

proud. Her girl was chatting now, freely and without embarrassment. The colonel had opened, and they had laughed together; and then she had caught, "You're like the photograph—we all wore it at school in little buttons!"—"Now you may go," said Mrs. Golding; and this time the girl fled in earnest.

It was a glimpse, a vision, real and unreal. Olive Golding was studying the colonel's face.

"She's a little—a little like her mother?" she asked shyly.

"Do you know, Olive, I thought it was a ghost," he said.

"A very substantial one."

"Apparently," and he smiled.

She gave him tea, and they talked of other things.

"Why don't you come to us for Christmas?" she asked at last. "We are all going away into the country, and we'd just have room for you. I'd be so glad."

"I'd fall in love with your daughter," was his reply.

"I would be gladder still."

Their eyes met, making her meaning plain. It swept through him.

"I'm an old fogey," he said, after an interval.

"You're not old."

"Middle-aged."

"Quite a boy!"

"She wouldn't have me," and he shook his head.

"Oh, Edmund, then you'll come!" It was, almost as though she were offering herself to him. "You will come?" she said. "I half hoped and wanted this ever since our first meeting. You see, I owed it you—so long!"

"But she wouldn't have me."

"Have you! Oh, aren't you a hero and all sorts of things! Do girls ever refuse them?—even if you were sixty!"

"But she'll find me out."

"She'll think herself the luckiest girl in England, and you can make it true. A young girl's clay. I was clay. A young girl's love is not a very deep thing, and it's easily won; but you can make it deep and win it and keep it. I know you'll be good to her, Edmund. You've been too good to me."

Sebright was looking at her, his eyes a little dimmed. "If she would grow like you!" he said.

"Then you will come to us?"

"I'll come," said Sebright, "of course I will!"

Before Christmas

Magdalene Merritt

Now comes the white snow mantle down
And hides the fields so bleak and brown.
The hardwood trees against the sky
Uplift their leafless branches high,
While nature in expectant mood
Seems prophesying something good;
So short the time that bringeth near
The happy Christmas of good cheer.

How gay the children run to school
And quick obey each stringent rule!
With bright heads bent above their books,
Right merry every scholar looks.
With side-long glances here and there,
And hopeful thoughts that wander where
Old Santa Claus packs up the things
That every glad some Christmas brings.

Then hurry up, good mother, bake
The doughnuts, pies, and rich nut cake,
Till full your pantry shelves will grow
With toothsome goodies, row on row;
There flanked by clear cranberry gell,
And small plum puddings steaming well,
The fattened goose is stored away
To ripen until Christmas day.

And in a hamper, deep and wide,
Pack close and well what goes inside;
For gifts like these that love doth send
To greater health will ever tend;
Since food touched by your finger tips
Is magic to another's lips.
Thus each small portion sent away,
Will wonders work on Christmas day.

Kerosene is excellent for cleaning windows, mirrors, cut glass, etc. Rub the surface with a rag dipped in the oil; wipe off with a clean cloth and polish with tissue paper or chamois skin. There will be no odor left on glassware, but there will be a wonderful brilliance.

A February Picnic

By E. M.

"Oh dear me!" sighed Nellie Page; "how I do wish I had been born in the summer."

"I'm sorry, too," said Nellie's mamma; "you really ought to have been born in June, you're such a rosy posy," and she kissed the little girl's plump pink cheeks.

"Helen Barr has her birthday in August when she can have a lawn party. Gracie Ford's is in July. She has always a picnic birthday party, and I have nasty, horrid, snowy, old February, when we've got to stay indoors and go home early because it gets dark and there's no flowers nor green things nor nothing."

"It is too, too bad," sighed mamma; "we thought you were such a dear little valentine when you arrived six years ago that I really didn't think anything about the winter. And it was such a snowy day, snowier than any birthday you have had since."

"I think there is plenty of snow now," said Nellie, as she gazed out at the windows watching the boys and girls wade home from school through the drifts.

"We're not going to mind the snow," said mamma cheerily; "I've just written all your invitations and asked the little folks to come to a picnic on Thursday."

"A picnic, mamma, out in the snowy woods!" cried Nellie.

"No indeed. This picnic will be under green trees and with flowers all round."

"Oh!" gasped Nellie; "where are we going? South?"

"I can't tell," said mamma; "don't ask any more questions; it would spoil the surprise."

How it did snow on Thursday! "Don't take off your things," said Nellie's mamma, to the boys and girls as they arrived for the picnic; "all come in and carry a basket to the picnic."

Mamma wrapped a shawl about her head and with her guests trooping after her carried a big basket out through the yard. They stopped, however, before they went into the woods behind the house; they followed mamma into the barn, up the stairs to the great big loft.

How the boys and girls did shout when they saw the wonderful picnic grounds. The floor of the loft was covered with a green carpet and green, grassy-looking rugs, and all around stood pine trees, nailed securely to the floor. You couldn't see, however, where they were nailed, for the grassy mats covered them. Two or three canary cages were hidden away in the rafters, and the birds were singing. There were two swings and a teeter board, and Nellie's big doll house and all her dollies. Best of all, off at one end there was a great, big mound of sweet-smelling hay. The children dived into it and rolled on it and made nests, and what a good time

they did have. There were boxes and pots of real blossoming flowers, which mamma had been petting and tending for weeks—daffodils and hyacinths and lilies.

I couldn't tell you of all the surprises which happened at that picnic. While she was playing hide and seek among the trees, Dolly Loring found a whole shelf of things ready to blow soap bubbles, and such fun as they had. In one corner, in the hay, was old Doosie with her three little kittens. Suddenly there came a burst of music. It was a funny old organ grinder. He had the drollest little monkey with him; it danced and bowed and played with the girls and boys.

At last the baskets were unpacked, and everybody sat down around the tablecloth laid on the ground to eat supper. There were delicious sandwiches, sugary doughnuts, red apples, nuts, cunning little saucer pies, candy and popcorn. The boys and girls were as hungry as bears. The big can had to be filled with milk. When they said good-bye and bundled into their big coats and rubber boots, and got ready to wade through the snow home, they all stopped to give three cheers for Nellie and her winter picnic, which had proved to be such a jolly good time.

"Really, mamma," said the tired little hostess, when her guests had gone, "it was the jolliest, funniest picnic I ever went to in all my life."

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