

THE TRANSFORMATION OF OLD PETER GRUFF

Elizabeth Rice Carpenter, in the New York Herald. Everybody knows it's true—at least almost everybody. But surly old Peter Gruff had been down in the village all the evening, celebrating Christmas eve. His stein had been filled and emptied any number of times, so he didn't know anything for sure, and didn't give a hang anyway.

When he was getting on toward midnight when Peter finally untied poor, weary Betsy (who was blind in one eye) and started at a breakneck pace through the gray mists over the flats to the farm. Far, far away in the heavens the stars twinkled knowingly. The man in the moon looked down with a shy smile. But Peter didn't notice these strange facts, for he was looking straight ahead (as straight as he could under the circumstances) along the road, thrashing old Betsy all the way and forgetting that it was Christmas eve, the time of all other times when one should be gentle and kind to one's fellow creatures. But Betsy was bidding her time, and the man in the moon and the stars smiled on.

At last they reached the old barnyard. As Peter unharnessed Betsy with a gentle hand and led her into the stable she looked around expectantly. Yes, sure enough, the animals were all wide awake and waiting—it was within a minute of midnight! On the perch sat the six leghorn hens; in the corner stood Muggins, the dog; Betsy's best friend and companion in sorrow, white from the left above peered two yellow eyes. These belonged to Polly, the cat.

Pete reached for the halter and tied it good and tight about Betsy's neck. Just as he did this the clock on the old church tower down in the village chimed 12. Peter, of course, didn't know this, but the animals did!

Then Betsy slowly turned, neighed loudly, made a profound courtesy to the animals, and spoke in a clear deep voice: "Merry Christmas, comrades!" Instantly there was a commotion. The cat sprang from the loft with a bound. "Merry Christmas, Betsy!" The dog jumped, wagging his tail so hard it's a wonder he didn't get it off.

"Merry Christmas, old pal, how do you find yourself this year? Even the chickens flapped and hopped their wings and cackled as loud as they could. "Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas!"

Peter started back. His hair rose so high on the back of his head that his little cap fell off. He had never experienced anything quite like this. No, not even after a loud evening spent at the tavern. And yet, of course it was just a sort of dream. His head felt dizzy anyway. Sure it was a dream, for animals don't talk! Never!

But he reached rather hastily for his cap. "I don't guess I stay in this old barn so long!" he muttered. But just as he rose to his feet and was turning to leave the stall he encountered Betsy's one eye fastened upon him.

"Pete Gruff," said Betsy severely, "loose the halter that I may lie down."

"Ach Himmel, vass iss!" cried Peter in a terrified voice.

"You may well say 'vass iss,'" answered Betsy in a withering tone, still fixing him with her one eye. "Old Betsy says that you are, will you loose the halter?"

"Tah, yah!" answered Peter in a quavering voice. He did as he was bid, then stood trembling very much in the corner of the stall.

"And now," continued Betsy, "take a place of advice from one who knows. Don't knock me about any more. Don't sneer and laugh me up my hill. Don't forget, as you oft do, to give me a drink when I'm tired and fainting. Haven't I been a faithful old mare? Haven't I ploughed your fields, raked your hay, gathered it into the barn and carried you and your fur to church on a Sunday?"

"Tah, yah, yah!" repeated Pete, in a quavering voice.

"Well, then, take warning before it is too late. And another thing Peter, you'd better leave off drinking beer. See what it's bringing you to! Here

is candy toys. Candy toys on the maple lined street, Dainty, old timey and primp and neat; Call it Miss Cartwright's, whatever you will; Forgive it is dreaming its Christmas dream still, And kills glad people reach up on their heads.

Where the window pane flattens the peaks of their nose— To count the dear treasures of little child toys. The old candy cans and the old candy toys.

White ones and brown ones and yellow ones, A host of a soldier with plumes on his head, Horses and carrels and elephants fine, And under a rooster with feathers ashine, Fat little dogs and huge ships with spread wings, Home ladders, short sofas, and all sorts of things; Old fashioned candy—pure sugar, and oh, Such a taste as it had in the dear long ago.

Dear little window, with shelves covered over With dainty lace paper, as white as sweet cheer, A tray in the center, with toys heaped sublime For the wonder of childhood at gay Christmas time; Dear beacon of dream on the street of right heart, Where the gingerbread men grew in grace of all art; White out, little marvel, on holiday street, Where the limbs of the maples still clasp as they meet.

For little fellows, with faculties bent On the paramount problem of spending a cent, Miss Cartwell has toys in that window of old, And I see the dear sight in the dreams that unfold. The little bell tinkles; some wight has gone in. Ah, yes, she is letting him pick o'er the when. He's chosen an elephant, holding his prize To tempt us with envy because of its size.

