

The Magical Door.



HERE'S a door in the wall of the ages—
A door that no man sees;
For the angel who writes in the book of Time

Is the keeper of the keys.
Once in the year it opens,
At the solemn midnight hour,
When the children sleep, and the old clocks keep
Awake in the tall church tower.

And then, as it swings on its hinges,
Whoever might peer inside
Would catch a glimpse of the centuries
That behind in the silence hide.
Egypt and Rome and Tyre,
All in that mythical place
Where the old years rest that were once possessed
By the wonderful human race.

The shadowy door swings open,
And a pilgrim enters in,
Bowed with a twelve-month's struggle
In this world of strife and sin.
Wart him a farewell greeting!
He will pass no more this way—
This weary year who must disappear
In the haven of yesterday.

The door still swingeth open,
And outward another comes,
With a stir of banners and bugles
And the beat of friendly drums:
His hands are full of beauty—
The cluster, the song, the sheaf,
The snow-dake's wing, and the budding spring,
And the foam on the created reef.

This is the New Year, darlings,
Oh! haste to give him cheer,
Only the Father knoweth
The whole of his errand here.
This is the New Year, darlings:
A year for work and play,
For doing our best, and for trusting the rest
To the Maker of night and day.
—Margaret E. Sangster, in Harper's Young People.

NEW YEAR'S AT BIG ELM.



[Original.]
ESSIE FOWLER, her pretty face glowing with exercise, was riding home, her lap full of packages which she had purchased at the country store six miles distant.

It was the last day of December, and a lovely afternoon. There was no snow on the prairies of southern Kansas to welcome in the New Year to be on the morrow. Cattle fed on the green grass, and red birds flitted gleefully among the sunflower stalks that lined the roadside.

Suddenly Bessie became aware of the approach of a horseman across the prairie to her sight. Something in the manner of his riding told her who it was, and a warm flush spread itself over her fair face.

"Good morning, Bessie," he greeted her, reining his horse in by the side of her pony, and looking the love which he could not conceal.

"Good morning, Tom," she returned, somewhat confused under his beaming gaze—"I mean Mr. Hartley," she quickly corrected herself.

"Let it be 'Tom,' as it used to be," he pleaded.

"If it wasn't for that old fuss," she returned.

"Both that old fuss! We needn't keep that up between us if our dads do," he laughed. "There's no sense in it, and it's time they turned that old fuss down. But if they don't it's New Year's to-morrow, Bessie, and we'll begin a new one on our own account. I'm bound to win you."

But the girl's face looked uneasy, and she strove to change the subject.

"When did you get home, Mr. Hartley?"

"Only this morning, Miss Fowler," imitating her formality. "And behold how I am repaid for my devotion. Hang the 'Mr. Hartley!'"

"Oh, Tom!"

"That sounds better, if the tone were only more cheerful. See here! I'm going to ride back with you to Big Elm, and have a talk with your father."

Bessie, knowing her father as she did, might have warned Tom of the uselessness of such an interview. But he was so handsome, so much improved by the two years spent in a northern college, from which he had just returned; then what girl does not possess sufficient faith in her lover to believe him capable of accomplishing whatever he undertakes, even to the storming of an obdurate parent's heart?

So, side by side, the young couple rode away together toward Big Elm, an isolated country post office, kept by Bessie's father. Here, twice a week, the scattered settlers and cattlemen of that region received their mail, which was carried from a little railway station thirty-seven miles to the east.

Tom Hartley, a handsome, manly fellow of twenty-four, just home from a good college, was the son of a prosperous ranchman, who lived nearly eight miles from Big Elm. Time had been when his and Bessie's fathers were famous friends. As boys they had grown up on adjoining farms in Illinois. When men they had married playmates, two lovely girls, and with their families had come to Kansas. They had formed a partnership in the cattle business, and for several years they had prospered reasonably well. Mrs.

Fowler and Mrs. Hartley were on terms of the most sisterly intimacy. Tom and Bessie went to the same little dug-out school, and laid the foundation of a lasting attachment, which strengthened with the years that brought the rancher's boy to noble manhood, and the girl to winsome womanhood.

