

## Barney Flynn's Partner



HE boy stretched the long black stocking and regarded it with satisfaction.

"I'll take it," he said. "How much?"

"Twenty-five cents a pair," Dorothy Winslow answered.

The customer fished out a dime and three pennies and laid them on the counter.

"I'll take this one," he said.

"But we never break a pair!" Dorothy exclaimed, with some amusement. "Oh," she added, sympathetically, as the boy's face fell, "was it—was it for some one with only one leg?"

"It's for my partner. He's got two legs, but he's crippled—just been let out of the hospital. And I'm going to give him a Christmas."

"Oh!" said Dorothy, comprehendingly. "And you wanted the stocking to hang up? I'm sorry, but—wait!" she cried suddenly, as the boy was gathering up his money in disappointment. "I can let you have it, I think. Cash! Cash!"

The little girl who came in response to the summons nodded to the boy, and then sped away to the desk with the quarter that Dorothy substituted for the dime and three pennies.

When the customer had departed, carrying his package, Dorothy contemplated the odd stocking which had come into her possession.

"Well, what an idiot I am!" she murmured. "Why didn't I give him both of them? But of course he wouldn't have taken them—as long as he was paying for one."

She called the little cash girl again. "Do you know the boy that was here a little while ago?" she asked. "I thought I saw you nod to him."

"Barney Flynn. He lives on the floor above us," "Cash" answered, "with Billy; and Billy got run down by a tractor. Barney sees to him."

Customers claimed Dorothy's attention, and for awhile she was all hurry and bustle. During the afternoon, however, when the neighboring saleswoman volunteered to watch over her counter for her, she slipped down the aisle to the shirt waists, says Youth's Companion. She was quite excited for fear that the particular shirt waist should be gone. There was that woman with the bargain counter habit. Dorothy had seen her dallying at the counter.

She rummaged a moment in a pile of shirt waists; then she looked tragically at her friend behind the counter.

"O Peggy, it's gone! I knew it! I knew it! I saw it in that bargain woman's eye!"

She had waited so patiently for that waist to be marked down! It would have suited her complexion—it had just the right warm, rosy tints.

"Peggy, why did you let it go?" she cried, reproachfully.

"Had to, my dear. I did my best—put it at the very bottom of the pile, but she fished it out."

Dorothy went back slowly to her counter.

"Dick would have liked it, too," she thought, disconsolately. "And now he'll have to see me in just my shabby old one."

It occurred to her that other people probably had Christmas disappointments; and then she thought of Barney Flynn and his partner.

"He's going to hang up the stocking for Billy—and I don't believe he ever had a Christmas for himself in his life," Dorothy meditated. "I know what I bought the odd stocking for—so long as I can't buy myself that lovely waist."

And she felt a glow of enthusiasm as plans began to take shape in her mind. It was almost closing-time when the little cash-girl came darting up with a message from Peggy.

"She's brought it back—the shirt waist—sleeves too short. If you want it, better hurry."

Dorothy hesitated. "No, I've changed my mind," she said resolutely. "Tell Peggy I'm much obliged." And she added to herself: "Now if Dick doesn't like me in my old plaid waist, I guess we'll have to quarrel."

When Dorothy returned to the store the morning after Christmas, the little cash girl came running up to her, and cried:

"I got it in for you all right, Miss Winslow! I worked it fine. I crept in in the dark, when Billy and Barney were asleep; you couldn't have heard me with an ear trumpet. And I felt for Billy's stocking, and hung yours alongside. And then I filled 'em both with all the things you'd given me."

"Well," said Dorothy, eagerly; "and what happened?"

"O my sakes!" said the child. "All of us on the floor below was waked up that early Christmas mornin'! Such a yellin' and stompin'! You'd like to have thought they'd never had a Christmas!"

Dorothy turned away to hide a smile.

"And Dick was glad to see me just as I was," she thought, contentedly.



## Baby's First Christmas

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### SANTA'S LIGHT LOAD

By BERTHA E. BUSH.

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**B**UT, mamma, Santa Claus can go anywhere where there is snow. He has his sleigh, you know. And there is snow here, plenty of snow."

