# ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE MORNING

BY GRACE S. RICHMOND.

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And all the angels in heaven do sing, On Christmas day, on Christmas day; And all the bells on earth do ring, On Christmas day in the morning. —Old Song.

That Christmas day virtually began a whole year beforehand, with a red hot letter written by Guy Fernald to his younger sister, Nan, who had been married to Samuel Burnett just two and one-half years. The letter was read aloud by Mrs. Burnett to her husband at the breakfast table, the sec-ond day after Christmas. From start to firish it was upon one subject, and it read as follows: "Dear Nan—It's a confounded, full

"Dear Nan—It's a confounded, full grown shame that not a soul of us all got home for Christmas—except yours truly, and he only for a couple of hours. What have the blessed old folks done to us that we treat them like this! I was invited to the Sewalls for the day, and went, of course—you know why. We had a ripping time, but along toward evening I began to feel worried. I really thought Ralph was home—he wrote me that he might swing round that way by the holidays

was home—he wrote me that he might swing round that way by the holidays—but I knew the rest of you were all wrapped up in your own Christmas trees and weren't going to get there. "Well, I took the 7:30 down and walked in on them. Sitting all alone by the fire, by George, just like the pictures you see of 'The Birds All Flown, and that sort of thing. I felt gulpish in my throat, on my honor I did, when I looked at them. Mother just gave one gasp and flew into my arms, and Dad gasp and flew into my arms, and Dad got up more slowly—he has that darned rheumatism worse than ever darned rheumatism worse than ever this winter—and came over and I thought he'd shake my hand off. Well. I sat down between them by the fire, and pretty soon I got down in the old way on a cushion by mother, and let her run her fingers through my hair, the way she used to—and Nan, I'll be indicted for perjury if her hand wasn't trembly. They were so glad to see me it made my throat ache.

"Ralph had written he couldn't get round, and of course you'd all written

"Raiph had written he couldn't get round, and of course you'd all written and sent them things—jolly things, and they appreciated them. But—blame it all—they were just dead lone-some—and the whole outfit of us within 300 miles, most within 30.

"Nan, next Christmas it's going to be different. That's all I say. I've got it all planned out. The idea popped into my head when I came away last night. Not that they had a word of blame—not they. They understood all about the children, and the cold snap, and Ed's being under the weather, and about the children, and the cold snap, and Ed's being under the weather, and Oliver's wife's neuralgia, and Ralph's girl in the west, and all that. But that didn't make the thing any easier for them. As I say, next year—but you'n all hear from me then. Meanwhile, run down and see them once or twice this winter, will you, Nan? Somehow, it struck me they aren't so young as they used to be.

young as they used to be.
"Splendid winter weather. Margaret
Sewall's a peach, but I don't seem to
make much headway. My best to Sam.
"Your affectionate brother,

"Guy."

Gay Nan had felt a slight choking in her own throat as she read this letter. "We really must make an effort to be there Christmas next year, Sam," she said to her husband, and Sam assented cheerfully. He only wished there were a father and mother somewhere in the world for him to go brime to.

somewhere in the world for him to go home to.

Guy wrote the same sort of thing, with more or less detail, to Edson and Oliver, his married elder brothers: to Ralph, his unmarried brother, and to Carolyn—Mrs. Charles Wetmore, his other—and elder—married sister. He received varied and more or less sympathetic responses, to the effect that with so many little children, and such snowdrifts as always blocked the roads leading toward North Estabrook, it really was not strange—and of course somebody would go next year. But they had all sent the nicest gifts they could find. Didn't Guy think mother liked those beautiful Russian sables Ralph sent her? And pleased with his cane from Oliver? headed Surely, with such presents pouring in from all the children, Father and Moth-Fernald couldn't feel so awfully ne-

"Gold headed cane be hanged!" Guy "Gold headed cane be hanged!" Guy exploded when he read this last sentence from the letter of Marian, Oliver's wife. "Fil bet she put him up to it. If anybody dares give me a gold headed cane before I'm 95, Fil thrash him with it on the spot. He wasn't using it either—bless him. He had his old hickory stick, and he wouldn't have that if that abominable rheumatism hadn't gripped him so hard. He isn't old enough to use a cane, by jolly, and Ol ought to know it, if Marian doesn't. I'm glad I sent him that typewriter. He liked that, I know he did, and it'll ahuse him, too—not make him think anuse him, too—not make him think he's ready to die!"