Then had come the disagreement. Fowler had grown tired of the cattle business and wished his partner to buy him out. At last Hartley consented, but in the settlement there was some trifling mistake made. It was in Hartley's favor, and Fowler had accused his friend of trying to cheat him. It is a very small thing which may plant the perverse seeds of discord in hearts that have long been united. Hartley was a man of quick temper and had warmly denied the charge. A quarrel had followed, and the families once so friendly were soon separated by a bitter estrangement.

Once, however, after he had cooled down and went over the business transaction carefully, Hartley saw the mistake, which was one of only a few dollars. He had hastened to Fowler to right the error, but the postmaster had obstinately refused to accept any apology or amendment. Too proud to sue again for a reconciliation, Hartley had walked away with an injured air. A three years' estrangement had followed.

The postmaster of Big Elm was watching from the window of his cabin as the young couple rode into the yard and halted.

"Say, mother," he cried, with sudden excitement, "ain't that young Tom Hartley out here with Bessie?"

Kind-faced Mrs. Fowler looked over her husband's shoulder from the window and surveyed the handsome young fellow who was in the act of assisting Bessie to dismount.

"Why, I do believe it is Tom," she returned. "How handsome he's grown to be!"

"Handsome, the dickens!" and he strode toward the door angrily. "I'll pay him for his impudence in ridin' with our Bess."

Flinging the door open he faced Bessie's escort with an angry flash in his eyes.

"I don't ask any odds of any Hartley," he said, gruffly, brushing Tom aside. "I can help my own gal off her pony."

"Father!" mildly remonstrated Mrs. Fowler from the doorway.

"I mean it!" he went on, rudely dragging Bess from her saddle. "Now you go in the cabin and stay there, Bess, and you," to Tom, "get on your beast and ride back to your dad's ranch. I ain't goin' to have you hangin' round here, fillin' my gal's head full of nonsense."

Bess staggered into her mother's arms, and hid her burning face on that sympathetic breast. Tom Hartley's indignation was aroused against the old man, but by a great effort he controlled himself to speak calmly:

"See here, Mr. Fowler, what's the sense in letting your old misunderstanding with father separate Bessie and me? I love her truly, and I believe I could make her very happy," Tom went on, fearlessly. "It's New Year's to-morrow, and I think you and father had better bury that old fuss and be friends again. He's willing if you are. It would make Mrs. Fowler and mother happy, I know. Come, begin the New Year with all the old disputes and dislikes cast away, and let Bessie and me enjoy an unclouded happiness."

"New Year's be hanged!" replied Fowler, admiring Tom Hartley's spirit, although he was resolved to be unrelenting. "You can tell your father I ain't willing to make up if he is. I ain't forgot all he said, and I'd just as lief begin my calendar of the New Year with that old fuss as with anything else. Ride on, and don't come back to Big Elm any more. You can't have Bess, and you're not needed here, and, pushing his wife and daughter into the cabin, he shut the door almost in Tom's face.

Stinging with indignation, the young fellow mounted his horse and rode away. As he passed the window he had a brief glimpse of pretty Bess crying her dark eyes red on her mother's shoulder. The sight almost maddened him, and he felt disposed to ride back, force an entrance, and carry her away from "that unreasonable ogre," her father.

"But who knows?" he communed with himself. "The New Year may bring about something for Bessie and me. No need to make the fuss worse, if I haven't done so already. Maybe the old man will cool off a little. I'll wait and see, and he rode on.

Then he began calling his father and the postmaster at Big Elm rather unpleasant names for being so foolish as to allow a slight mistake to cause such a disruption of friendship. Why couldn't folks exercise more sense, more dispassion in the affairs of business? It would save so much trouble if they only would.

The sun had set. Darkness was settling over the prairie, and the stars were beginning to appear here and there in the blue vault above him. But, unheeding the lateness, Tom Hartley rode on, he cared not where. He was in no mood to go home, and, as a kind of reaction of the condemnation he had been showering out, his heart became heavy, and he began to entertain apprehensions of his ever being able to win Bessie Fowler.

It was growing chilly, so he spurred his horse into a reckless gallop. This rate of travel suited him better, and he let the spirited animal go as fast as he pleased.

They had just entered some low, woody bluffs along a stream, when the horse caught one of its forefeet in a deep rut and stumbled, flinging its rider violently to the rocky ground.

