

# Rose of Christmas.



It was the eve of Christmas. The air was frosty—men's boots made the snow crack under them as they passed with the quick tread of those who had but a few hours left in which to anticipate the coming of the Christmas saint and the advent of Christ-myth in their homes.

Christmas greetings mingled with the orders of the shopkeepers to hasten the delivery of goods, the furs and satins of the millionaire's wife brushed against the faded, threadbare shawl of the shivering woman from the city's darkest slums, who had stolen a brief and hopeless holiday from toil that in this one hour of the world's joy she might breathe the incense of an unknown existence of happiness, of gifts, of plenty, of a fabulous and dream-like ease, a vision that floated before her starved eyes in dimmer unreality than the stored tales of pagan magnificence.

A flood of brilliant light poured out from the shops. Such was the luxury of the holiday season that not only the signs of winter were evident, but the garnered treasures of all lands. There were fruits from Persia and Arabia, gems from every nation that the sun shines on, luxuriant furs from polar regions, where only intrepid explorers have trod, silks from lands where the sun pours a fiery flood the year round, the choicest and daintiest bits from Egypt, India, Siam, a bewildering array from the islands of the sea and from the capitals of the European and Asiatic nations. Countries whose history told of the Christ-myth so far in the dim light of history that its origin is lost, piled their wares side by side with the unequalled productions of the new world, rivaling in costliness and beauty all that appeared to tempt the hearts and the purses of men.

Amid this Christmas joy Philip Meredith walked with an aching and indefinable pain at his heart. A gray, leaden mood had settled over him like a fog. He made a strenuous effort to forget. He had told himself that the coming of this anniversary should not overwhelm him with that agony of recollection which he knew down in his innermost soul he could not endure. For days the approaching holiday had

straight into the shop and say what you will have."

"Oh, Philip," said the woman, her eyes filling with a soft mist, "you are always good and generous, and I will let you give me flowers, but not for myself. Have you forgotten my poor people in the hospitals? Give me the flowers for them. I cannot have too many of them, and, oh, Philip, you cannot imagine how much joy they will bring the sick and suffering."

"You may have all you want," he said. "Here they are, roses, violets, orchids, lilies of the valley—what will you?"

It was Christmas morning in St. Joseph's hospital. There was a faint antiseptic odor in the air. The long lines of narrow white cots stretched their quiet rows down the room in pitilessly arched array. On one cot lay a woman, who was a mystery to the hospital officials. She had been brought in late in the afternoon of the day before insensible. She was young and beautiful; her clothing was that of a gentlewoman; she had all the marks of refinement, albeit with certain signs of toil, but every mark that could identify her had been carefully clipped from her garments. For hours the watchers thought the angel of death would stop at her before he took the one next her. Yet by the morning she revived and murmured words they could but indistinctly understand. Toward noon she revived so that her conversation became intelligible. But with the return of consciousness she seemed to guard her secret more closely. She refused to answer the questions of the hospital physicians, and insisted that she would soon be strong and well and would leave the hospital.

The Christmas flowers had come in and the nurse selected the finest bunch of American beauty roses in the lot and took them to her patient. She lay, limp and silent, in her cot. It was her first experience in a hospital. She reflected vaguely, that it would be her last. She had fainted on her way to the river, it is true, but that was no reason why she should not carry out her design. It was only a question of time. The nurse approached her. She bore a large box.

"Here is something for you," she said. "It was a large white box; around it were wide, pale blue ribbons. A spray of holly lay on the top. She looked at it listlessly. "Shall I open it for you?" said the nurse

about her head. Her eyes were filled with a dewy sweetness. The purple shadows of the aftermath of pain were slipping away on the horizon before the glory of dawning day. He felt dazzled. His heart leaped, then burned within him. He drew her arm within his own and they turned down a quiet side street. She smiled at him.

"I knew you would find me some time," she said, with an infinitely gentle air. "When they brought me your roses in the hospital this morning and I saw your dear name once more I knew that our trouble and separation were over forever. Sweetheart, how good it is to see you once more."

