

# CHRISTMAS

# 1895



UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

## A NIGHT'S TRAGEDY.



HE is seeking Him now, so they tell me; All children she loves in His name. In some child still hoping to find Him. Though 'twas ages ago that He came.

Natalie sang this verse of the old Christmas song over and over again, as she sat one evening in the long gallery surrounded by her beloved dolls. This gallery led to her father's suite of rooms in the Hermitage, the addition the Empress Catherine had built to the winter palace, and the reason that Natalie's father lived so near the palace, under the same roof, indeed, was that he was private secretary to the empress. Natalie was a little Russian girl, and the verses she sang were for the benefit of her last new doll, who had lately come from Paris with a great many French airs and fashions. The dainty creature seemed so different from the other homely, clumsy dolls, that Natalie felt she must be constantly explaining or apologizing for something that might not be just what mademoiselle was accustomed to. In France, for instance, perhaps they had never heard of Baboushka, the old woman who personifies Santa Claus to Russian children. She wanders eternally over the earth, looking into every cradle, and is always doomed to be disappointed, because she refused long ago to show the Magi the way when they were journeying from Persia to Bethlehem through Russia. The song told also how Baboushka is dressed like an old, old woman, with a pack on her back full of gifts for good boys and girls, and how she always carries a broom, because she was sweeping when the Wise Men knocked at her door. Natalie became quite excited as she went on, for the Russian girls and boys think almost as highly of Baboushka as we do here of Santa Claus. Perhaps, though, they stand a little in awe of her, for besides the rewards she has for good children, I believe the bad ones sometimes tremble at the thought of the punishment she could bring to those who deserve it. It seems queer that Santa Claus should

the rooms in which Natalie's family lived were filled with bronzes, medallions and costly marbles. So Mademoiselle Parishkin, the new French doll, was very fortunate to have found so grand a residence. Indeed, she seemed more at her ease there than some of the older dolls, who never got over their awkward ways and appearance. Some of them had been brought from Lido



land and the far-away provinces, and no doubt it was the way they were wrapped up from head to foot in fur and heavy cloth that made them seem so clumsy and unwieldy. But Natalie loved them all as friends, and often they were her only audience as she repeated the fairy pantomimes and plays she had seen performed at the empress' private theater in the Hermitage. She made them all—large and small dolls—act in their turn, and they did very well in pantomime. Of course, in the dialogues and plays, she had to make all the speeches herself, except when her cousin Saché, or Alexander, who was about her own age, joined in her play, and when he did, he made things go on very briskly. He thought the pantomimes rather slow, and preferred the evenings when they had illuminations in the gallery. These were imitations of the grand displays made at the winter palace when the emperor held his court there, and the anniversary of every important event was an excuse for a general illumination of the palace. On this particular evening, Saché came racing down the long gallery like the blustering north wind blowing over the steppes, calling to Natalie:

"Come on, I say, let us illuminate the gallery to-night!"  
"What do we want to celebrate today?" asked Natalie.  
"Oh, anything. I don't care what!" was the reply. "The taking of the battle, if you like."  
"Oh, no, Saché," returned Natalie. "You surely remember that we had that anniversary only a short time ago, and then, you know, you made a mistake about the date."  
She remembered how her heart beat high as they designed, cut out and painted the transparencies that, with hundreds of little candles shining behind them, were to surprise her father on the evening of his birthday, when he

should open the door of the long gallery leading to his library. But she did not remind Saché of the fact that the day before the birthday he told her that was the day the battle was taken, and friends of liberty should not let the anniversary pass without a sign. She had let him try the effect of the illumination that night, and in his eagerness to make experiments, he had set fire to the decorations she had arranged on the white marble chimney piece. Saché remembered it, too, and was almost ashamed to remember how he had enjoyed the excitement of seeing those decorations burn more than he would a half dozen pantomimes. He said nothing more about celebrating anniversaries, but suddenly turning, he saw Mademoiselle Parishkin leaning in a very coquettish way against one of the long windows.

