



It's just what I wanted to say, you'll admit. And it's easier far than to write one to fit. 'Twas the night before Christmas and Dick was in bed. When he heard a light step on the roof overhead, And a rattle of boots in the chimney, and knew It was Santa, so down the front stairway he flew And peeped in the parlor and there, sure enough, Was that little old gentleman, ruddy and bluff, With his thick bushy whiskers and jolly red nose, And the pack that he carries wherever he goes. But his dress, well, what student of story book lore Saw Santa Claus dressed in a sweater before? Or in trousers of plaid, while the stockings he sported Were the kind Anglomaniacs lately 've imported, Called "zoffers." In short, his attire was so queer, Dick's gasp of surprise reached the old fellow's ear. "Come in," said he, kindly, "I really would like To have some one to talk to. Say, how do I strike Your critical eye? Aren't these golf stockings nice? I fancy that they cut considerable ice. What! Surprised at my slang? I don't know why you should be, It's strange how the people have misunderstood me. I'm not the old fossil the story books state; I'll have you to know that I'm right up-to-date. My reindeer? you ask. My dear boy, they're too slow For this wide-awake age, they've been sold to a show. I'm riding a wheel and I fancy myself I could put a few racers away on the shelf. If I ever started to beat 'em. Let's see, My cyclometer tells me I've ridden just three Hundred thousand and twenty-five miles since I started, And—My! that reminds me, it's time I departed. So long—See you later." He stepped to the door And giving a jump quickly vanished from view. And Dick reached the window in season to spy The flash of his lamp as his cycle whizzed by. A glimpse in the road where the bright moonlight shone, A speck in the distance, and Santa was gone. And said Dick, as he slowly went back to the fire: "Say, what would he do if he punctured a tire?"

—Joe Lincoln, in L. A. W. Bulletin.

CHRISTMAS ROSES.

IT HAD been a dull, gray day, sunless, rainless, cheerless, and it was Christmas eve. A sobbing breeze that was not even cold sighed among the pines and the leafless elms that lined the street of the little southern town. "If the sun would come out, or even if it would rain! One likes to see something going on, even if the something is unpleasant. Things seem to have come to a sort of standstill. I wish we were at home with Minnie and the kids. She's the sort of person to keep you from missing the sunshine, and that." Jack Allen laughed. "You are in love with your wife, Tom, that's all." "I shouldn't be surprised. You'll understand why, when you see her. I wrote her that you were coming. Why, hello, here's a bright spot at last! Look at those Christmas roses! How white they are! My mother used to love them so, and Minnie does. Come in, Jack, and I'll get a pot for Minnie. Whose place is it?" glancing up at the name above the flower-filled window. "Rose Ellison. Why, let's see. We used to know her, Jack. Don't you recollect? She was one of the school-girls graduated with Minnie—pretty girl, too. Come in."

"Thank you, I'll wait here. Want a cigar. Flowers and old friends are not in my line," Jack said.

Tom glanced at his friend, who began to fumble with a cigar case, his back to the beautiful window. "Surly old bachelor, eh? More's the pity," he said as he opened the door and went in.

A trim little lady stood behind the counter. Her cheeks were a good deal flushed, and a curious, wistful light shone in her pretty blue eyes. She was trying to compose herself.

"Why, Miss Rose, I'm glad to stumble upon an old friend. How do you do? Minnie'll be glad to hear from you. I stopped to get a pot of your pretty Christmas roses for her." Tom talked on, and all the time his bright eyes were taking in the details of the little shop. Presently a sort of pain began to grow in his big, kind heart. Pretty Rose had come to this—to the wearing of faded, mended gowns and the selling of needles and pins and flowers. "They are the prettiest roses I ever saw," he went on, "and I want the very biggest and sweetest for Minnie's Christmas gift."

"I love them, every one," Rose said, setting down a fine plant. "How is this one?"

"It's a beauty. Will you take this for it?" He threw a \$10 bill on the counter.

"That? Oh, not even half so much."

"Shucks! You ought to deal with a city florist. I'd be lucky to get off at \$25! My conscience will trouble me, Miss Rose, if I pay less than \$10. Habit is strong. You won't spoil my Christmas and my pleasure in giving this to the little woman at home, will you?"

"But I, too, have a conscience," Rose laughed.

"But mine is so tender, Miss Rose, and, honor bright, it's a sure thing they charge awful; so that's all right. Maybe it would be better if you'd throw in a 'button hole.'"



"I—YOU DON'T CARE FOR THEM, JACK."

