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Christmas Story.

"Ceres: Miss Fie Burgoyne."

(By Miss Addon.)

CHAPTER I.

Lo! the plains and groves of Tempaly were be me, and the gods and goddesses were there desporting themselves though if you had been informed by the play-bill that the persons ore you *were* of that celestial rank you would never have guessed it fr their conversation, which, sooth to say, was not far removed fro what mortals designate "dogge."

Very dull, indeed it was—exactly resembling what have all of us heard five hundred times before, and shall probably he five hundred times again. The ting, too, like the conversation w painful. The break-downs of Di (Miss Clara De Lacy) had ho chas for me, and the *œillades* which Vis (Miss Tissie Fitzherbert) so plentifully distributed to the stalls, rath disturbed my equanimity than otherwise. I was growing utterly ired, and tired, and weary, and y friend Charlie Osborne was apparently as much bored as I was, wn Ceres appeared on the stage—a sht little girl, with fair hair, an aquine nose, and soft gray eyes, and lady-like, so refined, and seemed so out of place where she was, it she arrested my whole attention.

"Well, I can say it's funny," remarked my frie "and if you will unfix your eyes which appear to be absolutely scred into that young person in the ie and spangles, I think we'll go."

"Don't let go just yet," I replied. "Who that girl?"

"That is Ce, as represented by Miss Burgoyn and if Miss Burgoyne's rendeg of the character is a correct one, res must have been a young lad of very retiring disposition. Hgreat idea appears to be to secrete nself at the wings. I don't think tburlesque would have less go about if she were to remain at home."

"There's sething better than *go* about her," plied. "How nicely she speaks nd walks! She's a regular littledy, if ever there was one."

"If ever there was one!" said Charlie. "(there's no doubt that there have be several; and if you have quite sed that point to your entire satisfaion, perhaps you won't mind making move?"

"There's thing else to do," I replied; "lets see a little more of it. I am ierested it that girl. Don't you kno anything about her?"

"No, I've ver seen her rather melancholy fa before. As a girl, I have no doubt hat she is everything that can be aired; but looking at her from a hrionic point of view, she is, not tout too fine a point on it, a failure f Shakspeare had delineated a fene melancholy Jaques, he would hav found an admirable representativ in Miss Burgoyne. However, if y are inquisitive, we'll go round asask Clara De Lacy about her. hey is coming directly to sing his 'gat tropical song,' and I shall be hay to avoid it. He's encored thirte times every night—at least so s the advertisements. The fact is l returns to the stage and sings addional verses, and the public, with istaken forbearance, refrains from issing."

I assented agerly, for I had forgotten that Charlie had the *entree*, and we left ir seats. Through a little swing-dor at the back of the private boxes past a surly-looking janitor, he leche way, and we were in that land mystery—behind the scenes!

Clara De lcy, Miss Fitzherbart, and some of h other "characters," were talking together, and a little was apart, leing against a pile of old scenery, was the object of my quest. Withher fair little head drooping dow, and with half-closed eyes, she stod, and seemed very tired, and wo, and sorrowful.

Clara left he group on seeing Charlie, an greeted him with warmth, shing hands with me, too, on my troduction, with the greatest cordality.

"I saw you in front and wondered if you were coming round," she said. "How do you like the burlesque? Wtched part I've got, as usual! I had a great mind to throw it up, but Bney persuaded me to take it."

"How is it ossible for any author to write a pa sufficiently strong to show off half he capabilities of Miss Clara De Lcy? Besides, it's the best part in the piece. Who is that?" he inquired, iving a sly glance at ward Ceres, my friend here has fallen deeperately in love with her, and he says if you don't introduce him he'll go ad hang himself."

"'My *heart* wh loves *the surgin'*. 'Tis a smart
That can't be cured by the *surgeon's* art,'"

quoted Clara. "That's in the next scene. I don't know much about little Burgoyn; she hasn't been here long, you kow, and doesn't talk a great deal. He gave Evesham one for himself, though the other night. He was roud here with two or three men, and while he was standing close to hr, he tapped the bottom of her dres with his cane, and said, 'I've bee admiring your dress all the evening, Miss Burgoyne, and its extreme beauty induces me to believe that it is the identical dress alluded to by the poet, who you doubtless remembe, sings thus of the robe:

"'Qui par en haut, et bas commence,
Et finit et haut par en bas.'"

