

been, from the beginning, perfectly devoted to his profession, he believed that his happiness centred therein. But to-night, with all this Christmas cheer about him, and in view of hundreds of people hurrying homeward, burdened with mysterious packages, he faced the fact that he would give every thing he possessed—fame, fortune, all—if he might only hasten, like them, to a happy home where some one sweet and loving waited—a wife and little ones, perhaps.

"Well," he said, half aloud, "I'll buy a spray of holly and some mistletoe to hang up in my den, and though no kisses are given beneath it, perhaps it will bring me good luck."

He turned into the green-decked aisles of the Market House, more brilliant than ever now beneath the gaslight, and brushed against an old acquaintance, who called out gayly.

"Hello, Doc.; where are you going?"

"Going to buy some Christmas greens for my den," he replied with a cynical smile. "I feel as lonesome and homesick to-night as a poor mortal can who never had a home of his own. And what are you doing here?"

"Describing the city's Christmas dress for the *Post* to be sure. A poor quill-driver never has a minute's rest. But say, old boy, why don't you get you a home? No trouble, I'm sure, for a man like you."

"Well, Newsby," he replied, a little sadly, "I have unchanging views about my destiny, and among the many women I have known, my other self has not appeared; and more, I have quite given up finding her. It seems a foolish thing to confess, but there is only one woman, and one only, for me, and failing her, I shall never know anything of love or home."

"All things come to him who waits," quoted his companion, cheerily, "Come and help me select some roses."

"With all my heart," he returned; and having made his purchase and selected such greenery as Godfrey fancied, the two friends started out together. As they reached the Seventh Street crossing, the newspaper man gave a long, reflective glance at the gorgeous displays in the shop windows and the gaslit perspective that led to the many-pillared Capitol, which gleamed whitely through the dusk. The avenue was thronged with vehicles and foot passengers, and Newsby remarked:

"I don't believe I've seen such a Christmas jam for years. Take a good look about; maybe you'll see that far-fetched ideal of yours."

"Bah!" the doctor exclaimed, contemptuously. "But stranger things have—"

His speech was broken by a strong arm being flung about him, and the next instant he knew that he had been snatched from a confused medley of carriage wheels, restive horses and excited people, while in the midst of it there lay a venerable old man with blood trickling from his forehead. His professional instincts on the alert, he stepped quickly to the prostrate form, saying as he waved back the crowd, "I am a doctor;" felt the man's heart, and ordered a bootblack to call a cab; for, finding that no one knew the stranger, he resolved in gratitude to take him home and bring him back to life. So, leaving his card with the policeman who now arrived on the scene, they drove to Fourteenth Street, the young man holding the poor old wounded head in his arms as tenderly as if the man had been his father.

All that night, after excusing himself from a Christmas party, he watched by the side of the strange patient. His strong Teutonic features possessed an inexplicable interest for his physician and nurse, aside from the inquiry growing out of gratitude. After dressing his wound he had looked carefully through his clothing for some clue to his identity, but no scrap of writing could be found. Yet one thing remained unscrutinized. He wore beneath his clothes a thick leather belt about his waist, but when Godfrey tried to remove it with gentle hands the old man clutched it with relentless fingers, exclaiming: "Nein! nein! Mein Gott im Himmel! Nein!" and then relapsed into unconsciousness again.

The wound had seemed in nowise dangerous to Godfrey, but as the night advanced unfavourable symptoms about the condition of the heart presented themselves. He hastily sent for a brother physician, the best practitioner in the city, but when he came he declared that nothing could be done, and Godfrey watched on alone, wishing intensely to fathom the mystery of his patient's life. But as the hours passed slowly by, there came no faintest sign of returning consciousness until the breaking of the dawn.

The cold early light was struggling to overcome the night, and the mellow sound of music floated in from a Catholic Church not far away. The old man opened his eyes with an unearthly gleam in their pale blue depths; he raised up with outstretched arms and said: "Mein Gott im Himmel! Licht, mehr licht!" The first full beam of the rising sun fell across his face, and the heavy body fell back into Godfrey's arms. The spirit had fled.

Godfrey Jones held his fingers upon the old eyelids with unwonted tears upon his face, saying softly, in the deepest meaning of Christmas Day, "And no man doeth more than this, that he giveth his life for another."

