

ed; but the stenographer, who was too much in a hurry to give any thought to possible motives for personal presents, took Miss Williams's contribution, and, having completed her canvass of the fifth floor, went up in the elevator to the sixth.

Arthur was still beaming. He had decided to give a real Christmas present, to give it to his sister, the sister who he hoped would grow up into a woman exactly like Miss Gordon. (Miss Gordon was not quite so grown up in years as the elevator boy thought). He was in the delightful tortures of trying to decide exactly what to give her for a real Christmas present. No one except the people in office buildings had ever given him a present, and they had always given him a present of money; and he had never given a present to any one but his sister, and it had always been a present of money.

He wondered what people gave girls for real Christmas presents. Then he decided to wait and ask Miss Gordon; she certainly knew, he was sure.

He did not suspect that the stenographer was collecting money for his present. She hurried from the elevator to the various offices on the sixth floor. The several occupants of the offices gave her their contributions, with one exception. The exception was no other than the solemn old man who had wondered what Arthur meant by an unreal Christmas present.

'Elevator boy's Christmas present?' he ejaculated. Then he smiled slowly, and so kindly that he did not for the moment look in the least degree solemn. 'I am sorry, Miss West,'—the stenographer's name was Miss Julia West,—'or I should say, I am glad—or—that is to say, I have other plans for the elevator boy.'

Under ordinary circumstances this statement from the solemn old man would have aroused Miss West's curiosity, but just before Christmas her mind was too occupied with other things to give it more than a hurriedly passing thought. When she had collected all the contributions from all the offices in the building, for the elevator boy's present, she hurried to her own office, and counted it; and then put it carefully away in the safe, to be kept until Christmas Eve. It was, as Miss Williams had said it usually was, a nice little sum.

Mr. Cameron Maclaren, the solemn old man, meanwhile, had left his office. He was not a man who procrastinated; and having, as he had told Miss Julia West, other plans connected with a Christmas present for the elevator boy, he immediately proceeded to put them into execution. He went down in the elevator, smiling to himself, and went without delay to the nearest toy-store. Mr. Maclaren was a bachelor, and unfortunately he had no nephews, and was consequently rather ignorant regarding the proper things to give as real Christmas presents to boys of fifteen.

However, he went into the toy-store, and said to a young woman who came forward, and inquired as to what she could show him, 'I want something for a boy.'

'What kind of a boy?' asked the young woman, meaning, doubtless, how old a boy.

'Elevator boy,' said Mr. Cameron absent-mindedly.

The young woman, fortunately, understood the value of old-fashioned ideas of propriety. She did not smile, except in thought; and, discovering the elevator boy's age, she gave Mr. Maclaren several suggestions as to a Christmas present. Finally, Mr. Maclaren selected a pair of skates; and, thanking the young woman, returned with them to his office, and carefully put them into the safe. He laughed as he closed the door of the safe.

'He is going to give a real Christmas present. He will get one!' he said, wondering why he had never before thought to give real Christmas presents to the elevator boys he had known.

The elevator boy in question waited impatiently until it was time for Miss Lillian Gordon to go home. She was a trifle late, and was the only person from the offices in the elevator as it went down for the last time that day. Lillian was very much pleased as she saw the boy's face so much brighter than it had been.

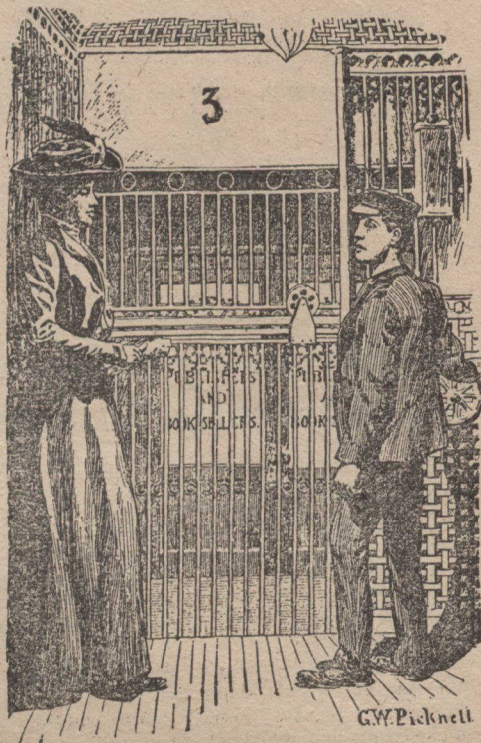
'I want to give my sister a present, Miss Gordon,' he began. 'I never gave her a real

Christmas present, and I don't know what to get.'