I suppose he thought she didn't understand French, because most of the girls dont; but it just happened that she did, and she looked him calmly in the face, and replied, quite quietly, you know, 'I think my lord, the words you quote apply with quite as much pertinence to your own high feeling, since you do not hesitate take a liberty with an unprotected girl.' The men who were with him were delighted, and said it served him right, and you never saw any one look so utterly collapsed in the whole course of your life."

"From all that I see and hear about her," observed my friend, "she seems to have adopted a very uncongenial calling. What does she do on the stage at all?"

"Well, I really don't know," responded Clara; "I heard that Burney gave her some money in advance, which she wanted to help on her brother, and she didn't know that she was engaged for burlesque. She sings really very well, you know. But it is more than probable that the story isn't true, for girls very often set some legend afloat just to interest people about them. I'll introduce your friend to her," and she led the way to where Miss Burgoyne was standing.

"My dear," she said, "let me present to you a very old friend of mine. When you have known him as long as I have you'll appreciate him as I do."

Miss Burgoyne bowed coldly without raising her eyes, and did not seem inclined to speak. There was a pause; but I did not think the worse of her for her silence.

"You don't appear to be well," I said at last; "I hope your head does not ache?"

She looked up at me. What pretty, soft eyes she had! And I suppose my face must have given her confidence, for she smiled faintly and replied: "I have a slight headache. I think it is the gas. There is much glare here and I am not used to it."

"I am sorry that you should have to play when you are suffering," I said; "and if you are not accustomed to burlesque, you must find it very hard work, I fear?"

"Very hard—very hard indeed," she replied. "I never played in burlesque before, and now—" Her lips quivered, and I do not think tears were very far from her eyes.

"I knew some people of your name in Kent, Miss Burgoyne. Have you any relations there? I remember a Mr. Burgoyne who had a living near Maidstone, and his daughter would be now about your age. Could he have been your father?"

"No; my father was a clergyman, but he lived in the North; and my name is not Burgoyne—only at the theatre. My real name is Lydney." In a moment she added, "Please don't let anybody know, because I have told no one in the theatre."

I was flattered with the confidence the little girl reposed in me, and pleased with her manner, which gained an additional charm from the peculiar surroundings, and I should very much have liked to know whether Clara De Lacy's version of her story was true or not.

"You have not a very good part," I suggested. "Do you like it?"

"No, indeed, not at all," she replied; "I dislike burlesque very much altogether. I cannot bear people to think of me as a 'burlesque actress.'"

"You should not allow that to annoy you," I rejoined; "the stage is a noble profession, and certainly cannot lower any one; and though I admit I would rather see in another style of piece than this burlesque, a lady never loses the good opinion of those whose good opinion is worth keeping by—"

"Now then, dear, we're on directly!" a voice exclaimed behind me, and Clara joined us; and indeed I was hardly sorry for the interruption, for I was touched by the little girl's evident distress, and in my anxiety to alleviate it, was saying rather more than I felt to be true. "I was just telling Charlie— There's my cue!" and she bounded on to the stage.

"Have you to go?" I asked.

"Directly," she replied.

"I hope I shall meet you again, Miss Lydney. I shall look forward very anxiously to doing so—very anxiously indeed;" and, used as I was to what is called "life," my voice trembled. "Good-bye," I said, as she made a movement as if she were going away.

"Good-bye, and thank you," she replied, and in a moment more the sad little face was assuming a fictitious smile, and she was on the stage.

I once more joined Charlie, and hastily quitted the theatre, for I could not bear to hear my new little friend speak any of the nonsense to which she was piteously condemned, and leaving Charlie at his club—not being myself in talking or smoking humor—I sauntered home.

