THIS ORIGINAL DOCUMENT IS IN POOR CONDITION

The Golden Christmas-Tide.

Under the far blue Syrian sky
Was born the Conqueror of Death,
Who bore redemption from on high,
In Bethlehem and Nazareth.
Then came the new and better times,
One long star signaled far and wide,
And now we ring melodious chimes,
To mark the holy Christmas-tide.

Come young and old, from every side;
Come rosy maid and gentle swain,
It is the holy Christmas-tide,
That joyously we meet again.
The holly hangs on the door;
It is no time for work or woe;
Now jollity commands the floor,
And joy comes with the mistletoe.

Bring in the Yule-log's ancient flame,
The sound bear's head, which repast!
Let sorrow go the way it came;
Let care be to oblivion cast.
The waits clear voices sound without;
Sackbuts and shawms make wholesome glee
Twined is the boar's head round about
With garlands fish and rosemary.

And now the foaming wassail bowl
Shall bring to comfort and delight!
This is the season of the soul,
From golden morn to starry night.
Naught care we for the piercing cold,
The drifted snow or raging blast;
For Christmas never shall grow old,
From ours new or centuries past.

Then welcome, merry Christmas-tide;
Another hour before we go,
The rosy girl close at our side
We'll kiss beneath the mistletoe.
Deep, mellow bells salute the air
With benisons sent far and wide;
[illegible]
Upon the golden Christmas-tide.

Joel Benton, in the Ladies' Home Journal.

LADY CARAVEN;

Or Married Above Her Station.

The passion of her words had deadened all sense of shame. She had forgotten that which her jealousy had prompted her to do, and remembered only her great bitter wrongs. She was no longer a heroine—only a passionate, injured, deeply-loving woman. She rose to the occasion.

The Earl was impressed more than he would have cared to own.

"I could not bear it," she continued passionately. "I should have done more than this, I am sure, if it could have been done. I was mad. I will tell you all. I was mad, because I had learned to love you with all the strength of my heart and soul. I could not bear that you should jest about me with careless words; it was as though you stabbed me for pleasure."

"Do you loved me?" he interrogated incredulously.

The dark shawl fell from her, and she stood erect before him in all the dignity of her pale, passionate beauty. Her amber dress and her rubies gleamed in the starlight; the queenly head was held aloft; she no longer pleaded and wept; the memory of her passionate love and her bitter wrongs filled her with angry pride.

"Yes, I love you," she continued proudly. "Whose is the sin? Is it mine, because I, your wife, have to tell you this, and you feel surprised? I love you; and now that I have to leave you I tell you that woman never loved man, wife never loved husband, more dearly, more deeply, more devotedly, than I love you. I would have died for you; every beat of my heart, every thought of my mind, every action was for you. I love you as Elaine loved the knight of old when she said:

'I have gone mad—I love you—let me die!'"

She drew nearer to him.

"I love you as no one else ever will—as no woman has ever loved you—partly because I could not help loving you, and partly because I have helped to awaken the better nature within you. You may live many years, happy, flattered, but no love like mine will ever reach you; the wife you are sending away is the dearest and truest friend you have."

He looked terribly distressed.

"Why did you not tell me this before Hildred?" he asked.

"I tell you? How little you know me! Was it my place to go to the husband who neglected me and plead for his caresses, for his love? I would have died a thousand deaths first. How little you know me! I should not tell you all this now, but that I know in this world we shall never perhaps meet again. I am speaking to you across a grave. I stretch out my hands to you over a grave—that grave where my love lies—slain."

And as she said the words she fell upon her knees, weeping, sobbing with bitter cries, as though a grave lay there, and she had fallen upon it.

He was touched. He could not tolerate what he believed to be her crime, but she was young, beautiful and loving. Her crime had been committed through love of him. He raised her from the ground.

"I am very sorry, Hildred," he said; "it is very sad for both of us. Now we must talk of something else. You must go at once."

She raised her weeping eyes to him.

"Must you send me away?" she asked gently. "It was wrong. I was mad with jealous anger, but I did not think I was. Could you not overlook it?"

"You speak lightly," he replied sternly. "No, you can never re-enter my house. I have arranged it all. I did so when I took poor Lady Hamilton back to the castle. I told our guests that you had suddenly been sent for by your father, that I had driven you to the station—and it is to your father's house you must go."

"Very well," she said drearily.

"You do not seem to understand," he remarked sharply; "do you not know the danger, the peril that hange over you?"

She did not, but of what use was it to say so

"Try to collect yourself and understand," he continued, "time presses. I cannot keep them away much longer. You must depart at once without being seen. No one must know at what hour you went. You must go to your father's house and wait there. If it should be needful to send you abroad I will arrange it."

"Have I done so very wrong," she murmured. The Earl cried out passionately—

"Heaven give me patience! You must be mad to ask me such a question. One would think you did not know what wrong means."

Hildred stood quite still, looking almost helplessly at him.

"You do not seem to realize or to know what you have done," he said, hastily.