Hello for Christmas and turn again, turn, To the land of child dream where the night windows burn, Muggins Miss Cummings has decked up her stove, Or Mrs. Heatz is beaming once more With Scotch cakes and doughnuts and old old devices Or German-made cookies with aniseed lace, Or maybe Miss Henry's shop tinkles with glass. To the quiet retreat 'neath the mulberry tree, For the glory of holiday street. The dear little windows, so dainty and neat, The toys in their amber and crimson and white, And childhood's young heart beating there in delight. Cheering and choosing and choosing again, Ah, take me, dear dream, from the cities of men, To the shop in the maple lined village of yore, Where the little bell tinkles above the glass door!

—Baltimore Sun.

It is Christmas eve, and your poor frau with next to nothing in the house to eat. Think of your children, your three little children, looking forward to gifts from Santa Claus. Oh, Pete, shame, shame!"

Betsy paused, out of breath. The hens cackled loudly. Peter, partly from shame, but more from fright, began to blubber like a biggie boobie. But here his dog, having a word to say upon his own account, stepped to the fore-ground and began to speak. "Peter Gruff," said Muggins gravely, "many and many a time I've been tempted to bite you! Yes indeed, I have! Why do you cuff me, kick me, drive me from the fire on winter nights when I'm doing no harm? Haven't I been a trusty old friend, keeping the boys from your orchard, bringing home the cows and guarding your house at night?"

Peter was about to answer when Polly, the cat, unexpectedly bounded forward and took the floor. "Peter Gruff," she shrilled in a high, cater-waul voice, "I want you to stop drowning my babies, monster that you are! Pray, isn't this farm large enough for both me and my poor little kittens? Cruel, cruel man! How would you feel if some one were to drown your children? Often I've just longed to dig you good and hard; I can do it, too. But, instead, I've killed the rats and mice, so that they wouldn't ruin your crops and nibble your barn to bits. Furthermore—"

There's no telling how much longer Polly would have talked, but one of the leghorns suddenly cackled, "Come, come, Polly, time's nearly up; give us a chance!"

The cat politely moved to the background, and the hen flew from her perch. What happened now was quite an accident. She had no intention of doing it, but she landed right on top of Peter's bald head, scratching it fearfully. This completed Peter's terror, for he really thought his time had come. He fell to the ground, groveling.

"Leber Himmel! lieber Himmel!" he screamed, clutching his head; "leaf me go leaf me go! I be all time goot; never go drunk again!"

The hen regained her equilibrium and apologized. "I didn't intend to scratch you, Pete, though I've had plenty of cause, and to peck you, too. But what I want to say is this: Stop stealing our beautiful white eggs. Stop telling Frau Gruff that we're not laying, and stop hooking the eggs for drink! You see, we know all. What do you think we are to take all that trouble and then to have you sell them when they should be kept to feed your family?"

"All times goot, all times goot, nefer go drunk," Pete continued to mumble this or and over at the same time, weeping very bitterly, and gingerly feeling the scratches.

Suddenly he fell over to one side and bumped his head rather hard against a beam. He sat up with a start and gazed dazedly about him. The light was still burned brightly, suspended from its hook in the wall. All was quiet. Betsy, halterless, reposed in slumber upon the floor. Muggins lay asleep in the corner. The cat, Polly lay curled round as a ball in a soft mound of straw. The six leghorns sat side by side upon the perch, each with her head under her wing.

Peter got painfully to his feet. He felt very light and lame, but he crept warily, oh so warily, from the stall, in deadly fear of rousing the animals.

And as he limped slowly along through the barnyard up to the house he formed his good resolutions which he never broke. The first was that henceforth he would be a total abstainer, which he was. The second that he would always treat dumb animals with kindness, which he did.

Sometimes he relates his strange experience his friends nudge one another and wink. "Ach, Peter," they exclaim, laughing, "dot was a dream, nicht wahr? But Peter is to any doubting Thomas changing to read this story let me say just a word. Creep to the barn on the night of Christmas eve, crouch unseen in some dark corner; now listen, and hear the animals talk.

YANKEE GIRL MAY GET THRONE OF CLEOPATRA



The Princess Ibrahim Hassan, formerly Miss Ola Humphreys.

Princess Ibrahim Hassan Urged to Return to Royal Hubby—May Leave Stage.

PROPOSITION LURES HER

Berlin, Special: An American girl may yet ascend a throne. This romantic prospect is already being discussed in Europe, where the girl is now sojourning, and where she has just been the recipient of an urgent appeal from Abbas Hilmi, the reigning khedive of Egypt.

The girl before whom the flattering prospect unfolds is the Princess Ibrahim Hassan, formerly Miss Ola Humphreys, a girl of wealth who had gone to the stage to satisfy her ambitions, met the prince while on a visit to London. He was brilliant, cultured, fascinating. He wooed her persistently, and finally, in spite of the warnings of many friends, she married him.

