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CHRISTMAS IN A SHANTY.

BY OLIVE THORNE.

"Bertie," whispered seven-yearold Lily, mysteriously, "I know where to find Santa Claus. Barbara told me."

"Where?" cried Bertie, dropping the block he was about adding to his

"Out on the hill," Lily went on, eagerly. "Barbara says that Christmas Eve the Christ Child comes down on the hill, with oh! lots and lots of presents, and picks them over and gives them to Santa Claus to take to the children."

"What bill?" asked Bertie, jumping up from the floor.

"The one the moon comes over, Barbara says," answered Lily. "And I guess it's that one"-pointing to the peak of a mountain, miles and miles away. "Christmas Eve's this very night," she went on, earnestly. "Let's you and I go up there and see him and pick out our presents."

"Well," said Bertie, always ready to do what Lily suggested. "We musu't let Barbara see us, or she won't let us go," said Lily. "But

I guess she'll be glad when we come back with lots of things." "I'll bring her a horse," said Ber-

tie, "'at she can ride." "And I'll bring her a be-au-ti-ful long dress that'll drag on the ground," said Lily, starting downstairs. Bertie followed. Barbara had gone to the kitchen for a few moments; Mamma was busy in the parlor with company; and nobody saw the two children creep down-

"I wonder which way it is!" said Lily, when they had reached the walk. "Oh! I guess that way, 'cause there's the hill," and she turned the way that led from the village toward the woods.

stairs, open the front door, and slip

The sun was just down, and away the eager children tramped, too much excited to feel cold, though they had nothing over them, and too much afraid of being overtaken by the nurse to linger. When they reached the woods, it looked rather dark and Bertie was afraid to go in. But Lily said they'd soon be there, she guessed; and the Christ Child would take care of them, 'cause he loved little children.

So hand in hand they entered the dreary wood. It looked much darker inside, and in fact the short winter day was about over and night was falling fast. Anxiously the two little wanderers hurried along, not saying much, now running when the ground was smooth and stumbling along over roots and sticks when it was rough.

"I'm cold, 'n I want my Mamma,' burst out Bertie, at last. "So am 1 cold," said Lily, "and I guess we must be most there; and then think

how nice it'll be!" "Will it be warm?" asked the anxious little voice.

Bertie, the tears rolling down his "Well, don't cry," said Lily, in soothing, motherly way." We'll soon be there now." And on they trudged, through swamps half up to their knees, falling over logs, scratching their faces on bushes, hungry, cold, wet, and at last frightened,

Bertie. 'Well,' said Lily, 'we'll go,' and

'Don't cry, Bertie,' the brave little creature said, after a while. 'If we die out here in the woods, maybe the robin red-breasts 'll come and

began to fail, and the tears ran down

see any consolation in that.

finding it again in a minute.

knocked. In a moment it was open- the cold. ed by a negro-old and bent and white haired-who gazed at the two weary children as though they were ghosts.

'Please, sir, are you Santa Claus? asked Lily, with trembling lips and tears on her cheeks.

'Santa Claus!' said the bewildered negro. 'Bless vo' heart, who's that? But come in out o' the storm. Yo' must be nigh froze to death. Who's come with vo'?' and he peered out into the darkness.

'No one,' said Lily, timidly, half afraid of his looks, vet reassured by his good-natured voice. 'We came alone, to see Santa Claus. But I'm afraid we missed the way.'

'Come alone, this yere cold night, from the village!' he ejaculated, in amazement. 'Do yo' Ma know?' 'No,' said Lily, casting down her eyes. 'We didn't tell her.'

'Well, come in by the fire,' said he, drawing them in and closing the door. 'What yo' s'pose yer Ma'll say when she finds yo'r done runned away?' Bertie burst into lond crying and

Lily sobbed: 'Oh! please won't you show the way back. I didn't think

that. 'Well, well, don't cry,' said he. Yo' must get warm and have a bite to eat, and then I'll see about getting on vo' home. I ain't so young as I was onct, and it's no fool of a tramp through these yere woods after night kin tell ye.'