"Yes, let me. You've been too generous, I feel that I cannot—"

"I'll take violets and a sprig of nutmeg."

"And your friend. Won't you take one for him?" She flushed again.

"To Jack?" glancing outside. "Yes, but he's a surly old fellow, and I doubt if he'll wear it. It's Jack Allen, you know. Remember he went west five years ago. I stumbled upon him at the hotel—just got back."

Tom noticed how the girl's white hands fluttered as she tied up his violets, and then how she hesitated, and at last broke off a white rose bud and a scented leaf for his friend. He pinned on his flowers, and waited while she deftly wrapped up the pot that held the Christmas rose.

"You hardly miss it from your pretty window," he said.

"I'd hoped to sell all these," she replied, a little break in her voice, "but it's getting late now. To-morrow is Christmas day."

"So it is. Rose, come spend it with us. Minnie is always so glad to see old friends. It's only a two-hour run. Can't you come?"

"Why, I'd like to. Christmas is so sad, nowadays; so sad and dull."

"Yes. Well, you see, Minnie has the kids, and she's at home nearly always. I'm on the road, you know. It would help her, and she'd be glad I thought of it. Let's see." He took a slim black book from his pocket. "I've just the number of miles here on this ticket. It won't be any good next year," tearing out a bit of paper. "You just use it, and I'll go and send a telegram to Minnie." And before Rose could collect her wits he had snatched up the flowers and was gone, and there on the counter lay the crisp \$10 bill and a railroad ticket!

"It's like a fairy visit," Rose laughed, peering between the roses at the men as they walked off. "And he wouldn't come in! I wonder why? He—oh, he has the rose in his coat! My little Christmas rose. I wonder if he remembers?"

The men were out of sight, and Rose turned from her flowery window, and snatching up the money and ticket hurried into the little room at the back of the store.

"I've found that recipe, Rosy. The cheap fruit cake, you know," squeaked a little voice,

"Oh, aunty, you can't do it. You needn't to. Three eggs and not a shred of citron! Burn the recipe. You are going to spend Christmas with Cousin Serena, after all!"

"Rose Ellison!"

"Yes, I've been so lucky. I'm going to the city, and— But your train leaves in an hour. Let's hurry aunty, else you'll have to wait until to-morrow afternoon!"

"Rosy, dear, I don't understand!"

Rose caught the quaint little figure in her arms, and kissed the puzzled face. "You needn't. Just get ready. You are going in an hour. In the morning I'm going to see Minnie Brown. I've had an invitation. She's married, you know, to Tom Wilkins—such a—there's the bell. Do get yourself together, aunty."

Presently aunty entered the store with a big green veil over her queer bonnet and a handbox on each arm, while in one hand she carried a blue silk bag and the other grasped an immense umbrella. Into the bag Rose dropped a handful of coin, and kissing aunty's flushed, withered old face hurried her on. "It'll be a fine treat to me and Sereny, Rosy. But what'll you do to-night?"

"Me? Oh, I'll stay with the minister's wife and help her fill the wee bit stockings. Get a real good time, aunty, dear."

"I will, child, but I feel all a-flutter, with the sadness of it. Kinter off my feet, you know." Then she trotted on down the street with the great band-

boxes bouncing like life preservers, under her arms. She was just in time for the train. A little out of breath and a good deal excited, she settled her belongings in the end of her seat, and began to take comfort.

Two gentlemen in the seat before her glanced back at the quaint little figure, and one of them smiled. "Look here, Jack," one said, "don't let me forget at the next station to wire Minnie. That poor little girl is going down to-morrow to spend a day or so. It's a great nuisance, our having to go to Brightville instead of straight on home. She'll get there first, in the morning. We'll get in at 12."

"What girl is it?" Jack pulled his cap down over his curly hair.

"Why, Rose Ellison, of course. I was so sorry for her, Jack, I asked her."

"The dickens you did!" Jack's brown eyes flashed.

"Why, Jack, are you a regular woman-hater? The poor little woman is worked to death, and I warrant she never has a good time. If I'd thought a moment—but I was sorry for her. It's such a poor little place. She's pretty and the roses are, but there's—it's a stuffy little store. I'm afraid Minnie's forgotten her—it's been so long since they were girls, and I can't recollect hearing Minnie speak of her, but I'll send her word. That little woman shall have a good time. Why, Jack, old fellow?"

Jack's hand was on his friend's shoulder. "Don't Tom. It's going to be pretty tough for me, old boy. Can't you let me off?"

"Let you off, with Minnie expecting you? Not if I know it," and Tom looked very grave and earnest. "You are not a coward, are you, Jack? What's the matter?"