Guy was not the fellow to forget anything that had taken hold of him as that pathetic Christmas homecoming had done. When the year had nearly rolled around, the 1st of December saw him at work getting his plans in trim. He began with his eldest brother, Oliver, because he considered Mrs. Oliver hardest proposition he had to tacin the carrying out of his idea.

he expounded patiently. they sat and stared at him, "it isn't they aren't always awfully glad to the whole outfit, children and all, see the whole outfit, children and all, but it just struck me it would do 'em a lot of good to revive old times. I thought if we could make it just as much as possible like one of the old Christmases before anybody got marked harp up the stockings and all ried—hang up the stockings and all, you know—it would give them a mighty jolly surprise. I plan to have us all creep in in the night and go to bed in our old rooms. And then in the

morning—See?"

Mrs. Oliver looked at him. An eager flush lit his still boyish face, Guy was 28—and his blue eyes were very bright. His lithe, muscular figure bent toward her pleadingly; all his arguments were aimed at her. Oliver sat back in his impassive way and watched them both. It could not be denied that it was Martin's decisions which usually ruled in ian's decisions which usually ruled in

matters of this sort.

"It seems to me a very strange plan," was Mrs. Oliver's comment, when Guy had laid the whole thing before her in the most tactful manner he could command. She spoke rather coldly. "It is not usual to think that families should be broken up like this on Christmas day, of all days in the year. Four families, with somebody gone—a mother or a father—just to please two elderly people who expect nothing of the seems to matter or a father—just to please two elderly people who expect nothing of the seems to matter the seems to me a very strange plan," aroused no suspicion. It was very like Guy's affectionate boyishness.
"I presume he'll be down," said Mrs. Fernald. as she limped quitely about the room, making ready for bed. "Don't you remember how he surprised us last year? I'm sorry the others can't come. Of course, I sent them always do that—but it is pretty snowy weather, and I suppose they don't outle like to risk it."

we only came ourselves. Of course, know I'm asking a sacrifice of each family, and it may seem almost an in-suit to invite the children and all, yet perhaps next year we'll try a gathering of all the clans. But just for this year —honestly—I do awfully wish you'd give me my way. If you'd seen those two last Christmas ——"

He broke off, glancing appealingly at Oliver himself. To his surprise that gentleman shifted his pipe to the corgentleman shifted his pipe to the cor-ner of his mouth and put a few per-tinent questions to his younger broth-er. Had he thought it all out? What time should they arrive there? How early on the day after Christmas could they get away? Was he positive they could all crowd into the house without rousing and alarming the pair?

"Sure thing," Guy declared quickly.
"Marietta—well, you know I've had the
soft side of her old heart ever since soft side of her old heart ever since and I was born, somehow. I talked it all over with her last year, and I'm solid with her, all right. She'll work the game. You see, father's quite a bit deaf now—"

"Father deaf?"

"Sure. Didn't you know it?"

"Forgotten. But mother'd hear us."

"No, she wouldn't Don't you know it?"

"No, she wouldn't Don't you know by force from inside. A cautious voice

"Sure. Didn't you know it?"
"Forgotten. But mother'd hear us."
"No, she wouldn't. Don't you know how she trusts everything about the house to Marietta since she got that

fall-"Mother get a fall?"
"Why, yes!" Guy stared at his brother with some impatience. "Don't you remember she fell down the back stairs a year ago last October, and hurt her knee?"

hurt her knee?"

"Certainly, Oliver," his wife interposed. "I wrote for you to tell her how sorry we were. But I supposed she had entirely recovered."

"She's a little bit lame, and always will be," said Guy, a touch of reproach in his tone. "Her knee stiffens up in the night, and she doesn't get up and go prowling about at the least and go prowling about at the least noise, the way she used to. Marietta won't let her. So if we make a whisper of noise Marietta'll tell her it's the cat or semething Coal Leat or whisper of noise Marietta'll tell her it's the cat or something. Good Lord! yes—it can be worked all right. The only thing that worries me is the fear that I can't get you all to take hold of the scheme. On my word, Ol,"—he turned quite away from his sisterin-

Marian began to speak. She thought Guy was exceeding his rights in talking as if they had been at fault. It was not often that elderly people had so many children within call—loyal children who would do anything within reason. But certainly a man owed something to his own family. And at Christmas! Why not carry out this plan at some other—

Her husband abruptly interrupted her. He took his pipe quite out of his wedge of mince pie with a fine disre-

Her husband abruptly interrupted her. He took his pipe quite out of his mouth and spoke decidedly.

"Guy, I believe you're right. I'll be

sorry to desert my own kids, of course, but I rather think they can stand it for once. If the others fall into line, you may count on me."

Guy got away, feeling that the worst of his troubles was over. In Guy got away, feeling that the worst of his troubles was over. In his younger sister, Nan, he hoped to find an ardent ally and he was not disappointed. Carolyn—Mrs. Charles Wetmore—also fell in heartily with the plan. Ralph, from somewhere in the far west, wrote that he would get home or break a leg. Edson thought the idea rather a foolish one, but was persuaded by Jessica, his wife—whom Guy privately declared a trump—that he must go by all means. And so they all fell into line, and there remained for Guy only the working out of the details.