'A real present?' said Lillian inquiringly.

'Yes,' said Arthur. 'I always give her a little money at Christmas; course that's nice to have, and she liked it,' he added hastily; 'but I want to give her a real Christmas present, tied up with a red ribbon.'

'I see,' said Lillian very kindly indeed. 'What can you give her? Girls always like pretty things. Some little silver cuff-pins would be nice, or a little silver button-hook. You can get them right across the street, or you may see something there you will like better. You get it, and bring it up, and I'll



'TIED AND WRAPPED?' SAID THE BOY VAGUELY.

(Drawn by G. W. Picknell.)

help you tie it. I have yards more red ribbon than I need; and I shall have more holly, too. Don't forget! Good-night.'

She told her family all about it as soon as she reached home. They were greatly interested, from her mother, who advised her, in consideration of the elevator boy's name, to give him that delightful book, 'The Boy's King Arthur'; to her brother, who urged her to get him a pair of skates. Happily for Mr. Maclaren and Arthur, too, she took her mother's advice.

The day before Christmas, she bought the book; she wrapped it, and tied it with red ribbon, and slipped a sprig of holly under the ribbon. Just as she put it into her desk, Arthur came into the office, bringing a small box containing his real Christmas present for his sister.

'It's little pins, like you said,' he explained, exhibiting them proudly to Lillian's appreciative eyes.

She admired them even as warmly as he desired, and decorated the box containing them with red ribbons and a sprig of holly. Arthur was delighted; he began to be certain that he was having not only fun, but as much fun as Miss Gordon.

Before he went home that Christmas Eve, he had very much more fun than he had ever imagined possible. Miss Julia West gave him the nice little sum of money she had collected for him; and which would be very useful indeed to him; and Miss Lillian Gordon presented him with 'The Boy's King Arthur,' so gayly decorated; and Mr. Cameron Maclaren—a sprig of holly in his buttonhole, if not under the hemp twine tied around his present—gave him the skates. Most amazing of all, Miss Williams, first glancing around to see that no one was looking, hastily handed him a parcel with a rubber band around it, and said, 'The world is a practical place, Arthur, but—there's a knife for you; and I wish you a happy Christmas.' So saying, the calm and deliberate Miss Williams turned and fled.

In fact, all the givers of the presents had

hastened away before Arthur could thank them. It was just as well that they had, for he was too greatly overcome with amazement and joy for words. The next day, which was Christmas Day itself, he wrote notes to them, the longest to Miss Lillian Gordon, to whom he said in conclusion: 'It was such fun to have real Christmas presents,—nice as money is to have. I never had any real ones before. It was fun to give my sister a real one, too; and she is that gay over the pins! They was all nice to give me the presents; but I sorter feel it sorter come 'cause of you. You seemed to get such fun out of giving real Christmas presents, it made me want to have them, and it made me want to give them, more than to have them. And I sorter think it must have had something to do, too, with the other people's thinking of giving them to me. I'm sorter shook up in by mind now as to which is more fun,—having them or giving them!'

### Outside.

The toy-shop is a merry place

At any time of year,

But, oh! it's quite like fairy-land

When Christmas day is near.

The music-boxes tinkle,

And the trumpets add their noise;

And up and down and everywhere

Are toys and toys and toys!

The busy crowds that look and laugh

And hurry to and fro,

The dolls that walk, the dolls that talk,

The cars that truly go,

The tops that sing, the steeds that prance

For children to bestride—

How sad it seems that any child

Should need to stand outside!

In prickly green of Christmas wreaths

The holly berries glow,

The Christmas trees will sparkle soon,

With Christmas fruit bent low,

And here's a thought will help us all

At happy Christmas-tide,

The very best of pleasures

Are the pleasures we divide!

Wherever hearts are happy;

'Tis a simple thing to do,

To seek some other, sadder heart,

And make it happy, too.

The joy we share with others

Is a joy that's multiplied,

And 'twill make a perfect Christmas

If there's no one left outside.

—Hannah G. Fernald, in the 'Youth's Companion.'

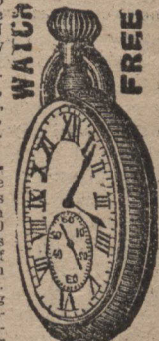
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