"Why, who is this you've got here?" he said.  
"That's my new doll, Mademoiselle Parishkin. Isn't she imperial?"  
"She looks as if she thought she might be the mother herself!" (So the Russians call their empress.) "She needs watching," continued Saché. "I think you should let me train her; she might get you and herself into trouble. Do you know now, Natalie, I think she looks like a French spy!"  
"Oh, no, indeed!" exclaimed Natalie. "I am sure she is not. Why, the Princess Laminski brought her to me from Paris."

"You would never know a spy even when you saw one," said Saché. "I'll tell you what we will do. We will try her according to the laws of her own country in a court of justice, and see if she isn't a spy." (Alexander had been studying French history.) "Of course, if she is not a spy that will end all the fun, but if we find out that she is, I know how to take it out of her."  
"Yes, but—Saché, she has on such a beautiful dress. Please don't spoil it!"  
"Oh, it won't hurt a bit to try her



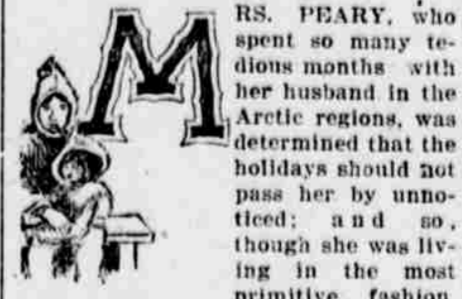
Suspended her outside the window, as a spy. Of course, if she is convicted, she will have to take off that one and put on a convict's dress before she goes to Siberia. Now, I'll be the little Father (the emperor). You know I could send her right off into exile, but I will try her first in a court of Peers. Stand those fellows up in a row, Natalie. Now you answer for her. Why did you come to St. Petersburg?" he asked, looking very sternly at Parishkin.  
"I—don't—know," answered Natalie, hesitating.  
"There!" said Saché, "that convict

you. In the military catechism that every man in the Regiment knows by heart, Gen. Suvarof says, 'I don't know' is worse to meet than the enemy. For the 'I won't know' an officer is put in the guard—a staff officer is served with an arrest at home. If you only had not said that!"  
"Wait, then," said Natalie; "she came here for me to take care of her and love her as I do my other dolls."  
"No, you must not bring in outside parties in that way. You must speak only in her name."  
"But I am not an outside party at all," said Natalie. "She belongs to me and I don't want to see her convicted. I believe you do."  
"Well, that's not the way to do, but you may recommend her to the emperor's clemency, and I will give her the choice of going to Siberia, or with that fellow there next to you and that one next to him—call them the Prince and Princess Poloukhyn—and let her live with them on their estates in Livonia and never appear at court until the emperor pleases."  
"This one, do you mean?" asked Natalie. "Do not call this dear Saché that fellow! My good Prascovie, the oldest of them all. But she and Catiche can go with Parishkin to Livonia. Where is Livonia, Saché?"  
"Oh, in your schoolroom, you know. It is very pleasant in there, only they must stay there until I say they can

## IN ARCTIC REGIONS.

### A CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL AMID ICE AND SNOW.

How the Members of the Peary Expedition Passed the Day—Teaching the Eskimos American Manners—Loath to Quit the Dinner Table.



MR. PEARY, who spent so many tedious months with her husband in the Arctic regions, was determined that the holidays should not pass her by unnoticed; and so, though she was living in the most primitive fashion, with a frozen world all about her, she made hearty though simple preparation for festivity.  
They spent, she says, a day in decorating the interior of their Arctic home for the Christmas and New Year festivities. In the larger of the two rooms the ceiling was draped with red mosquito netting. Wire candelabra and candleholders were placed in all the corners and along the walls. Two large United States flags were crossed at one end of the room, and a silk sledge flag was put up on the opposite corner.  
I gave the boys new cretonne for curtains for their bunks, and we decorated the photographs of our dear ones at home with red, white and blue ribbons. We spent the evening in playing games and chatting, and at midnight Mr. Peary and I retired to our room to open some letters, boxes and parcels given us by kind friends, and marked: "To be opened Christmas eve at midnight."