"Merita assured him, "but it might market as a because for me, but there's been so excuse for me, but t

of the details. "Mis' Ferr s'pose you'll laugh, but Guy—he wrote me partic'lar he wanted you and his father to"—Marietta's rather stern, thin face took on a curious expression getting' what I was to ask you. I thin face took on a curious expression

—"to hang up your stockin's."

Mrs. Fernald paused in the doorway of the bed room opening from the sitting room downstairs. Sho looked back at Marietta with her gentle smile.

gentle smile.

"Guy wrote that?" she asked. "Then
—it almost looks as if he might be
coming himself, doesn't it, Marietta?"

"Well, I don't know's I'd really expect him," Marietta replied, turning her
face away and busying herself about
the hearth. "I guess what he mare." the hearth. "I guess what he meant was more in the way of a surprise for a Christmas present—something that'll go into a stockin', maybe." "It's rather odd he should have writ-

"It's rather odd he should have written you to ask me," mused Mrs. Fernald, as she looked at the stockings.

Marletta considered rapidly, "Well, I s'pose he intended for me to get 'em on the sly without mentionin' it to you, an'put in what he sent, but I sort of

guessed you might like to fall in with his idee by hangin' 'em up yourself, here by the chimbley, where the children all used to do it. Here's the nails, same as they always was."

Mrs. Fernald found the stockings, Mrs. Fernald found the stockings, and touched her husband on the shoulder, as he sat unlacing his shoes. "Father, Guy wrote he wanted us to hang up our stockings," she said, raising her voice a little and speaking very distinctly. The elderly man beside her looked up, smiling.

"Well, well," he said, "anything to please the hoy. It doesn't seem more

please the boy. It doesn't seem more than a year since he was a little fellow hanging up his own stocking, does it,

The stockings were hung in silence. They looked thin and lonely as they dangled beside the dying fire. Marietta hastened to make them less lonely. "Well," she said, in a shamefaced way, "the silly boy said I was to hang mine, too Goodness knows what he'll find

aroused no suspicion. It was very like

elderly people who expect nothing of the sort, and who understand just why we can't all get home at once. Don't we tan't all get home at once. Don't wouthing the people who expect nothing of the sort, and who understand just why we can't all get home at once. Don't wouthing the people who expect nothing of the sort, and who understand just why we can't all get home at once. Don't wouthing the people who expect nothing of the sort, and who understand just why we can't all get home at once. Don't the sort, and who understand just why the sort is a sort of the sort o we can't all get home at once. Don't you think you are really asking a good feal?"

Guy kept his temper, though it was hard work. "It doesn't seem to me I am." he answered quite gently. "It's only for once. I really don't think father and mother would care much what sort of presents we brought them, if

"Mis' Fernald, Peter Piper's got back in this part o' the house, somehow, and I can't lay hands on him. Beats all how cute that cat is. Seem 's if he knows when I'm goin' to put him out in the woodshed. I don't think likely and the lid on harm, but I thought I'd tell you, so'f you heard any queer noises in the night you'd know it was Peter."

"Very well, Marietta"-the soft voice came back to the schemer on the ether side of the door. "Peter will be all side of the door. "Peter will be right, wherever he is. I shan't alarmed if I hear him."

"All right, Mis' Fernald; I just though I'd let you know," and the guileful one went grinning away.

There was a long silence in the sleeping room. Then, out of the dark-

ness came this little colloquy:

"Emeline, you aren't getting to sleep."

"I—know I'm not, John. I—Christmas eve keeps one awake, somehow. It lways did.' "Yes . . . I don't suppose children realize at all, do they?"

"Oh, no — oh, no! The alize—they never will, till-They here themselves. It's all right. I think

I think at least Guy will be down tomorrow, don't you?"

"I guess maybe he will." Then, after a short silence. "Mother—you've got me, you know. You know—you've al-

me, you know. You know—you've always got me, dear."

"Yes." She would not let him hear the sob in her voice. She crept close, and spoke cheerfully in his best ear.

"And you've got me, Johnny Boy!"

"Thank the Lord, I have!"

So, counting their blessings, they fell asleep at last. But, even in sleep, one set of lashes was strangely wet.

"Christopher Jinks, what a drift!"

"Lucky we weren't two hours later."

"Sh-h—they might hear us."

"Nan, stop laughing, or I'll drop a snowball down your neck!"

"Here, Caroi, give me your hand."