"I do—I do," she moaned; "and there will be no pardon. I wish that I might fling myself into the lake. I would, but that there is life to come."

"Hildred," said the Earl, sternly, "listen to me. I have told you that you must never re-enter my doors; but you bear my name, and for my name's sake I shall shield you. The Countess of Caraven may have done wrong, but the world must not know it. I must save you from the consequences of your mad folly. See, I went quietly to your rooms and have brought you these." He gave her a cloak and a bonnet with a thick veil. "I found them in your wardrobe. Have you any money?"

"No," she replied, vacantly, "none."

He took out his purse, and gave it to her.

"I would accompany you," he said, "but that it would draw down suspicion on you. I must be here to ward it off. Wrap yourself in this cloak. Hide all thac amber satin."

With cold trembling hands she obeyed him. Suddenly she remembered the rubies. She unclasped the necklace and bracelets.

"Take these," she said; and the Earl took them. It was better, he thought, to humor her.

"Now, you quite understand, Hildred? You must not go near Court Raven—you are known there. You must walk to Worseley; that is a larger station; no one will know you. Take a ticket to London. When you reach there hail a cab and go straight to your father's house. Are you quite sure that you understand?"

"Yes; what must I say to my father?" she asked.

"You had better tell him the truth. He is a quick, keen man of the world; he will know far better than I do what should be done. Tell him all."

"Yes," she replied mechanically.

"Now hasten away from here, Hildred," he said. "I am in mortal fear. You understand all. You know the road to Worseley—it is direct—you take the high road without turning. Good-bye."

She raised her dark eyes to his face; all the love, the passion, the regret that she could not put into words, was revealed in them.

"Good-bye," she repeated.

He did not hold out his hand to her. Had he been speaking to the merest stranger, his voice could not have been colder or more stern. Then he turned quickly away, and Lady Caraven walked across the coppice and through a lane into the high road. She walked quite mechanically. She had to go to Worseley, to take a ticket for London and then go to her father's house. She repeated the words over and over again to herself, like a child who dreads forgetting a lesson. Her face was deadly pale; her lips trembled with cold. The golden stars shone down upon her; the night winds whispered round her. She walked on, unconscious of it all.

It was the early dawn of morning when she reached the station—a large railway junction where she was both unknown and unnoticed. The train started for London in half an hour. No one spoke to her or appeared to see her as she took her place, and in a few minutes more she was on her way.

It was a hard punishment—terribly hard for such a trifle, she thought, wondering that the Earl could be so stern. She was tired, fatigued, exhausted with passion and emotion. She had neither eaten, drunk nor slept since the evening before. When she reached London she asked a porter to call a cab for her, and gave the address—"Mr. Ransome, The Hollies, Kew"; and the drive thither seemed to her more than ever like a dream.

CHAPTER XL.

Arley Ransome had not worked quite so hard of late; there was but little need. He had achieved the height of his ambition; he had a large fortune; he was able to speak of his daughter, the Countess of Caraven; he could claim kinsmanship through his daughter with some of the noblest families in England. There was no need now to work quite so hard; he could linger over his daintily-spread breakfast table and reads his papers at his leisure, content if he reached the city before noon.

On this morning he had seated himself so as to enjoy three things at once—the beautiful view of the river from his window, the bright fire in the grate, and the *recherche* little breakfast that had been served up to him. It was a sudden shock to him when, on hearing a sound, he raised his eyes to the door, and saw there a pale, beautiful woman, who stood wringing her hands.

"Father," she said, "I am come home."

In utter amazement he started from his seat. His daughter, his beautiful Hildred, the Countess of Caraven, pale as death, wrapped in a dark travelling cloak! What did it mean?

"I—I am very glad to see you, my dear," he said; but he had a horrible foreboding that something terrible had occurred, and that the days of his greatness had vanished. Come in—pray come in, my dear—do not stand there. How strange you look! Where is Caraven? Dear, dear, how odd it is! Come in, Hildred, the servants will think it strange to see you standing there."

She entered the room and walked up to him with haughty mien.

"This is the end of my marriage, father," she said calmly—"the marriage that you told me could be happy without love. This is the end of it and I am come home."

"Sit down, my dear, sit down; there is nothing so horrible as a 'scene,' and this looks like one. Take off your cloak and your bonnet. What a strange headdress!"

She unfastened the thick travelling-cloak, and there in picturesque disarray was the rich evening-dress of amber and black, with a faded crimson flower clinging to it. The lawyer looked on in utter dismay. This disregard for dress and appearances spoke more forcibly than anything else could have done—told more plainly than words that something dreadful had happened.

"Evening toilet, Hildred! Pray, my dear, put on your cloak again. I did not know—I was not prepared—but it is on quickly, before any of the servants come in. What is it, Hildred? What is the matter?"

"Not much, father," she replied drearily; "my marriage has not turned out well, and I am come home, you see."