The sick woman, lying on the bed in the little pioneer cabin, looked at the white whirl of flakes that shut out all but the gray daylight from the little windows and shuddered. Yes, there was plenty of snow. You could not see even the dimmest outline of anything that was ten feet away. And



But Even Mark's Ghost was Welcome.

somewhere out in the snow—she knew not where—her husband was journeying. Three weeks ago he had started to the nearest town 60 miles away for supplies. He had been sure that he would return in a week. Was he lying now under one of those huge white drifts? Was he out in this dreadful blizzard, perhaps freezing to death at this very minute. She turned away from the window and moaned. She could not bear to answer the child. But Hattie, the hired girl, who never seemed to lose heart, answered cheerily:

"Land sakes, yes, there is plenty of snow, Lillie. But you know Santa Claus is getting old. He can drive in the snow of course, but a howling blizzard like this might freeze him

stiff. You'd better make up your mind not to get any Christmas presents this year, Lillie. You wouldn't want dear old Santa Claus frozen to death."

"No, of course not. But papa goes out on the prairie. Why shouldn't Santa Claus? Don't you think he could get here with a light load? You know, when we came, we got stuck in the soughs lots of times and papa unloaded the wagon and got it across empty. Don't you think Santa Claus could do that?"

"Yes, he shall," said Hattie, with determination.

She was only the hired girl who had come in friendly pioneer fashion to help the settler's wife through her sickness; but to the inmates of the little cabin she was a ministering angel. Strong and faithful and efficient, an angel could hardly have done more in that prairie home. Yet she did not look in the least like an angel as she put on the pioneer's old cap and coat, tied a red woolen scarf around her neck, drew old stockings over her shoes and floundered out through the drifts, stout and rosy in the wind, to do the chores for the night. Not a glimpse of the near by barn could be obtained from the cabin door. Hattie tied a long rope to the door knob and carefully held the other end as she walked toward it.

She pulled down hay and fed the stock and milked. She brought out pails full of the snow water she had melted in the big wash boiler for them to drink. She brought in a great supply of fuel and made everything outdoors and in as snug and cheery as possible. Then she cooked the supper—that did not take long for there was little to cook—and washed up the dishes and cared for the sick woman and the little babe. She put Lillie to bed in the queer little trundle-bed—the child chattering about Santa Claus every minute—and tucked her in as happy as if there were no fear or anxiety in the world; oh, what would the pioneer families have done without the "girls" of that time?

The mercury ranged 4 and 5 degrees below zero. The storm outside howled with the fury of a legion of demons. In some drift out there in the whiteness John Carver might be sinking to death now.

The baby cried and the sick woman moaned. There was no lack of occupation for the young helper. Hattie's strong arms held the child till it was quiet and at the same time heated flannels, brought water, smoothed pillows, and did everything that could be done for the anxious young mother.

"Hattie, you haven't anything to worry you," cried the sick woman, enviously.

"Not a thing except what worries other people," answered Hattie. But she knew that all the time she carried beneath her songs and cheery words a heartache that was as hard to bear as the young wife's own.

It was Mark for whom her heart ached. A year ago she had thought that by this time she and Mark would be settled in a pioneer cabin of their

own. Her quilts were all quilted, her store of household goods was ready. But a coldness had come between them, and Mark had gone away—"back east where girls were plenty." Since then she had been learning to live without him, and it was a bitter lesson. True she did not speak of it, not even to her best friends, but the ache was always there.

Her work, was done at last. She had time to look at little Lillie slumbering in her low trundle-bed with her stocking spread out trustingly on the pillow beside her. Now was the time for Santa Claus to come. But the sick mother was too ill and broken with anxiety to be bothered. There was nobody to fill that stocking but Hattie, and nothing to fill it with except what her girl's wit might devise.

She was very tired. All day she had been battling against storm and sickness, doing a woman's work and a man's too. Now she must do Santa Claus' work. Was ever a Santa Claus so sleepy? Oh, what would she not give to throw herself on the bed, dressed as she was, and sleep? But there was no time for that. Santa Claus must come to the waiting child. She knew that in a little while the sick woman would rouse again and need her. Softly and wearily she lifted the one little drop-leaf table over

to the window farthest from the sick mother and placed the lamp upon it. Then she got out her precious, dimming store of letter paper that had to be brought to her from 6 miles away, like the rest of the supplies, and the clumsy shears, and began to make paper dolls.

Clip, clip, went the big shears. That and the rustle of the paper were the only sounds to be heard. Gradually she realized that the howling of the wind had ceased and the blizzard had gone down.

Lillie's words kept repeating themselves sleepily in her tired brain. "A light load." Surely this Christmas gift would be light enough for Santa Claus to take anywhere. Clip, clip, went the shears, and wonderful creations fell from Hattie's hands. There was a father with a miniature newspaper spread out before him. There was a mother with a baby in her arms and another in a tiny paper cradle at her feet. There were brothers and sisters.