On Christmas day we had what we considered the jolliest Christmas dinner ever eaten in the Arctic regions, and then we invited our faithful natives to a dinner cooked by us and served at our table, with our dishes. I thought it would be as much fun for us to see them eat with knife, fork and spoon as it would be for them to do it.  
After our meal had been cleared away, the table was set again, and the Eskimos were called in. We had nicknames for all of them, and it was the "Villain" who was put at the head of the table, and told that he must serve the company just as he had seen Mr. Peary serve us.

The "Daisy" took my place at the foot of the table, and her duty was to pour the tea. The "Young Husband" and "Misfortune" sat on one side, while "Tiresome" and the "White Man" sat opposite.  
It was amusing to see these queer-looking creatures, dressed entirely in the skins of animals, seated at the table, and trying to act like civilized people. Both the Villain and the Daisy did their parts well.  
One incident was especially funny. The White Man, seeing a nice-looking piece of meat in the stew, reached across the table and endeavored to pick

come back. Hasn't she something else to put on instead of all this finery?"  
"Oh! I do not intend to take off that beautiful dress as long as she lives," said Natalie.  
"She is dressed too fine for a convict," said Saché, "and besides I think she is getting off too easy. Let us give her another choice. The knout or Siberia? Which do you choose, prisoner at the bar?"  
"I want to know first where Siberia is," said Natalie. "Now I am myself speaking. I do not want my dress torn with any of your sticks."  
French fashions ruled the world then just as they do now, and Mademoiselle's costume would have been a good model for a fashionable Russian lady's evening dress. It was in the days of crinoline and paniers, and over a skirt of white tulle she wore a lovely crimson satin polonaise with long ribbon streamers of the same shade, and stockings and slippers to match.  
"Well, then, she will have to go to Siberia," said Saché, "and I will hang her by one of those red strings outside the schoolroom window, where she can see the Neva frozen over. That will be Siberia, and when she comes back she will be a different creature!"  
Natalie consented, but only because she feared something worse might be done to the unfortunate prisoner. She showed Saché which of the ribbon loops would be the safest to bear the doll's weight when he suspended her outside the window.  
And there, in that perilous situation, poor Mademoiselle Parishkin passed the night—for they forgot all about her, and in the morning she fulfilled Alexander's prophecy of the night before. The snow and ice that fell during the night formed a thick coating all over her, and when she was carried to the large porcelain stove in the schoolroom to thaw, the red dye in her satin polonaise, her slippers and hose, stained her all over from head to foot, and she had indeed become a "different creature!"



Christmas Customs.  
One custom that has come to us from across the sea is that of hanging up stockings on Christmas Eve. Little children are taught that St. Nicholas brings in gifts to them through closed windows, and it is supposed this custom started from a tradition that St. Nicholas used to throw purses of money in through the windows of poor maidens, so that they might have marriage portions.  
Howison, in his sketches of Upper Canada, says that he met once at midnight on a beautiful moonlight Christmas Eve an Indian, who was softly creeping along on the ground. Upon being questioned, the Indian motioned to him to be silent, and said: "We watch to see the deer kneed; this is Christmas night, and all the deer fall upon their knees to the Great Spirit and look up."  
They watch the lofty chimney tops With eyes of eager youth, And seldom 'tis a young one drops To what is really truth.  
Oil stains may be removed from wall paper by applying for four hours pipe clay, powdered and mixed with water to the thickness of cream.

The Coming Event.  
Now Santa Claus hooks up his teams, Among the snow-girt dells, And happy children hear in dreams The jingle of his bells.



They watch the lofty chimney tops With eyes of eager youth, And seldom 'tis a young one drops To what is really truth.  
Oil stains may be removed from wall paper by applying for four hours pipe clay, powdered and mixed with water to the thickness of cream.

