

A NEW SANTA CLAUS.

Without the wind was waiting,
The night was cold and clear;
Within the red logs crackling
Proclaimed the Christmas cheer.

"It Santa Claus would only,"
Said little Bertha, "now
Come down the jet black chimney
With painted doll and cow,

"With elephant and zebra
And scarlet cockatoo,
Rhinoceros and camel
And frog and kangaroo,

"I should be very happy
To see his features sweet."
Her father said, with laughter,
"The logs would burn his feet."

He sent them to the kitchen
And told them that no doubt
Santa'd come down the chimney
When he saw the logs put out.

Then up stairs went the father,
A-laughing with delight,
Put on a great fur nister
And hair and whiskers white.

He brought the toys down with him,
And when they flopped about
He gave them fruit and candies
And laughed to hear them shout.

He gave them toys and kissed them
And sent them up to bed,
That he might join the reindeer
And speed upon the sled.

"The children all are happy,"
Unto his wife said he,
"And we shan't have the bother
Of dressing up that tree."

"Hurrah for all the blessings
That light our cozy ken!
Hurrah for Merry Christmas
And peace unto all men!"

R. K. MCKINTIRK.

TWO CHRISTMAS EVES

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CHAPTER I.

HOW THE FIRST ONE CAME.

"Not another word, sir," said old Eben Withers in his usual decisive manner. "I know nothing about the girl, and I don't desire to, but I do not intend you to marry for some years, and then you are not to choose a penniless bride. You are to build up the family fortune, sir, not scatter it. No, I will not listen. And he turned to his morning paper again."

Young Eben said more than his prayers sometimes, and it would not do to set down all he said to himself as he left the room. He was as plucky a lad as there was in seven counties around, but he had always been obedient, partly from a sense of duty and partly because of the genuine love that existed between father and son.

But even young Eben, after he met Miss Mildred, saw things a little differently and would perhaps have used another word than love in speaking of his father. Certainly it did not seem as if his filial love was very strong when he came to tell her what his father had said. In those days he told her everything. Afterward he grew older and learned a good many things.

Miss Mildred did not take it well. Young Eben was dissatisfied with the promptness with which she said that she



"LET US PART IN KINDNESS"

would never forgive herself if she should be the cause of a quarrel between him and his father.

Young Eben looked at her attentively before speaking again, and that was a thing calculated to bewilder a man. You couldn't fully appreciate the beauty of her brown hair with its odd gleams of red and of gold before you would be admiring her broad low forehead, full in the temples, rounded and symmetrical as it was. Then a flash from her deep, large, hazel eyes would fasten your gaze for a moment, till the perfect complexion and chiseled, classic features would coax you away, and the sweet glory of her face would perplex you so with its multiplicity of charms that you would fall to wondering which of them was most to be desired.

All this beauty, which his father had undertaken to deny to him, without even seeing it, made young Eben desperate. "Then you want me to marry some other woman," he said.

"No, no! Never!" she exclaimed almost wildly as she threw her perfect arms around his neck and began to sob at the thought. Her quick emotions were not the least of her charms.

And that is why she did not take it well! She would, and she wouldn't listen to either side of the question. Young Eben must obey his father, and he must never cease to love her, nor ever marry any one else. And nothing was ever to induce her to waver in any respect. It was delightful—and somewhat perplexing.

"If you won't settle the matter," he said finally, "I will." This, by the way, was what he had intended from the first.

"Settle it, how?" she asked in some alarm.

"By marrying you," he said firmly,

"but not just now. I will do nothing rashly."

It must be said that the next few months were pretty hard ones for the boy. He had set himself to wait till he should be of age, the next December, not with the thought of defying his father even then, but because he would render his service loyally to the last day. So time went on. His duty was done at his desk in the counting room so well that his father could not complain, rigid taskmaster though he was. His sweetheart was not neglected, and yet he found time, or made it, to keep up his studies faithfully.