"Good-bye, and thank you!" What did she thank me for, I wondered? But how tender was the light that shone in her eyes, and how pretty looked, as she raised her face to speak! I mused long and late over Ceres that night, trying to discover what there could be about her that affected me so strongly; but muse as I might, her face was before me, and I heard her "Good-bye, and thank you," and when at last I slept, I saw her and watched her in my dreams.

Next morning I had to go down to the country and was away nearly three weeks, but my first impulse on returning to town was to go to the Prince's Theatre, and I sauntered down Regent Street, toward five o'clock, thinking of her. How to while away the time was the problem before me, and I contemplated a dinner of unusual dimensions, with a view to effecting that result; but chancing to enter a bookseller's shop as I wended my way to my club, there, to my great surprise, was Ceres, the subject of my thoughts.

I watched her—without her seeing me—as her eyes wandered timidly from the things on the counter to her slender purse, and then, inquiringly, to the face of an elderly lady by her side. She recognized my voice as I spoke to the shopman, and turned round with, I thought, a pleased smile on her face. A little hand clad in a gray kid glove was put out to meet mine, and then half withdrawn; but I captured it, and detained it for a moment.

"I did not expect to see you quite so soon," I said, "but intended doing so this evening. I shall find you, I suppose?"

"No, I am not playing that dreadful part now," she replied. "I have left the theatre, and am not going to act any more. I have been very fortunate, and have got several engagements to sing at concerts."

"I am very glad you have done with Ceres; though I shall miss seeing you this evening, and that is a very great disappointment indeed. However, I must try not to regret it, as you benefit by the change."

I had no time to say more, for the old lady joined us. "This is mamma," said Flossie—it is so hard to call her anything else now—and I bowed to "mamma," who opined that it was growing late, and that tea would be ready by the time they reached home. How much I should have liked to go! but it was, of course, a useless desire; so, with another pressure of the hand from Flossie, and a smile from their mother, they left.

I completed my purchase, and was leaving, when my foot struck against something on the ground. It was a purse—the purse I had noticed in her hand. I would follow them, I thought; but in a moment I recollected that I did not know which way, they had gone. A better thought! I would call and leave it. It was a splendid excuse for seeing her home, and I knew where it was, for I had heard her give the shopman the address. I waited a little time, lest my swift hansom should arrive before them, and, after a sufficient pause, was soon on my way to 58 Chiselhurst Street.

My heart beat high as I was driven down Great Portland Street toward Chiselhurst Town—a suburb which I had always imagined consisted of dingy streets and seventh-rate squares, but which did not seem half so dingy, and was several rates higher than I had supposed. Past the Hibernia, into High Street, Chiselhurst Town, and so to Chiselhurst Street.

I had been wondering what sort of a place No. 58 was, and I found it a corner house, and having a slight advantage over its neighbors, inasmuch as, being opposite the church, which was surrounded by trees, there was a little vegetation to look at, and the inhabitants avoided the gloomily monotonous sight of "over the way" which renders life in town so depressing. I rang the bell. "Was Mrs. Lydney at home?" "Yes, sir; just come in. Would you walk up-stairs, please? and what name shall I say?"

The maid showed me up-stairs, and left me in the room while she ascended farther and aloft to summon her mistress, and I glanced round the apartment. A piano was against the wall, and a harp stood in the corner by the fire-place, the instruments being supported by a quantity of neatly-packed music. Standing by the fire was a low chair, which I at once settled in my own mind must be hers. A vase containing a few flowers was upon the table, and, I shame to say, thoughts of petty larceny got a strong hold on me; but I resisted the first desire, and before the second had overcome me the door opened and Mrs. Lydney entered the room. She seated herself and looked inquiringly toward me, with an expression which seemed to ask to what was she indebted for the honor of this visit.

"You may recollect," I commenced, "that I had the pleasure of meeting you in Paxton's shop, in Regent Street, this afternoon."

She bowed coldly.

"As soon as you had left I picked up this purse, which I remembered having seen in Miss Lydney's hand, and I hastened after you to restore it."

"How very kind of you, Mr. Dudley!" she said; "I am sure my daughter will be extremely obliged to you. She discovered her loss, and has been lamenting it, but we looked on its recovery as hopeless."

