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HAWTHORNDEN A STORY OF EVERY DAY LIFE

BY MRS. CLARA M. THOMPSON

CHAPTER I. SPOUATION

In the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty...

His bearing was soldierly, and the insignia on his shoulders, marked him as a colonel in the United States service.

It will be necessary here to bring forward what has perhaps been anticipated by the reader—the cause of the sudden sorrow that had overwhelmed in one moment a household that had dwelt for years in peace and quiet, enjoying all the comforts and luxuries of life.

Mr. Benton looked imploringly into the face of her parent. "What can I do, and do right? I know, dear father," she exclaimed, a bright flush kindling her pallid cheek for a moment, and passing away like a shadow.

"This comes upon you severely, Lucy; I will try to help you in your decision, if this must be," said Mr. Benton.

"I must give up one of my girls, at an age when most they need a mother's care, to one almost a stranger, who will claim her as a mother, and worse than all, to people of another faith. This comes upon me (am I not sinful to say it?) more cheerlessly than my first grief."

"Dear, dear grandpa," said the sound, and a curly head nestled in his arms, and he felt the little creature sob as he pressed him to his bosom, and heard the whisper, "Papa has gone away off, and mamma is so grieved, and sisters cry all the time, and Harold stamps his foot."

it. I wish we could all die, or take mamma to some desert island, and—

"But you wouldn't leave mamma in disgrace, too! O, Marion, how could you or Baine think of such a thing?"

"Of course I should not wish to leave mamma," replied the sister, coloring slightly, "but you know if papa wishes it, it must be done, and it would be less care for papa, we shall be so poor."

"I don't care for poverty, Marion," said the boy, blushing crimson; "poverty isn't disgrace. I must give up college, and all that, of course, but I'm thankful we are going off, but I don't care how far, if we could only get away from it; to have it flung at me and three more, O, Marion!"

"Such a big boy cry!" said Willie, carefully wiping Harold's eyes. At this moment sister Rosine appeared with a summons from their mother.

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assures you of an earnest, whole-souled welcome. I have none but your children shall be my child; educated, trained as you please. I will this day settle a sum upon you and your children, sufficient for your support, if you will come to me. Hawthornden, your early home, with all its tender associations, shall be yours, if you will leave your husband, give up one who has proved so unworthy of you—"

"Please don't, father," said Mrs. Benton, with a shudder; "do not tempt me to be unfaithful to the vows made before God and man. You were the first to teach me my duty; you would not entice me from the path where you taught me to walk?"

"But, my child, consider your duties to your little ones." "I have, I have," she replied earnestly. "A path will be opened for them in the wilderness. It cannot be right for me, for the sake of their future in this life, to forsake one to whom I have promised to keep till death; and their mother must follow the fortunes of their father. Let me tell you," she added, seeing him about to urge the matter.

"I have had a line from Colonel Hartland, our noble friend, has offered him a home on a farm of his in Illinois, and we are to meet Philip as soon as arrangements can be made. The Colonel has often begged of him one of his daughters, and now it is my husband's wish that I leave either Marion or Rosine with him."

Mrs. Benton forced herself to communicate this intelligence to her father, but toward the close of the sentence, her voice became unsteady, and though no tears followed, she was seized with a violent attack of trembling, and some moments passed before she could recover herself.

"My poor Lucy!" exclaimed her father, enclosing her in his arms, "this is too much!" "Yes, I own, I rebel against this requirement of my husband more than any he ever made."

"And yet, Lucy, you are my all; but you leave me in my declining years, taking away all my precious grandchildren except one, whom you place with comparative strangers."

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MOLLY MISTLETOE

"Buy a sprig of mistletoe! Little sprig of mistletoe! Ten cents buys a sprig of mistletoe!"

It was Christmas Eve, and Billy Orphan, that miser you so much. And the small woman went on in a voice like the low murmur of a distant stream, giving Mrs. Benton the sweet comforts of their mutual faith, and the last intelligence from the House of the Infant Jesus, of which she was Sister Superior, winning her thoughts for a time from her own grief, and bringing a gleam of light for her for the future, in the memory of how much she had been enabled to do for the poor unfortunate naves who crowded the streets of the city.

