


JOHN RAYMOND'S AWAKENING

KATHLEEN EILEEN BARRY.

HE weather-prophets had promised New York a real, old fashioned Christmas, and for once it looked as though the prediction would be verified. On the morning of December 24th, 1900, the City was covered with a white carpet, and all day long the snow-fairies added to its beauty by shaking from their gossamer wings star-shaped crystals and feathery flakes of purest hue.

With the approach of night the Spirit of Christmas seemed to pervade the whole town. It shone in the bright faces of the passing throng, and even the poor blind mendicant was radiant as he squatted on the curbstone outside the Savoy Hotel, while the handorgan on which he ground out a carol sounded less asthmatic than usual.

The Savoy was festooned with garlands, and mistle toe and holly-berries gleamed like pearls and rubies from the emerald setting. Emblems of the joyous season were visible everywhere, except in the suite of rooms, occupied by John Raymond. He would not allow his apartments to be decorated. Christmas meant nothing more to him than a tiresome holiday which interfered with his stock-broking business, and he disapproved of what he was pleased to call the sentimental fuss that was made over it.

Just now he was standing by the window, gazing out on Fifth Avenue. Snow was still falling, and the leafless branches of the trees that dotted the Park Plaza were weighted with a glistening burden. It was an ideal Christmas night, and "Peace on earth, to men of goodwill" was the reigning sentiment in the hearts of the crowds who hurried along the brilliantly-lit square.

Suddenly from the pavement below rose a newsboy's shrill voice, crying, "EXTRA ! EXTRA ! Big crash in Wall Street ! Read the extra !"