

into an hilarious laugh and laugh for centuries. Effervescent happiness was bubbling up through his very eyes. He trembled with emotion. That great ponderous bell, ringing out the hour in venerable tones, every vibration of which was formerly hateful to him, now infused a greater joy. His brain swam, and his twitching hands, his elastic youthful step betrayed his irrepressible delight. He imagined that he was walking, with head erect to the stately tune of some majestic march, and when the ringing ceased with one huge exalting boom, the merry laughter of the young people seemed to take up and prolong its theme.

So on he went, wondering how he could have spent so many black years; wondering how he could have lived so miserably for so long and not see that a happier state existed. Ah, old Sneck now knows that he has been miserable, and having caught the flavor of this unwonted fruit he snatches eagerly for the very core, just as the poor prisoner, who has been caged up in a dark dungeon for sixty years, leaps for liberty. And this happiness which could not been purchased by some for millions was his for a little charity—liberty for one little step, the price of a bed for a tramp.

But Sneck did not forget that painting of the Nativity whose influence he knows had all to do with his liberation. He certainly ought to purchase it. He will do it to-morrow. No, the morning after, because the stores will not be open on Christmas day. No, he'll not buy the picture to-morrow; he will go and see poor Porter, and after that his daughter in the convent. "But by the way, Sneck, you old dog" he says to himself "just buy some trinkets for young golden-

locks—some goody-goodies to take with you. Now here's a fine store. Let's see what they have"—and the childish delight that Sneck took in the selection and final purchase of a neat golden brooch was, for him, unprecedented,

Ah, Sneck you are changed. One day ago you would have gone along this street with head down cursing these merry faces, and if a wayfarer had accosted you and solicited alms you would have passed in scorn. You would not have purchased the merest trifle for an unknown child if implored by angels—you would have died first. But the best part of the whole story is that Sneck knows what he would have done the day before, and calls himself the worst kind of scandalous names—names, of course, which were quite consistent with his now elevated state, but nevertheless very severe names indeed. And after he had finished with that you cannot imagine how much better he felt.

Then he bought some bacon—smoked bacon. He had not tasted any kind of bacon for four years, and then it was "green"—not so palatable as smoked, nor so expensive either. When he got home he lit two candles, and made a "buster of a fire," as he called it; cooked three rashers of that smoked bacon, got half a loaf of bread from the cupboard, and made two nice crisp pieces of toast, singing all the while. And such singing! First he tried whistling, but the attempt was most unsatisfactory. Those poor old lips and scanty lungs were too dry and too weak to make a respectable whistle. So he tried singing. This was apparently more suited to him. In some places his voice was all right, but where it got above a certain note it invariably cracked, and then suddenly went all to pieces.