

"Is this another letter from her?" said Mabel.

"Oh, dear, no! it's from my brother. He is in England; only think of that! He says that he has reformed, and wants me to see him. But I know that Mr. Burnish will be terribly annoyed. Edward forfeits his income by leaving Guernsey. I really know not what to do."

"Surely it would be better frankly to tell Mr. Burnish.

"Oh, no! that's impossible. My brother's name never comes up but it causes words, and lays me on a sick bed. I really am not equal to contending about it, or seeing poor Edward. And he talks such wild nonsense about "finding the woman he has injured." Injured indeed! he was her victim. I heard some stuff about her being fifteen years younger than himself; but there's no believing about these creatures' ages—besides, they're old in sin. I really think my brother's mind is affected. Mr. Burnish used to say he was mad. If I had my maid, Plyer, who lived so many years with me, I should know what to do. She used to see him for me, and took him money; but, though I like Gabb, Mr. Burnish so much objects to servants being confided in, that I resolved not to tell her."

"If I could help you," said Mabel reluctantly, "I would willingly offer my services. But I really don't see how I can be of any service."

"No," said Mrs. Burnish, relapsing into tears, "I must bear my burden alone; no one to help me, no one to feel for me."

"My dear Mrs. Burnish," said Mabel, compassionating her distress, and really touched by the affection for her brother, which seemed the one deep feeling of her feeble nature, "command me in any way that you think proper. I am sure you would not ask me to do anything unsuited to my age, or my position as the instructress of your children."

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Burnish, rearing her head haughtily for an instant, then adding, "You are a good creature—kindness itself. I told Lady Burnish so when I wrote last. You see my poor brother cannot come here, and I suppose he does not live anywhere where I could go, for he has promised to meet me in Kensington Gardens. Now, it's impossible I could do that, for I must take the carriage to the park—I never could walk that distance; and my poor nerves! I should die at his feet—I'm sure I should. Now, if you went, Miss Alton—"

"I, madam!" said Mabel amazed.

"Yes; what of it? In the daylight—a gentleman old enough to be your father—to bear a message from his sister?"

Mabel thought for a moment, and then replied, "You will suffer the children to go with me. I could walk there with them, and it would take off the awkwardness of seeing him alone."

"Oh! that'll never do." On second thoughts, she added, after a pause, "They need not know but it is some friend of yours, whom you have accidentally met; for they have forgotten their uncle. Poor Edward! If Mr. Burnish were out of town he should certainly come here. But, he tells me," she continued, looking again at the letter, "that he is 'quite out at elbows as to costume.' Oh! that's his old pleasant way. Oh! that such a man should be ruined by designing people."

"By the customs of society, and his own habits," was Mabel's mental comment.

Just then, Gabb entered with tidings that Mr. Burnish, feeling rather poorly, had returned at that early hour from the House. Mrs. Burnish hastily crushed the letter into her desk, bade Gabb bring her a cup of strong tea, wished Mabel good night, and, with a languid smile, prepared to receive her husband.

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## Our Casket.

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### BITS OF TINSEL.

A little four-year-old upset in a boat was not alarmed. A surprised sailor asked her afterwards why was this. She said: "I finked of Peter."

"Yes," she said, "I always obey my husband, for I have something to say about what his commands will be."

"How will you have your hair cut?" asked the barber. "With the scissors," said the customer quietly. "Looks as if you used a knife last time."

"So you prefer my medicines to those of Dr. Pillsbury, Mrs. Mulligan?" "Och, indade, dochter dear, ye're a deal better than th' other ould humbug."

Two boys from the country, taking advantage of a cheap trip to the seaside, indulge in a bath.—"Jack," says one, "thou'rt very dirty."—"Ay," replies Jack, "I missed coming last year."

A candidate for medical honors, while subjected to a severe examination, was asked: "How would you sweat a patient for the rheumatism?" He replied: "I would send him here to be examined."

### DON'T STOP MY PAPER.

Don't stop my paper, printer,  
Don't strike my name off yet,  
You know the times are stringent,  
And dollars hard to get;  
But tug a little harder,  
Is what I mean to do,  
And scrape the dimes together,  
Enough for me and you.

I can't afford to drop it;  
I find it doesn't pay  
To do without a paper,  
However others may.  
I have to ask my neighbors  
To give me theirs on loan;  
They don't just say—but mean it—  
"Why don't you have your own?"

You can't tell how we miss it,  
If it, by any fate,  
Should happen not to reach us,  
Or come a little late.

Then all is in a hubbub,  
And things go all awry,  
And printer, if you are married,  
You know the reason why.

The children want their stories,  
And wife is anxious, too,  
At first to glance it over,  
And then to read it through;  
And I to read the leader,  
And con the book reviews,  
And scan the correspondence,  
And every scrap of news.

I can not do without it,  
It is no use to try,  
The other people take it,  
And printer, so must I.  
I, too, must keep me posted,  
And know what's going on,  
Or else I'll be accounted  
A foggy simpleton.

Then take it kindly, printer,  
If pay is somewhat slow,  
For cash is not so plenty,  
And wants not few you know;  
But I must have the paper,  
Cost what it may to me;  
I'd rather dock my sugar,  
And do without my tea.

So printer, don't you stop it,  
Unless you want my frown,  
But—lest I miss a number—  
I'll plank the cash right down?  
So send the paper promptly  
And regularly on,  
Let it bring us fortnightly  
Its welcomed benison.

—Selected.

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## For Girls and Boys.

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### CHRISTMAS DIALOGUE.

#### FOR TWO BOYS.

*Charlie meets Frank about the centre of the platform carrying a fair-sized parcel, or paper box, with a smaller one containing small book or autograph album tied across the top.*

Charlie.—Hello! Frank, I wish you a merry Christmas.

Frank.—Thanks, Charlie; same to you, and a Happy-New Year besides! by the way, when you went off last August, you said you were going to stay over Christmas.

Charlie.—So I should, if it had not been for an accident to Aunt Ellen.