Of course, the birthday came in due time. Birthdays do. In the morning old Eben met him with something like emotion.

"I have looked forward to this day," he said, "as anxiously as you. You have been a good son and I believe you always will be. I am proud of you, and I believe you

will live to be proud of yourself. Now that you are a man I want to start you with this. It is yours to do with as you like."

"This" was a check for a small fortune. He took it from his pocket as he spoke and handed it to the young man, who flushed with surprise and perfectly natural pleasure as he looked at it.

"It would be idle, sir, to try to thank you in words for this, or for all your kindness to me all my life," he said. "But I have something else to ask. Even this princely gift of money seems small compared to that."

Old Eben's face darkened. He did not like to hear money spoken of lightly, and it seemed an ungracious speech. However, he spoke kindly and with all sincerity.

"What is it, my son? You are not likely to ask anything that I could refuse today."

"I want you, sir, to reconsider what you said about my marrying. Let me introduce you to the woman!"

The dark face grew rigid. "Let us understand this now," said the father interrupting. "I insist upon your obedience so long as I play the part of a father. I have no legal claim, I know."

"Don't talk of a legal claim, father," said the son, interrupting in his turn. "Very well. It is not a claim, but I am still your father, and so long as you continue in my home you are my son. Let me hear no more of this folly. I will never consent to this marriage. Do you understand?"

"I do, God help me!" exclaimed young Eben. "And you must understand me also. I shall certainly marry the girl I love, and I do not change, sir, any more than you. I will obey you in all else, but not in that."

"Then we may as well part now," said old Eben, staring beyond endurance by the first defiant words he had ever listened to. "You can have no claim on me henceforth."

"If we part," said the lad, his voice breaking, "let us part in kindness at least. I ask for nothing more." And he stepped forward with his hands outstretched.

But the other drew back. "I said you had no claim on me. My kindness was for my son, not for an ingrate. Obey me and everything shall be as it was. If not, go now."

With a despairing gesture the young man turned away, but his father spoke again. "Stop a moment," he said. "You have forgotten your check." And he pointed to where young Eben had dropped it on the table. "I gave you that, sir, before you had defied me. It is still yours."

"I cannot take it, father," said young Eben, with some spirit, though not defiantly. "You would not give it to me now, and I cannot receive what does not come from your hearty good will."

"As you choose," said his father. "I certainly would not give it to you now."

And after the young man left the room he picked up the slip of paper and tore it in bits before throwing it into the fire. Then, seating himself at the table, he rang for his breakfast. When it was brought, however, he sat for an hour looking straight before him and finally, leaving it untouched, he arose and went to his office. "God help your poor father," said Mildred as she nestled in young Eben's arms in the shelter of their new home the night before Christmas.

"Amen!" said young Eben. "He is poor indeed in his loneliness, but I never can cease loving him."

CHAPTER II.

HOW THE SECOND ONE WENT.

It was a bright, happy year for the youngsters, contrary to the laws of fiction, for they had love and hope and hard work to fill the time and good common sense to guide them, but old Eben had never relented, and there was a shadow over the little home, happy as it was. One evening late in the year young Eben had come home from his work and settled himself, as his habit was, to study, when he was suddenly interrupted.

"I want to talk a little while," said Mildred, pulling his book away and seating herself on his knee.

"Good," said young Eben, smiling, "but you must pay for my time."

But after she had done that very satisfactorily with a kiss she sat for a long time with her head on his shoulder, saying nothing till at length he said, "I thought you wanted to talk to me, dear?"

Still she was silent a moment, as if it were hard to begin. Then she said, "What would you like best for a Christmas present?"

Young Eben laughed. "It's some time to Christmas yet," he said. "I hadn't thought. Besides you gave me the most precious gift in the world last Christmas. Anything else would seem very small after that."

"How lovely to say that!" she exclaimed, kissing him again. "And to say it as if you meant it. But that is just what I am afraid of."

This was bewildering. "What are you afraid of?" asked young Eben.