The storm door swung open, propelled by force from inside. A cautious voice said low: "That the Fernald family?" A chorus of whispers came back at Miss Marietta Cooley: "Yes, yes—let us in, we're freezing." "You bet we're the Fernard family—every man-Jack of us—not one missing."

missing."
"Oh, Marietta—you dear old thing!"
"Hurry up—this is their side of the

"Sh-h-h-"
"Carol, your sh-h-ishes would wake
the dead!" Stumbling over their own feet and bundles in the endeavor to be preter-naturally quiet, the crew poured into the warm kitchen. Bearded Oliver, eldest of the clan; stout Edson, big Ralph, tall and slender Guy—and the two daughters of the house, Carolyn, growing plump and rosy at 30; Nan, slim and girlish at 24—they were all there. Marietta heaved a sigh of con-

tent as she looked them over.
"Well, I didn't really think you'd get here—all of you. Thank the Lord, you have. I s'pose you're tearin' hungry, bein' past 'leven. If you think you turned quite away from his sisterin-law's critical gaze and faced his brother with something like indigna-tion in his frank young eyes—"don't we owe the eld home anything but a present tied ap in tissue paper once a present tied ap in tissue paper once a

wedge of mince pie with a fine disre-gard for any consequences that might overtake him. "This alone is worth it. overtake him. "This alone is worth it. I haven't eaten such pie in a century. What a jolly place this old kitchen is! Let's have a candy pull tomorrow. I haven't been home Christmas in—let me see—by Jove, I believe it's six—seven—yes, seven years. Look here: there's been so excuse for me, but what about you people that he near?" He looked accusingly about. Carolyn got up and came around to him.

here. If either of them should want some hot water or anything—"
"The dining room door's bolted,"
Marletta assured him, "but it might you boys better step right up over that seventh stair without touchin' foot to

"All right—we'll step!"
"Who's going to fix the bundles?" Carolyn paused to asked as she started

the stairs, "Marietta," Guy answered. "I've labeled every one, so it'll be easy. If they hear paper rattle, they'll think it's the usual presents we've sent on, and if they come out they'll see Marietta, so it's all right. Quiet, now. Remem-ber the seventh stair!"

They crept up, one by one, each to his or her old room. There needed to be no "doubling up," for the house was large, and each room had been left precisely as its owner had left it. It was rather ghostly, this stealing silently about with candles, and, in the necessity for the suppression of speech, the animation of the party rather suffered eclipse. It was late, and they were beginning to be sleepy, so they were soon in bed. But, somehow, once composed for slumber, more than one grew

wakeful again. Guy, lying staring at a patch of wintry moonlight on the odd striped paper of his wall-it had stoppd snowing since they had come into the house, and the clouds had broken away, leaving a brilliant sky—discovered his door to be softly opening. The glimmer of candle filtered through the crack, voice whispered his name.
"Who is it?" he answered under his

breath.
"It's Nan. May I come in?"
"Of course. What's up?"
"Nothing. I wanted to talk a min

She came noiselessly in, wrapped in a woolly scarlet kimono, scarlet slip-pers on her feet, her brown braids hanging down her back. The frost bloom lately on her cheeks had melted into a ruddy glow, her eyes were stars. She set her candle on the little stand and sat down on the edge of Guy's bed. He raised himself on his elbow and lay ooking appreciatively at her.
"This is like old times," he said. "But

won't you be cold?' "Not a bit. I'm only going to stay a minute. Anyhow, this thing is warm as toast." Yes, isn't it like

"Got your lessons for tomorrow?" She laughed. "All but my Caesar.

She laughed. "All but my Caesar. You'll help me with that, in the morning, won't you?"
"Sure—if you'll make some cushions for my bobs."
"I will. Guy—how's Lucy Harper?"
"She's all right. How's Bob Fields?"
"Oh. I don't care for him now!" She tossed her head.
He kept up the play. "Like Dave Strong better, huh? He's a softy."
"He isn't. Oh, Gay—I heard you had new girl."
"New girl nothing. Don't care for girls."

w girl nothing. Don't care for 'Yes, you do. At least I think you. Her name is—Margaret."

The play ceased abruptly. Guy's face changed. "Perhaps I do," he murmured, while his sister watched him in the cannot be light. Guy's She won't answer vet?" she asked

very gently.
"Not a word." "You've cared a good while, haven't you, dear? eems like ages. Suppose it isn't"

"Seems like ages. Suppose it isn't"
"No—only two years, really caring hard. Plenty of time left."
He moved his head impatiently. "Yes, if I didn't mind seeing her smile on Tommy Grower—de-il take him—just as sweetly as she smiles on me. If she ever held out the tip of her finger to me, I'd seize it and held on to it for fair. But she deesn't. She won't. And she's going south next week for the rest of the winter, and there's a fellow down there in South Carolina where she goes—oh, he—he's

there's a fellow down there in South Carolina where she goes—oh, he—he's red headed after her, like the rest of us. And, well—I'm up against it good and hard, Nan, and that's the truth."