"I'm afraid I am, Tom, but if I must go, help me all you can."

"To keep out of the poor little creature's way? She looks harmless enough. I'd be more afraid of Minnie's town friends."

"You don't understand, Tom."

"Then suppose you enlighten me?"

"I—I used to know her in the old days. She was everything to me. I reckon I was a fool, but I couldn't tell her so."

"That you were a fool? Don't blame you."

"No; that I—that—she—that we—"

"Exactly," Tom nodded.

"So I sent her a bunch of Christmas

roses like these." He touched one of the nodding white flowers tenderly.

"Like that in your buttonhole?"

"Yes. I sent them on Christmas eve—five years ago to-night. And there was a foolish note with them asking her if she loved me to wear them to the Dwight's party."

"And she didn't wear them?"

"She didn't even go, and I, fool that I was, went to see why. Her aunt was to go with her—I had ordered a carriage. There were lights all about the house. A dim one was in the parlor. I used often to go to the French window that opened on the veranda and save waiting at the hall door. That night the lace curtains were drawn across the window, but the blinds were open. I was about to push the window open when I saw Rose seated on a sofa across the room. She wore a bright loose-looking dress, and her face was pale and earnest. Beside her—" He stopped a moment and loosened his collar. Then he went on: "Beside her on the sofa sat Rex Hill—you recollect a young doctor who used to be with old Dr. Bellamy?"

Tom nodded. He had forgotten Rex Hill, but that didn't matter.

"Well, he sat there talking to her and holding her hand, and presently she burst out crying and—and—my eyes burned so I couldn't see very well, but her head went down on his breast, and—I reckon I was wild, mad. The next I knew I was on a train that was speeding westward, and the Christmas sun was rising."

Tom blew his nose; Jack covered his face with his hands. There was a little stir among the handboxes behind them, and a hand in a gray cotton glove was laid on Jack's shoulder.

"Oh, sir," squeaked a small, mouse-like voice, "that was the night her father died. Dr. Bellamy was sick and he sent for the young man. I was there, spending Christmas. It was a stroke—so sudden and unexpected. Rosy couldn't believe—she couldn't sense it. I saw her dressed for the party in her pretty white frock with the Christmas roses in her hair and on her breast, and I saw her when the news came. She was almost crazy. She tore off the party finery, but she put the roses in water, and afterwards she set 'em out and they grew—their same roses. I put the red wrapper on her, and the young doctor undertook to tell her that her father'd have to die, for I couldn't (though I'm not one to shirk my duty), and I've stood by her ever since. Rosy never meant no harm—she never was bold. There's not many like Rosy."

The car door opened and the porter yelled "Centerville." There was a stir among the handboxes, a flourish of the umbrella, and the quaint little figure fluttered out before either of the men could speak or move. And after she was gone they were quite still until presently Tom got out his cigars and went into another car.

The sun shone bright enough Christmas morning when Tom and his guest left the car for the carriage that would take them home.

"You see, I'll have to see Minnie all to myself, just at first, that's why she won't be in the hall. I'll just tumble you into the parlor for a moment until I gather my senses. Compensations, you see. It isn't so bad being a traveling man—there are so many home-comings!" Tom said, holding the carriage door open while they were speeding on.

That was how it came about that Jack walked into the bright warm parlor to find a little blue-eyed woman with Christmas roses in her hair sitting alone in the ruddy glow of the yule-tide fire. His eyes grew bright and soft as the little woman rose, flushing and confused.

"Are you wearing the Christmas roses for me, dear?" he asked, humbly.

"I—you don't care for them, Jack."

"Indeed I do. I want the sweetest of all the roses for my own, little girl. May I have it, now?"

A mischievous sparkle brightened the blue eyes. "How can I tell which is sweetest?" she asked.

"May I take my choice?"

Then Tom and Minnie came and after them the "kids," and altogether it was a very happy Christmas.

"The rosiest sort of a rosy time," Tom said, pinching Rose Ellison's pink cheek.—Ellen Frizell Wycoff, in Minneapolis Housekeeper.

Signs of Christmas.

She meets me at the door
Each evening with a smile that's sweet
And mellow;
"Your supper's waiting; come right in, you poor,
Dear, tired fellow!"
(But I know just what this means,
For we've struck the Christmas scenes;
A new red hat,
And the likes o' that—
That's just what the dear one means.)

She marks my frowning brow
('Tis sweet to know a woman to adore you)
And says: "I know your head must ache,
and now
I'm going to rub it for you!"
(But I know just what that means,
For we've struck the Christmas scenes;
A dress, a hat,
And the likes o' that—
That's just what the dear one means!)