Snip—snip—Her hands went slower and slower until the last of the paper family trailed off into aimless cutting. Then Hattie's weary head sank down on the table and Hattie was asleep. Asleep and dreaming of Mark.

In the daytime she could keep the thought of him away from her with fierce determination. In the night it would come. She was dreaming and she knew it. She had dreamed of him too often not to know. And in her dream the door burst open and Mark stood before her. Of course it could not be real. Or, rather, it was a dream of Mark's ghost all deathly white. But even Mark's ghost was welcome. There could not be any harm in embracing a ghost in a dream. She threw her arms around his neck—

But this was no dream. It was too solid and it was too cold. It was a real man who stood before her, benumbed with cold, and covered with snow from head to foot.

In a flash she came out of her dream. It was well for Mark that she knew what she was, and that she knew what to do. She brought the great tub of melting snow-water, cut off the frozen footwear and mittens and plunged his feet and hands in it. She rubbed his face with snow. She made hot coffee—blessing the forethought that had kept the kettle filled with boiling water for the sick woman's use—and forced him to drink it. Little by little life and strength came back to him and incoherent words.

"Started—with Craver. We wanted to see—his wife. I wanted—to see—you. Blizzard came up. Lost our way. Dug a hole in the snow and stayed two night. Went a long while—and came to Smith's farm. Craver—too badly frozen—to go on. Will be all right after awhile, but couldn't go on then. Wanted to like fury. Smith had to hold him back. Good thing. He couldn't have come on his frozen feet. I came on—alone. Got lost again. Been lost all day. Pretty near—gave out. Thought I'd have—to give up. So dark and cold. Saw—your light when wind went down. Came to—you."

The words might be jerky and disjointed, but Hattie understood it and never words sounded sweeter.

"Santa Claus did come in the night," chirruped Lillie. "saw him. He was all white. And he brought me this. She held up the precious paper doll family.

"Aren't they lubby. I fought he could get froo with a light load." Then another thought came to her.

"But he didn't bring anything to you, Hattie. That's too bad."

"No, no, it's as good as it could be." Hattie laughed out in pure joy. "He brought me the one thing I wanted most in the world. And I shall be thankful to him every day I live; for if I had not kept my lamp burning in the window while I was working—I mean waiting for him—Mark would not have found the way."

**His Ear to the Ground.**  
"Do you expect people to believe all that you tell them?" "That is not the idea," answered the sagacious campaigner. "The way to win the hearts of the people is to tell them what they already believe."

**Working Him.**

"They certainly are working that boy too hard at college," mused the fond papa, as he thoughtfully signed up another check for his industrious son.

**Knives, Spoons and Forks.**

Knives and spoons are of great antiquity, but the use of forks is comparatively modern. Indispensable as these adjuncts of the table may now appear, they had not become at all general at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

**Cosmopolitan City.**

The city of Eperjes in Hungary is one of the most cosmopolitan places in the world. Nearly every one who lives there speaks six distinct languages and several dialects, and has to use them all in order to do anything.

**Manila is Thriving.**

According to the census of the board of health, Manila has 11,022 houses of strong material, 15,142 of light material, and 3,311 of mixed material, a total of 29,745 houses. The population is 223,542, says the Manila Daily Bulletin.

**Both Worlds.**

The grand difficulty is to feel the reality of both worlds, so as to give each its due place in our thoughts and feelings, to keep our mind's eye and our heart's eye fixed on the land of promise, without looking away from the road we are to travel toward it.—Augustus Hare.

**Chicken May Die of Grief.**

Two chickens were hatched from one egg last spring on the farm of John Paulus in Bethlehem, Pa. Both developed fully and became great pets of the family. One of the twin chickens was crushed to death. Since then the other twin has refused to eat and Paulus fears it will die of grief.

**Couldn't Take the Job.**

A middle west graduate came to New York to seek employment, says Success. Through a friend he received an offer of a place as shipping clerk to a certain firm. In reply he wrote as follows: "I regret that I cannot accept your kind offer of the position of shipping clerk, but the fact is that I am always sick when on the water."

**Advised to See Real France.**

C. A. Le Neveu, in Modern Language Teaching, says: "If tourists would go farther on into old France, into the old provincial life, instead of remaining quartered in Paris or some other big, fashionable town, they would really learn to know what French is like. They would feel they have wrongly judged us, and they would acknowledge that Frenchwomen are good wives, good mothers and good friends."

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