"Our House is to have another wing, and this week we have had a legacy which will help us to many things for our dear orphans," proceeded the Sister, as she found the attention of her friend gained; "we had a strong call this morning—six little orphans of one family, the eldest only fit for the nursery; some of our good ladies sent me clothes for them at once, and—"

"My means are cut off. I have nothing left that I can call my own," said Mrs. Benton, with a deep sigh. "O yes, dear, you have prayers; ah, if it wasn't for prayer, our alms would be but little good; besides, you have always been my Lady Bountiful; it is but fair others should take their turn. You must not have that pleasure all the time," said the sister, playfully patting the hand she held, and looking through the tears in those happy brown eyes, like the sun peeping through an April cloud.

"I wanted to see you today," said Mrs. Benton, changing the subject. "There is a matter upon which I can ask advice of no one but you—not even Father Roberts; he is sympathetic and kind, but it seems to me he could not understand a mother's heart as you can. I want to ask which of my daughters I must leave behind when I go?"

"The very thing I want! I'll take, and she beamed upon Billy, "as much as I can carry. I think about twenty-five sprigs—that will be one for each of my packages."

"Buy a sprig of mistletoe! Little sprig of mistletoe!" chanted Billy Orphan. "Mistletoe!" exclaimed Molly. "The very thing I want! I'll take, and she beamed upon Billy, "as much as I can carry. I think about twenty-five sprigs—that will be one for each of my packages."

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TO BE CONTINUED

unscalable heights would Aunt Marcella's respectable eyebrows ascend?" Molly's laugh rippled down the corridor to her apartments, where she discovered Billy Orphan, bending blissfully over a steaming assortment of viands.

"Boy!" she exclaimed joyously. "Just think, I sold it all! Not a scrap of your mistletoe is left! I stood there and waved it and called as you had done, and all of Copley Square came up and bought!"

"Gee, Miss, then you must of got 'bout five dollars," scoffed Molly. "Five dollars!" exclaimed Billy. "You sat while I count, and, so saying, she shook her white fox muff, and the largest quantity of money that Billy had ever seen was precipitated into the rug.

Billy dashed to the rescue. Together they counted the proceeds. "Seventy-three dollars!" announced Molly. "Gosh! I guess I'll have ter get a burglar insurance on me goin' home!"

"Clotilda will sew all but the silver into your inside pocket." And to Clotilda: "If Aunt Marcella had only happened into Copley Square, Clotilda, she would have been borne off in an ambulance." Clotilda chuckled respectfully. "I'm thinkin', Miss, your poor, dear Aunt would have had some fierce jolt!"

"New, Boy-not-quite-so-Blue," said Molly, "promise me two things before you leave. First, go and buy yourself an overcoat and some mittens, and second, don't try to sell any more mistletoe to-night—it's too cold and you're too tired. Will you promise?"

"Hones' ter Gawd, Miss. It's me for one fine coat, an' then I'll lug ma' there's a Sanky Claus." "But there is a Sanky Claus, Boy, dear!" objected Molly. Billy winked eloquently at Clotilda. "They is of you say so, Miss. An' I've seen some awfully doller ter the Movies, but take it from me, they ain't no skirt nowhere that ever wuz in it wid you!"

Molly laughed. Merry Christmas, Boy! "An' a wallopin' fine one ter you, Miss—er, Mistletoe!"

John Henry Weston, with his tendoral boutonniere radiating its special brand of Christmas merriment, walked on a private aerial promenade entirely around Copley Square. The card on which Molly Mistletoe was scribbled sent wireless sweet-nothings to the Western Department of thrills. In vain he wrestled with his powers of description; in vain did he mobilize a troop of the most flattering adjectives in the ranks of the Century. Unabridged. Words—just words, poor, futile, inadequate words. Why, the English language was reduced to two words—just two, redolent of magic and mystery! Molly Mistletoe! What could be sweeter, tenderer, more caressing than Molly—unless it be Mistletoe!

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