There was a brief honeymoon in Paris, and then the prince took his wife to his great palace in Cairo. She had expected to live in Africa the gay, free life of an American girl, but how profoundly she was disappointed. She became a prisoner in the great palace, closely guarded, and was permitted to see no man but her husband. Fine dresses from Paris and every luxury were heaped upon her. But she was denied her liberty.

This was intolerable. In the summer following her marriage she coaxed her husband to take her to Paris. There, although closely guarded, she made her escape and returned to America. She later came to Europe and has recently made plans to return to the stage.

She May Quit Stage. The khedive has heard of her determination to go on the stage, and is urging a reconciliation. Quite recently he called upon the princess in Berlin and begged her to go back to her husband. He pointed out to her that Prince Hassan was near in the line of succession to the Egyptian throne. He offered her all sorts of rewards and honors if she would refrain from going on the stage and go back to Egypt.

The princess replied that she would consider returning to Egypt only under certain conditions. These were that if she went back to her husband she should be treated exactly like an American wife; that she should be free to see any man she pleased and that she should have the right to go anywhere she liked without being followed by attendants. She required a written agreement, signed before an American consul, guaranteeing these conditions.

The khedive was unable to give her the guarantees she asked, owing to the fact that his cousin was in the field in Turkey and could not be reached immediately. He declared, however, that he would order the prince to sign the stipulation.

In the meantime the princess has halted her plans for going back to the stage, and is wondering whether she would cut as much of a figure on the Egyptian throne as Cleopatra did some 2,000 years ago.

Child Mother, Father: Love

A STORY OF NEW YORK. Arthur Swan, in the Sioux City Tribune.

I. A woman told me this little story to-night—or rather, last night, for I just heard the hall clock strike an early hour. It happened last Christmas, to be exact; but I hope you will think it none the less worthy for that; because it is being told in print for the first time today.

You won't find this a Christmas tale of the conventional kind—but, of course, you would hardly expect that from Aucassin. Here there is no Santa Claus, no angels, no stockings, no mistletoe; and the plot and characters are not funny. Moreover—but let us see!

She felt in her heart, she told herself at least, that this would be the happiest Christmas she had ever had; and though she was only 23 her Christmases had not been a long series of joyous holidays. Now she had the baby, of course; but a baby is not always quite enough. A baby minus love does not equal happiness.

But he was good to her; indeed, since the little one's coming he had been kinder and more considerate of her than ever before—not, for that matter, that he had ever been unfair. But his kindness, she tried to make herself believe, was only his pity; and she knew that though she didn't exactly or deliberately mean to, she was showing him that she recognized his interest in her for what she held it to be.

To celebrate Christmas alone—there is no such thing; and she was virtually without a friend in the city. It was different with him; he was a man—he was free. She was thankful to him, naturally, for the help he was giving her. It was another matter when she was employed at the publishing house. She didn't fear the world then.

But now! Typewriting at home was not a very remunerative business—perhaps, after all, it really was better than to give up the child and go out. That day, however, might soon come. She shuddered to think of it; but of course she must not overlook that he was only a man, like all other men.

But she was aware also that he did not have much more than she needed, and that he was perhaps foregoing a number of pleasant things for the sake of her and her baby. She must give him credit for that, and she thought that in her heart she had always considered him as better than most other men. He brought her typewriting to do, chiefly stories of his own; and he told her that she earned whatever outlay he made for her. But she knew better, certainly. The rent bills alone that he paid far exceeded all the typewriting she had ever done for him. He didn't complain now. But how long could it last?

He was disgusted with himself. He hadn't been so ill at ease, so "nervous all over," so "all unstrung" as far back as he could recall. He was free on the afternoon of Christmas, and he went out to Brooklyn again to look at the little flat he had in an aberration entered on the preceding Sunday. He took pains now to make sure of the rent and the desirability of the immediate neighborhood.

Why did he do such things? he asked himself on his return to town, and he replied, as was his wont, "It's my crazy temperament!"

He had observed that she cared less for him than he cared for her, and he had observed that she blamed him for the "accident," as he still referred to it, though incredibly; and he reflected that of course she had the right to blame him. He could do no more now than to stick by her till she was on six ground again, and then get out of a liaison such as theirs, built

Christmas Snow. The air is full of frozen flowers; The snow, the snow is falling, And all the voices of the north Upon the winds are calling. Come, high winds, low winds, sing across Swells and falls and dying lulls and wild breath blowing.

Weird realm of wonder and of awe, With ice fields darkly crashing, Where cohorts of the cold go forth, With great auroras flashing. Your high winds, low winds, blow across the meadows. Blow, with all your bitter will, with all your eery shadows.

Blow, you dark north, o'er hill and dale, With many a mile of drifting, From dawn till purple twilight glow, Swift, swift your silver drifting, yet sweet world, yet glad world, despite the stormy singing, the heart of all the earth is warm while Christmas bells are ringing. —Harriet Prescott Spofford in St. Nicholas.