Certain legal processes followed, and when the belt was opened before the proper authorities it was found

to contain a miscellaneous collection of coins and bank-notes, which amounted to nearly \$1,000; but, more important than this, was a small piece of paper, which bore in German script these words:

"I do hereby bequeath all the money in this belt to Anise Brooks, of Kansas, out of love to her." And the short will was properly signed and witnessed.

It happened that Judge Gay, who conducted these proceedings, was an old friend of Godfrey, and, yielding to his wish to do any thing possible for his preserver's relatives or friends, placed the task of discovering the exact address of the legatee in his hands; so, in a few days, these lines appeared among the personals in the principal Western papers:

"If one Anise Brooks, of Kansas, will write to Godfrey Jones, M.D., 1,414 Fourteenth Street, Washington, D. C., she will learn something to her advantage."

A few evenings later Anise Brooks sat under the hanging lamp in the family sitting room, with her fair head bent over a piece of embroidery, while her father was reading bits of news from the day's *St. Louis Globe*, to the harmonious accompaniment of his wife's knitting-needles.

"Hello, what is this!" he suddenly exclaimed, and read aloud:

"If one Anise Brooks, of Kansas, will write to Godfrey Jones, M.D., 1,414 Fourteenth Street, Washington, D. C., she will learn something to her advantage."

"Do you suppose it means you, Anise?"

"I am certainly 'one Anise Brooks, of Kansas,'" she replied: "I can only write and find out if I am the one."

So next day she despatched a note with some degree of excited curiosity, and its terse sentences called forth an immediate reply from Godfrey Jones, who told the story of the old wanderer, asked what she knew about him, and requested information concerning the witnesses.

Anise wrote in return a concise account of her brief acquaintance with Gottlieb Brenthaus, whom she readily recognized from Godfrey's description, as one of her "angels unawares," and furnished the information that both the witnesses were farmers in the neighbourhood, but that these were away from home for an indefinite period; and, in conclusion, she said, "Use every means in your power to discover his own people before any steps are taken to prove the will. In case you find them, I will take his love for my legacy, and they may have the money."

"A kind German woman," thought the young doctor, "who does not need the money. Perhaps an old sweetheart of the dead man, though she speaks of his being a stranger." Following her instructions, he made every effort to discover his relatives; but, as far as he could learn, Gottlieb Brenthaus had neither kith or kin.

It was late in the autumn before he gave up the quest, and communicated his failure to the heiress, who wrote that the two witnesses were expected to return by the 1st December; and when Judge Gay told him that it would be best to send out a man to see to the matter, Godfrey, in response to some sudden impulse, said: "I'll go myself. I need a change, and I'll enjoy a run out there immensely."

"As you like," his friend replied. Three days afterward Godfrey found himself standing alone on the platform of the desolate Monganeek station, the train which brought him receding in the distance, and the village lying lonesomely before him. He looked about with the depression of this out-of-the-world place weighted upon him, and then, inquiring of the agent the way to Mrs. Brooks', he at once set out for the great square farmhouse which domineered the village.

Winter had come earlier than usual to Monganeek this year. All the nearer slopes and wide-reaching prairies were shrouded deep in snow. The wind whistled shrilly about the dilapidated old wind-mill as he passed it on his way, and the naked trees stretched their arms up hopelessly to the heavy, low-hung sky. He saw no human being after he passed the little shops, and only here and there the upcurling smoke from some dull red chimney showed that the weather-beaten houses were inhabited.

"An American copy of the 'Deserted Village,'" he thought. "Do people really live here, or do they only exist?"

His question was answered satisfactorily a moment later as he was ushered into Mrs. Brook's parlour by a trim maid. The room was furnished with a degree of elegant comfort that came upon him as a very delightful surprise in his tired depressed state, and when the door opened and he saw a tall, young woman, fair, refined and becomingly clad, who gave him her hand and said in a rich, cultivated tone: "I am very glad to see you, Dr. Jones; I am so anxious to hear every thing all over again about my poor old father."

He thought he must be dreaming, and his irreproachable manner was for once tinged with something like embarrassment, as he replied: "And I am very glad to see you, Mrs. Brooks. I feel that indirectly I owe you my life."