He understood how fate had played with those Christmas roses, and in the sudden illumination of his mind and heart he felt as if he had narrowly escaped falling over a precipice.

As they walked down the street together the bells rang "Glory to God in the Highest," and white pigeons circled around the steeple.

## AN INNOCENT USURPER.

Portrait Painter's Daughter Sat Upon the Throne of England.

To sit upon the throne of England, and there to receive the obeisance of the real sovereign, is an experience granted to but few. Miss E. D. Taylor, in her book, "Heliciums in Miniature," tells a pretty story of how Miss Blanche Sully, daughter of the American portrait-painter, once enjoyed this distinction.

The queen gave Mr. Sully three or four sittings, after which he told her that he did not need to have her sit longer, and asked if she would allow his daughter to take her place, as she was so much in the habit of posing for him that she could sit as well as a log—a matter of peculiar importance while jewels were being painted, on account of the changing light upon the stones.

The queen readily gave her consent, and when the artist returned to his lodgings and told Miss Blanche that she was to accompany him to the palace the next day, that young lady was in a state of wild excitement. Having left home in a great hurry, she had only one silk gown with her, which she describes as an "ugly thing, green striped with black." The despised gown was donned, and Miss Blanche set forth with her father for the palace.

Mr. Sully had not told his daughter what she was to do, and great was her surprise when she was suddenly raised to the throne of England and arrayed in the queen's robes, with the royal crown upon her head. Although the head that wears a crown is said to be uneasy, Miss Sully declares that this crown, which was adorned with many beautiful jewels, did not cause her any uneasiness, being no heavier than an ordinary velvet hat.

After she had been sitting for what seemed to her a very long time, the doors were suddenly thrown open with a great flourish, and the queen was announced. From no one do we get a more interesting picture of the fresh, joyous young queen than comes to us from this other girl's recollections of her. She says that the queen was not pretty, but had a lovely complexion and golden brown hair, which was drawn away from her face and gathered in a large knot at the back of her head.

The royal young lady looked at Miss Blanche, sitting in her regalia, made a low reverence and laughed, after which she glanced at her own gown, then at Miss Sully's, and laughed again. The two dresses were precisely alike, except that the green and black stripes were wider on that of the queen. Miss Sully describes the queen's manners as gracious, and her conversation, when she talked with the painter, as delightful.

Her youthful majesty must have had a sympathetic feeling for a young appetite, as she ordered refreshments for Miss Blanche, a thing she had never done for her father.

Miss Sully recalls the golden salvers, the handsome tea service and the curving tumbler set in stands of gold filigree. There were so many queen-cakes in the basket that was handed to her that she asked her father if the queen lived on queen-cakes. She, poor child, was so awed by the strangeness and magnificence of her surroundings that she could not eat a morsel.

## Too Confident.

Emergency lectures are good in their place, but a writer in the New York Times thinks that some of those who attend upon them acquire very exaggerated ideas of their own consequent fitness to deal with serious cases.

The other day a woman fell in the street, and broke her arm. She was taken into a store, and clerks ranged themselves at the door to keep the crowd out. A gentleman had helped to carry her. When she had been placed in a comfortable position, he, after cutting her sleeve from wrist to shoulder, called for some cotton, and making some splints of the thin boards upon which dress goods are rolled, prepared to set the limb.

At this moment a tall woman with eyeglasses, having with difficulty run the gauntlet of clerks at the door, pressed eagerly forward.

"You're doing that all wrong; all wrong," she said.

As the gentleman did not even turn, she continued, "Come, you must let me do that. You don't know anything about it; I have an emergency certificate."

The gentleman paused in his work, and without looking up, remarked briefly, "Parlor me, madam, but I am a surgeon."

A woman may insist that she wants her husband to be present when she gives a party, but that doesn't change the fact that he is a particularly good husband if he has business out of town.