"I think"—she faltered—"that the angels are going to bring you about Christmas time—a blessed gift, straight from heaven and I'm afraid you'll love it more than you do now." Then came a flood of tears—happy ones that young Eben was too wise to try to stop.

Old Eben might have softened a bit if he had known about this, but, of course, he didn't. He kept himself well informed about the lad he loved, but proud as he was to see that his son could make his way in the world without help, he was sensible



"FOOL!" SHE BEGAN.

tive enough to feel it an injury to his own importance and unreasonable enough to feel his anger increasing week by week. One day when he was more incensed than usual he made a will leaving all his fortune to a distant cousin, Alice Withers, who had come to keep house for him.

When he told her about it that night, a gleam of triumph came in her narrow eyes. It was what she had hoped and schemed for, but her face was grave, and her voice steady, as she spoke in reply: "You are doing too much for me, Cous-

In Eben," she said. "I have done nothing to deserve such kindness, and, pardon me for saying it, you are doing a cruel injustice to your son."

It was a crafty speech, for she knew that the old man would resent the charge of injustice, and her eyes flashed again when he said harshly, "I have no son. I had one, but he left me. Never mention him again."

And so the breach seemed hopeless, but Christmas was coming again, and strange magic is working everywhere in the Christmas season, softening men's hearts and quickening all impulses to peace and good will. As the year drew to a close old Eben grew weaker and more infirm. Day after day he sat alone, careless of his business, thinking always of his ruined hopes and eating his heart. On young Eben's birthday he shut himself in his room and would see no one, but he was harder than ever next day.

Nothing moved him till that strange magic of Christmastide came. Here, there and everywhere it worked, penetrating



HE LOOKED TO SEE WHAT IT MIGHT BE.

even old Eben's mansion, despite the barred doors, and reaching his stony heart as he sat thinking of his well beloved son, and of the wife of his youth, so long dead.

It was another stormy Christmas eve. Suddenly he rang for a servant and sent for his lawyer in haste and within an hour he sat alone again, looking with a happy smile at the new will he had made. "I will go to my son in the morning," he said to himself, "and we will have a happy Christmas once more."

Smiling tenderly, he fell asleep in his armchair in front of the great open fireplace, where the flames were roaring up the chimney. After a time he awoke with a start.

Between him and the fire stood Alice, reading the will he had just made. She was furious with rage as he saw at a glance, and just as he started she was about to tear the document in two.

With an angry cry he leaped forward, his indignation giving him a strength he had not felt for months. His cry startled her, and with a quick movement she cast the paper into the flames before he could reach her. Then with a mocking laugh she turned toward him.

"Fool!" she began. "Do you think"—And then she stopped. The shock had been too much for the old man, and he fell on the floor before her insensible.

That night in young Eben's cottage there came a feeble wall, telling that a new born soul had flown in through the storm to the warm shelter of a happy mother's arms. All was well, the nurse said as she brought the lusty man child out for Eben to see, and the young father's heart was moved with a great yearning. It must not be, he thought, that there should be any anger or hatred any more in the world. Whatever lay in his power he would do to bring peace.

So, when the first excitement was over and he was told that Mildred was asleep and must not be disturbed, he buttoned himself in his greatcoat and set out in the storm to seek his father's house and ask once more for his love.

The wind buffeted him, and he laughed. "The driving snow beat upon him, and he shook it off lightly. Suddenly a paper fluttered along on the gale and struck him in the face, and he instinctively reached up and caught it. Then, stepping under a light, he looked to see what it might be.

Here was magic, if you please. The will that Alice had thrown into the flames had been caught in the roaring draft of the old fashioned chimney and had been carried by the spirit of Christmas straight to the hands of the heir. It was scorching a little, but not injured.

Young Eben glanced through it and then noted the date, and with a glad shout sprang forward again. At his father's door Alice met and would have stopped him, but he pushed her aside with a laugh and went straight to the old man's room.

