

THE TALE OF A VERY BAD BOY.

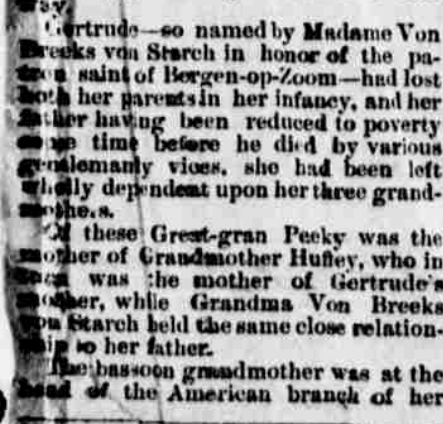
Oh! this is the tale of a very bad boy: He had done all he could to be thought of as a very bad boy. Then what do you think there was found to employ...



Our Bachelor's Christmas Dinner.

THE THREE GRANDMOTHERS.

"And you would marry this fellow," said Grandma Von Brecks von Starch, in her bassoonist that is the only word I can think of with which to describe...



Baby in my stocking, eh? -P-H-; P-H-



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And the next day the piano was closed and locked, and the fair performer a prisoner in her own room; and Grandmother Hufley, meeting...

above her still dark eyebrows, beneath which beamed with a mild, dreamy light her soft brown eyes, and a pleasant winter bloom lingered on her wrinkled face.

And so it happened that Gertrude, trying to play an air from memory, and fingering it continually, eyed her was about giving it up in vexation.

"It's a beautiful thing," said the painter, still standing in the doorway; "but I think the song beginning in this way"

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And when the flight was discovered next morning, the anger thereat was nearly equalled by the wonder in regard to the manner of it.

"She never went by the front door, for the key was under my pillow," thundered the bassoonist.

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lay a crisp thousand-dollar United States Treasury-note. But never did Everdell or his wife hear from or see her again, for very soon after their marriage she passed quietly out of life, and so will remain an enigma to them forever.

Gertrude stood an instant in thought. Then she glanced in the mirror. It reflected a bride-like figure. Dress of some clinging creamy white material, daisy-decked head, a cloud of lace clasped at the throat by a tiny gold cross.

And how charming is that ancient and tender custom of the Calabrian peasants, who in the days just before Christmas go down from their mountains to visit the shrines of the mother of Christ, and cheer her with their wild strains of song!

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Twelfth-Night, came—such sway, indeed, that they grew to deserve and wear the name of the Captains of Mischiefs; those revellers where the great Yule-log was kindled, a log so huge that its slow core of heat might burn...

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we are following an old British custom of the Druids, who hung the green up within doors when the frost came, in order that the sylvan sprites might still find a home in the wintry weather under the forest bough, and bring a blessing to the house that gave it to them.

Although in Latin countries the day and its preceding night are celebrated with countless bells and masses and candles, and with midnight banquets to sustain the fatigues of the celebration, yet the children there have no such luck in school holidays proper to the season as children do with us, their longest holiday ending the day but one after the festival, while our little lads and lassies look forward to Twelfth-Night as the winding up of their joys.

Nor are our children confined to any one form of the Christmas genius. As every nationality is represented with us, so every form of Christmas spright and guardian is happily welcomed, from the Santa Claus who came over with the Knickerbockers, his pack full of toys and sweetmeats, to the Petit Noel of French settlements, who goes about dropping silver pieces into the children's shoes at the foot of their little beds; and all up and down the land the flowers of summer are replaced by the flowers that bloom in the tiny flames upon the boughs of the Christmas tree, which, if it was originally exotic, has now established its growth, and if it has not become almost a native of the soil, has certainly taken out naturalization papers, and become a citizen of our homes if not our forests.

We may console ourselves for the neglect that the great festival has met with in these regions of ours by remembering that Christmas was not celebrated at all till nearly half-way into the second century of the Christian era, and even then it was an exceedingly movable feast, often confounded with another, that of the Epiphany, and sometimes only honored so late as the month of May.

Nor did it become firmly fixed till two or three hundred years after that, when, by the best authorities of the old Roman archives of that early time remaining, the date was decided, and whether correctly or not, making really very little matter, so long as the fact for which the date is desired is thus hallowed with remembrance.

Nor do we now actually keep that identical date, since the change from Old Style to New Style brings the time round to quite another day still.

With all the celebration that Christmas receives the world over, we doubt if it anywhere has such various and general celebration as on our own shores. In the North, amidst snows and frosts and howls and howls of wind, the day has a delightful domesticity, a sense of shut-in comfort and well-being; farther south fire-crackers and pistol-shooting give it a strange atmosphere, and still farther south its songs are given to balmy breezes laden already with the scents of roses, of orange flowers, and of oleanders, that make the day as genial and as pleasant as it must have been nearly two thousand years ago.