"But that is nonsense—you cannot come home. What is the matter? Tell me"; and the lawyer with a very resigned expression of face put away his *pate de foi gras*, and folded his hands to listen to his daughter's story.

"You have not quarrelled with the Earl, I hope—that is, you have not left him?"

"He has sent me away," she replied; and Arley Ransome's face grew dark.

"There is not much to tell," she continued wearily. "You misled me—you told me that marriage could be happy without love. I find that love is the soul of it, that without love marriage is a dead body. I, being the weaker and inferior, was the first to learn to love. I learned to love my husband—he has never cared for me."

"You are too sentimental, Hildred," said Arley Ransome severely.

"I have been doing my best for my husband," she continued, "and we were growing happier. In time I think that he would have loved me; but some one else, a fair woman—one of the kind of women he admires—Lady Hamilton, came, and——"

"I see," said the lawyer—"the old story, jealousy and quarrelling. Surely, Hildred, you have not thrown away the labor of a lifetime by growing jealous and vexing the Earl?"

"I have done worse than that," she said, "far worse. I was jealous of Lady Hamilton. I thought that both she and my husband were deriding me. I felt loved them when they went out to see the sun set over the lake. I hid myself behind the alder-trees to listen if they said anything about me; and then—I cannot tell you how it happened—my hus band saw me. He was very angry; he said that I was never to enter his doors again, but to return home at once to you."

The lawyer's face cleared.

"You are quite sure that you have told me the whole truth," he said.

"Yes, quite sure. What should I keep from you? It seems a very hard punishment for what was merely a fault rather of judgment than anything else. I told the Earl that I loved him, and that jealousy had driven me mad."

"You told him that? Then rely upon it in a few days all will be well. He will forget his anger and come to find you."

"I do not think so," she returned.

"You are quite sure, Hildred, that you have hidden nothing from me?" he interrogated; adding, "It is as you say, severe punishment for so smal a fault."

She looked up at him in surprise.

"What can I have to hide, papa? In telling you of my love and my jealousy, I have told you the worst."

"Then all will come right again. In the meantime keep up appearances, go to your room unobserved, and wait until your luggage arrives. I shall say that you are come for a few days' change. Keep up your spirits; all will come right again, I feel sure."

"I am very tired, papa," she said. "I think I will stay in my room to-day."

"Very well, my dear; do just as you like; you know best, of course. I will say that you do not feel very well. Go to your room, by all means. I hope you will soon be better. Now try to cheer up; it will be all right; I will see to this difficulty with your husband for you."

She looked up at him proudly.

"You must not interfere, papa! I shall never return to him now!"

He looked pityingly at the white face.

"You appear very ill, Hildred. Is there nothing that I can do for you?"

"Nothing," she replied coldly. In her heart she felt bitterly angry with her father. She had trusted him he had misled her. She did not offer to kiss him or to touch his hand, but went quietly out of the room and upstairs, leaving him with some very unpleasant thoughts.

It had not been an agreeable interruption to his breakfast, but he tried to think little of it. It was only a quarrel, after all, and his daughter had done nothing wrong. He should make it all right in a few seconds when he saw the Earl. He wrote to him before he went to the city, telling him that his wife had reached home safely, but was looking very ill.

The rest of that day Hildred remained in her room, and on the morning following she did not come downstairs. It was afternoon when Arley Ransome, with a face as pale as death, asked for admittance to her apartment. She bade him enter, and he did so, with an open letter in his hand. It was her husband's writing, she perceived.

"You have deceived me," said her father sternly; "you told me that you had hidden nothing from me. Your husband tells me that he has hidden you here because you shot Lady Hamilton on the morning of the thirty-first, shot her with intent to murder, and that you confessed your guilt!"

Without a word or a murmur, she looked at him, and then fell like one dead at his feet.

CHAPTER XLI.

The young Countess, as she stood behind the alder trees at Ravensmere had heard the sound of a shot; she was too dazed with her own grief and misery to note the direction from which it had proceeded. She had fancied that something went whirring through the trees. That something was the ball that had been fired at Lady Hamilton, which pierced her shoulder and would have pierced her heart had it gone in the direction in which it had been aimed. For the moment Lord Caraven had been too bewildered to know what had happened; what he was saying in reality to his guest was that he liked his wife's maiden name better than any he had ever heard. Lady Hamilton, who never liked to hear any one praised but herself, asked at once what it was. He had answered, "Hildred Raoucse"; and those were the words Lady Caraven had heard. They had been so absorbed that Lady Hamilton fell on his shoulder with a faint, low cry—a cry that seemed almost simultaneous with the firing of the shot.

The Earl knew she had been shot, but by whom or why he could not guess. He laid her down for one minute while he looked around; then it was that he saw the white face of his wife.

He made two announcements to his household, which no one even thought of connecting. The first and most startling was, of course, that Lady Hamilton had been shot accidentally—a chance shot—though why a ball-partridge had been used was a puzzle—supposed to have been fired by a poacher in the wood; the second was that Lady Caraven had been suddenly summoned to her father's house in London. No

The keepers had made strenuous efforts to find the poachers, but they had evidently made their escape, frightened, doubtless, at what they had done. No trace of them could be found.