There lay old Eben, weak from his fainting fit, but little the worse for it.

"My son! My son!" he cried out eagerly. "Now I can die in peace."

"Die nothing!" exclaimed young Eben, with a cheery laugh. "God has sent you a grandson and a son tonight. You'll have many a merry Christmas yet with me and mine."

And so it was. DAVID A. CURTIS.

Post-Christmas "Lines."

[After Stephen Crane.]

It was the morning after Christmas and the boy was breaking toys.
I begged him to desist and come out into the sunshine,
But he wrinkled his face. And he cried,
"No, I will not come!"
And he continued his work of destruction.

The Usual Way.



Mrs. Youngbryde—What are you going to give your husband for Christmas?
Mrs. Longwood—I think I shall give him a new mahogany tea table—I've wanted one a long time.

CHRISTMAS IN LIBBY.

MAJORA R. CALHOUN RECOUNTS HIS OWN EXPERIENCE.

Christmas of the Awful Battle Year of 1863—A Touching Incident of the War. The Captain's Death at Midnight—Momentous Times Recalled.

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The James river, at the back of the prison, was locked with ice, and the snow, falling steadily outside and swept in by the cutting wind through the iron barred, glassless windows, did not lighten the gloom in the six long, black rooms, where the ragged prisoners tramped to keep warm, and thought as they tramped of the dear ones in homes far beyond the battle lines—dear ones whose Christmas season would be rendered joyless by thoughts of the imprisoned soldier.

"We mustn't give way to despair," said young Lieutenant Watson of the Twenty-third Wisconsin, as he took my arm and led me down the crowded length of the upper Chickamauga room, so called because most of the prisoners occupying it had been captured in that disastrous battle.

"Turner has agreed to let us have the cookroom for a show tonight, and Ed Maas, God bless the brave fellow, is getting up a troop in the Potomac room, and they will sing the old home songs and the war songs, too, and so we'll forget the hunger and the cold. After all, old fellow, happiness is largely a matter of imagination, and if a man can't get his imagination going on Christmas time—why he hasn't any, that's all."

Watson, he is now colonel of the Thirtieth Brooklyn, or New York State guard, was, and still is, one of those brave, cheerful spirits that look ever on the bright side of things and have the power to communicate their feelings to those of more somber cast, like myself.

We had reached the head of the broad damp steps leading to the lower middle room when, instead of going back in the same way, I led my friend across to the other.

"What for?" he asked.

"I want to see Bohannon, captain of the Third Middle Tennessee cavalry. You remember he came in about ten days ago."

"Yes, yes. He's a quiet sort of a chap, but looks like a good soldier. What of him?"

"Well, he's under the weather and in bad shape. He was captured in a cavalry fight near Knoxville and was pretty badly hurt by the fall of his horse. The horse was killed. You can bet on that. Then the captain got a severe cold, but he has a horror of the prison hospital and refuses to report himself on the sick list," I said.

Captain Bohannon was half reclining, with his back against the wall and his legs stretched out on the damp floor.

He was a tall, slender man of five and thirty, with long brown hair and curly beard of the same color. The strong face must have been handsome before the sun had bronzed it to an Indian hue, and care had cut deep lines down the cheeks and between the fearless gray eyes.

Now, there was a flush on the cheeks and a light in the eyes which experience had taught us were due to prison fever instead of to health. This impression was increased as Watson and myself knelt beside the captain and pressed the strong brown hands and felt their abnormal heat.

Before this I had again and again urged the captain to go to the prison hospital. Dr. Sabal, the Confederate surgeon in charge, was one of the best and kindest men that ever administered to the ailments of friend or foe, but the Tennesseean always shook his head and said:

"I know you're my friend, old pard, and you are dead right, but I've never been in a hospital, and I somehow feel that it would kill me if I went there. No, if I've got to be buried in a blanket, let them carry me away from here. What's the difference?"