Frightened at its own mishap, the horse extricated himself and went tearing off across the prairie, leaving its master where he had fallen.

Tom Hartley was too stunned to move for several minutes. When he did at last attempt to rise he realized that his right arm was badly sprained. But congratulating himself on hav-

ing escaped worse injury, he started toward the stream, resolved to refresh himself with a sup of water, then hurry to the ranch, where he knew the return of his horse without its rider would create alarm.

He was picking his way around a bluff when voices suddenly attracted his attention.

Two men were earnestly engaged in conversation not ten feet from where he halted.

He was about to pass on when he heard them pronounce a certain name. This determined him to listen, and, slipping into a dark niche of the bluff, Tom Hartley overheard the following dialogue:

"So Old Fowler never mistrusted the message wasn't O. K.?"

"No, I worked it slick. You see he owes Mr. Gray for money loaned him to pay off his mortgage, and when I told him that Gray wanted to see him at once on important business, he raked right out on his pony without asking me another question."

"Then there's nobody at Big Elm but the old woman and gal?"

"That's all. I'll take old Fowler till after midnight to get to Gray's, and by that time we'll have that registered letter in our own paws."

"How did you find out Old Tompson had a registered letter at Big Elm?"

"From his cow puncher, Rum Charley. We're good friends, and I met Charley as he was riding back from Big Elm this afternoon. He was swearin' high at Old Fowler for not



lettin' him have a registered letter that had just come in for the boss. Fowler said he'd deliver it into no hands except Tompson's own. He wouldn't accept Rum Charley's receipt for it, and that's what made him so mad. It's an important letter, containin' one thousand dollars from Hepley's bank in payment of a check old Tompson had there."

"Maybe Old Tompson will post right over to Big Elm this evenin' for his letter."

"Bother, man! Old Tompson's away from the ranch and won't be home for two days. I got everything straight from Charley. A half pint of brandy in my pocket did the work. The money's at Big Elm, Old Fowler's on his way to Gray's, and all we've got to do is to help ourselves."

"But what if the women give us trouble?"

"We'll wait till they're in bed, before we raid the post office. I know the ground well. It'll be easy enough, but if Bess and the old woman give us bother, I know how to silence them. Come on over to the cabin, Pete. We'll need something to brace us up. The night's gettin' cold."

So the plotters walked away, leaving Tom to dig as well as he could what he had heard.

"The post office to be robbed!" he repeated to himself, as he crept cautiously away from the bluff. "Fowler summoned off by a false message, and Bessie and her mother alone! He told me I wasn't needed at Big Elm, but I rather think I am now, and as I'm nearly five miles away I haven't a minute to spare, and, despite the pain in his arm, Tom walked briskly away across the prairie.

He recognized in the leader of the plotters Dave Mowley, a new settler of questionable character, who had a small cabin near those bluffs. By some few persons he was secretly suspected of having some connection with an outlaw gang of Indian Territory; but he had managed to keep up a semblance of respectability by working part of his time for Gray, a wealthy stockman, some twenty miles from Big Elm.

"Mowley has appeared in his true character at last," Tom remarked, as he hurried along toward Fowler's cabin. "But I'll foil him."

Then he remembered his injured right arm. He could not use his revolver easily with his left hand. What was he to do?

"I'll prove a poor match against those two villains, my arm this way," he said. "There's not a house along this trail where I can stop for help, and it's too far to go home and tell them. The least delay now is dangerous. I must save Bessie or die in the attempt."

Bessie Fowler was putting out the light, preparatory to retiring, when a gentle rap on the window-pane startled her.

"Oh, Tom! What's the matter?"

"Hush! Don't alarm your mother yet. Let me into the kitchen at once."

She quickly complied. As she closed the door behind him, she cried:

"Oh, Tom! Is something wrong with father?"

"He's all right, I believe, only gone on a false errand."

"False errand! What do you mean, Tom?"

"No matter. Is there a valuable letter in the post office for Ranchman Tompson?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You must be brave, Bessie, and help me. Mowley and another villain will make a raid on the post office to-night to get possession of it," and he briefly related the plot of the robbers whom he had overheard.

