

Christmas spirit into her un-Christmas-like home; but her thinking was all in vain. What could she, only a little girl, do?

With a heavy sigh she turned away from the window, and obeying the impulse of her loving little heart went over to her mother's chair, and stooping down, inprinted a kiss on each cheek of baby Nelly. Then throwing her arms around her mother's neck, she kissed the wan face tenderly, saying, "Cheer up, mother darling! It is always 'darkest before the dawn,' you know."

The words seemed strangely prophetic, and a faint gleam of hope thrilled for a moment in the mother's heart as she dried her tears and returned her daughter's caress, saying, "God bless you, my own darling! What should I ever do without my little Ruth?"

Just at this moment a knock was heard at the door, and Mrs. Moore arose and opened it, admitting much to her astonishment, a tall, handsome young man, with a bronzed, weather-beaten face, and dressed in a rich fur coat and cap.

Mr. Moore, hearing the knock, had by this time risen from the couch on which he had been reclining, and together the two confronted the stranger in an attitude of enquiry. The silence lasted for fully half a minute, during which the stranger's face seemed working with some hidden emotion. When at last he spoke it was with a voice of suppressed feeling that he cried, "Father, mother—do you not know me? Can you forgive your boy?"

Know him! yes indeed! For the stranger proved to be their long-lost boy, whom they had thought of as buried beneath the pitiless waves of the sea. Taller and manlier he was now, with a face so changed by exposure to a severe climate that it was hardly recognizable; but there was the same soft, curling hair, the same bright eyes, the same loved voice of yore. Know him! Forgive him! ay, how willingly, gladly they forget that there had ever been anything to forgive!

Now I will not attempt to describe the scene which followed, for it would be quite impossible. The joyous exclamations, the eager questionings, the long clinging embraces, the sudden overflow of overwrought hearts in happy tears—all made such wild confusion that none of them more than half knew what was happening.

There were many questions asked which were not answered, or the answers if given were not listened to. The simple realization that the 'dead' was 'alive again,' the 'lost' was 'found' for a time swallowed up all other considerations of the how and why, but at last out of the chaos the following simple facts were learned.

The "Victor" had indeed been lost in Northern seas, as had been reported, but not with all on board. There had been a few survivors, who had cruised for a time on an ice island, till they had been picked up by a steamer bearing a party bound for the Klondike. The other survivors of the wreck had remained at the port where the ship landed, waiting for a chance to return to their homes; but Artie had pleaded so earnestly to be allowed to make one of the expedition to Klondike that a well-to-do gentleman of the

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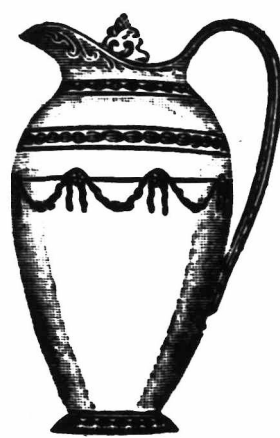
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party, taking a fancy to the lad, agreed to pay his way, with the understanding that after reaching Klondike, Artie was to work for him until he had made up to him the expense incurred.

After much hardship and privation they at length reached Dawson City, where the party separated, most of them to take up claims and dig for gold, others to work at some lucrative trade in the pursuit of which they made more money than many a speculator in the gold fields—for it must be known that not everyone who goes to Klondike be-



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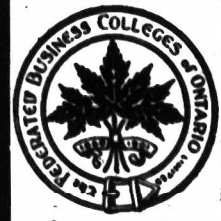
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