie and Bob were left with Grandma, whose knitting had dropped on her lap as if she, too, were

Golden haired Jennie looked around the pretty room, but not even Alice in Wonderland or Grimm's Fairy Tales, which lay on a table near could tempt her to read to-night.

All at once Bob's dark eyes sparkled

nd nestling close to Grandma's side

"Tell us a story, Granny, bout the time when you were a little girl."

The light shone on Grandma's sweet face and silver hair and the dim eyes grew soft and bright as she patted the cury head and putting her arms round Jennie's slender form, drew her close

"Would you like a story about Christ-"Yes! yes, indeed," said both in the

same breath. "Well, a great many years ago, near the Gulf of St. Lawrence, five children lived in a little house on a hill not far from the sea. On fine summer days they could go down to be the and watch boats come in with their loads of fish and gather pretty shells and stones In the early spring they hunted for the sweet pink mayflowers hidden un-der the moss and knew when the time came to find the blue violets in the ence corners.

They picked berries, too, among the long grass of the meadows or in the woods. The older ones, Martha, Hugh and Janet, with little Elsie, went to school, but delicate little Ernest stayed home with his mother.

But there was no sign of green grass or blue waves, much less of flowers or berries this Christmas morning. The whole world was covered with snow. For two days the feathery flakes had fallen from the green the clean to be the control of the contr For two days the feathery makes had fallen from the grey sky, silent and thick and fasts. Then the wind had risen and for a day and a night it had howled and whistled till the roads were blocked and the little house was covered on one side of the eaves with a great hard white bank that blocked the door and windows. It had grown very cold and although the fire in the big stove had burned nearly all night the windows were covered so thick with frost that the pretty patterns of ferns and trees and all sorts of graceful figures had disappeared and hardy Hugh could scarcely, with his hot tongue and warm breath, make a hole large enough to see through. through.

And now, perhaps, you had better hear something of the people who lived in this home, which humble though it

was, was a very happy one.

Mr. Morton was the district school teacher. He had come to the settlement seven years before and was loved and honored both by the parents and children. He was not, however, well paid, and even sober Martha little knew what a hard struggle it was to get plenty of wholesome food and warm clothing for the family. But Mrs. Mor-

ton was a rare manager, and if the family was poor the children at least never felt it.

They loved their tail, fair mother very dearly and thought there was no one so beautiful as she in her Sunday dress of soft grey alpaca with its bread white color.

But father was the playmate of the little folks. All sorts of nursery rhymes and stories seemed to be hidden in his head and many a noisy romp and merry game the little folks had with him if the had with him in the winter evenings. And this was Christmas morning, the happiest day in the year. Dim as the fire was, it was bright enough to show the stockings hung close to the stove. With laugh and shout the calldren drew out their treasures. cake, a bunch of raisins, a handful of sticks of home-made candy (cockinning they called it), a big apde and some doughnuts do not per haps seem great riches to you have books and dolls and toys. not one of you will be happier on Christmas day than were these girls and boy

share with father their treasures, mother and Martha began to get breakfast. But when did children eve want breakfast on Christmas morn

ing?
And now the little ones must d. The girls put on the pretty pinafores that covered their warm focks. Hugh wore the suit mother made last week from an old one of father's, and little Ernest. the the pretty plaid frock with its bright sent from town.

And now, from outside, voices could Mr. Jackson, the whose big house was only a stone's throw distant, and his two big boys were busy shovelling a tunnel to the door, and before the children had grown tired of their play it opened, letting in a flood of Christmas light and showing the jolly face of the farmer, as he shouted, "A merry Christmas!"

Very soon Mrs. Jackson followed

him. bringing in her cheery race, whost of good wishes and under her clean print apron, a bowl of steaming broth which Mrs. Morton must, perbody and take. The day force, sit down and take. The day That the quie an hour of noon. mother had been less busy and active than usual, the children had not no ticed, but they had felt, somehow that very soft and tender and as leaving little ones he put his arm round oldest daughter and gave her his Christmas kiss; she remembered afterwards that his voce trembled

happened. Bustling Mrs. Jackson carried off every one of the little troc dinner. As mother hastily kissed then good-bye she told them all to be good. Father had gone out and the bewildered children were inside the big hous before they had tim to question even if ing why.