"Poor boy. And you gave up going to see her on Christmas day, and came down here into the country just to—"

"Just to get even with myself for the way I've neglected 'em these two years while my head's been so full of—her. It isn't fair. After last year I'd have come heme today if it had meant I had to lose—well—Margaret knows I'm here. I don't know what she thinks." she thinks.

she thinks."

"I don't believe, Guy, boy, she thinks the less of you. Yes—I must go. It will all come right in the end, dear—I'm sure of it. No, I don't know how Margaret feels—Good night—good

night!"
Christmas morning, breaking upon a wintry world—the star in the east long set. Outside the house a great silence of drift wrapped hill and plain—inside, a crackling fire upon a wide hearth, and a pair of elderly people waking a lonely holiday.

Mrs. Fernald crept to the door of her room—the injured knee always made

Mrs. Fernald crept to the door of her room—the injured knee always made walking difficult after a night's quiet. She meant to sit down by the fire which she had lately heard Marietta stirring and feedling into activity, and warm herself at its flame. She remembered with a sad little smile that she and John had hung their stockings there, and looked to see what miracle had been wrought in the night. had been wrought in the night.

"Father!"—Her voice caught in her throat. . What was all this? . . By some mysterious influence her husband learned that she was calling him, though he had not really heard. He came to the door and looked at her, then as the chimneypiece where the stocking humans looked as the chimneypiece where the then as the chimneypiece where the stockings hung—a long row of them, as they had not hung since the children grew up—stockings of quality; one of brown silk, Nan's; a fine gray sock with scarlet clocks, Ralph's—all stuffed to the top, with bundles overflowing upon the chimneypiece and even to the floor below.

"W...t's this—what's this?" John Fernald's voice was puzzled. "Whose are these?" He limped closer. He put on his spectacles and stared hard at a parcel protruding from the sock

put on his spectacles and stared hard at a parcel protruding from the sock with the scarlet clocks.

"'Merry Christmas to Relph from Nan," he read. "To Ralph from Nan," he repeated vaguely. His gaze turned to his wife. His eyes were wide like a child's. But she was getting to her feet, from the chair into which she had dropped.

"The children!" she was saying. "They—they—John—they must be here?"

here?

here?"
He followed her through the chilly hall to the front staircase, seldom used now, and up—as rapidly as those slow, stiff joints would allow.

Trembling, Mrs. Fernald pushed open the first door at the top.

Trembling, Mrs. Fernald pushed open the first door at the top.

A rumpled brown head raised itself from among the pillows, a pair of sleepy but affectionate brown eyes smiled back at the two faces peering in, and a voice brimful of mirth cried softly: "Merry Christmas, mammy and daddy!" They stared at her, their eyes growing misty. It was their little daughter Nan, not yet grown up!

They could not believe it. Even when they had been to every room—had seen their big son Ralph, still sleeping, his yet youthful face, full of healthy color, pillowed on his brawny arm, and his mother had gently kissed him awake to be half strangled in his hug—when they had met Edson's hearty laugh as he fired a pillow at

hearty laugh as he fired a pillow them carefully, so that his fat of the details.

"Mis' Fernald"—Marietta Cooley strove with all the decision of which she was capable to keep her high-pitched, middle-aged voice in order—"fore you get to bed I'm most forgetting' what I was to ask you. I strong the strong was strong to the parlor. Now, go awful careful up them stairs. They have you tramp through the settin' room to the front through the settin' room to the front meet them in his bathrobe and slip--Guy, holding out both arms from above his blankets and shouting "Merry Christmas!—and how do you like your children?"—even then it was difficult to realize that not one was missing—and that no one else was there. Unconsciously Mrs. Fernard found herself looking about for the sons' wives and daughters' husbands and children. She loved them all—yet -to have her own, and no others, just for this one day-it was happiness in-

When they were all downstairs, about the fire, there was great rejoic-ing. They had Marietta in; indeed, she had been hovering continuously in the background, to the apparently fright-ful jeopardy of the breakfast in preparation, upon which, nevertheless, shad managed to keep a practised eye.

"And you were in it, Marietta Mr. Fernald said to her in astonish-ment, when he first saw her. "How in the world did you get all these people into the house and to bed without

waking us? waking us?"