"What can we do?" said the girl, with white face. "We're so far from all aid, and your arm hurt that way—"

"Never fear, Bessie; we'll baffle them some way. Let us go into the post office. I want to take some notes."

The post office of Big Elm was kept in a room which had once been used as the Fowler kitchen. A long table surmounted with a box divided off into rude pigeon holes for holding the mail stood in one corner. The table had one large drawer, which contained the postal supplies and all valuable letters coming to or leaving the office.

The room had only one window, while just beneath it was a large trap-door, leading into the cellar. Tom received an idea.

"Bessie, is the outside cellar door locked?"

"Yes, securely."

"Well, you take Tompson's letter and all the stamps and hide them in your room. See that all the windows

are secured, then put out the lights and get quiet. I'll stay here."

Half-way to Gray's ranch, Fowler met one of the cowboys who told him that Mr. Gray was not at home. Guessing at once that he was the victim of a false message, he rode frantically back to Big Elm.

It was nearly midnight, and a dim light burning in the post office assured him that something must be wrong.

Jumping from his horse, he flung the door wide open, and stood staring at the unexpected picture that met his gaze.

Tom Hartley, with his right arm in a sling, sat on a table, which had been placed directly over the trap-door. Bessie with her father's trusty Winchester stood beside him. Strange, muttered curses came from the cellar.

"Tom Hartley! You here?" cried the postmaster, recovering his speech.

"Yes; I thought I was needed, so I came," Tom answered.

"What does it mean? I feared something was wrong."

"Some villain's tried to rob the post office, but I have them trapped," and Tom pointed significantly toward the cellar.

In a few words as he could use Tom related to Fowler how he had overheard the plot, and how he had hastened to the cabin and prepared things for the reception of the robbers, sending them headlong through the trap-door the minute they had entered through the window.

"Tom," and the old man's voice was husky as he grasped Tom's left hand, "you've saved us. I haven't words to thank you. But it's all right. See!" and he pointed to the old clock on the wall. It was ready to strike twelve, the midnight hour. "The Old Year's dying; let the old fuss die with it."

"Amen!" said Tom and Bess together, as their hands joined.

And the old bitterness passed out with the Old Year, and the dawn of the New smiled upon the revival of the old friendly feeling between the Hartleys and the Fowlers.

The robbers were turned over to the proper authorities, and the Hartleys came over to Big Elm to celebrate the reconciliation by partaking of a good old-fashioned New Year's dinner with the postmaster's family.

"Accordin' to my thinkin'," said Fowler, carving the wild turkey browned to a turn, "folks who keep nursin' old fuseses throw away lots of golden time to do good to each other."

—A. H. GIBSON.

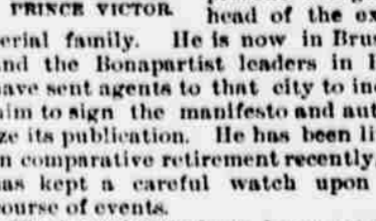
Between the Years.
A minute's pause, while o'er the face of night
A solemn silence reigns, and far and near
A million tongues are hushed, ere wings his
flight
The spirit of the old and dying year.

A moment's pause, and on the city's heart
A pall has fallen, and a muted bell
Proclaims the hour of midnight as the darts
Of Time descend—then dies the old year's
friend.

Then, clanging wildly to the listening ear,
From spire and steeple comes the joyous peal
Of bells that welcome in the infant year,
Fraught with the wish of happiness and weal;
And, ere the shades of night again descend,
The spoken wish has passed from friend to
friend.
—Walter Sedwin, in Once a Week.

THE FRENCH CRISIS.

The Panama Canal Scandal Revives a Spark of Life in Bonapartist Dry Bones.
PARIS, Dec. 23.—The activity of the royalists in the present crisis in France aroused the jealousy of the imperialist leaders and at a secret conclave they drafted a manifesto addressed to the people of France, urging them to recall the house of Bonaparte to the throne. This awaits the approval of Prince Victor, the present recognized head of the imperial family. He is now in Brussels and the Bonapartist leaders in Paris have sent agents to that city to induce him to sign the manifesto and authorize its publication. He has been living in comparative retirement recently, but has kept a careful watch upon the course of events.