As she was speaking Flossie came in. "Here is your purse, you careless little child!" said her mother. "You dropped it in Paxton's shop, and Mr. Dudley has been kind enough to bring it."

Her smile of thanks would have repaid me for travelling a thousand miles.

I was wondering whether I had better go, or whether I had sufficient excuse for staying a few minutes, when I heard a slight clatter on the stairs.

"We were just going to have some tea, Mr. Dudley," Mrs. Lydney said; "I suppose you dine late, and it would be useless to ask you to take a cup?"

Need I say how eagerly I accepted the offer, and with what a reckless disregard for truth I vowed that I always dined early—*very* early—about half-past eleven generally—and the great desire of my life at that moment was a cup of tea? And, indeed, under the circumstances, the last part of my statement was strictly in accordance with the fact.

And so, instead of seeing her behind the foot-lights, arrayed in a sparkling azure dress made on the plan peculiar to theatrical goddesses, I saw her in her own quiet home, clad in a closely fitting gown of dark blue, which showed off her trim little figure to advantage.

How gracefully she presided at the tea-table! and she was a clever little girl, also, I discovered, and disclosed a vein of quiet humor and quaint ideas, when her first shyness wore off, for which I had not given her credit. She played well, and sang superbly—indeed, a musician of eminence having heard her at the theatre had sought her out, and given her that start in the musical profession which is so very, *very* hard to obtain, and which promised to land her very high in the calling she had adopted. Not only had she wonderful facility of execution, but that rare power of identifying herself with the song, and so imparting genuine feeling to the music. Her mother, too, had that high-bred tone which you would scarcely expect to find in Chiselhurst Street; and the circumstances which had induced Flossie to go on the stage were as Clara de Lacy had told. Flossie had not know she was to play burlesque, having, woman-like signed, an engagement to play any parts that might be given her for six months, without reading the document; however, she managed to free herself, and was making great progress in a calling for which she was more suited. I never enjoyed an evening so much in my life, and when I rose to leave, at ten o'clock, I felt that it was quite useless to struggle with feelings too powerful to repress—I was thoroughly in love.

(*To be Continued*)

Terminal Exercises.

Ladies Academy.

(CONCLUDED.)

Our space did not permit us in our last to publish an epitome of three of the essays delivered at Lingley Hall on Monday evening of last week. They were all excellent specimens of literary art. The one by Miss Edith Morrow, of Halifax, developed a parallel between the sources of success and

KEYS.

"Have you not had a mother, a grand-mother or grandame, whose marvellous bunch of keys you well remember? Was there not one magic key that you often watched with eager eyes, as anon they dangled at her side?" Miss Morrow then gave us a peep into a wondrous closet which this key only would open, and with pretty fancy picture of what was there. How willingly, yea gladly, children leave all the fair bright things lying at their side for just one glimpse of something under lock and key! She alluded to the strong keys that unlock the cells of a prison and pictured the feelings of the culprit as he heard the clink of the key which locked him in out of all the world. "On going through a vacant house we stumble across a bunch of rusty keys. As we gaze upon them they suggest varied fancies. How many treasures these keys have unlocked! How many firesides have been cheered by dainties they have brought forth? How many beggars they have sent from the door with lightening heart? Where are the owners? Do the jewels still gleam on the taper fingers? Is the portfolio with its sacred contents yet treasured? Is the cadence of the lines penned by the dear one as joyous and rhythmical as ever? Do they make the same sweet melody in the heart? Your own key lost—she alluded to the manifold trial of borrowing your neighbors—thus showing how utterly worthless is any key but the right one, then spoke of the various keys necessary to unlock the storehouse of knowledge, also of the keys that enable one to solve a problem more easily or translate a difficult sentence. These, she said, never found entrance to a Ladies' Academy, but were said often to grace College halls. Wholesome counsel was added to the effect that a pony is a very easy horse to ride. Mention was made of the false keys used in quest of Captain Kidd's gold; of the cheerful tick or the doleful "forever never;" the clock all timed by the winding of a little key; o the spade and pickaxe which unlocked the treasures of Pompeii. Miss Morrow then cited the remark concerning the blind which led Lytton to the creation of Nydia. At last she reached the keys to the heart—sympathy, kindness, friendship and love. Even if the heart be closed against everything else it cannot resist the strongest of keys—love.