It was a droll little place that the children had come into. The whole | They talked a little more house consisted of one room, roughly built, evidently by Old Philip himself. On one side was a rude lounge-frame, holding some sort of a coarse bed and a blanket or two; on the other a table, made by turning a packing-box on one side. The third side was given up to the rickety old stove, the pipe of which went out through a hole in the side of the shanty, and a rough shelf behind it, on which were a plate or two, as many cups, a package or two of corn-meal, tobacco, and other necessaries, and a lighted tallow candle, stuck into a hollowed-out potato. There were no chairs, but a soap-box by the stove looked as though it was used for that purpose. A saw and sawbuck in the corner by the door and an old coat and hat hanging up completed the furniture

of the dwelling. But, if the house was odd, it was warm, and the two half-frozen children eagerly crowded up to the

'Pore chillen!' said their tenderhearted host. 'It's a miracle yodidn't freeze to death out in them woods.'

quivering lip. 'And oh, dear! how can we get home again?" 'Don't you fret yo'r heart, my little lady,' said old Philip, kindly. 'I see

'We did most,' said Lily with

about that 'ar. 'Pears to me vo'd 'mazingly like a hot 'tater, now, wouldn't yo', my little man?' 'Yes,' said Bertie, who was more

than half atraid of him. Philip opened the door of his stove, raked away the ashes, and there were two nice potatoes, baked to a lovely brown. He took them out, carefully brushed off the ashes, ed his head, whistled a little; and laid them on the table, brought out a cracked teacup with salt in it, and an old knife, and told the children

to come up and eat. 'If I'd a know'd I was gwine to and pop-corn, anyway.' have company to tea, he said, laughing, 'I'd a got up a supper in style. foot of the bed, opened it, and took But eat the 'taters and I'll bake vo' out beech - nuts - delicious little a oncommon nice hoccake. Yo'like three-cornered things, that he had

hoecake? knowing just how to begin such a tempted to push it pack, it hit somemeal. 'How do you eat these? thing, and he put in his hand and They're hot.

forgot yo' wasn't used to my sort o' 'Oh!' said Lily, hastening to follow his directions for herself. As

voured his potato without salt. 'I don't want to be covered up with handed it in the same way onto a whittled the end off smooth, and leaves,' sobbed Bertie, who couldn't plate and put it on the table. It was there was as fine a riding-horse as brown and smelt good, and the hun- any boy of five could ask for. gry children eagerly devoured it,

were more comfortable.

compassionately. 'Yo' mus' have the weather is.'

and went to the door. A fierce blast came in as he opened it, with a flurry of snow, nearly putting out the light. He shut it quickly, and stood a few moments with a look of perplexity on his face.

through the woods to-night. piece down here.'

Bertie's lip went up for a cry; but Lily took him in her arms in a motherly way, and said: 'Never morning, and we'll go home in a

them up as snug as he could with the other blanket. "Tain't much of a cover to them, reckon,' said he to himself; 'but I

suspicion they'll get cold.' Having fixed them as nicely as he ould, shaded his light so it would me?' burst out of her eager lips. not shine in their eyes, and replenshed his stove, old Philip sat down on his soap-box, and fell to talking mus' a know'd whar yo' was, an' to himself, as he often did out there in the woods, for want of other leff hyer fur yo'.

'Pore creeturs!' he said, looking shaking the sleepy boy. 'It's Merry at the sleeping children. 'What a Christmas, and Santa Claus has been

after a while he got up softly and hung their stockings up to dry.