## The Antiquity of Ice Cream.

Ice cream is an older sweetmeat than many would suppose. In the beginning of the seventeenth century goblets made of ice and also leaved fruit, i. e., fruit frozen over, were first brought to table. The limonadiers, or lemonade-sellers of Paris, endeavored to increase the popularity of their wares by being them, and one more enterprising than the rest, an Italian named Procope Couteaux, in the year 1660, conceived the idea of converting such beverages safely into ice, and about

## CHINESE HOSPITALS.

Black Holes Where Patients Are Killed Instead of Cured.

If ever surroundings were conducive to ill health, or a prolongation of disease, those of a Chinese hospital are certainly meant to be productive of continued revenue to the owner. For, be it remembered, the Chinese hospital is a private institution run by the undertaker. He is always on the safe side. If the patient keeps alive he gets money for caring for him. If his friends tire of paying for his keep he is placed in the "Chamber of Tranquillity" and starved to death. After he dies the undertaker, that Pook Bah who has three offices only, buries him and makes money out of him to the last.

Imagine a room about 10 feet wide and 12 feet long, filled with the odds and ends of a junk shop. Let this room be so dark that it takes two candles to make a light, and so filled with the malodorous smells that are usually met with in Chinatown dens that a strong man hesitates before he enters and gasps for breath after he gets inside. Place half a dozen bunks around the walls and a cauldron in which some witches' broth is boiling in the corner. Have two Chinamen to each bunk in all stages of disease and in all stages of filthiness. Let the walls be so full of rat holes that the three cats which make themselves at home on the bunks with the sick Chinamen are insufficient to watch them all. Imagine all this and you may have some slight conception of what the interior of a Chinese hospital looks like. If your imagination is very vivid, and if you have seen Chinese opium dens, you will get pretty close to the real thing—otherwise you will miss it. It is almost beyond imagination.

But the front room is Elysium in comparison to that other, just back, through a dark hall. There are grades of darkness, the scientists tell us, and these grades may be found in these Chinese hospitals. Some darkness can be seen; some can be felt. That in the back room of this inferno can be felt palpably. In fact, it is present to all the human senses at once.

It can be tasted. It can be heard. It can be seen. It can be felt. That it can be smelled goes without saying.

You stand just within the opening, which by courtesy is called a door, and you hear breathing, as if some one were exhausted after a long run. You are not mistaken. It is a man breathing heavily in his race with death. He is still alive, and you wonder why. Groping your way you reach some stationary object and light a match. It gives just enough light to enable you to see a candle on a bench and you light that. Then you feel that an electric arc light would scarcely be sufficient to enable you to pierce that Stygian darkness.

It is well, perhaps, that you have an obscured vision. It is possible that if you could see all that is in the room at once you, too, would be a sick man. It is a noisome den where vermin abound; where rats make their home; where the living and the dead humanity lie side by side—the one waiting for its coffin and the other for the cessation of the struggle for breath.

This is part of the Chinese hospital. It is also a part of the undertaking establishment. This is the "Chamber of Tranquillity" and if one couldn't be tranquil here he would be restless in his grave. It's the grave's next door.—San Francisco Chronicle.

## Picks from Portugal.

Next to Portugal, Japan sends the greatest supply of toothpicks to the United States. These are made by hand from fine reeds. They, too, are sold in close competition with the American product, owing to the cheap labor in Japan. The cases in which the Japanese picks are inclosed are fine specimens of skill with the jackknife. They are of wood, cut into strips as thin and delicate as tissue paper, but very strong. The cases are ornamented with hand-painted Japanese scenes and are of a size convenient to be carried in the vest pocket. The competition between the Japanese and Portuguese makers on the one side and American manufacturers on the other has become very keen. An importer of toothpicks said recently that the Japanese picks can be made and sold in the American market, cases and all, for less than the cost of the paper boxes that contain the domestic picks.—Philadelphia Times.

## Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty.