"It was pretty consid'able of a resk," Marietta replied, with modest pride, "seein' as how they was inclined to be middlin' lively. But I kep' abushin' 'em up, and I filled 'em up so full of victuals they couldn't talk. I didn't know's there'd be any eatables left for today," she added—which last remark, since she had been slyly bak-

ing for a week, Guy thought might be considered pure bluff.
At the breakfast table, while the eight heads were bent, this thanksgiving arose, as the master of the house, in a voice not quite steady, offered it to one unseen:

Thou who camest to us on that first Christmas day, we bless Thee for this good and perfect gift Thou sendest us today, that Thou forgettest us not in hese later years, but givest us the greatest joy of our lives in these our oyal children. Nan's hand clutched Guy's under the

table. "Doesn't that make it worth it?" his grasp said to her, and hers replied with a frantic pressure, "Indeed it does, but we don't deserve it."

. It was late in the afternoon, a tremendous Christmas dinner well are and the group, scattered when

a tremendous Christmas dinner well over, and the group scattered, when Guy and his mother sat alone by the fire. The "boys" had gone out to the great stock barn with their father to talk over with him every detail of the prosperous business he, with the help of an invaluable assistant, was yet able to manage. Carolyn and Nan had ostensibly gone with them but in reality the former was calling but in reality the former was calling upon an old friend of her childhood, and the latter had begged a horse and sleigh and driven merrily away alone upon an errand she would tell no one but her mother. Mrs. Fernald sat in her low chair

at the side of the hearth, her son upon a cushion at her feet, his head resting against her knee. Har slender fingers against her knee. He sender lingers were gently threading the thick locks of his hair, as she listened while he talked to her of everything in his life, and, at last, of the one thing he cared

"Sometimes I get desperate and think I may as well give her up for good and all," he was saying. "She's so—so—clusive—I don't know any other word for it. I never can tell how I stand with her. She's going south next week. I've asked her to answer me before she goes. Some how I've clung to the hope that I'd get my answer today. You'll laugh, but I lert word with my office boy to wire me if word with my office boy to wire me if a note or anything from her came. It's 4 o'clock and I have 't heard. 'he —you see, I can'f help thinking it's because she's going to—turn me down—and—hates to do it—Christmas day."

He turned suddenly and havied his

He turned suddenly and buried his face in his mother's lap; his shoulders heaved a little in spite of himself. His mother's hand caressed his head more tenderly than ever, but, if he could have seen, her eyes were very bright. They were silent for a long time. Then suddenly a jingle of sleigh bells approached through the falling winter twilight, drew near, and stopped at the door. Guy's mother laid her hands upon his shoulders. "Son," she said, "there's some one stopping new. Perhaps it's the boy with a message from the estation." the station.'

He was on his feet in an instant. Her eyes followed him as he rushed away through the hall. Then she rose and quietly closed the sitting room door behind him. quietly close behind him.

As Guy flung open the front door, a tall and slender figure in gray furs and a wide gray hat was coming up the walk. Eyes whose glance had long been his dearest torture met Guy Fernald's and fell. Lips like which there were no others in the world, smiled tremulousty in response to his eager exclamations. eager exclamations. And over the piquant young face rose an exquisite color which was not altogether born of the wintry air. The girl who for two years had been only "elusive" had taken the significant step of coming to North Estabrook in response to an elo-quent telephone message sent that

quent telephone message sent that morning by Nan.
Holding both her hands fast, Guyled her up into the house—and found himself alone with her in the shadowy hall. With one gay shout Nan had driven away toward the barn. The inner doors were all closed. Blessing the wonderful sagacity of his womankind, Guy took advantage of his moment.

"Nan brought you-I can see that "Nan brought you—I can see that I know you're very fond of her, but—you didn't come wholly to please her, did you—Margaret?"
"Not wholly."

"Not wholly."

"Tve been looking all day for my answer. I—oh—I wonder if—" he was gathering courage from her aspect, which for the first time in his experience falled to keep him at a distance—"dare I think you—bring it?"

She slowly lifted her face. "I thought it was so—so dear of you," she muttered, "to come home to your people instead of—staying with me. I thought you deserved—what you say—you want—"
"Margaret—you—"

"Margaret—you—"
"I haven't given you any Christnas present. Will—I—do?"
"Will you do! . . Oh!" It was
great explosive sigh of relief

and joy, and as he gave vent to it he caught her close. "Will-you-do! . . . Good Lord! . . . I rather think you will!" "Emeline-"Yes, John dear?" "You're not-crying?"