'I know what Iz'e gwine to do. he said. 'I'll give 'em some nuts

He drew a box from under the gathered in the woods. From the stood irresolute before the table, not of small popping-corn. As he at-

pinch o' salt in, and dig out the didn't 'spect, when I done shoved it in under there fur a walking-stick,

'There,' said Philip, 'that'll do fur

When they had eaten as much as the gal.' A long time he puzzled 'There it is! There they are?' they could, and drank some water over this, till he remembered some she cried. 'Look Bertie! That out of teacups, Philip gave Lily a birds' eggs that had hung in his must be the place!' And they hur- seat on the shoe-box, while he turn- shanty for months. He took down ried on, losing the light now and ed a big stick of wood up on end and the old coat that hung on the wall, then, as a tree came in the way, and sat down on that himself. He then and there they hung, very dusty took Bertie, who had got over his now, but not broken. Carefully he When they came near the light fright, on to his lap and proceeded took them down and washed them they saw that it came from a win- to take off the soaked shoes and clean, breaking one or two, but on dow, and when they got close to it stockings and warm the little cold, the whole succeeding very well. they saw it was a small house and a red feet. Lily meantime did the Then he strung them on a clean 274 door was beside the window. Lily same for her feet, which ached with string, and they looked very pretty It was a welcome sound when old him alone.

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> Phillip's voice rang out at the door. 'Done loss any chillen hyer?' Mr. Deane, who had just returned,

ushed out. 'Yes. Do you bring any news?' 'Well, 'spects I does. Two chillen

lone spent the night in my cabin." 'Come in,' cried the father, hastily drawing him in. 'Where are they now? How did you find them? Where is your house? Bless you, I'll never forget this!' he poured out

in a stream. 'One at a time, Massa,' said old Philip, going up to the stove in the hall and spreading out his black hands to the pleasant warmth. My shanty is over in the woods a piece -nigh unto two miles from here, I reckon. An' them two chillen sot out, nigh's I kin make out, about sundown, to find Santa Claus. They see my light, an' come to my do' bout eight o'clock, I reckon, nigh about froze an' starved; the boy cryin', but the little gal brave an'

By the time the story was finished all the household had gathered around and the father had Philip's rough hands in both of his.

'No, you won't, said Philip. 'I don't wan't no pay. But them young ones is alone in the shanty, an' they mowat set afire, though I charged began to prepare breakfast. His the little gal to look out." potatoes were baked and his hoe-'Is there a road? Can I get there

with a sleigh?' asked Mr. Deane. the art when Lily opened her eyes. 'You kin go purty nigh,' said At first sight of Philip a look of fright came into her face, and then 'Well, you get warm and have some breakfast. Cook, turning to her, 'give him the best you can in five

Seated by the kitchen table, Philip disposed of a cup or two of hot coffee and some meat and bread in a 'I feel well enough,' said Lily, few minutes, and when the sleigh came up to the door he came out.

> put on his own in the ball. 'No, sir,' said Philip. 'The woodsawin' business isn't over 'n above

Mr. Deane turned to the rack where he had taken his. 'Here's one for you,' he said, handing him s 'Oh! Bertie, wake up!' cried Lily. heavy overcoat.

'There's my horse,' he shouted, as soon as he saw it. 'Let me have a ride.' And he snatched it down, started off. got astride, and rode around the Of course, it did not take very long to reach the point nearest the 'Let's see what else is in the stock-

shanty, though the road was not ings,', said Lily, taking them down. broken and it was rather hard pull-'Oh! pop-corn! Isn't it nice?' ing for the stout pair of horses. When the tather opened the door. 'And what are these?' she asked,

'Oh! Papa,' she exclaimed, wher she saw him, 'Santa Claus came here and left us such beautiful things!" 'See my horse!' shoated Bertie beech-nuts! Didn't you never see

Mr. Deane looked around the

Santa Claus bringed him!"