"I am very happy to have aided in preserving the

strength of your preserver," she returned, with her eyes brimming over with mirth, which broke forth with an apology. "Excuse me, but what made you think me Mrs. Brooks?"

"Why, why, I do not know," he replied, laughing heartily at his own absurdity; "I somehow got it into my head that you were a middle-aged woman, and consequently married. You know you gave me nothing in your letters save your name without a prefix."

"And you always addressed me as 'Madam'; but here is Mrs. Brooks," she said, as her mother entered the room, and shortly after the farmer himself came in, and was so pleased with Godfrey's appearance that he declared there wasn't a decent hotel in the place, and that he must stay there, sent down for his portmanteau, and by supper-time he was thoroughly at home.

Godfrey had expected to stay but two or three days at most, but the return of a witness was delayed for a week, and then there were various haltings and inconveniences known to the law besides. These things seemed not to trouble the self-chosen executor in the least; for after all his years of unceasing labour, it seemed as if he had suddenly landed on some sweet summer island, where all of warmth and quiet beauty, of hope fulfilled and realized content, were embodied in the person of Anise Brooks. And as they talked and read together during the short winter days and cosy evenings, she began to feel a peace and rest from the old vain longings and useless aspirations that was delightful as intense. So the days went by filled with a wondrous harmony that made the music in her face more sweet and rare.

And still to all outward seeming she was but the thoughtful, cultured hostess, and he the polished, entertaining guest, who appreciated to the full her graceful courtesy. He feared it was too soon to speak, and dreaded to break the blessed enchantment that had fallen upon them, and yet he felt as if they had been together always thus; but at length his business mission was ended, and there was no excuse for a longer stay. And with this decision came Christmas Eve once more.

The night had shut down, cold and clear, brilliant with stars and full of the subdued sparkle of a myriad of frost crystals on shrub and tree and bending weed, and Anise sat before the open fire in the parlour, busy with some trifle that must be finished before the morrow, when Godfrey came in from a brisk walk, his handsome face all aglow with the joy of being with her.

"All alone?" he asked, as he leaned against the mantel and looked down into her eyes.

"Yes," she said; "alone, yet not alone, for I have been thinking of Gottlieb Brenthaus."

"I too have been thinking of him to-night. A year ago he gave his life for me, and now I give his wealth to you." He placed a small package in her hand, and then continued "But I owe him much more than my life—my knowledge of you."

"Surely that is but little," she said, with downcast eyes. "Tell me, how shall I use this strange bequest? I can never use it for myself."

"Miss Brooks," he asked, irrelevantly, and with a new note in his voice, "do you believe in destiny?"

"Not in the heathen sense. I believe rather in the Christian doctrine of foreordination. Why?" And she raised her smiling face inquiringly.

"Because," said he, with deep intensity—"and I might have told you this at first—I believe that you and I have been destined, or foreordained, if you will, from our creation to be united. During all my manhood I have dreamed of you, and worked and waited for you and you only, and now that we have met at last, shall I not claim my own? You know I love you; I think I have known and loved you always."

He had imprisoned both her hands in his, and as he watched the colour deepen in her cheeks, and noted how the light in her eyes gleamed with love and joy beneath his words, he waited for no spoken answer, but clasped her in his arms and pressed upon her lips the first long, sweet lover's kiss.

And the old bell in the little church steeple rang out upon the frosty air in tones, for them, of sweetest melody, and the blessed morrow brought the peace and good-will of the Christ Child to all the world.—*Brooklyn Magazine.*

THE Revs. F. B. and T. E. Converse, brothers and clergymen of the Southern Presbyterian Church, and editors of the *Christian Observer*, have been before their Presbytery at Louisville. For several years, reports have been given currency privately and in one or more Presbyterian papers, as well as in secular journals in the South, affecting their truthfulness and honesty. At last, they made a demand that these charges should be formally presented to an ecclesiastical court, and this was done by two clergymen, W. E. Boggs, D.D., and Eugene Daniel, D.D., of Memphis, Tenn. The charges were of falsehood and slander, and the defendants were acquitted by a vote of nineteen in their favour to eleven for conviction. It is curious that the seven ruling elders all voted for acquittal, while the ministers stood eleven to twelve. The trial has attracted great interest and may have considerable influence on the future of the Southern Church.