PRINCE VICTOR

The imperialists have been canvassing earnestly for supporters among the deputies, but not with much success, while the division between the monarchists and the Bonapartists heretofore on common ground as opponents of the republic, has grown and each now shows considerable jealousy as to which will profit by the difficulties of the republic.

Should the Bonapartists act it is expected that they will attempt to strike a blow in Paris rather than in the provinces. They, like the monarchists, are being carefully watched and every movement is reported to M. Ribot and President Carnot. The proceedings of the secret conclave, at which the manifesto was determined upon, were known to the government almost as soon as the conclave had adjourned and the government is already in possession of the terms of the manifesto.

M. de la Fosse writes to Figaro that the parliamentary republic is ruined and ought to be replaced by a consular republic with Prince Victor Bonaparte as the first consul. The suggestion is looked upon as an attempt to revive the empire through the same process by which the first Napoleon arrived at the throne.

OKLAHOMA STATEHOOD.

Some Chance of Getting Perkins' Measure Through by an Omnibus Bill.
WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—Senator Perkins has introduced a bill to enable the people of Oklahoma and of the Indian territory to form a constitution and state government and to be admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original states and for other purposes.

The bill covers both territories, forming one state, and provides for a constitutional convention, the members of which are to be elected by the people. The convention is to adopt a constitution and submit it to the people and if ratified by them it will be presented to congress, and when approved by congress the work of forming a state is complete.

As estimated by the friends of the new measure, there is a chance to get it through by making a state omnibus bill. This bill is to usher into the union the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma. They estimate that the idea of making a state of Oklahoma will be a popular one, and if the republicans will consent to the admission of the other two the whole thing can be put through. This is the plan that will be adhered to in seeking the best results.

"CRANK" LEGISLATION.

A Peculiar Bill Introduced into the Senate.
WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—One of those peculiar "crank" bills which occasionally find their way into congress was introduced yesterday by Mr. Mitchell in the senate. Its elaborate title provides for the prohibition of electro magnetism, mesmerizing and hypnotizing human beings, etc., and prescribing punishment. Numerous petitions and documents accompany the bill, and others equally voluminous are referred to. The bill in brief provides that any person who, anywhere within the jurisdiction of the United States shall apply a current of electricity upon a person for the purpose of affecting another, or which does so affect, shall be guilty of a crime punishable by death, and that any person having knowledge of such current having been applied, who fails to notify the proper authorities, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$5,000 nor more than \$20,000, or by imprisonment ranging from two years to the period of one's natural life.

HAVOC ON THE TRACK.

A Locomotive Opens Its Valve After Bumping Another and Starts Back on a Career of Destruction.
BIRMINGHAM, Ala., Dec. 23.—A runaway switch engine in the Louisville & Nashville yards shortly before daylight played havoc. Two engines collided and the valve of one of them flew open. The engineer and fireman had jumped off before the collision. The latter engine started backward rapidly with four cars attached. It ran a mile through the yard at a terrific rate. The two switchmen on the cars jumped off. Near Eighteenth street the wild train dashed into another engine with seven cabooses attached and the entire outfit was wrecked. Engineer William Harrison, of the last-named engine, was perhaps fatally burned. Fireman Ed Moberly was also badly hurt. Three engines, seven cabooses and four cars were wrecked.

All-Night Saloons For New York.

NEW YORK, Dec. 23.—The excise commissioners have approved the applications of 300 saloon keepers for the privilege of keeping open all night. The all-night license costs \$100, and is distinct from the usual license, which allows the saloons to keep open from 5 a. m. to 1 a. m. The applications must meet the approval of the new board of aldermen, which is regarded as practically assured. The list begins with the saloons nearest the Battery and goes upward. Other batches of applications will be approved and submitted to the board of aldermen later.

BAD WRECK.

Collision on the Gulf Road Near Olathe, Kan.—An Engineer Killed and Many Persons Injured.
OLATHE, Kan., Dec. 22.—The most serious and destructive head-end collision that ever occurred in this section occurred on the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis railroad at Lenexa, eight miles northeast of this city, at 11:35 yesterday morning between northbound freight train No. 58 and the Missouri, Kansas & Texas southbound passenger which runs over the track of the Memphis route from Kansas City to Paola.

Engineer Souerland, of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas train, was instantly killed, some persons seriously and many slightly wounded.