There they were with playmates of their own age. There were more sweet-ness and nuts to eat. The older children helped to set the long table. The snowy cloth, the pretty dishes the brightly pol-ished steel knives and forks were soon in their proper places on the long table. The big diningroom with the roaring fire in the great Franklin stove, the warm carpet and gav. warm carpet and gay rugs, was very comfortable. The children were shy at first for a farmer and his daughter from a distance settlement had come to spend Christmas with their friends and good Mrs. Jackson had not yet come back. But by the time the his vectors.

Mrs. Jackson had not yet come back.

But by the time the big roast goose was cooked she was ready to sit at the table and help her double family to all the good things she and her clever daughters had provided. It would take too long to tell of the big plum pudding, the pumpkin pies and the doughnuts which distippeared that day. Very merry were the too big farmers and many a story they told of trips made in their schooner to the town where goods were to be bought cheap.

After dinner, great dishes of russet apples were handed round and as the old friends set apart at a table their arose an odor, strange to the Morton childlyne cill.

arose an odor, strange to the Morton children, filled the room. It came from children, filled the room. It came from a steaming bowl of punch made from the cask of rum that had formed part of the schooner's cargo. And then the stories grew jollier and now and again a song from the old English vales where they had spent their boyhood was sung

was sung.
But now the short winter day was But now the short winter day was over. The sun was going down hind the snowy world, leaving a sky lighted with gold and green and purple.

Then the children were taken home their bind heatess who hade them

by their kind hostess who bade them be very quiet. As the door closed upon them, shutting out the cold wind their father come softly towards them bearing in his arms a tiny white bun-dle. To the wondering children, he showed his Christmas gift, a tiny, white bundle, with a crown of golden hair, that had come to brighten the

hair, that had come to brighten the home on that day of love.

Then he led the children to the bed, where tended by a motherly old lady, mother lay white and quiet, but with a smiling happy face and put the bay in her bosom."

"Yes Lennia the story is true" And

"Yes, Jennie, the story is true." And as grandma spoke a lady entered. Her face was sweet and bright and as she stooped to kiss her children her hair glowed in the firelight showing here and there a strand of silver. Then Jennie remembered that mother's birth-day was Christmas day but she did not speak as she held her close in her soft little arms.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS BROUGHT UP TO DATE.

(By B. L. T.) Twas the night before Christmas, and both of us glum, For the wagon from Chargem & Co's. ladn't come.

The stockings were hung by the chimney of the chimney.

-ail five-But the things to put in them had failed to arrive. The children were sleeping as soundly as tops,
And creaming of toys they had seen in
the shops
And mama in kimono and I in pajamas
Were drowsy as dormice and silent as

clams— When down on the street there arose such a clatter,
I threw up the sash to see what was the
matter. And observed, on the breast of the newfallen snow, The delivery wagon of Chargem & Co.

Whoa. Ton and "Whoa, "Whoa, Tom." and "Whoa, Jerry:
voice that was gruff
Exclaimed, and "Quick, Bill, with this
last bunch of stuff!"
As a man who is climbing the face of
Mont Blanc,
Or a river that's rising to cover its bank, So rose to our flat, bundle-burdened and slow, The tired out driver from Chargem & Co. His trousers were tattered, his jumper His trousers were tattered, his jumper was torn.

His countenance grimy, his manner for-

lorn.
A cigarette stump he held tight in his face, And its odor unpleasant affected the place. He spoke not a word when I opened the door, But an armful of packages flung on the Then presented a book of receipt for the With a stub of a pencil to scribble my

I was moved to invite him to pour out a drink, But the Scotch was all out, as I happened to think:
So I gave him instead a large five-cent seegar.
Whose aroma long after I smelled from

remarked when he left, and mamma That his was a cheerless existence, indeed;
For he falled to observe, as he drove out of sight,
"Merry Christmas to all and to all a
good-night!"

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS' MISIONS.

(Will Carleton in Every Where.) Sadness and Gladness were walking to gether, As oft they had done before;

adness was sighing, and Gladness re plying With jewels of laughter galore. this earth can you find any

mirth. mirth, When sorrow is sown in your sight?" "Ho wean you sigh," was the merry reply.

"When an of the world is so bright?" Jauntily swinging, the Christmas bells' singing.
Came joyfully sweet to the ear:

Sadness, unheeding Despondency's pleadupward a sweet smile of cheer. But Gladness a tear dropped, warm and sincere.

For the pain that the Christ-Martyr And each saw the other: and Glade

Twined arms, and were friends evermore.