

A Christmas Song.

It was Christmas Eve. All through the day the snow had been silently falling on the hills, on the valleys, on the city, and the keen frost gradually knit the tiny snowflakes, crusting them as with beautiful enamel, a fitting garb for Nature to assume in anticipation of her Maker's coming. And tonight a thousand starry worlds, in no way abashed by the crescent moon that was hanging in the heavens, looked upon the busy people in the city below. The people themselves hurried to and fro, eager to have their work over, so that they could seek the cheering warmth of their own firesides.

Such was the scene without. Now let us enter that stately mansion standing back from the street, away from the busy mart, and the rush of the work-a-day world. Before the open grate, in the beautiful and magnificently furnished library, sat Mr. John Conlon, the master, deeply buried in thought. As he gazed into the glowing coals, but one picture arose from their depths—his past life. Once more he sees himself a young man entering life; once more he is tossed upon the sea of trouble and buffeted by the waves of misfortune; and now he fights again the old fights and gains the dearly-bought victory. And this is the laurel wreath, honor, respect and wealth.

But tonight his mind is not at rest. He had been a Catholic once, but wealth had thrown him in with those who scorned religion, and the song of the siren sounded sweeter and sweeter, in his ears, and he went farther and farther away from God, until now he is all but a scoffer at religion. But the spirit of unrest is working in his soul, and it seems as though the final struggle is at hand.

So absorbed was he in his own meditations that he did not notice the presence of an intruder until a peal of merry laughter, like the ripple of a silvery cascade, met his ears, and Miss Helen, of the warbling voice