The two engines were completely demolished and Souerland was found cut to pieces beneath the ruins. The express and baggage car of the passenger train was torn into splinters. An emigrant car on the freight train, which was attached next to the engine, was torn to pieces and piled upon the ruins of the engines.

Four flat cars loaded with coal were also wrecked. It will take several days to clear the debris away. A track is being built around the wreck and the south bound passengers were transferred on the Olathe suburban train and taken to Paola. North bound trains went in over the Santa Fe.

Among the injured are:
Fireman Boyts, of Kansas City, had cut on head and bruises.
C. B. Torry, of Prescott, Kan., badly hurt in back and left leg.
F. G. Torry, of Prescott, Kan., both legs badly crushed.

Mrs. S. A. Robinson, of Akron, Cal., hurt in neck and shoulders.
Route Agent S. H. Beckwith, of Olathe, Kan., badly hurt about shoulders and for a time insensible.
G. H. Child, of Kansas City, baggage-man badly scalded on hands and face.
Charles Goldengle, traveling paper artist, hurt in ear.

TROUBLE IN MEXICO.

A Revolutionary Outbreak That May Prove Very Serious—Reports to Overthrow the Present Administration.
LAREDO, Tex., Dec. 22.—The storm is coming, and when it breaks it will be over the republic of Mexico. Dispatches are rushing to and from the Mexican officials to the United States officers on the frontier, and in the near future there will be a genuine revolution in Mexico. Information was received here that Gen. Estrada, stationed at Mier, about seventy-five miles down the Rio Grande, was missing from his post of duty, and it is thought he has joined the revolutionists, who are marching toward the interior of Mexico. This is another indication that the outlook is very serious for President Diaz.

It is impossible to gain any information from those high in authority, as everyone is under the strictest orders not to make public the telegrams, but this much is positively known, that there was a battle on the 17th, on Mexican soil, near Guerrero, about thirty miles from the river, between the Mexican troops and revolutionists, with a victory for the latter. There were five soldiers killed in the skirmish, the revolutionists completely routing the federal troops, and in a body 400 strong continued on their march toward the interior. When last heard from they were within a few hours' march of the town of Corralvillo, which is situated fifty miles from the river, near the Candillo mountains and thirty miles from the Mexican National railroad. This information is from an officer whose name is, of course, a secret, and can be vouched for. He states that the Mexican troops down the river have been given orders to march into the interior and that further trouble will come from a powerful influence working for the overthrow of the present administration in Mexico.

It is reported that there is no lacking of funds to carry out the movement. There has been a grand coup made by the revolutionists. They made the raid at San Ignacio on the 10th and did not recross to this side, but went out into Mexico. Meanwhile the troops were ordered by both countries to the frontier with the expectation of finding them in the chapparal on the Texas side of the river, when in fact they were gathering strength as they receded toward the mountains in Mexico.

The Nicaragua Canal Bill.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22.—The Nicaragua canal bill, which has held the attention of the foreign relations committee since the beginning of the session, has at last been completed and was yesterday favorably reported by its author, Senator Sherman, who gave notice in the senate that he would call it up at an early date and endeavor to secure prompt action upon it. The new bill is drawn on substantially the same lines as the bill reported from the committee to the last congress, including as it does, a proposition to guarantee bonds of the company to the extent of \$100,000,000 to aid in the construction of the canal. The new bill, however, contains some additions which increase the obligations of the company as well as the security of the government.

A Millionaire in Danger.

CHICAGO, Dec. 22.—A warrant for Millionaire J. C. Doane for investigating the docking of his horses' tails contrary to the Illinois statute, was sworn out by President Stutart, of the Humane society. He is a personal friend of Doane's, but declares that that will not prevent him prosecuting with vigor. The penalty may be imprisonment for a year in jail.

Missed Word Cracked.

LONDON, Dec. 22.—A decision has been handed down in the case of the queen against Pearson's Weekly, one of the papers that was conducting the missing word competitions which were stopped by the court because of the fact that the word competition used in advertising and conducting the scheme was an infringement of the gambling act. When this decision was made the proprietors of the weekly had on hand the money sent in with guesses of one missing word. This sum amounted to \$120,000, and a question arose as to what disposition should be made of it.