It was with a sense of relief that Lord Caraven went to his room that night. He wanted to be alone to think over the events of the day. He found himself dwelling less on the terrible fact that his wife had shot Lady Hamilton than on the wonderful fact that she loved him.

"I have gone mad—I love you—let me die!" The words haunted him like the refrain of a song. He could not sleep. All night the pale, passionate, beautiful face was before him. The words rang in his ears as they had rung when he saw Hildred in the starlight, pleading, praying, accusing him, all in one vehement storm of words. So he would see her until he died. He felt as though she had been a stranger to him until then. The passionate love which had flamed into hot jealousy had been hidden under a cold, calm exterior. How she loved him! He had never seen any woman's face light up so splendidly. For the first time in his life he owned to himself that by the side of her magnificent beauty, blonde loveliness faded into nothing. He wondered that he had lived so long in the house with her, so long under one roof, yet had not noticed that which every one else remarked.

"I wish it had never happened," he said to himself. "She is a noble woman, in spite of all, and I—well, I could have loved her, but now she must never return."

He could not sleep or rest. Never had his pillow seemed so hard, his thoughts so troublesome. The excitement had been too much for him. Wherever he went, whatever he did, his thoughts were with Hildred. Had she reached Arley Ransome's house? Had he acted wisely in letting her go alone? Would any clue to her guilt ever be found? These questions followed him, haunted him, pursued him. If he went to talk to any of his visitors, the conversation was sure to turn upon the poachers and Lady Hamilton.

Wearied of it all, he sought refuge with Sir Raoul in his room; and the soldier noted with concern how worn and haggard the handsome Earl looked.

CHAPTER XLII.

Greatly disturbed in his mind about his wife, and worried excessively by troublesome enquiries as to the accident which had happened to Lady Hamilton, Lord Caraven determined to seek refuge with his kineman, Sir Raoul Laureston.

"Let me stay with you, Raoul," said the Earl on entering the room; "my guests tease me to death. One hears of nothing but Lady Hamilton and the poachers. I have had to tell the story over and over again, until I am fairly tired of it. Let me find rest here."

Sir Raoul looked at the Earl's haggard face.

"Poor boy," he said; "it is rather hard for you certainly. I promise you that I will mention neither Lady Hamilton nor the poachers."

"Poachers!" repeated the Earl contemptuously. "Surely you——" He paused; he had been on the brink of betraying the secret that he had sworn never to reveal.

"And to make matters worse," remarked the Earl, with a gesture of weary despair, "here comes the Doctor."

Doctor Randall entered the room unnounced and in great haste. The Earl sprang from his seat at the sound of his agitated voice, his face growing pale and anxious.

"Surely," he said, "Lady Hamilton is not worse?"

"No, she seems better. It is not about Lady Hamilton that I want you, Lord Caraven. I was sent for the moment I left here in behalf of the man who used to act as your steward—John Blantyre."

"John Blantyre," said the Earl vaguely. "Is he ill?" The subject did not interest him very much—indeed he thought it trivial amidst the excitement of his own affairs.

"No, not ill in the common acceptation of the term," answered the doctor, "He is dying, I fear."

"Dying, yet not ill! You speak in riddles, doctor."

"It is all a riddle to me," said the physician; "perhaps you can solve it. He has committed suicide—that is, he has made an attempt on his life, but he has not quite succeeded."

"He was very foolish," remarked the Earl. Even the fact that his confidential steward had attempted to destroy his own life seemed to be a matter of less moment than the fact that his wife loved him.

Dr. Randall looked uneasily at the unconscious face.

"May I speak on a private matter?" he said.

"Certainly," was the quick reply. "I have no secrets from my relative Sir Raoul."

"I cannot quite understand," continued the doctor. "They sent for me, and when I reached the house I found that Blantyre had attempted to take his life. I will not tell you how—there is no need to add to a list of horrors. I found him dying, not dead; he is dying now. His only cry was for you, Lord Caraven; he wanted to see you."

"I do not in the least desire to see him," said the Earl quickly. "Frankly speaking, doctor, repentant sinners and death-beds are not much in my line. I could do him no good."

"Perhaps not—yet he gave me no rest until I had promised to ask you to go and visit him—no rest at all. The strange part of the story has to come, Lord Caraven. It was not a poacher who fired the shot—it was himself. We have this time done the poachers an injustice."

The doctor was not prepared for the effect of his words. The Earl sprang from his chair, rushed across the room, and seized him by the arm.

"Say that again!" he cried. "John Blantyre fired that shot?"

So he says," replied the doctor. "He gasped the story out to me in broken words. "I always hated her," he said "hated her," and last night I shot her by the edge of the lake. I shot her through the heart, and I saw her fall, and——"

"It is impossible!" cried the Earl. "The man must have been delirious! He never saw Lady Hamilton in his life—how could he hate her?"

