

On Christmas Day in the Morning

sat on the floor smiling up at them;— Oliver, advancing to meet them in his bath-robe and slippers;— Guy, holding out both arms from above his blankets, and shouting “Merry Christmas! — and how do you like your children?” — even then it was difficult to realise that not one was missing — and that no one else was there. Unconsciously Mrs. Fernald found herself looking about for the sons’ wives and daughters’ husbands and children. She loved them all; — yet — to have her own, and no others, just for this one day — it was happiness indeed.

When they were all downstairs, about the fire, there was great rejoicing. They had Marietta in; indeed, she had been hovering continuously in the background, to the apparently frightful jeopardy of the breakfast in preparation, upon which, nevertheless, she had managed to keep a practised eye.