

And she turns on her pillow like a tired child, and falls asleep, only to wake when the sun is high in the heavens, and the Christmas chimes are ringing out gaily over the snow-covered moor, and Doctor Thorn is sitting beside her bed with a pleasant smile on his kindly old face which wins a smile to Annabel's own lips.

"A merry Christmas!" he says, gaily. "How is our little heroine this morning? Who would have supposed it was in our bonnie Belle to do such doughty deeds? Heaven bless you, dear child!" he adds, with a tremor in his kindly voice. "You saved a life we could have ill spared."

"How is Ralph?" says Annabel, eagerly, sitting up among her pillows, and blushing very prettily.

"He is the most troublesome patient man ever had," said the old doctor, with a queer little smile. "He has a broken arm and a sprained knee, which must have given him intense agony last night, and he would insist on getting up this morning. To have opposed him would have thrown him into a fever, so between Elwes and myself, we got him downstairs, and he is at present waiting breakfast for you in the dining-room. I must be off now," he adds, as Annabel thanks him with tears in her eyes. "I am going to leave Elwes with you for a few days, and I shall be in these parts before the New Year."

Annabel dresses slowly, feeling a little languid and tremulous still, and when she looks in the glass, she sees that her face is very pale. Going downstairs in her pretty black velvet dress, she finds a group of servants waiting for her in the hall.

"Heaven bless you, Miss Belle!" says the old butler, tremulously. "You're brave and true enough to be an Ediot yourself."

And Annabel smiles as she holds out her hand to him. Davis can give her no greater praise, she knows.

Ralph is alone in the dining-room; he is lying on a wide, old-fashioned sofa, looking terribly pale, and pulled down, even in so short a time; but his eyes go to Annabel's face with a look of unutterable love. She does not go to him, nor speak for a few moments, and busies herself with the coffee equipage; but when the coffee is made, she has no further excuse, and going to his side, she kneels down by the sofa. Ralph folds his one disposable arm around her, and draws her head down upon his breast, and Annabel is glad to hide her face there to conceal the tears of joy and thankfulness which well up into her happy eyes.

"Belle," says her guardian, at length, and his voice is full of love and tenderness, "do you know what I owe you?"

"Not half as much as I owe you," she answers, quickly. "Oh! Ralph, let me tell you this once, how I have felt all your goodness to me all these years!"

"You made my happiness!" he says, unsteadily. "My darling, listen to me; do you know that many a brave man would have hesitated to do what you did last night?"

"The weakest woman would have done it for one she loved," Annabel murmurs tremulously.

"I doubt it, my darling," he replies, and draws her closer to his heart. After a pause: "Belle, do you know what day to-day is?"

"Christmas-day, Ralph!"

"Do you remember what you promised to tell me to-day, my child?"

"Let me give you some breakfast," says Annabel, growing brave as she sees his self-possession is deserting him.

"Ah! do not keep me in suspense!" he says, eagerly, with quivering lips. "Belle, I cannot bear it to-day. Forgive me, dear child, my pain makes me impatient!"

"Poor guardie!" and Annabel stoops her lips to his brow, smiling through the tears in her eyes.

"Listen then," she goes on, softly; "I told Sir Edgar Dunstan that though I was grateful for the honour he did me, I could not accept his love."

"Why?" is all Ralph can find voice for.

"Because—her cheeks are very pink now—I did not love him. I told," she goes on, growing braver, "that if you would keep me at Moor House, I would never leave it."

"Belle!" Ralph's voice is tremulous and broken. "Do you know what you are letting me believe?"

"Do you believe it?" she says, with a sweet glance at him through her long lashes. "Do you believe that it is no child's love, dearest guardie? Will you believe that if you will take me, a weak, foolish girl into your heart, I will do my best not to let you repent; at least, and she bowed her head on his breast again, "my love is great enough to make up for all my other deficiencies."

"Belle, you are not mocking me?" falters Ralph.

"How am I to make you believe it?" she says, tremulously. "I told you, Ralph, that my love was no child's love. Dear, will you take me as your Christmas Gift?"

Need Ralph Eliot's answer be recorded; the joy seems too great to be real; and in that moment of perfect felicity all is forgotten but the gladness of mutual love.

"Good-bye, Eliot—good-bye, Miss Belle," says Doctor Thorn's merry voice, as he puts his head in at the door. "Any commands for Greenham?"

"Come in, doctor," calls out Ralph, gaily, but without releasing blushing Annabel. "What do you think of my Christmas Gift?"

"That you are a lucky fellow," says the doctor, smiling—"a deuced lucky fellow! But take care, Eliot, a little woman with so much pluck may turn out a dangerous customer some of these days. Look at her," he adds, laughingly, "who would think that that delicate creature saved a big man's life no later than last night! Ta, ta! young people, I hope before next Christmas to dance at your wedding; meanwhile, a merry Christmas to you!"

And to you, dear reader!