The captain had evidently lost his grip on things terrestrial. It was not that he was a prisoner that depressed him; he was too much of a man for that, but there are heart wounds more killing than those made by bullet or saber, and the captain was suffering from one of these.

Bohannon's father had been a well to do planter in middle Tennessee, but mistaken speculations impoverished him and ended in his death a few years before the war. George, the only child, with characteristic



"WE WILL BE MARRIED ON CHRISTMAS DAY," pluck and energy, started for California to regain the lost fortune, but before doing so he became betrothed to Edna Crawford, the beautiful daughter of a neighbor.

"Win or lose, Edna, I'll be back at the old home, and we'll be married on Christmas day, 1863." That is what George Bohannon said to his sweetheart when he kissed her goodby in the summer of 1859. Like the hero that he was, the young Tennesseean went to work in the Golden state, and never a mail passed that the dear girl in the old home did not hear of her lover's brightening prospects. But "man proposes and God disposes."

In the midst of his growing prosperity young Bohannon, in the mines of Calaveras, heard Lincoln's call for men to come to the defense of the Union, and for the time the old spirit of patriotism beat the long roll in his heart. His forefathers had fought in every war for the Union, and thrilling with these memories, he dropped his pick abandoned the prospect of certain wealth and hastened back.

Tennessee was in the hands of the enemy, so that it was only by stealth that Bohannon could reach his home near Murfreesboro. He found nearly all his old neighbors on the side of the south. Edna Crawford's father and her two brothers were in the Confederate army, and all the sympathies of his betrothed were on the same side.

But the changed relations did not

change their love. "I would not have you fight against your convictions," said Edna. "But go to the side where your heart calls you. It is yet two years, George; the war cannot last till Christmas, 1863. Come back to me then, and whether the Union falls or wins, our union can be staid only by death."

And so they parted again, Edna Crawford helping her lover to escape into Kentucky, where he met Buell's army and secured a commission in the Third Middle Tennessee cavalry.

Then the young captain began to count the Christmas days. That of 1861 was spent on the banks of the Ohio; that of 1862 was passed in the terrible series of battles that ended in Bragg's defeat at Murfreesboro. Before the victorious Union legions, Edna Crawford and her mother, braving the inclemency of that most inclement weather, fled for safety to Chattanooga. They might have remained at home in security, for not only the captain, who at once sought them out, but every Union soldier worthy the uniform he wore, would have protected them, but in those days the invading Yankee was regarded as a cruel monster.

The privation brought on a cold. Consumption followed, and a monster more inexorably cruel than the war god had an irredeemable lien on Edna Crawford's life. Rosecrans advanced on Chattanooga and Mrs. Crawford took up her dying daughter and fled to Knoxville. Burnside came down through east Tennessee and seized Knoxville, and Bohannon's troop was the first to enter the city with the stars and stripes.

Edna was dying when the captain found her and gave her every care.

"Christmas, 1863, will soon be here, my darling," he whispered at their last meeting. But she did not hear him. The little hand grew colder in his grasp, and with her life gone all life became indifferent to him.

When George Bohannon left Edna Crawford's grave a change came over him. He who had been the life of the camp and the soul of hope became despondent and morose. There was no



HE WHISPERED, "ALL'S WELL."

change in the performance of his duties, but the men, who adored him, noticed that he had become reckless, and those who knew his secret saw that he wanted to die.

"It's here at last, boys! Tomorrow will be Christmas day, 1863. It was a blamed long time to wait in the mines and in the war, but knowing she'd be true has cheered me up. You'll all come to the wedding." That is what the captain said as we knelt beside him holding his hands.

My companion and I exchanged glances. The fever was in the brain as well as in the hands. He had no idea of his position. He was a free man and not a prisoner of war. Men were talking about Christmas on all sides, and it was this that brought the controlling impulse of his life into such prominence that it dominated all his thoughts. Christmas day, 1863, was at hand, and the yearning of years was to be consummated in his union to Edna Crawford.