"That is the strangest part of the story," said the doctor. "He persists in saying that he shot Lady Caraven. I cannot understand the matter."

"I do," put in Sir Raoul calmly. "Blantyre was dismissed at Lady Caraven's desire, and he swore to be revenged upon her. This is his revenge—he has shot Lady Hamilton, believing her to be the Countess.'

"It is impossible!" repeated the Earl. "They are so different. Lady Hamilton is fair, the Countess dark—he could not mistake them."

Suddenly he remembered that it was in the semi-darkness of night that the occurrence had happened, and Lady Hamilton was wrapped in a silvery veil. Could he have mistaken them. The doctor shook his head.

"I do not understand—it is, as I have said, a riddle to me. I should certainly advise you, Lord Caraven, to see the man; that is the only way to clear up the mystery."

"There is no mystery," said Sir Raoul. "It is as I say, the man intended to murder Lady Caraven—by mistake he has shot Lady Hamilton. How he mistook them is perhaps a mystery, and that you can solve by going to see him. Go, Ulric."

"Yes," responded Lord Caraven, "I will go—I will go with you, doctor, if you are ready. Raoul, it would be as well not to mention this."

"You may rely upon me," said his friend.

The doctor and the Earl quitted the room together. The carriage was ordered, and they drove at once to Court Raven.

They were not long in finding Blantyre's house, and before long the Earl stood by the death-bed of his late steward. The man's dying face was turned towards him, his dying eyes gleamed as they recognized him.

"My lord," he said, "you were always kind to me. Her ladyship ruined me—she turned me away—and I hated her. would not harm one hair of your head; but I have killed her, and I am not sorry, I am glad."

"Whom have you killed?" asked the Earl calmly.

The dying eyes glared.

"Whom? The Countess of Caraven, the beautiful, proud, imperious woman who, with one wave of her hand sent me to ruin—I have killed her."

When the last scene was over, the Earl, who had remained with him to the end, returned to Ravensmere. John Blantyre's crime and suicide had saddened him inexpressibly.

He was not without plenty of sense and reflection. He saw at once that this was the result of his own folly—his inattention to his duties. He had implicitly and blindly trusted this man simply because he was too idle to overlook him and his accounts. What was the result? He had grown reckless with long impunity, and, when his quick, intelligent wife discovered the amount of his peculations, she had dismissed him at once. For what had happened there was only himself to blame.

"How I wish that I could live my life over again," he thought,—"I would act differently; but, as that is impossible, I must make the most I can of the time that remains."

He was more saddened and unhappy than he ever remembered to have been in his life before. He sought Sir Raoul's room.

"I am quite out of spirits to-day," he said—"let me talk to you, Raoul. This dreadful death of Blantyre has been a shock to me that I shall never get over. I feel as though I am to blame for it, all through my negligence and want of looking after people."

"You have been to blame," agreed Sir Raoul; "I do not deny that. But your indulgence ought not to have made him a thief."

The Earl sat down; he laid his head back with a tired, wearied expression.

"How my life has changed, Raoul!" he said. "I seem suddenly to have grown into a man, wiser, sadder than I had ever thought to be. One thing above all others puzzles me—how could I have been so foolish as to misjudge her?"

"Misjudge whom?" asked Sir Raoul.

"Hildred. Oh, I forgot I did not tell you that! You believed, of course, that she had been sent for?"

"Certainly I did," replied Sir Raoul, in amazement. "Was it not so?"

"No—that is the worst part of my trouble. There is no truth in it. I sent her away myself."

"You sent Hildred away," echoed Sir Raoul, slowly. "What do you mean, Ulric?"

"I told her that she must never enter my doors again. Now I find that it is all a mistake."

Sir Raoul tried to be patient, but it was very difficult.

"I do not in the least understand what you mean, Ulric. Why did you send Hildred away and what was a mistake?"

"I shrink from telling you. Upon my honor I am ashamed of myself. Do you know, Raoul, I positively believe Hildred had done the deed—I believed she had shot Lady Hamilton."

An expression of deepest contempt came over Sir Raoul's face.

"I should never have imagined such a thought would enter your brain," he said, indignantly. "I speak plainly to you, Ulric, as I have never done before; your wife is wasted on you—she is a thousand times too good for you. She is one of the noblest, truest, purest women under the sun. You—if you could so misjudge her—are to be pitied. Hildred capable of murder? Heaven give me patience! I could not have believed you would entertain such an idea. I could not have imagined that you were so utterly devoid of reason."

"Listen, Raoul—do not judge me quite so harshly. You do not know all. Let me tell you my story"; and without further discussion the Earl related the whole history.

Sir Raoul listened in silence.

"Great heaven," he cried at his, "to think what a heart you have thrown away!"

"But, Raoul," he rejoined, "then I found her hiding behind the trees, and she owned that she was guilty, what was I to think?"

"What can I do?" asked the Earl humbly.

