

ston. This idea insured a larger run than usual on Mine Host Krause's barrels and kegs, the precious contents of which were "toted" all the way from the coast—or were supposed to be. The nucleus probably was, and the spring behind the hotel supplied the rest necessary in making the fiery "white whiskey" which has been aptly described as calculated to make a "rabbit spit in a bull dog's face." It was notorious among the miners how under Krause's skilful manipulation, whiskey increased even as did the widow's creuse of oil in the time of Elijah; indeed, there were some who maintained that for every barrel brought in from the coast twenty were sold over the bar. But though his patrons called it "pisen," "knock-out," "forty-rod," and "hell fire," and pretended in jest to burn the floor with it, Krause was unassailable in his argument that "Them as didn't like his liquor needn't cough up their dust fur it." But on Christmas Eve they did want it and did put down many an ounce of dust for it.

But while all this revellry was in progress in Twenty-Mile, a coast wind found its way through the mountain fastnesses, swept up the creeks, swirled down the gulches and valley and howled around the old hotel, almost burying it in a drift of new-fallen snow. Flurries hissed down the wide chimneys into the fire, and found their way through the chinks and crevices in the walls unnoticed and unheeded by the revellers. It was a terrible night without. The stableman, after studying the situation, announced that no one could possibly make his way through that storm, and so when it came to pass that when the genial Krause had made the best possible disposal of his guests there still remained a number who of necessity had to bivouac on the floor.

When the mirth subsided, Old Freeland fell asleep in his chair by the fire.

It may have been that the spirit of Christmas was upon him, the spirit of the Child born in the manger at Bethlehem; or it may have been the faint night cry of a child heard through the house that brought the old man back in dreams to happier days, to the Christmas celebrations of long before.

He was back on the old homestead. It was Daisy's, little Daisy's first Christmas. He and her mother had brought her her presents in her cradle. "Don't you think she sees them, dear, and knows it's Christmas," his wife was saying. "Oh, I think she must; see her smiling."

This dream merged into another. He was still on the old homestead and his family circle was as yet unbroken.

"Merry Tisssmus, Daddy. . . Merry Tisssmus. . . Wake up, Daddy; wake up. . . It's Merry Tisssmus, don't you know?" and daddy looking down at the halo of golden hair, and at the wee white nighty, said within himself that not only on the plains of Bethlehem had angels heralded the Christmas Day, but his own little angel had caught the song across the divide of two thousand years to procla'm it to him.

"A Merry Christmas, Daisy, a Merry, Merry Christmas," and peace and goodwill were in his soul as he fondled his little daughter.

The old man still slept on. His dream merged into still another. He was no longer on the old homestead, but in a wild, rough Californian mining camp.

A little girl housekeeper came in to wish Daddy a Merry Christmas. "But you mustn't come near the kitchen, daddy. You mustn't even peep in at what I have got for dinner. And—we'll try not to be very lonely, dad, though—mother—is away;—but I'm sure she'll see us to-day—it's Christmas."

Had his neighbors from the creeks seen the old man as he slept they would scarcely have recognized him. The

hard, weary, cynical look had disappeared. In dreams he was yet a husband and father, not a homeless wanderer, loveless and weary of life. Dreamland was his only taste of heaven, his only fleeting glimpse of happiness.

Then a door away at the end of the big room creaked and a tiny figure peeped through, stopped for a moment irresolute, then tip-toed over to the fire-place. The fire was yet burning brightly enough to show her the old man asleep—just what the wee apparition had hoped and almost expected to see.

"Merry Tisssmus, Santa Claus. . . Merry Tisssmus, Santa Claus. . . Is oo tired and sleepy, Santa Claus? . . . Did oo come down froo the Chimney, Santa Claus?"

It seemed to the old man but a part of his dream. The child's voice thrilled him through and through.

Meanwhile she watched for him to awake. She even touched his hand.

Slowly he awoke from his slumber so sweet, and looking down saw a tiny angel in white robe and fuzzy golden halo. Surely he was still dreaming.

He glanced quickly around the dingy interior. This was really Twenty-Mile, to which he had come through the snow on the previous evening. He realized that he was awake. But this was—was surely his own little girl who had come to him out of dreamland; he could not mistake her, for her image was engraved upon his memory. But how had she come back to him through all the years, to the wilds of the Caribou? It seemed surpassing strange, almost uncanny.

But little Daisy was beginning to shiver. She had just skipped out of bed to get a glimpse of Santa as he came down the chimney as she had been told he would. She had seen only an old man sleeping by the fire and she was now very cold. Indeed, she was "awful told," she said.

But the old man was now wide awake. He grabbed up the sweet little child and stirred up the fire, cuddling her to his bosom to make her warm and cosy, as he had done years and years before in the days of auld lang syne.

"Who are you, dearie?" he asked with the passion of his forgotten love burning anew in his breast.

"I'se Daisy."

"Daisy!" he repeated, mechanically. His own little daughter's name! Was this after all a dream? Again he looked about him. He was assuredly awake and away off in the lonely Caribou. And it was no mere apparition; it was a real child of flesh and blood he was fondling in his arms. Yet how could any other child be so like his own had been? and the name, too—

"What's your other name, Daisy," he asked.

"Just Daisy, that's all. But is oo Santa Claus?" she in turn enquired.

Just then an alarmed voice called "Daisy, Daisy, where are you?"

"Here, mamma. I'se tummin'," and without further ceremony the little bunch of sweetness slipped down from his knee and ran off to rejoin her mamma.

Old Freeland felt that he was losing his reason. The woman's voice had thrilled him even more than the voice of the child. He tried to think, tried to imagine. Could it be that—No, it could not be. His own Daisy, whom he had cast off, was living happily, he hoped, under the sunny skies of California, thousands of miles away, probably the mother of children, likely forgetful of her old father whom she had run away from.

He could not but think of his daughter. The chance meeting with the child had kindled anew the fatherly instincts in him. The little ray of sunshine had melted the snows and frosts of years of steeling his heart against the object of his love, and germinated the roots of kindness which are natural to the souls of men.

As soon as the house was astir in the morning old Freeland hunted up Krause and enquired feverishly about

Daisy and he tried to could be him.

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