The Bartholdi statue of "Liberty," the "Bavaria" at Munich, and the "Germania" opposite Bingen on the Rhine, are modern echoes of the famous Colossus which Chares set by the harbor of ancient Rhodes. The "Liberty" exceeds it in height one hundred and fifty feet by half; but still, if the Colossus were among us to-day, it would doubtless be treated in the guide-books with eminent respect. Like the Liberty, it stood by the harbor of a great emporium, where the ships of all nations came and went. In the form of a patron deity, it represented the genius of a state, and in its dimensions it spoke for a national taste which, as the Laocoon group and the Farnese Bull, both Rhodian compositions, seem to betray, worshiped much at the shrine of the god of bigness.—Century.

## Island of Monte Cristo.

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Clarence—Yes. She returned all the love letters, but retained all the jewelry.—London Tit-Bits.

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## WHAT SYMPATHY COULD DO.

Pretty Peasant Girl Was Restored to Sanity in a Prison.

It is difficult to imagine a bright side to prison life, and when to confinement is added the gloom of insanity, the darkness seems impenetrable. The author of "The Dungeons of Old Paris," however, gives a touching picture of what womanly sympathy once accomplished even in so extreme a case.

There was a strangely sympathetic side to this sadder of the prisons of Paris (St. Lazare, for women). The sick and worn-out were always tenderly regarded by their fellow-prisoners, and if a woman died in the prison, it was not unusual for the rest to club together to provide a costly funeral.

In the early years of the Restoration, a pretty peasant girl named Marie was sent to St. Lazare for stealing roses. She had a passion for the flower, and a thousand mystical notions had woven themselves about it in her mind. She said that rose-trees would detach themselves from their roots, and glide after her wherever she went, to tempt her to pluck the blossoms. One in a garden, taller than the rest, had compelled her to climb the wall and gather as many roses as she could, and there the gardeners found her.

This poor girl excited the most vivid interest in that sordid place. The prisoners plotted to restore her to reason, christened her Rose, which delighted her, and set themselves to make artificial roses for her of silk and paper. Those fingers, so rebellious at allotted tasks, created roses without number, till Marie's cell was transformed into a bower.

An interested director of prison labor seconded these efforts, and opened in St. Lazare a work-room for the manufacture of artificial flowers, to which Marie was introduced as an apprentice.

Here she made roses from morning till night, and her dream of the future being dispelled, the malady of her mind reached its term with the end of her sentence, and she left the prison cured and happy. She became one of the most successful florists in Paris.

## The Spanish Vessels.

The Century prints part of Captain Sigbee's "Personal Narrative of the Maine." Captain Sigbee says: After the destruction of the Maine, and while the Vizcaya and Oquendo were in the harbor, we could observe no drills taking place on board those vessels, although it is possible that they might have gone on without our being able to observe them. There was much ship-visiting on board. In everything they did, except in respect to etiquette, the practiced nautical eye could not fail to note their inferiority in one degree or another to the vessels of our own squadron at Key West. Our vessels were then having "general quarters for action" three times a week, and were keeping up their other drills, including night-drills, search-light practice, etc. The vessels of the Vizcaya class, below in the captain's cabin and officers' quarters, were one long stretch of beautiful woodwork, finer than on board our own vessels. The smaller guns of their primary batteries, and the rapid-firing guns of their secondary batteries, were disposed between the turrets on two decks in such decreed fashion that in order to do great damage an enemy needed only to hit anywhere in the region of the funnels. I remarked several times—once to Admiral Sampson, who was then Captain Sampson of the court of inquiry on the destruction of the Maine—that the Spanish vessels would be all aflame within ten minutes after they had gone into close action, and that their quarters at the guns would be a slaughter-pen. Future events justified the statement. Afterward when I boarded the wreck of the Infanta Maria Teresa near Santiago de Cuba, her armored deck was below water, but above that there was not even a splinter of woodwork in sight; in fact, there was hardly a cinder left of her decks or of that beautiful array of bulkheads. It may have been that the Maine remained longer in Havana than had originally been intended by the Navy Department. It was expected, I believe, to relieve her by another vessel; which vessel, I do not know. I had hoped that the Indiana or the Massachusetts would be sent to dispel the prevailing ignorance among the Spanish people in regard to the strength and efficiency of our ships. The department may not have accepted my views.