Philip showed her how to take the delicate nut, and she declared it the most delicious nut in the world. of my barn is a comfortable room Santa Claus made them purpose for built for a man, but my man don' occupy it. I'm going to have you It was some time before Philip move down there this very day and live in it. There's furniture enough ings and shoes on and eat their about the house to make it comfort able, and I can find work enough fo mother would be; and as soon as he burn lots of wood and have a garder had seen them fed he got ready for in the summer; and, in fact I take though it had stopped falling, and as Philip struggled to speak. I can 'Now mind yo' don't set the house never repay you for what you have afire,' he said, as he put on his buck- done for me; but I'll do what I can

Well, the children were soon i Philip said : 'Good-bye. I'll hurry | their mother's arms ; and Mr. Deane fast as ever I kin,' and went out and with the help of the whole house shut the door, leaving them alone hold, spent the morning in furnish

coat up tight to his chin. 'Don't little ones over to the sleigh, you

let the fire go out, nuther, or you'll shall have a team to come for you

were as merry over their rude | A very cozy place it was Christmas presents as though they | was ready. A carpet; a new little eooking-stove; a nice bed, made ur And how do you suppose the with white sheets and things; night had passed in the home of Lily table, a chair or two, including on the shanty in the woods. When ing dishes, tin, and iron ware en their absence was discovered there ough to set up a family ; jars of suga was great excitement, deepening as and tea and coffee and meal; and, is the village was searched and no fact, everything the combined house trace of them discovered, turning to hold could think of to add to the ole horror as the storm came up and man's comfort-not forgetting

trace. There was excitement all item by item, till he reached a pic through the village; but in their ture which Lily had insisted of home it was agony. The father giving, hanging it up with her own spent the night in scouring the hands, and then he just turned hi country, the mother in going from face to the wall and covered it up one fainting fit to another, till the with his hands.

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"Oh! of course, and light, said Lily, cheerfully, and plenty of nice things to eat." "I want something now," wailed

when the snow began to come down thick and tast. "I want to go home."

they turned around and began to retrace their steps. But alas! they had not come straight, and they only went further and further from home. ed Bertie for awhile; but when some time had gone by, and it was almost totally dark, and they could see nothing, and ran against trees and hurt themselves, even Lily's courage

her face, though she tried to choke cover us up with leaves, as they did

Just at that moment they came out from behind a rock, and they saw a while Philip made another. light. Lily was ablaze in a minute.

'Now tell me how yo' comed to run away,' said Philip, when they

'We came out to find the Christ Child, said Lily. 'Barbara says he comes on Christmas Eve down on a hill and gives the presents to Santa

said Bertie, who had recovered his 'Poor little things!' said Philip,

'I'll tell you what,' he said at length, in answer to Lily's anxious look, 'it's teetotally umpossible to go wouldn't 'tempt it in this yere storm alone, let alone toting two chillen. I'll fix yo' up as comf 'able as 1 can hyere to-night, an' soon as it's light I'll go to the village an' tell y'r folks, an' they'll come with a sleigh .-

mind, Bertie, dear; it'll soon be sleigh, maybe. And then it'll be Christmas, you know.' Philip fixed a place for them to at home.' sleep. He shook up the bed till it

a Christmas mornin' bright. Thev'll be powerful forlors when they He was silent some time, scratch-

'I don't know,' said Lily, who same box he took two or three ears

what I'd want it fur.' It was a piece of a branch of a them back. But still they stumbled for Bertie, he had already half de- tree, and on one end it was bent over so as to make a natural sort of Philip now brought out a bowl a handle. It would do very well and mixed up some corn-meal in it; for a horse's head, too. So Philip had a room full of toys. then, brushing off the hot griddle of got out his old jack-knife, cut a sort his stove, he poured the mixture on. of a mouth for the horse, dug holes In a few minutes he turned it over in the bark to represent the eyes, and Bertie? Not so quietly as in rocking chair; a cupboard, contain with a knife, and in a short time he made a sort of a bridle of string,

doctor despaired of her life.

indeed know,' said he, with a grin of pleasure on his black face; 'an' I'll learn

Next the droll old Santa Claus proceeded to prepare his pop-corn. He took out from some dark corner Claus; end we wanted to pick ours a sort of iron saucepan, and put it on the stove while he shelled the corn. When it was hot, he dropped in the corn, covered it up, and began spirits, now that he was warm and to shake it about, first slowly and then faster and faster as the corn popped off in little explosions inside; every few seconds looking at the sleepers, to see that they didn't

> they had not stirred once. Then he went on to hang a stocking of each child on the wall near