"Oh, no—no, no, John!" What a blessing deafness is sometimes! The ear cannot detect the delicate tremolo which might tell the story too plainly. And in the darkness of night, the eye cannot see. "It's been a pretty nice day, hasn't

"A beautiful day!"
"I guess there's no doubt but the children care a good deal for the old

folks yet."
"No doubt at all, dear." "It's good to think they're all asleep under the roof once more, isn't it?— And one extra one. We like her, don't

"Oh, very, very much!"
"Yes, Guy's done well. I always "Yes, Guy's done well. I amount thought he'd get her, if he hung on. The Fernalds always hams on, but a mite of a temper—I didn't The Fernalds always hang on, but Guy's got a mite of a temper—I didn't know but he might let go a little too soon. Well—it's great to think they all plan to spend every Christmas day with us, isn't it, Emeline?"

"Yes, dear—it's—great."

"Well—I must let you go to sleep. It's been a big day, and I guess you're tired. Emeline, we've not only got

Emeline, we've not only got the children. too. That's a pretty happy thing at our age, isn't it, now?"

Yes-yes. "Good night — Christmas night, Emeline. 'Good night, dear."

#### New Jersey Women Get Even. From the Chicago Post.

Only a few weeks ago Newark, N. J., told woman, with emphatic majority, her place is in the home.

Now Newark is being taught the folly Now Newark is being taught the folly of its admonttion. Newark is soon to celebrate its 250th anniversary, and great plans are being made. But plans need execution, and in all such matters the aid of women has been found of greatest value. With this in view, Newark men relented sufficiently from their attiftude in the suffrage election to name two women on the committee of 100 that has the celebration in charge. Two women to 98 men—a generous concession, and counted upon to enlist the co-operation of hundreds of other women in subordinate positions doing the real work.

women in subordinate positions doing the real work.

But when enlistment began it was discovered that the admonition conveyed in the suffrage wote was being heeded only too well. One prominent woman, noted for her energy and ability, answered:

"Why, no; I can not help you. I have been remanded to my home by the men of Newark." Another, usually much to the fore in civic effort, declared: "I should think not. Any work I de will be for suffrage. When we win that I'll be free for other things." A young business woman replied: "I am too busy seeking a hushand to make a home for me into which I can retire, as advised." Others refused to help Newark celebrate the fact that it was not merely 250 years old, but 250 years behind the times.

It is a whole lesson for Newark, and we hope it will be well rubbed in.

#### Photographing Flying Birds. From Outing Magazine.

In photographing flying birds the main point is speed. A fast plate, a fast lens, a fast shutter and fast work is the combination that gets the pic-ture. Having the first three named ture. Having the first three named articles I began trying to improve my part of the operation, and soon learned that focusing used up most of the frac-tion of a second that the birds are in range. Then I determined to leard to point the camera at an object and get it focused properly without taking time to look at the ground glass or finder. My desire was to reach that stage of rapid movement and quick judgment rapid movement and quick judgment of distance where I could throw the camera into position, twist the focusing screw, press the trigger, and stop a flying bird, much as a good quail shot can snapshoot quail that are flushing wildly in high brush. I have not attained perfection, but this snapping by judgment has often helped as it by judgment has often helped, as it did with my next picture.

A Swedish scientist has advanced the theory that beared grain, such as wheat, draws electricity from the air and that the plant is aided in its growth thereby.

O learn of me—no partial rill, No slumbering, selfish pool be you; But social laws alike fuffit, O flow for all creation, the Edward Lovillond (Elightzenth Century)

### \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* CHRISTMAS COOKERY.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* From the Pictorial Review. Southern Country Sausage. Ten pounds of ground meat, 3 ta-Mespoonfuls salt, 2 teaspoonfuls finely

ground red pepper, 1/2 teaspoonful saltpeter, 2 teaspoonfuls black pepper, 1½ leaspoonful sage.
Use both the lean and the fat meat, just as it comes. Before adding the seasoning the sage should be crisped In the stove and rubbed through a sieve. After the ingredients are thoroughly mixed, form into little cakes

with the hands, fry in hot skillet and lay around the turkey. Delicious Mincemeat:

Two pounds lean beef, 2 pounds raisins, 1 pounds citron, 4 pounds apples, 1 quart brandy (or Sherry), 1 nutmeg, ½ ounce cinnamon, 1 cupful blackberry jam, 2 pounds beef suet, 2 pounds currants, ½ pound candied lemon peel, 2 pounds sugar, ½ pint whisky, % ounce cloves, juice and rind of two eranges, juice and rind of two lemons. juice and rind of two lemons