"Whither have you sent her?" was the stern inquiry.

"To her father's house," replied the Earl.

"Then I will tell you what to do. Go as fast as steam can take you and ask her pardon. She is a noble woman, and may forgive; but," added the soldier, frankly, with a flush on his honest face, "I declare that if I were in her place I never would."

The Earl took the advice offered him, and went straight off to town.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Lady Caraven had refused to see anyone; she had refused to quit her apartment. The horror of the character made against her powered her. Her husband believed her guilty of intent to murder. At firs that was the only idea her mind could grap—a horrible distorted idea. She could not think clearly. Her husband, whom she had served from youth, whom she had cured from indolence and self-indulgence, whose better nature she had called into life, when she loved with a passionate love, had judged her guilty of murder. She could not realize it; she could not put her thoughts into words; they assumed no tangible form. Then slowly enough she returned to a clear memory of what had happened.

Some one had shot Lady Hamilton; who it was, or how it had happened, she could not tell. Then she remembered having heard fired the shot of which she had thought so little. She remembered how something had whizzed through the trees. By degrees all the events of that dreadful night returned to her clearly and forcibly—the startled cry, the sound that came from the borders of the lake, the tramp of many feet—and she wondered that all these things had had no significance, for her husband had cried—

"You guilty, cruel woman!" and she had owned herself guilty. Then she saw how the mistake had arisen. They had been playing at cross-purposes. He meant that she was guilty of murder; she had meant that she was guilty of jealousy and of following him.

She was in despair. Of what avail would it be to defend herself, to tell him that she was not guilty, to try and clear herself? Her husband would never believe her, he would always suspect her because of her own words.

(To be continued.)

The Fin de Siecle Small Boy.

Mrs. Hicks—Do you believe in a really and truly Santa Claus?

Dick Hicks—Of course I do, mamma. (Aside) I think it is too cruel for children to undeceive their parents in such matters.

Christmas cards first came into fashion in 1846.

The Russians admit that they lost half a million men in the Crimean war.

The Bombay Sorosis, the first woman's club in India, is keeping up its work under many difficulties, and sends a petition that the president of each woman's club in America will send at least one letter a year with the catalogue of her club.

Strawberries four inches in diameter have been grown in Oregon, near Colville, this summer.

He was visiting his parishioners, when one of them, an old woman, informed him that since they met "she'd gone through a sight o' trouble. Her sister was dead, and there wor a worse job than that: the pig died all of a sudden, but it pleased the Lord to tak' him, and they mun cow, they mun bow." Then the poor old lady brightened up and said: "But there's one thing, Mester Allen, as I can say, and ought to say, the Lord's been pretty well on my side this winter for greens."—*Dean Hole's Memories.*

A man is satisfied to make a reputation for himself, but woman, bless her, wants to make one for everybody in the neighborhood.

"Man proposes"—"Yes, but he needs encouragement."

Brown—What do you use barb-wire fences for? Hayseed—So the hired man won't stop to rest every time he climbs over.

The Christmas trees are as plentiful as ever. In fact, the woods are full of them.

"Miss Budlong is travelling under an assumed name." "What on earth is she doing that for?" "She's been married and has assumed her husband's name. They are away on their honeymoon."

The waggon-tongue has nothing to say, but it gets there ahead of the rest of the outfit.

Trustly—My tailor wants me to pay up. Bilker—And mine wants me to pay down. Trustly—What's the difference? Bilker—In one instance you can get the clothes out of the store, and in the other you can't.

One half the world doesn't let his better half know how he lives.

LIBERAL TO EMPLOYES.

Mr. Gould Was not a Believer in the Economy of Cheap Help.

Mr. Gould was not a believer in cheap men. In the employment of help he regarded economy as poor policy. In the various branches of his extended business he aimed to secure the best man possible, and he was never known to dicker over the amount of pay. His conspicuous success in avoiding the legal shoals through which he was obliged to thread his way during his eventful career was due mainly to the fact that he always had in his employ the very best legal talent that money could procure.

The story about Mr. Sage and his office boy has been frequently told in Wall street, but it has never appeared in print. Mr. Sage had an office boy who had been with for several years, was familiar with his methods and moods, and understood perfectly well the status of each of Mr. Sage's customers. The boy was alert, tactful and faithful, and in due course of time received tempting offers to leave Mr. Sage's employ. He, however, stuck to Mr. Sage for a long while, imbued with the false hope of advancement.

The boy's salary was $15 a week, and when he told Mr. Sage one day that he had been offered $25 a week to go elsewhere, Mr. Sage coldly told him that he had better go—and he went. Jay Gould happened in Mr. Sage's office a few days afterward and cheerily remarked: "Why, where is John?"

"Oh! he has left me," said Mr. Sage. "He got extravagant notions in his head and I had to let him go. But I've got a new boy and I save $3 a week on his salary."

"You do, eh?" remarked Mr. Gould, with undisguised disgust. "Well, have you figured how much you will lose on his blunders?"

