

MADGE WILDING'S CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 5)

The revelation of feeling made her feel sick and faint. Her hand fell from the door, which swung noiselessly back to its place. It was all she could do to stagger to the sofa and lie down again.

But what was she to do? She could not sit there and let her employer be robbed under her eyes; but how was she to prevent it?

Then she remembered that in a small closet adjoining the room there was a private telephone to Mr. Rosset's house at Putney. If she looked the door leading to the outer office and shut the closet door tight, surely the noise of the instrument would not be heard. Even if she only sounded the bell, that would be enough to summon help. A moment would do it.

Without stopping to think, Madge stole across the floor, quickly closed and locked the door, and then flew to the telephone.

But she had secretly closed the closet door when she heard the door of the room fly open, and the sound of hurrying feet and low muttering voices. It was evident that the slight click of the bell, as she had locked the door, had caught the attention of the burglars. She was trapped.

The speaking-tube was in her hand, but she did not dare to use it. A small cane chair stood behind her, and she sank down upon it, too much scared to do anything, or even to think clearly.

"I'm certain I heard the key being

turned," said a coarse, thick voice, "and whoever did it, I'm bound to find him, and when found I'll break his neck."

"Here you are then," cried Colebrook, as the light of his dark lantern flashed on the closet door. "I'll bet he's in there."

The door was torn open, and Madge heard some one cry, "Great Harry, it's a girl!"

The three ruffians stood around the door staring at her.

"Gag her and lock her in," said the only way," said the man who had spoken before.

"I know the lady," said Colebrook, calmly. "It will not be necessary to gag her. Her word that she will not cry out or attempt to escape will be sufficient."

"It will not!" cried the other, with an oath.

"Miss Wilding," said Colebrook, so coolly and so politely as if he had been asking her to have another cup of tea, "will you please say word that you will not try to escape or raise an alarm?"

"Yes, I suppose I must," said Madge. "But oh, Mr. Colebrook, I don't think it right."

Colebrook turned away without answering, and one of his companions, with a great laugh, slammed the closet door and locked it.

III.

About half-past eight that Christmas Eve, Tom Browning was pacing the platform of the wind-swept railway

station at Crowbridge, waiting for an incoming train. He had been out all the afternoon, and had not heard of Madge's telegram.

Already the train he had hoped she would come by had arrived, and he had scanned the faces of the passengers in vain. Now he was anxiously waiting for the next one. So certain was he that Madge would keep her word if it were possible, that he was rather alarmed that she had not turned up.

Suddenly he heard the "chit-chit" of a motor-car, and looking over the rail he saw his landlady, Sir Herbert Townley, speaking to the station-master.

"I can tell you better, sir, what the state of the line is when I have a word or two with the guard of this train that's just coming in," said the official.

It was the London train, and with hungry eyes Tom searched among the passengers as they streamed out of the carriage.

No, Madge was not there.

"No, saying when you may get to town, Sir Herbert," said the station-master. "The train are waiting three or four days."

"No, saying when you may get to town, Sir Herbert," said the station-master. "The train are waiting three or four days."

A sudden thought darted into Tom's head. "Oh, Sir Herbert, would you mind giving me a lift?" he cried; and in a few minutes he explained the situation.

He Herbert was inclined to laugh at the idea that anything serious could be the matter, but he good-natured-

ly cried out to Tom: "All right, Browning! Jump in, and we'll let her rip. But you we do it under two hours!"

Tom was first to Madge's lodgings, and when he was told that she had been expected back about five and had never come, he became seriously alarmed.

Unable to rest, he jumped into a hansom, drove to the office, and with some trouble, aroused the caretaker. She assured him that all the clerks had gone home hours before, but Tom had not got it into his head that the girl had been accidentally locked in, and he insisted upon going upstairs.

A half-crown changed hands, and the caretaker produced a key. Throwing open the door, he called aloud: "Madge!"

There was no answer. All was in darkness.

"There, sir, I told you so," said the caretaker; but her next word was changed to a shriek. Two men had suddenly rushed past her downstairs; and the strange gentleman was struggling in the dark with a third.

Very soon it was all over.

The police quickly answered the caretaker's screams; and when Tom's prisoner was taken off his hands he became aware of a faint but persistent knocking at the inner door.

