



Ring, happy bells, across the snow,  
The new must come, the old must go;  
How gleefully they fill the air,  
How all the world is white and fair?  
She listens and her eyes grow glad;  
To her the thought is nowise sad;  
The new must come, the old must go,  
Ring happy bells, across the snow.  
Ah, little one, your life is sweet  
And pure as snow that stays your feet;  
It is your right to pause and hear  
Good tidings for the future year;  
The new must come, the old must go,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow!

THE BIRD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

(Continued.)

VI.—“WHEN THE PIE WAS OPENED,  
THE BIRDS BEGAN TO SING!”

The children went out the back door quietly, and were presently lost to sight, Sarah Maud slipping and stumbling along absent-mindedly as she recited, under her breath, “It was such a pleasant evenin’—an’ sech—a-short-walk-we-thought—we’d-leave-our-hats-to-home.”

Peter rang the door bell, and presently a servant admitted them, and, whispering something in Sarah’s ear, drew her downstairs into the kitchen. The other Ruggleses stood in horror-stricken groups as the door closed behind their commanding officer, but there was no time for reflection, for a voice from above was heard, saying, “Come right up stairs, please!”

“There’s not to make reply,  
There’s not to reason why,  
There’s but to do or die.”

Accordingly, they walked upstairs, and Elfrida, the nurse, ushered them into a room more splendid than anything they had ever seen. But, oh, woe! where was

Sarah Maud! and was it Fate that Mrs. Bird should say, at once, “Did you lay your hats in the hall?” Peter felt himself cleft by circumstance the head of the family, and, casting one imploring look at tongue-tied Susan, standing next him, said huskily, “It was so very pleasant—that—that—” “That we hadn’t good hats enough to go round,” put in little Susan, bravely, to help him out, and then froze with horror that the ill-fated words had slipped off her tongue.

However, Mrs. Bird said, pleasantly, “Of course you wouldn’t wear hats such a short distance—I forgot when I asked. Now, will you come right in to Miss Carol’s room, she is so anxious to see you?”

Just then Sarah Maud came up the back-stairs, so radiant with joy from her secret interview with the cook, that Peter could have pinched her with a clear conscience, and Carol gave them a joyful welcome. “But where is Baby Larry?” she cried, looking over the group with searching eye. “Didn’t he come?”

“Larry! Larry!” Good Gracious, where was Larry? They were all sure that he had come in with them; for Susan remembered scolding him for tripping over the door-mat. Uncle Jack went into convulsions of laughter. “Are you sure there were nine of you?” he asked merrily.

“I think so, sir,” said Peoria, timidly; “but, anyhow, where was Larry;” and she showed signs of weeping.

“Oh, well, cheer up!” cried Uncle Jack. “I guess he’s not lost—only mislaid. I’ll go and find him before you can say Jack Robinson!”

“I’ll go, too, if you please, sir,” said Sarah Maud, “for it was my place to mind him, an’ if he’s lost I can’t relish my vittles!”

The other Ruggleses stood rooted to the floor. Was this a dinner party, forsooth;

her white forehead flushed delicately, her eyes beamed with joy, and the children told their mother, afterwards, that she looked almost as beautiful as the pictures of the angels. There was great bustle behind a huge screen in another part of the room, and at half-past five this was taken away, and the Christmas dinner-table stood revealed. What a wonderful sight it was to the poor little Ruggles children, who ate their sometimes scanty meals on the kitchen table! It blazed with tall colored candles, it gleamed with glass and silver, it blushed with flowers, it groaned with good things to eat; so it was strange that the Ruggleses, forgetting that their mother was a McGrill, shrieked in admiration of the fairy spectacle. But Larry’s be-

and, if so, why were such things ever spoken of as festive occasions? Sarah Maud went out through the hall, calling, “Larry! Larry!” and without any interval of suspense a thin voice piped up from below, “Here I be!” The truth was that Larry, being deserted by his natural guardian, dropped behind the rest, and wriggled into the hat-tree to wait for her, having no notion of walking unprotected into the jaws of a dinner-party. Finding that she did not come, he tried to crawl from his refuge and call somebody, when—dark and dreadful ending to a tragic day—he found that he was too much intertwined with umbrellas and canes to move a single step. He was afraid to yell! When I have said this of Larry Ruggles I have pictured a state of helpless terror that ought to wring tears from every eye; and the sound of Sarah Maud’s beloved voice, some seconds later, was like a strain of angel music in his ears. Uncle Jack dried his tears, Peter nudged Kitty, who sat next him, and said, “Look, will yer, ev’ry feller’s got his own partic’lar butter; I suppose that’s to show yer can eat that much’n no more. No, it ain’t neither, for that pig of a Peory’s just gittin’ another helpin’!” “Yes,” whispered Kitty, “an’ the napkins is marked with big red letters. I wonder if that’s so nobody’ll nip ‘em; an’ oh, Peter, look at the pictures painted right on ter the dishes. Did yer ever!”

havior was the most disgraceful, for he stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once for a high chair that pointed unmistakably to him, climbed up like a squirrel, gave a comprehensive look at the turkey, clapped his hands in ecstasy, rested his fat arms on the table, and cried, with joy, “I beat the hull lot o’ yer!” Carol laughed until she cried, giving orders, meanwhile, “Uncle Jack, please sit at the head, Sarah Maud at the foot, and that will leave four on each side; Mama is going to help Elfrida, so that the children need not look after each other, but just have a good time.”

A sprig of holly lay by each plate, and nothing would do but each little Ruggles must leave his seat and have it pinned on by Carol, and as each course was served one of them pleaded to take something to her. There was hurrying to and fro, I can assure you, for it is quite a difficult matter to serve a Christmas dinner on the third floor of a great city house; but if every dish had had to be carried up a rope ladder the servants would gladly have done so. There was turkey and chicken, with delicious gravy and stuffing, and there were half-a-dozen vegetables, with cranberry jelly, and celery, and pickles; and as for the way these delicacies were served, the Ruggleses never forgot it as long as they lived.

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“The plums is all took out o’ my cramb’ry sarse, an’ it’s friz to a stiff jell!” shouted Peoria, in wild excitement.

“Hi—yah! I got a wish-bone!” sung Larry, regardless of Sarah Maud’s frown; after which she asked to have his seat changed, giving as excuse that he gen’ally set beside her, an’ would “feel strange;” the true reason being that she desired to kick him gently, under the table, whenever he passed what might be termed “the McGrill line.”

“I declare to goodness,” murmured Susan, on the other side, “there’s so much to look at I can’t scarcely eat nothin’!”

(To be Continued.)

’TIS A MERCY to have that taken from us which takes us from God.



“THE RUGGLESSES NEVER FORGOT IT.”