When Col. F. K. Hain was made general manager of the elevated railroads in this city, he was unknown to Mr. Gould. It not long, however, before the quiet little millionaire began to take a lively interest in him. Col. Hain possesses qualities which excited admiration in Mr. Gould's breast. One day, not many years ago, Mr. Gould, as President of the Manhattan Railway Company, received Col. Hain's written resignation. In great surprise he sent for Mr. Hain and asked him to explain the reason for his resignation.

"Mr. Gould," said the Colonel, "I have received from the Reading Railroad Company an offer of the position of General Manager at a salary of $12,000 a year, and in justice to myself and my family, I do not think that I ought to resign it."

"How much are you getting here?" asked Mr. Gould.

"Six thousand five hundred dollars a year," replied Col. Hain.

"Is the increase in salary your only reason for your resignation?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you stay with us for $15,000 a year?" asked Mr. Gould.

"Certainly," responded Col. Hain.

"Very well, let it be so," said Mr. Gould, "and, Colonel, I am perfectly satisfied with your work. Never let a question of money come between us."

The loyalty of S. S. H. Clark, General Manager of the Missouri Pacific and President of the Union Pacific, to Mr. Gould has been the subject of frequent comment. Mr. Clark is by no means a low-priced man, and the fact that he has long been one of Mr. Gould's trusted lieutenants means that he has not worked for low pay.

It is related that Atchison people once tried to get Mr. Clark to enter their employ by offering him an advance of $10,000 on the salary the Missouri Pacific Company was giving him. Mr. Clark promptly refused the offer and said nothing. Mr. Gould, however, heard of the matter from other sources, and on the Christmas Day following Mr. Clark received a check for $50,000 with a short note which read: "A merry Christmas to my loyal friend.—Jay Gould."—*New York Times.*

If He Only Knew.

Young professor—What curious plant, may I ask, Miss Laura, is that hanging to the chandelier overhead?

Miss Laura—Oh, I declare, professor, I had forgotten all about that! It is a sprig of—of mistletoe.

Young professor (examining it intently)—It is quite pretty. I do not remember having seen anything like it before. I was about to remark, Miss Laura, that to one who is interested in the charming science of entomology the blatta orientalis, or cockroach proper, as distinguished from the blatta Germanica, or so-called croton bug of common observation, affords a most wonderful field for microscopic research, etc.

Popular Similes.

As wet as a fish—as dry as a bone,
As live as a bird—as dead as a stone;
As plump as a partridge—as poor as a rat,
As strong as a horse—as weak as a cat;
As hard as a flint—as soft as a mole,
As white as a lily—as black as a coal;
As plain as a pikestaff—as rough as a bear,
As tight as a drum—as free as the air;
As heavy as lead—as light as a feather,
As steady as time—uncertain as weather;
As hot as an oven—as cold as a frog,
As gay as a lark—as sick as a dog;
As slow as a tortoise—as swift as the wind,
As true as the Gospel—as false as mankind;
As thin as the herring—as fat as a pig,
As proud as a peacock—as blithe as a grig;
As savage as tigers—as mild as a dove,
As stiff as a poker—as limp as a glove;
As blind as a bat—as deaf as a post,
As cool as a cucumber—as warm as toast.

Courted Her With a Brass Band.

Charley—I hear that your girl has gone back on you.

Johnny—That's right.

"What's the trouble?"

"She got mad because I courted her with a brass band."

"Well, that was a peculiar method, but I should think she would have felt complimented rather than angry."

"Oh, it wasn't music. You see, I couldn't afford a gold engagement ring, so I got a brass one and she found it out."

It Always Takes.

Boggs—Don't you think I ought to make a great football player?

Simmons—No; you haven't got the physique.

Boggs—That's very true, but I have a great shock of hair to hang over my eyes as I emerge from the melee in front of the grand stand. And think how it would show up in the photograph of the team!

No Evasion Necessary.

In a prohibition town.

"How do you evade the law?" was asked of a liquor dealer.

"What law?"

"Why, the law forbidding the sale of liquor."

"My friend, you don't seem to understand that this is a prohibition State."

Enough to Kill Her.

"What's the baby's name?"

"Southerland Fauntleroy Smith."

"Take off the sinker."

Of course it was a goose that laid the golden egg. Any sensible bird having a snap of that kind would have kept it to itself.

The latest remedial craze appears to be the barefoot cure. There are several distinct departments of this general school of health. One advocates the racing barefooted, and, indeed, barelegged to the knees, through the sunny sands of the seashore. A sleeveless shirt or blouse low at the throat is worn, too, and no hat, that as much of the skin surface as possible may be exposed to the life-saving sun and air. The Kneipp cure, as it is called, after the benevolent old German priest, Father Kneipp, who conducts the cure at Worishofen, Germany, is different. According to an exchange, the special features of the Kneipp cure are "short baths and douches of very cold water, and putting on the clothes of coarse homespun linen without drying, walking in the early morning barefooted in the dewy grass and walking barefooted in cold water. The Kneipp shirt, a coarse linen garment, is worn next the skin during the process of cure, and the simplest and most frugal of diets is observed, the idea being to harden the system, and by a return to almost aboriginal habits of life restore its tone, and thus remove disease." Many cures are reported, and advocates of both systems cite abundant success.