It was looked, but a touch from the safe-breaker's jimmy soon opened it; and Madge, crying and laughing hysterically, but quite safe, fell into his arms.

Luckily, the midnight train started late that night, and Tom and Madge

travelled down by it, afterwards walking the whole way to Hill Farm over the frozen snow. Madge asked only one question of her deliverer.

"What was the man you handed over to the police like, Tom?"

"Oh, an ill-looking blackguard. Jim, I think, one of the police called him."

Madge heaved a little sigh of thankfulness. Next morning she insisted upon getting up to go to church. She was a little late, but Tom had considerably waited for her.

A few neighbors had been asked to drop in at Hill Farm for the evening, and, of course, Madge had to tell her story over again. Then there were old-fashioned games, actually forfeits and hide-and-seek!

Madge was hiding in a dark corner of the barn, when she thought she heard someone stirring near her.

"Is anyone there?" she asked tremulously.

"It's only me," said a meek, yet manly voice. "I followed you in here, for I wanted to ask you some thing. You know what it is, Madge, don't you?"

There was no answer, and he groped about in the darkness till he touched her dress, and took her hand.

"Won't you speak to me? Won't you try to love me a little?"

And Madge found herself suddenly folded in a pair of strong arms, and Tom was kissing her.

That was Madge Wilding's Christmas.



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YULETIDE IN THE COUNTRY

Christmas Day in the Old Farm Home
Recalls Fond and Pleasant
Recollections.

Christmas in the country, Christmas day in the old farm home. What pleasant memories it recalls to some of us, and what good times it will mean for many of us this year. There is really no place like the farm home for Christmas good times and jollity and good cheer. Here, if anywhere, prosperity and plenty abound, and in family gatherings and in neighborhood reunions, with an abundance of the fruits of our labor with which to spread our bountiful boards old friendships may be renewed, new ones made, and even the stranger within our gates may be added to the list.

At Christmas time we may put into practice the real principle of neighborliness. Living close together does not always make neighbors. Speaking acquaintances are not always neighbors. To be real neighbors we must have the spirit of neighborliness in our hearts which prompts us to get together once in awhile, to gather around a well-laden table and feast, and visit, and laugh and joke and have a roaring good time. To love our neighbor as we do ourselves, we have to know him pretty well, and there is nothing like these neighborhood reunions as a means of getting acquainted.

It may be that some of us will have

HOLLY AS A CHRISTMAS DECORATION.

Holly has its place in the legends and at one time carols were composed in its honor.

European peasants think a sprig of holly which has been used in church decorations will bring luck to the house, so when the evergreens are removed they beg for a spray. Holly used for decorating houses must, on the other hand, be burned after Jan. 1, or ill-luck will follow.

In some parts of England, as in Ireland, girls seek omens from burning the Christmas decorations and say the more noise they make and the brighter they blaze up the warmer is the affection of their lovers.

In some places it is considered unlucky to burn the Christmas decorations, and they are thrown away instead.

The holly tree was dedicated to Saturn and was said to have many healing virtues.

A pretty legend is handed down about the first Christmas tree. When Ansgarius preached the "White Christ" to the Vikings of the north the Lord sent him three messengers, Faith, Hope and Love, to help find the first tree. They were to seek one that should be as high as hope, as wide as love and that bore the sign of the Cross on every branch, so they chose holly, for as it met their requirements better than any other tree in the forest.

It was usual at Roman weddings to present the bride with a wreath of holly, significant of the warmest congratulations.

CHRISTMAS.

"What means this glory round our feet?"

The Magi mused, "more bright than morn."

And voices chanted clear and sweet, "Today the Prince of Peace is born."

"What means that star?" the Shepherd said,

"That brightens through the rocky glen."

And angels answering overhead, Sang, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

All round about our feet shall shine

A light like that the wise men saw; If we but willing hearts incline To that sweet Life which is the Law.

So shall we learn to understand

The simple faith of shepherds then, And, clasping kindly hand in hand, Sing, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

And they who do their souls no wrong,

But keep at eve the faith of morn, Shall daily hear the angel-sang: "Today the Prince of Peace is born."

—Lowell.

CHRISTMAS FOR THE BABIES.

Never deny the babies their Christmas. It is the shining set upon a year of happiness. Let them believe in Santa Claus, or St. Nicholas, or Kris, Kringle, or whatever name the jolly Dutch saint bears in your region.