NOVEL IDEA FOR A NEW YEAR'S DANCE

Pretty Climax for Cotillion Is Suggested—Gifts for New Years.

BY MADAME MERRI. It seems strange to be planning parties for "next year," and it is almost impossible to realize that 1912 is so close at hand. I am asked by many of our young readers who are tasting the first joys of "society" and going to holiday functions to give them some novel idea for a New Year's dance. I think this scheme quite fetching: Have a florist make a large bell of wire, cover the frame with holly, a rim of mistletoe adds to the attraction. Get balls of confetti, wrap in white tissue paper, dip in liquid glue, then in diamond dust; place these balls inside the bell, paste paper across the bottom, permitting four ribbons of red and green to come through from the clapper. When the hostess wishes, four guests pull the ribbons, each guest gets a ball and merry peeling with confetti follows, and all wish each other a "Happy New Year." This is best for the close of the party. If the party winds up with a cotillion the favors may be horns, bells, calendars, and all good luck symbols.

For the New Year. In France it is the general custom to present one's friends with a gift at New Year's, and I find many people do it here. Many of us love all occasions on which we have the opportunity of remembering our loved ones. Here is a charming device to accompany the gift from a sweet-heart.

Another year of smiles and tears. Another year of grief or gloe, Another year of all my years I dedicate to thee. Diaries and "Line-a-Day" books are

always acceptable gifts, and doubly valuable if inscribed with a sentiment like this, written in the giver's own hand: My sheets invite The hand to write Each day on one Of something done— But better still A blotted scrawl That naught at all.

All those who contemplate having friends to watch the New Year "Aunt in will welcome this invitation, and seal the envelope with a "bell" seal, or write the message in gold on a white bell-shaped cord; add hour and address with name of hostess: Soon the midnight bell will chime, "One lap more for Father Time!" Come, sing a song and merry din Help us bring the New Year in!

CHRISTMAS CHARADES.

Here is a novel suggestion for the hostess at a Christmas party, bent on securing an attractive diversion for her young guests. The game is called book charades. It requires no rehearsing and is lots of fun. Prepare cards with numbers from one to 20, or the number of charades you are to have and let the guests write down the ones they guess. For a prize give a book candy box filled with bonbons or salted nuts. Here are a few suggestions for suitable subjects for book charades. They are very easy to arrange: "Looking Backward"—A girl walks across the stage with her head turned over her shoulder. "The First Violin"—Some one holds up a violin on which the number 1, cut from white paper, has been pasted. "We Two"—A man and girl walk across the stage, arm in arm. "The Brass Bowl"—A girl walks forward carrying a brass bowl. "Lavender and Old Lace" is represented by a girl dressed in lavender gown trimmed with old lace. "When a Man Marries"—A man and a girl walk across the stage while some one plays the wedding march. "The Light That Failed"—One girl carries a lighted candle which another girl blows out. "The Gentleman from Indiana"—A man comes across the stage wearing a conspicuously labeled "John Jones, Indiana." "Vanity Fair"—A girl gazing into a looking glass. "A Study in Scarlet"—A girl seated in a red velvet chair wearing a scarlet dress. "The Bow of Orange Ribbon"—A girl or a man wearing a huge bow of orange ribbon. "The Bride of the Mistletoe"—A girl dressed as a bride but wearing a wreath of mistletoe. "A Certain Rich Man"—A man wearing a tag which says in big letters "John D."

"From Sea to Sea"—Two huge letter 'C's are cut from white paper and pinned to the curtains on each side of the stage and the players walk from one to the other. "The Ascent of Man"—A man climbing gravely to the top of a stepladder and remains seated there.

WHITE HOUSE BABY TO WINTER AT WASHINGTON



MISS ESTHER CLEVELAND. Miss Esther Cleveland, known the country over as "The White House Baby" daughter of the late President Grover Cleveland and Mrs. Cleveland, plans on spending at least a part of the winter with friends in Washington. Miss Cleveland recently made her debut to society at her mother's beautiful home, "Westlands," at Princeton, N. J.

A LADY'S SCISSORS AND SOLDIER'S BUTTONS

From the Christian Herald. Before the late gathering of our warships in the harbor at New York, women were solemnly warned, or meekly implored, by the press not to debut on the occasion of the visit of the Italian fleet to the Jamestown exposition. The Italians were astounded and did not know what to make of it. The reason at the bottom of this "habit" lies not alone in the passion of the curio-hunter or in feminine desire for a military hatpin or brooch. It lies in woman's admiration for heroism; and she connects heroism with the military and naval uniforms. Let her keep the sentiment and leave the button!

The French government is planning to grant a bounty to each fishing vessel equipped with wireless apparatus and an annual allowance for maintenance.