—Atlanta Constitution.

A Mistake.

"Hit am er mistake," said Uncle Eben, "ter hab yoh merry Christmas in sech a way dat yoh can't hab er happy New Year, case ob de worry 'bout de bills."—Washington Star.

To the Boys.

Honor thy father and mother around Christmas if you expect to get anything.—N. Y. Truth.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH.

—Bishop Joyce writes in a most enthusiastic way concerning Methodist missionary work in Corea.

—The church in which Henry Ward Beecher preached his first sermon is being torn down at Clairmont, near Batavia, O. It has been used as a livery stable for 30 years.

—At the thirty-eighth session of the Des Moines conference a resolution was passed calling attention to the rumors of the existence of destructive criticism in our theological schools and demanding an inquiry into the same.

—Two hundred Lutherine pastors of the Baltic provinces who had been charged with administering Lutherine baptism to the children of Lutherine fathers and mothers who had married members of the Greek church, have been granted a full pardon by the czar.

—Miss Mary Raymond, a member of the Epiphany Baptist church, New York, in 1824 deposited \$26.55 in a bank, intending the money to be used for the education of heathen children. It was only withdrawn this year and paid into the treasury of the Missionary union. It has grown to \$1,117.

—A medical service was recently held at St. Paul's cathedral, London. The archbishop of York preached the sermon. The service, which was held in the evening, was largely attended by the medical men of London, all wearing academic costume and accompanied by the ladies of their families.

IT CURED HIM.

One Instance Where Children's Poetry Served a Purpose.

The foreman on a Texas paper is addicted to speers. He is a valuable man, and, although the editor invariably discharges him whenever he has one of his "lapses," he always hires him again the next day.

A few weeks ago the foreman came in after a five-days "whizz," with a wild look in his eyes, shaking hands, and a propensity to let his sight travel round the room, following things that were not there. The editor, as usual, delivered his lecture and told him to go to work again. The foreman took a handful of copy from the file on the editor's desk and went into the composing-room. Presently he returned with a frightened look, holding a sheet of paper in his hand.

"Would you mind looking at this, sir?" he said. "I'm not feeling very well, and I'd like to have you read a few lines of it out loud, if you will."

The editor took the paper and glanced over it. It was one of those "nonsense" verses for children that have become popular of late with the publishers of children's literature, and was a particularly idiotic specimen of its kind. The first verse ran this way:

"The Winkum-Woojum in the land of Skee
And the Boojum of Cripple Crangle Cree
Met the Tumptyum Tumpty of Booldedum
Boo,
And they danced to the tune of Di-dumpty-di-doo."

The editor conceived an idea.

"Why, this is plain enough," he said. "The handwriting is very good. It goes:

"The summer sun has sunk to rest,
The bees have ceased to fly,
The little birds are on their nests,
The stars are in the sky."

"I don't see anything the matter with it, Dan. Are your eyes failing?"

The foreman took the copy and read it again earnestly, with a bead or two of perspiration standing on his forehead.

"Are you sure," he said, anxiously, "that you read that right?"

"Of course," said the editor. "It's as clean a piece of poetry as I ever laid my eyes on. Don't you read it the same way as I do?"

"Y-e-s," said the foreman. "I make it about the same; but I never expect to take another drink of whisky as long as I live."

The editor challenges the world to cite another instance of a writer of this kind of verse accomplishing anything that will serve as an excuse for his existence.—Detroit Free Press.

Photographs of Animals.

Among the scientific applications of photography, the value of which has recently been pointed out, is the study of the natural attitudes of birds and other animals, through instantaneous photographs of them. It is ascertained that very erroneous impressions are often conveyed, even in scientific treatises, through the incorrect and sometimes impossible attitudes in which animals are represented. Not only could such errors be avoided, but important characteristics of animals might be made evident by applying photography to the study. The case is analogous to that of the galloping horses, formerly so incorrectly represented by artists.—Youth's Companion.

An Eating Contest.

Hicks—I understand there was a queer contest at your house last evening.

Wicks—Yes; there was a fellow there who has the reputation of being a rapid eater, and he made a bet with Phacer that he could swallow more biscuit in a given time than Phacer could. The chap was a terror, but Phacer beat him all to nothing.

"That must have astonished you."

"It did, and it startled the champion eater, too. You see Phacer had a very generous mouth, and while the other fellow had to eat tandem, Phacer took them in two abreast."—Boston Transcript.