

TOLD ON CHRISTMAS EVE. CHAPTER IV. (Continued) "Wait until the year is out," he said to Charles, emphatically and firmly. "If you really think the same thing, I will say so more. But until then, stay where you are. You are very young, Charles, and youth is the changeable April time of a man's life."

And Charles had waited, but he had not changed at all. He meant to go as soon as the New Year came in. He meant to return to his father's house, and through his soul there were eving an appealing and plaintive voice, "Keep my memory green!"

"Papa," said Violet, putting her hand on her father's, and turning her wistful eyes to his, "in my story there is a girl like me, and perhaps you will think her wicked and ungrateful to her father, who is just like you; but you will hear all about her quite to the end and before you say 'No, you, papa.'"

"If she like my little girl, she can't be very bad," said Arnold Silver, laughing proudly, and patting her pretty head. "Go on, my dear, we are all anxiously to hear this tale."

Violet turned her face from him, clasped her hands on her lap, and fixed her eyes intently on the lamp. Her huge and molten gold of the flames, lighting the great white of the legs on the huge armatures, and began her tale. In her voice there was something strangely unworldly, but as though she feared to tell it.

"Some years ago there were two brothers, partners in a great business, first papa, as you and Uncle Aurelius are; and one of them had two sons, and the other only one little child, a girl; and the two brothers were dead. Now, the elder brother, the father of the two boys was a strange man, cold and haughty, and like iron in everything he said and did; and when his wife died—he was very fond of her—he—"

"What are you telling," interrupted Mr. Silver. "Hear me to the end, please, Uncle Aurelius." "Yes, yes, the tale must be heard to the end," put in Arnold Silver. And Violet went on.

"This elder brother grew colder and harder, though I knew it was only pride in his heart he was poor. His eldest son, who was many years older than the other, was like the dear mother who had died, and a generous, high-spirited lad, and I am quite sure all the time he had been so devoted to his father, that he had no time to see the evil which was gathering around the lad—and he was only eighteen. Had he been five, he would have been an angry that he might see his father's face to save him. Not that he meant to be cruel; you must think that for a moment, but he said and thought that, for a truly honorable upright nature, there could be no such thing as temptation."

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