It becomes her, then, to burn the fire upon her hearth in its honor, as if it were an altar flame fed with spices and fanned by the breath of prayer, to hang the ground-pine upon her door, that all who enter it may enter in the name of the day, and the holy-days, and laurel in her window, that all who pass shall know the spirit that reigns within, and to cast her wreaths upon the monuments in the church-yards in the name of Him who has risen from the dead, and that none of all the household who may have gone into the shadows beyond shall fail to have their share in its remembrances. It becomes them to spend thought and care and money on their gifts and on their tables, and to see that their poor also are not forgotten, and to teach their children to sing carols, not for the sake of mere music, or as pastimes, but as expressions of devotion, which, having entered into the reverence and the ship world, raise them above those people who are content with the mere noise of the world.

Yet it is to notice how, even in our abbreviations, we have not been able to escape some of the former heathen practices that have crept upon us, so that even in the hanging of the festoons and the wreaths of ever-

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How for the Holidays.

No dreary dreariness from ghostly spirits, when you go to Heaven's thanksgiving, gathering of the heart. Did we have a happy Christmas? No, we did not suppose it was all wrong—the children of a King, journeying here for a day—but we spent every hour of that pleasant festive time in bitter sorrow and wept; who had been so happy, and expected that on our heads, at dawn of sorrow; that the sorrow would never darken our happy smiles!



"When does my father wake up do I think of his done spread hisseff dis time Santa Claus for a fac

riedly that, and even so I—and his mother, near glitter over it, and I—I—I—something like a—there crumpled paper at the door, and the well-known whistle—he was always whistling—and he was in our arms—bonnie, blue-eyed boy with fearless look; the same smile in his chin; the same eyes that seemed the most precious weight in the world to us, that never die or best in this

Home for the holidays! It was his first year at school, and he had pleaded for this home-coming, that we could not refuse, and all our plans had included none—for what would a Christmas dinner have been without our boy?—we had his sled, "The May-flower," but for there was a flurry of snow, and we tried not to let him see how foolish we were about him, or how we followed the sound of that whistling voice through the house, and wondered if there ever was such another boy, and planned out just what sort of a man he would be!

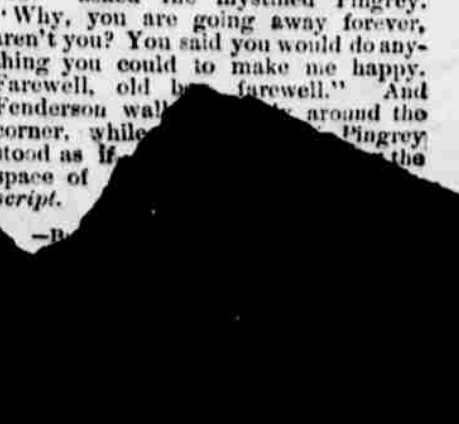
That was one week before Christmas. All in a moment a hand cold as ice was laid on our hearts—the snow that had fallen on its white chillness brought death with it, for it fell into our summer garden, and covered the one tender flower blooming there.

"I think," said the Gardener, clasping his arms with a gentle hand, "This is the most tender flower I ever saw." I can tell you nothing about it except the vague sense of nights that were as days, and of days that were as nights; of sad, solacing words from people who meant well, but who were all unconscious of wakening a wound. Was it Longfellow who said: "Before a great grief we are dumb?" There was a fond, feverish caress, and the last whispered words:

"Papa, m-m-m-ma, I am going home-me for the holidays," and then: "His Lord looked down on the flower, and his heart went out to its need. 'Tis just the plant for my garden. A plant of celestial seed, and still further east and still further south its songs are given to balmy breezes laden already with the scents of roses, of orange flowers, and of oleanders, that make the day as genial and as pleasant as it must have been nearly two thousand years ago."

"And yet, dear heart! remembering thee, Am I not richer than of old? What change can reach the wealth I hold? Thy love hath left its trust with me!" I can not feel that thou art far. Since near as needs the angels are, And when the sunset gates unbar, Shall I not see thee waiting stand, And while against the evening star The welcome of thy beckoning hand?" —Detroit Free Press.

—"I wish you a happy New Year!" said Pingrey. "Oh, that's easy enough to say," replied Fenderson; "but what will you do towards making my New Year a happy one?" "Anything I can," said Pingrey. "Do you mean it?" cried Fenderson, dramatically. "Do you mean it?" "Well, well, good-bye, farewell." "What's the matter with you?" asked the mystified Pingrey. "Why, you are going away forever, aren't you? You said you would do anything you could to make me happy. Farewell, old boy, farewell." And Fenderson walked away around the corner, while Pingrey stood as if in a space of spirit.



Great Anticipations.