

had he remained at home she would have gone out in the fresh air and have gained the power to ward off such an attack. He went back to his wife's room; she was waiting for him and had missed him. He bent over her to hear her low words "I want my baby," she said. Max went after him with the tears raining down his cheeks. They brought the child and put him close by her side, and she smiled as she had not done for days. When they tried to remove him she shook her head, and they left him until the doctor came. "Oh yes, better let her have all she wants, poor girl, it will not hurt the boy I think." This was more than Max could bear. He went out and walked up and down the library floor until day dawned before he had courage to return to his wife.

"She wants you, sir," said the nurse, and Max hurried to her, feeling that the end was near and he must be by her side.

She looked up brightly as he entered, and said in better voice than Max had heard since his return, "I am better dear, little Tom made me sleep, and now you must go away and thank God he has left you little Tom's mother." Max was on his knees in an instant. He could not speak. He could only pat the thin, white cheek which had grown so dear to him as it became thinner and thinner. He did not rise when the doctor entered, and when he heard from his lips that the disease had taken a favorable turn, Max bowed his head, and for the first time in his life, fully realized the power and comfort of prayer.

"Now, Dugeddon," said the doctor, "we must have you taking better care of yourself, go to bed and sleep for ten solid hours; this little woman will need the tenderest care for many weeks to come."

"She shall have it while I live," said Max fervently.

The Christmas bells had ceased to ring for that season, but the Christmas peace was in the heart of all that household and wherever Agnes was known. The following year Max Dugeddon with his wife and child went about the city carrying joy and gladness into many homes less comfortable than their own. Wherever sickness or sorrow cast a shadow, there went Max, always presenting his offering in the name of his wife and child.

Strangers sometimes wonder why so young a man should have snow white hair, and those who knew Max at the club frequently commented on the great change in his manner, but none, save Agnes, will ever know that he suffered crucifixion, when self was laid low. He came out of the trial a braver and a better man, and Clara Fairfax no longer chides him for his selfishness.

Neither then or ever after did Agnes mention her experiences during that bitter Christmas season, nor Max never quite knew how it was until one day when he was looking over her diary to find a reference she had desired. Under the date of that Christmas day he read these lines of Keble's:

"Let storm and darkness do their worst;  
For the lost dream the heart may ache,  
The heart may ache, but may not burst;  
Heaven will not leave thee nor forsake."

Out from the depths on his manly heart, made perfect through suffering, there went up to heaven's gate an unspoken prayer:

"Heaven help me to be worthy of little Tom's Mother."

THE END.

## Merry Christmas, Ho!

**M**ERRY, Merry Christmas, Ho!  
By the fireside's merry glow  
I can never forget my pretty pet  
As she romped some years ago.  
But as the green sward after rain  
Renews its beauty not in vain,  
That tempest pass'd, and she to me  
Became a blest reality,  
Making my life what it should be.

**M**ERRY, Merry Christmas, Ho!  
The light gleams to and fro  
On the busy street, where the many feet  
Press over the glistening snow.  
The outward garb, the features play,  
Page-like you read their lives away.  
A loving wish, a pitying sigh  
Wells up your heart when passing by—  
We're kindred all—God bless the tie!

**M**ERRY, Merry Christmas, Ho!  
Sweet song of long ago;  
Some chords are left the seraphs swept,  
And fill the vales below.  
For the bridal of the earth and heav'n,  
That blessed morn, the links were given,  
And so we hear the merry chime,  
One hand enclosing Father Time,  
The other reached by hands divine.

Toronto.

S. D. O.



PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, OTTAWA.