Cover the meat with beiling water and let it simmer until tender, then set aside to coal, while preparing fruit. Shred suet and chop fine. Pare, core and chop apples. When the meat is cold, chop and add to other dry ingredients, Add oranges and lemons ast. Mix well and pack in a stone jar,

ast Mix well and pack in a stone jar, pouring the whisky and brandy over it iust before the mixture is put away. The housewife who is fortunate to possess a haunch of venison, cooks it a day or two before Christmas, so as to be sure she is giving full attention to the details of roasting. The venison is washed in warm water and well dried with a cloth. A sheet of white paper is buttered and laid over the fatty section of the roast, then the whole put in a deep baking pan with a very little boiling water. When a covered dish is not used the roast is smaggly protected with a coarse paste one-half dish is not used the roast is smaggly protected with a coarse paste one-half inch thick and a layer of paper. Before covered baked dishes were discovered in the south all venison was roasted in a jacket of this kind, and in this method of cooking a little intensible flavor steals into the game, a flavor that is missing when the conventional covered baking dish is used. The venison is cooked in a moderately het over covered baking dish is used. The venison is cooked in a moderately het oven for from three to four kours, according to the size of the haunch and when practically done the fire quickened, the covering removed, and the roass dredged with flour and buster. The roast is basted with the gravy until a delicate brown. Of course, current jelly is a necessary accompaniement to ly is a necessary accompaniment to venison, but the Kentucky housewife serves a more formal sauce with her roast venison.

## ALL CHRISTMASES ALIKE.

The American Magazine has been offering prizes for the best letters entitled "Going Home for Christmas," and the prize-winning letters are published in the December number. Fedlowing is one of them. It is from a man who, for reasons explained in his letter, can nev-

er go home for Christmas:
"The black squares in the calendar of the year for me are the holidays, the days when everyone else is the happiest. And of all, Christmas is the

worst. "I reside in a great eastern city; all about me during December are Christmas preparations: Christmas feasts, Christmas dances, Christmas parties, succeed each other, the joyousness of the season for my friends who live at home. Sometimes I am invited by some big-hearted, whole-souled em-

some big-hearted, whole-souled embodiment of the Christmas spirit who guesses at my loneliness. Not that I go; in would be only too wind a reminder of the old days.

"But, most poignant of all, is to witness the bustle of preparation which accompanies the real home-going of those who are departing for the little towns of their boyhood, where Christmas can only be really kept for them. I can picture each home-coming vividly, "Friends of the past will greet him at the depot, each genuinely glad. But more than these, more than brethers and sisters or nephews and nieces, will more than these, more than brethers, and sisters or nephews and nieces, will be his mother, hen face shinlag with joy. 'But why cannot I go home for Christmas?' you ask. That's where the answer comes hard. Let's have it over in a word. Long ago, in a frenzied moment, I took a step which made mestand forth in my own little town, a defaulter, an embezzier, a betrayer of defaulter, an embezzies, a betrayer of my trust, whatever you may choose to call me. Whether I was a trusted employe, a banker, or a business man, does not matter, the best the playing friends of my family could say was the

characterization: 'A good man gone wrong.' Arrested, tried, convicted, I served my time and moved 1,000 miles away, to forget and be forgotten.
"Not that I, the physical man, have anything of which to complain. Finding employment in another line, I have succeeded in a quiet, unobtrustve fashsucceeded in a quiet, unortruste rash-ion—found my place in a rut, as it were. I have no hardships, no tale of persecution to recount. My pay en-velope, while not plethoric, is still suf-ficient to give me the comforts of life. In a modest way I have made good, as, any man of average intelligence and determination can.

determination can.
"But, even at Christmas, I can't gohome. The episode is a closed one and yet, rightly or wrongly, I am not for-given or forgotten. My family, a good home. one, of position and standing, would not wish to have me. Even my mother, loving me as I know she does, for she remembers Christmas for me, would not desire my return. I am the black Did you ever mad 'The Man Without a Country? It is even works
to be a man who can't go home.

"Is it any wonder that the 25th of
December is the blackest day in the
year for one who has seen real Christ-

What "Old Santa" Overhea Tis said old Santa Claus one time Told this joke on himself in rime:

One Christmas in the early dia.
That ever leads the morning in.
I heard the happy children shout in rapture at the toys turned dut of bulging little socks and sines.
A joy at which I could but chalse To listen enviously, becauss I'm always just "Old Sarea Glaus." But ere my rising sigh had get To its first quaver at the thought, it broke in laughter, as I keeper A little voice chirp like a bind. "Old Santa's mighty good, I know, And awful rich—and he can se Down ever chimbly anywhere In all the world!—But I don't care, I wouldn't trade with him, and the Old Santa Claus, and him be me Fer all his toys and things—ail, Know why, and bet you he know, the Wuz ist a little boy 1300 Mac."

Inscription on a Fountals O you, who mark what flowers 15 22.
What gates, what odors breat ing hear.
What sheltering shades from summer's

Allure my spring to linger here.

You see me quit this margin green. Yet see me deaf to pleasurest call Explore the thirsty haunts of men. Yet see my beauty now for all.