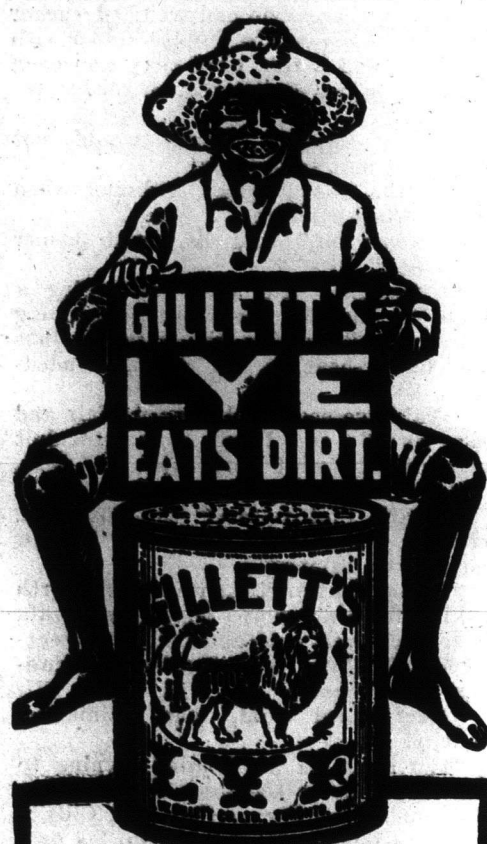




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broken in the sails and an old tar had boded ill luck to the voyage therefrom; so that before dinner was over Priscilla had decided to send Jasper the line he craved by Captain Lewis. Therefore when, a month later, Lewis dropped in one day to say good-bye and that he sailed for the same port on the morrow, in the interest of the same merchants whom Jasper served, Priscilla asked: "Would you mind taking a line to Captain Jasper for me?" and then the color shot over her face and stained it crimson.

"Humph!" said Lewis, "anything particular between you and Jasper?"

"I don't know what you call anything in particular; but if you don't wish to take my letter, you can leave it."

"Of course I'll take it, Chilly. 'Would' not I do anything for you? What shall I bring you home now?"

far off; and she used to sit over her darning and imagine Jasper's surprise when Captain Lewis should deliver the letter. She had never dreamed that love could tame so. Why, she cared nothing at all for the vain babblings of those striplings who followed in her train whose adoration she had valued but yesterday. She could hardly believe that she had let Jasper go without a kind word; but then she had counted upon seeing him to-morrow. She was late in learning the wisdom of putting nothing off till to-morrow that should be done to-day.

And so the year waned; the blackberries grew ripe in the pastures; Pettengales' wood rained nuts; the maples turned scarlet and yellow on Broad Street, and the little ragged urchins with wheel-barrows caught up every leaf that fell as if it had been gold dust. There were long blue days, when the



"We shall sail to-morrow, he said to her."

"Bring yourself home," she answered, with the last spark of her old caprice flaring up before going out forever. And then Captain Lewis took the little note, which simply read:

"Dear Jasper: I haven't changed my mind, for I didn't need to in order to love you. I shall look for you on Christmas-day. Yours, Priscilla."

And Captain Lewis went off whistling "Caller Herrin," as contentedly as if his name had been Jasper.

They were not much in the way of letter-writing, these simple fishing folks, and this was a labor of love to which Priscilla had set her name—first to make sure of saying enough, but not too much; to take care the spelling was not too bad, that the punctuation did not put out the sense nor obscure her meaning. She did not expect an answer; but, satisfied with her tardy resolve and confident of its success, she pursued her household duties, and joined the merry-makings with a light heart and smiling face, lit by the luster of a hope.

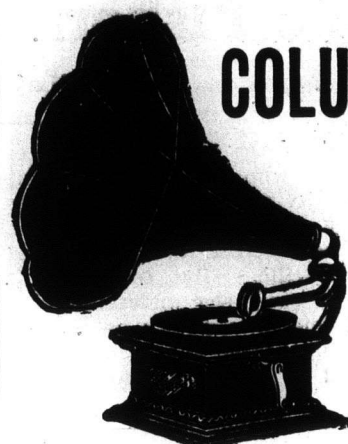
After all, Christmas was not so very

"flying gold of the woodlands" was abroad, and the atmosphere seemed steeped in sunshine; then the east winds swooped down upon the coast, and brought drenching rains and bewildering fogs, and shook the heart in the bosom of many a sad watcher. Sometimes now Priscilla would wake in the "dead middle of the night," and hear the tide lashing the piers and fretting about the shore; and she would catch, far off, the dull smothered thunder of the sea, where it broke in a fury of crested waves upon the bar, and sent its spray to rend the darkness in the face of the troubled sea-farer. On such nights she used to rise and open her window, listening breathlessly for signals of distress, imagining that dying shrieks mingled with the hoarse roar of the breakers.

"Jasper shall never go to sea again if once he comes home," she thought—lying awake there, and trembling and shuddering among her blankets—"not if I have to stand on the street corners and cry red herrings for a living."

And yet Jasper was not due till

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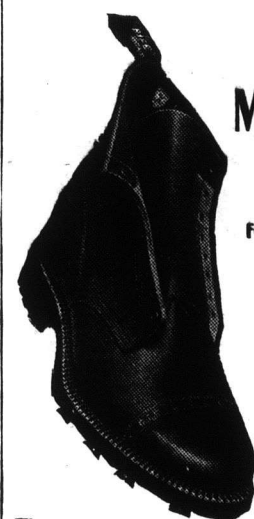
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