Bless you, my man, I'll pay you for this. ishing the fire, kept old Philip busy till nearly morning, and then he

she remembered. 'Oh!' said she, 'I thought it was minutes, while I see about the horses. You, Barbara, get cloaks and

'Yes,' said old Philip. 'See your 'Have you no overcoat for this weather?' asked Mr. Deane, as he 'Oh! what a lovely string of eggs Oh! where did you get it? Is it for

> Philip was overcome. Something choked him so that he couldn't speak; but he speedily got into it and followed Mr. Denne out to the sleigh. He was already in, and he bade Philip get in by him, and they

he found Bertie prancing around on as she emptied the corn into her lap, his horse and Lily perfectly happy and the nuts came down in a little studying out her birds' eggs.

> room and understood the poverty of its owner, and a happy idea occur

But not sad. Far from it; they ing up old Philip's room.

to be found, and settling into de- from the family store-room. spair when the various parties who And Philip! Well, he stood and were out hunting returned with no looked at it in silence, taking it it

483-5

The prospect of going home quiet-

the children in the woods in my

'Yes, I want a herse 't I can ride,

had a dreffle tramp! I'll see how So he sat Bertie on the lounge-bed

There's a wood-road round a little

was high and round, laid one guest this blessed Christmas mornblanket over it, put the now halfasleep children in it, and covered How do yo' feel?' sitting up. 'Is this Christmas, really?" stocking hanging up thar?' kin keep a fire all night, an' I don't

marcy that they got sight o' my here. light. They'd be done dead by this time. An' to think the little innocents come out this-a-way to find Santa Claus. Pore things! Little 'nuff Christmas they'll have, I'se a thinkin'. I wonder what they're samll room, perfectly happy. a-doing down to their house. Tearin' round fit to kill, I reckon. They'r somebody's darlin's I see plain 'nuff'. Won't they be powerful glad to see this nigga in the mornin'? Yah! yah-l' he laughed softly to himself. I reckon they never so glad to see this chile afore. Pore things!' he went on, after a little, 'come out yere to see Santa Claus an' get some presents. Golly!' he exclaimed, as a new thought struck him. 'I wonder if I couldn't in the woods.' hunt up somethin' 'r other to make

drew out a stick 'Sure 'nuff,' ,said Philip. 'I done "Golly!" said he again, "if there ain't the very stick fur a hoss fur eatin'. I jest cut off the end, drop a that boy, that he want's so bad. I

the boy; now what kin I find fur the

WHOLE NO. 503.

'Little curly head'll like that 'ar, I

her the name of every kind.'

They were far too tired to wake and when he had poured the beautiful white shower out on the table

the bed; and then, tip-toeing around as though he was stepping on eggs. he went back and forth filling them. peart to the last." First down in the toe came beechnuts, filling all the foot; then popped corn stuffed the leg into a funny bunchy shape. Then over Lily's he hung the string of birds' eggs, and over Bertie's the comical horse. All this work, varied by replen-

cakes mixed in the highest style of

Lily looked around quickly.

and they began to eat it at once.

'Le's see,' said Philip, looking at

them curiously, as though he had

never seen them, 'Why, them's

beech-nuts afore?' There's heaps

How do you open them?

us, I guess,' she said.

his journey.

he resolved to start.

'I'll tend to it,' said Lily.

'No, I never saw any,' said Lily.

could get them to have their stock-

breakfast. But he hurried them by

reminding them how anxious their

It did not look very promising

outside. The snow was a foot deep.

'But you isn't, honey. Yo's my in'. Wish yo' Merry Christmas.

good since so many burns coal. "Course it's for yo', said Philip, hasn'r had an overcoat for many : showing all his teeth. 'Santa Claus done come down the chimbly an'

'Philip,' he said, 'in the chamber you into my employment from thi hour, at the best wages going, to bas your life. You needn't say anything. skin mittens and buttoned his one Now, if you'll help me carry the-

the hours went by and no children goodly array of half-worn garment

And they all stole away and lef