## IN 1620.

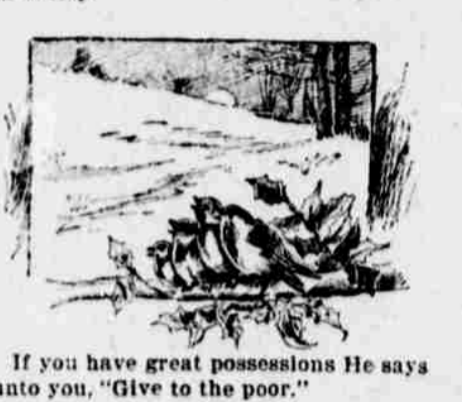
### The First Christmas Celebration on This Continent.

It was in the year 1620 that the Puritans passed their first Christmas in America. By referring to a copy of the old Bradford manuscript it will be found that the early settlers evidently determined not to celebrate their first Christmas in a new land except by hard work. William Bradford writes of it in this manner: "Ye 16 day ye winde came faire, and they arrived safe in this harbor. And afterward tooke better view of ye place, and resolved wher to pitch their dwelling; and ye 25 day began to erect ye first house for common use to receive them and their goods." To look back upon those early days, when our forefathers by hard labor toiled for a house for all, makes one realize in some degree the advancement of our country. Bradford continues as follows: "Munday, the 25 day, we went on shore, some to fell tumber, some to saw, some to rine and some to carry, so no man rested all that day, but towards night some, as they were at worke, heard a noyse of some Indians, which caused us all to goe to our Muskets, but we heard no further, so we came aboard again and left some twentle to keep the court of gard; that night we had a sore storme of winde and rayne. Munday, the 25 day, being Christmas Day, we began to drinke water aboard, but at night the Master caused us to have some Beere, and so on board we had diverse times now and then some Beere, but on shore none at all."



A score of intelligent and well-informed persons, assembled in a drawing-room one evening, were asked to give the habits and peculiarities of the mistletoe. Without exception they described it as a parasitic plant growing upon the oak. This almost universal belief comes, no doubt, from associating the plant with the oak which the Druids venerated. It is, however, regarded as exceptional when a mistletoe flourishes on an oak-tree. An eminent authority declares that there were a few years ago less than a score of oaks in all England on which this parasite was found.

The Meaning of Christmas Day.  
The keynote of Christmas joy is "Peace on earth, good will to men." The first Christmas Day that ever dawned brought rejoicing in its wake. On that day there was born in Bethlehem, Judea, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. For those weary with sin, for those oppressed with sorrows, for the troubled in mind, for the weak and helpless He came. But not to these alone. To the joyful and happy ones, to those rich in this world's goods, to the successful and prosperous He came. To the whole world He appeared. None were forgotten by Him. And now to the outcast and to the weary one, to the rich man and to the joyful child He says the words, "Learn of Me."  
If you suffer Christ pities you.  
If you be lonely He is with you.  
If you repent of sin He will keep you in safety.



The Yule Feast.  
Let England have her plum pudding, and let us have our own particular American dishes on Christmas Day. A comment was made by an Englishwoman upon Americans in general yesterday. When asked what she had noticed specially about Americans during her two years' visit to this country, she smiled at first and said nothing. But when the request was repeated and emphasized by the question: "Now what are you going to say about us when you return to England—in fact, what are you going to say behind our backs?" she replied: "I shall probably say in criticism that you disgrace the streets of New York by having an elevated railroad, and that all Americans are trying to be as much like the English as possible, and I do not see why this is. I should think you would want your American individuality preserved." For a Christmas dinner this year let us have some dishes that belong to our own country, and which not even Merry England nor chivalrous France can furnish. The dishes are not expensive, and of course additions may be made.  
What folly it is to pray, "Give us our daily bread." If we have devoured widows' houses, and go to church with the cash in our pocket.  
The only wholesome bread that we take from God's hand is that