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D. M. EISENHAUR,
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SEC. TREAS.Adventures of
Peace And
Goodwill

Peace and Goodwill were a
sprightly who came into existence
a child, who lay cradled in
gar, one night, long, long ago,
a strange and wonderful star
and suddenly in the western sky
Child sent them forth into the
as His messengers, but they
gone very far before they found
way barred by a great giant
giant's name was Selfishness,
all the giants they had encountered
on their way, none were so formidable
as he. Try as they would, they
not pass him, for his hands,
with a disease called Grasp, were
landed on either side. His feet
trailing constantly in the path
Progress, and he grew and grew
his head reached that altitude
the clouds known as Station
Peace, a sweetest child, with
with heart-healing in her eyes
voice angelic with songs of
ing joy and hope, grieved that
could not give her message, and
will, her brother, a merry yet
whose lips a thousand hearty
ings burned for lack of utter
racked his brain for a plan by
they could outwit the Giant
ness.

And then Christmas, their bi
came around, and lo! The
hands dropped, his feet stoppe
terrible tramp, tramp, and his
pent till his face was hidden
Peace and Goodwill slipped pa
unhindered. For a week the
high carnival all over the
louching with magic has
tired hearts of the earth-br
bringing to the sick comfort,
and joy. In return they heard
own peculiar language spoken
their praises sung in church
street and home, and then, be
them and the people, still e
from their presence, the great
Selfishness rose up again, and
therefore, sat mournfully down
him, and watched his hands sw
again and his feet resume the
tramp, that ever grew quicker
quicker, and his head lifted un
face was lost, and the world
will grow restless after awhile
stood up and recognized the
"Think," he said to Little Peace,
even were growing sad, "that
climbed over so easily up the
back, he might not notice us,
could stand on top of his head
look down and see what the
is like when it is not Christmas
So they began their planing
the Giant's back. Goodwill le
Peace following, timidly, he
After a perilous climb they re
the top of the Giant's head.
There they lay, waiting for the
thence lay a great hard spot, w
sharp rise in the centre of it.
will, who was a wise Spirit,
down and whispered to Peace:
"We must now descend the
This hill in the centre of this
space is the bump of Self Int
They say it is a very tender
if we touch that we are done fo
With care they rounded the
of Self Interest, and reached
Giant's nose, down which they
search of a good point of va
which they found at the bridge.
sat down and viewed the world
the Giant never saw them, for S
ness is a very short-sighted
indeed, and cannot see even as
the bridge of his nose. And w
funny world it was! Groups of
and women were going around
mad whirl. Around and around
went, with their hands full of
bundles, into which they were
ing with eager, searching eyes.
had bags of jingling gold, which
turned over and over with
hands; some turned their an
sure up and down scrolls of P
some turned the leaves of Knowl
some reached for something in
trees and crowns; some tried t
wind gossamer threads of Pla
and Fashion, which melted aw
their fingers; and under their
trodden and bruised, lay Love
Faith, and Hope, and Charity, th
quite dead, the others almost so.
"What are you seeking for,
dren of the earth?" said the
voice of Peace from the bridge o
Giant's nose.

"We search for Peace, we s
for Peace" came the piteous cry
the whirling throng below, and
no one let his neighbor know
he had uttered the cry.

"I am here," said Peace, gu
"Come to us, oh, come to us,"
cried.

"I will come to you gladly—o
gladly—if you will make room
my brother, Goodwill. Let me
come, and he will help you tr
those poor crushed things that
trump beneath your feet," said P
The people turned and scowle
each other. "We do not want
brother; we want only you,"
said.

Peace clung to Goodwill's h
"Oh, I could not go without my
er," she said. "I never go any
without him; we are always tog
You would kill me if I went down
without Goodwill to look after
"Then we do not want you."
are an impostor. Peace is h
somewhere among those things
carry; we will find her." And
tell to searching and waiting
sagely than ever, and listened
more to Peace.

"I suppose we must go back
wait for Christmas; it seems to
the only time that the earth-chi
want us," said Goodwill.

"How very, very different the
is then," sighed Peace, as they
ed, and crept softly up the G
nose.

CHRISTMAS, THE KING OF
SEASONS.

Then let us all sing till our roo
ring.

And it echoes from wall to wal
To the stout old wight, fair w
tonight.

As the King of the Seasons all