In boiling the Christmas pudding remember not to put the mold into a kettle full of boiling water. This is a frequent cause of sogginess in dumplings and puddings. There should be only enough water to generate a good volume of steam, but it should not boil over the mold. The kettle should be kept covered to cook the pudding evenly.

Mrs. Hiram Daly—And so you've got your old cook back! I thought you told me she was married about three months ago and had gone to housekeeping. Mrs. Riverside Rives—She has given up housekeeping and has come back to me. Mrs. Hiram Daly—What was the matter? Mrs. Riverside Rives—She couldn't get a girl.

MOTHERS, and especially nursing mothers, need the strength giving properties and help that comes with Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It lessens the pains and burdens of child-bearing, nurses healthy, vigorous offspring, and promotes an abundant secretion of nourishment on the part of the mother. It is an invigorating tonic made especially for women, perfectly harmless in any condition of the female system, as it regulates and promotes all the natural functions and never conflicts with them.

The "Prescription" builds up, strengthens, and cures. In all the chronic weaknesses and disorders that afflict women, it is *guaranteed* to benefit or cure, or the money is refunded.

For every case of Catarrh which they cannot cure, the proprietors of Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy agree to pay $500 in cash. You're cured by its mild, soothing, cleansing, and healing properties, or you're paid.

CHRISTMAS IN EUROPE.

How the Great Festival is Observed in Old-World Lands.

In Germany they make more of Christmas than we do in America. Everywhere the Christmas tree is used.

If a family is too poor to have a whole tree, a single branch only will stand in a conspicuous place, hung with the few simple gifts.

A week before Christmas St. Nicholas visits the children to find out who have been good enough to receive the gifts the Christ-child will bring them on Christmas eve.

It is a very usual thing to see on a German Christmas tree, way up to the very topmost branch, an image or doll representing the Christ-child, while below are sometimes placed other images representing angels with outspread wings.

After the tree is lighted the family gather round it and sing a Christmas him.

In France may be almost universally seen representations of the manger in which Christ was born, with figures of Mary, Joseph and the child Jesus and cattle feeding near by. Often these representations are decorated with flowers and lighted candles burn softly before them.

In Norway the people have delightful custom of putting on the roof of the barn, or on a pole in the yard, a large sheaf of wheat for the birds, who fully appreciate their Christmas feast.

In England almost every one who can do so has a family party on Christmas eve. Young and old join in the games, many of which belong especially to Christmas time.

From the ceiling of one of the rooms a large bunch of mistletoe is hung. If any little maid is caught standing under it the one who catches her has a right to take a kiss from her rosy lips.

In Holland the little Dutch girl puts her wooden shoe in the chimney-place ready for gifts, just as the little American girl hangs up herstocking.—*Youth's Companion.*

WHERE SOLOMON GOT HIS GOLD AND SILVER.

In the December *Californian Magazine* Thomas Crawford Johnston develops his theory that the precious metals used in the construction of Solomon's temple at Jerusalem were brought from Mexico by the Phœnicians. He does not even mention Rider Haggard's discovery of "King Solomon's Mines" in Southern Africa, nor does he pay any attention to the circular wall surrounded by timber and underbrush alleged to exist on the Zanzibar coast. He selected from the first book of Kings the statements that "all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon," and "For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram; once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks." The Phœnicians had for a long time an overland traffic as far east as the mouth of the Indus. When Solomon conquered from the Edomites a port on the Red Sea, he and Hiram built ships there suitable for commerce with India and Ceylon, whence the apes, ivory and peacocks could be obtained. Extending the voyages from Ceylon to Java and Sumatra, thence to Mulgrave Island in Torres Strait, proceeding to the Caroline Islands, Tonga, Samoa, Rapps in the Austral group, thence to Easter Island, and on to the coast of America at Mexico and Peru, the Phœnicians left their traces. All these island and mainland points contain remains of substructions identical with those found under the remnants of Solomon's temple, peculiar to Phœnician architecture. All along the route, from Tyre and Sidon to Mexico, the custom of human sacrifices to Baal or Moloch was firmly established. The plan of producing fire by the friction of pieces of wood is another trade mark left behind.

After giving figures to show the enormous production of gold and silver in Mexico, proving that it was a country capable of being the Ophir of Solomon's time, the author winds up with this synopsis of his argument, from which one half of which must be sought in the article itself:

First—We find a correspondence between the architectural remains in Mexico and those of Europe and Asia.

Second—We find that the details of this art are not a distinct type but composite, and the product of a variety of sources.

Third—We segregate this composite art, and reduce it to its original sources.

Fourth—We determ