Miss Jeffrey gave a very good digest of those inventions and discoveries of modern times that have led to an upper scale of

SOCIAL PROGRESS.

We have made progress in travelling by means of train and steamer, until now we are carried with almost inconceivable rapidity through space. Some of the ancient philosophers thought it possible for spirits to be transported from one region to another without passing through the intermediant space. They must have been dreaming of our day when space seems almost annihilated or perhaps according to Darwin, the human race had blossomed on into higher forms, and we are the swift-winged spirits, capable of such mysterious flights. All former methods for transmitting messages have been superseded by the telegraph which is every moment flashing news to us from abroad. The telephone promises great things. In conversing on this instrument, however, one precaution must be taken—secrets must not be told—politicians and speculators must turn in sorrow away and continue to make use of their old methods, the sealed envelope and the cipher telegram. Our social progress is marked by the improved ways we have found for obtaining light for illuminating purposes. It is now believed that the electric light will be the light of the future. The groans of the gas companies heard from time to time, on account of the decline in stock, are prophetic that we are soon to enter upon a brighter era. The onward progress in civilization, wealth and commerce, is shown in the magnificent exhibitions which are opened to the world. They have resulted in an interchange of thought, a peaceful rivalry, and the diffusion of useful knowledge among the nations of the earth. Our age is one rich in blessings and advantages. We have not to look into the future to see rising before us summits clothed with bloom and beauty. We occupy these summits—we bathe in the golden light, and revel amid the inviting scenes. It had been well said that we are reaping the fruits of former ages.

The voyage of life, and its stormy vicissitudes, was happily dealt with by Miss Clarke in

UP-STREAM.

Miss Clarke opened her essay with a picture of a pleasure boat, well-laden with merry passengers. As it glided over the dancing waves, and all were at the highest pitch of enjoyment, some one noticed how dark the face of the captain had grown. The veins were gathering in great knots upon his temples and the muscles enlarging in the strong sinewy arms.

After a vivid description of the threatening danger, its cause and the struggle with the tide, a few almost superhuman strokes of the oar and a "thank God" arises from every lip, the danger is past. Hither and thither upon the sea of life are multitudinous barges, some strong and sea-girt, some threateningly frail, but all struggling with the current. Figuratively, we are drifting adown the stream of time—literally we are pulling up-stream. Is there no smooth sailing then, no proudly, prosperous voyaging? What says the oarsman? What says the helmsman? What say we all? These grave questions Miss Clarke undertakes to answer. She alluded first to boats which leave shore without any reference to the tide, and thus their home-coming is often indefinitely delayed, next, to a stately brig about to weigh anchor, which was at first so poorly equipped, that the crew were fearful in leaving shore, but owing to the faithful captain and crew she had improved with every voyage, and now behold her yards of bunting floating in the wind; then to those vessels continually leaving port with a good captain and crew, but meeting so many counter-currents with which to wrestle so many rapids to sheer clear of, that no effort could make the voyage prosperous. Next, she pictures a life-boat rocking and reeling upon the surging waves just to save lives and keep hearts from breaking; it does nothing but pull against the stream. She likens life in its varying phases to all these crafts. Miss Clarke thought more pains should be taken to select the tide when at its flood, then with a helmsman thoroughly acquainted with his compass, the probabilities of life's success on all in our favor. But, struggling manfully, if the boat goes down beneath the wave what then? The bottom of the seething, roaring ocean is not the last resting place. There is another shore ahead. There is something we are sure of obtaining if we persistently pull up-stream.

THE Earl of Sefton would be today almost the wealthiest man in England if his ancestor had not sold, for a comparative trifle, his harbor rights, held under an ancient grant, to the town of Liverpool; and the Marquis of Donegal would to-day be thrice as rich as the richest man in Ireland had he not recklessly leased the town of Belfast on perpetual leases at nominal rents, receiving in so doing heavy "fines," or payments. Almost the whole town is nominally his property.

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