C. N.

### Slipping Away.

They are slipping away—these sweet, swift years—

Like the leaf on the current cast;  
With never a break in the rapid flow,  
We watch them as one by one they go  
Into the beautiful past.

As silent and swift as a weaver's thread,  
Or an arrow's flying gleam,  
As soft as the languorous breezes hid,  
That lift the willow's long golden lid  
And ripple the glassy stream.

As light as the breath of the thistle-down;  
As fond as a lover's dream;  
As pure as a flush in the sea-shell's throat,  
As sweet as the wood-bird's wooing note,  
So tender and sweet they stem.

One after another we see them pass  
Down the dim-lighted stair,  
We hear the sound of their heavy tread  
In the steps of the centuries long since dead,  
As beautiful and as fair.

There are only a few years left to love;  
Shall we waste them in idle strife?  
Shall we trample under our ruthless feet  
Those beautiful blossoms, rare and sweet,  
By the dusty way of life?

There are only a few swift years—ah, let  
No envious taunt be heard;  
Make life's fair pattern of rare design,  
And fill up the measure with love's sweet wine,  
But never an angry word!

### Advice to a Young Man.

Get married, my boy? Telemachus, come up close and look me right in the eye, and listen to me with both ears. Get married. If you never do another thing in the world, marry. You can't afford it? Your father married on a smaller salary than you are getting now, my boy, and he has eight children, doesn't have to work very hard, and every year he pays a great pile of your little bills that your salary won't cover. And your father was just as good a man at your age as you are now. Certainly you can afford to marry. You can't afford not to. No, I'm not going to quote that tiresome old saying that what will keep one person will keep two, because it won't. A thousand dollar salary won't keep two one thousand dollar people, but it will keep two five hundred dollar people nicely, and that's all you are, just now, my boy. You need not wince or get angry. Let me tell you, a young man who rates in the world as a five hundred dollar man, all the year round, Monday as well as Saturday, the day after Christmas just as well as the day before; the fifth of July as well as the third, he is going to rate higher every year, until he is a partner almost before he hoped to be bookkeeper. Good, reliable five hundred dollar young men are not such a drug in the market as you suppose. You marry, and your wife will bring tact, and love, and skill, and domestic economy that will early double your salary. But you would have to deny yourself many little luxuries and liberties? Certainly you would; or rather you'd willingly give them up for greater luxuries. And you don't want to shoulder the burdens and cares of married life? I see you do not. And I see what you do not realize, perhaps—that all your objections to marriage are mean and selfish. You haven't given one manly reason for not marrying. If you do marry you are going

into a world of new cares, new troubles, new embarrassments. You are going to be careful and worried about many things. You are going to be tormented with household cares and perplexities all new and untried to you. You are going to be pestered and bothered and troubled. You will have to tell stories to the children when you want to read. You will have to mend a toy for young Tom when you ought to be writing letters. You will have to stay at home in the evening when you used to go to the club. The baby will rumple your necktie and the other children will trample into your lap with their dusty shoes. Your wife will have so much to do looking after the comfort of her husband and children that she won't be able to play and sing for you every evening, as your sweetheart did. Your time will not be your own, and you will have less leisure and freedom for fishing and shooting excursions, camps in the mountains and yachting trips along the coast than your bachelor friends of your own age. I admit all this. But then, you will be learning self-denial, you will be living for some one else; you will be loving some one better than you love yourself, and more than a thousand fold that compensates for all that you give up.

Why, you want to remain single now, my boys, just because you are selfish. And the longer you stay single the more this selfishness will grow upon you. There are some noble exceptions among bachelors, I know, and some mean ones among married men; and a selfish married man needs killing more than any other man I know, but as a rule—just look around your own friends and see who are the unselfish men; who it is that gives up his seat in a street car to a woman—not a pretty, young girl, but a homely, wrinkled woman in a shabby dress; who is it heads the charity subscriptions; who pays the largest pew rent; who feeds the beggars; who finds work for the tramp; who are the men foremost in unselfish work? I know your young bachelor friends are not stingy. Oh, no. I know Jack Fastboy paid \$570 last week for a new buggy—it is light as a match-box, and has such a narrow seat that he never can ask a friend to ride with him; and at the same time Dick Slocum, who married your sister Alice five years ago, gave \$250 for the cyclone sufferers. I think the angels laughed all that afternoon, my boy, but I don't think it was because Jack paid \$570 for his new buggy. If you want to shirk the responsibilities of life, my dear boy, you may; if you want to live forty or fifty years longer with no one under the heavens to think about or care for or plan for but yourself, go ahead and do it; you will be the only loser, the world won't miss you nearly so much as you will miss the world; you will have a mean, lonely, selfish, easy time, and, unless you are a rare exception to your class, little children will hate you, and the gods never yet loved any man whom the children disliked.

Dainty little luncheon bags for school are crocheted out of dark brown or blue macreme cord. They usually measure eight inches square, are worked with the monogram in some contrasting shade, with handles of the macreme and ornamented with bows of satin ribbon.