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"IT IS HE!" SHE CRIED.

filled him with an unacknowledged terror. It was the first Christmas he had spent without her, without Mirabel. And, telling himself that he would forget, that he would not remember, he straightway remembered with the intimate fidelity of pain all that could wound him now.

A breath of fragrant air from out a florist's shop made him turn his head for a moment, and as he looked he saw forget-me-nots. The sight gave him a pang. He recalled the morning they had first met. It was a morning in spring, fresh with innocence. Her eyes were blue—blue like the forget-me-nots. Then, less than a year later, they were red, and the one Christmas they had spent together had seemed to him more exquisite in its perfect happiness than the one on the plains of Judea could have been to the shepherds. Then came misery; scarcely had the echo of the Christmas bells died away in the air than that fatal episode had occurred that had parted them. It arose in a trifle, as most of the world's misery and woe have, and then before he knew it he had said words that had made a gulf between them which it seemed could never be bridged. She said she would go away and battle with the world by herself; he made a brutal reply. Then they parted, but when, after a few days of devastating loneliness, he went to seek her, she had gone.

So the year had dragged out its course and this terrible holiday was at hand. It flaunted itself before his eyes—his joy mocked him at every step—his ineffectual attempts to forget it brought it more vividly before him.

Again the opulence of a florist's shop met his gaze. A sudden resolution came to him; he stepped up to the window and speculated between orchids and lilies.

"Ah, Philip, I see you are choosing my Christmas gift," said a voice at his elbow. He turned—it was his cousin, a woman born to bring to others some of the light and joy denied them in their own poor lives. "Do not hesitate now, easily I am pleased in the matter of flowers. Shut your eyes and choose whatever you see first when you open them, and it will suit me."

It will give me more pleasure to suit your taste than to trust to a haphazard choice," he replied. "Come with me

pleasantly. "It was sent especially for you by a friend."

The pale patient almost smiled. The nurse's kindness was almost pathetic.

"There is no one to send me flowers," she said, "but you may open it for me."

The nurse did so. A rush of fragrance filled the air. The roses burst upon the vision of the pale woman with the glory of midsummer, dazzling in their brightness. They lay in their satin-lined home like fragrant jewels.

"Oh, how beautiful!" she cried. "Let me have them."

As she took them a card fell out. She looked at it as one might look at a dear face that had been hidden for years. Her eyes dilated. She was silent for one moment, then she cried out in a voice that thrilled the nurse and caused every head in the ward to be lifted from its pillow.

"It is he!" she cried. "It is he. I must go at once."

They remonstrated with her, but the sick woman was well. She arose from that pale couch with sudden vigor—her eyes were bright—every trace of illness left her. "I must go to him," she repeated, time and again. The doctors came and looked at her and then conferred in a low tone with the nurse. "She may go," they said.

So she took her roses and walked down the street. It was a beautiful morning—the sun shone brightly and the air was crisp—one could not have guessed that the angel of death had hovered near her during the night. She walked some distance and then she neared a church. On its steps, just stepping out to go down the avenue, was a man. His restless agony had driven him forth in the early morning to try to exorcise the demon that would not let him rest. He had passed the church, and, drawn by an impulse he could neither define nor resist, he had entered. With the strains of the "Gloria in Excelsis" ringing in his ears he went out. As he stood on the steps of the cathedral and looked casually down the street he saw what made his heart stand still. A mist swam before his eyes—his knees shook under him. He hastened toward her.

"Mirabel!" he gasped.

She looked up at him with a smile.

"I was going to see you," she said simply.

The morning sunshine made a halo

The rainbow is always bent on disappearing.