I saw the danger and rose to my feet. "Don't leave me, old pard," said the captain, clinging to my hand. "Remember you are to be my best man."

"You can depend on me, captain," I said soothingly.

"I've often dreamed about this wedding," he went on, "and for awhile I did not think we could have music and flowers and lots of folks present. You can smell the clover and the magnolia blossoms. There! Hark! to the music! They're rehearsing!" And he raised a hot hand to command attention, while from the Potomac room beyond the wall there came the refrain of the old plantation melody:

"In de mawnin, in de mawnin by de bright light—"

De Christmas bells'll toll out in de mawnin!" We left him with a rapt expression on his face, while he swayed his head as if beating time to the singing in the next room.

"I'm afraid the captain's called," sighed Watson.

"Called" was a term used when we felt sure a comrade was about to die.

But we must save him if we can. Come, let us get word to Dr. Sabal and have the captain taken to the hospital, I urged, and my heart was in my throat, for I loved Bohannon like a brother.

It was nearly dark when, after some trouble, we succeeded in getting word to Dr. Sabal. He came, and after examining the captain shook his head. I had explained to him the case, so that he was not surprised when the captain invited him to the wedding which was set for midnight, "when Christmas eve," as the expectant man expressed it, "gives place to Christmas day."

"Yes. It is to prepare for the wedding," I said, when, holding Bohannon's hand, I led him to the head of the stairs.

He insisted that I should go with him, and the kindly doctor consented.

The hospital on the ground floor and on the eastern side of the prison was dimly lit with swinging lamps, but the light was dazzling compared with the gloom in the regular rooms. The captain was prevailed on to lie down on one of the cots. The doctor felt some medicine, but there was that in his handsome face as he turned to go that convinced me he had no faith in the power of his drugs to help this case.

"A marriage is a trying matter. Yes, I'll feel the better for a rest," spoke the captain, while I sat beside him with my cold fingers pressed to his hot leaping pulse. "There's a great crowd gathered and the lights—I was always fond of light."

And so he wandered on. To him the imprisonment and the death of Edna Crawford had become as a torturing dream, and the joyous hallucination was a glowing reality.

Rage came on crutches, ghastly faced men with the fever marks on their cracked lips and in their hollow eyes were about the cot, but if the captain saw them his wild fancy transformed them into wedding guests, and their whisperings of pity for one more wretched than themselves were to him congratulations on the great

event that was to unite him to Edna Crawford.

It was a bitterly cold night, and the voices of the guards calling out the passing half hours about the prison were muffled and hoarse. The approaching Christmas day had no pleasures in reserve for them.

A thin brick wall separated the hospital from the cookroom to the west, where Maas and his minstrels began to sing about 8 o'clock.

The music was in honor of the approaching wedding. All the pain lines melted from the bronzed face.

Once he tried to join in the chorus when "My Old Kentucky Home, Good Night!" was sung, but the effort died in a rattle in his throat.

At length the concert was over, and the lights in the dreary hospital were turned down. But the captain still heard music that was not for our ears, and lights burned before his closed eyes that were not for our vision.

From Carey street on the west a hoarse voice shouted at length, "Twelve o'clock! Post No. 1, and all's well!" "Twelve o'clock! Post No. 2, and all's well!" and so from post to post about the prison went up the same cry, the last man adding, "And a merry Christmas to all!"

The captain had been so still and his hands so cold for the past hour that I thought him dead, but like an echo he whispered, "All's well!"

From the Richmond churches the bells clanged out their salutation to the Christmas day just born, but the captain heard them not. True to his pledge he had joined Edna.

ALFRED R. CALHOUN.

CHRISTMASISMS.

Junius Henri Browne's Helps to Digest the Dinner.

Although Christmas comes but once a year, we need not wait till Christmas for an opportunity to do good. We can make a Christmas for the poor and unfortunate whenever our hearts are touched with pity and our hands tingle with generosity.

There are persons who do not so much censure Judas for betraying Jesus as for betraying him for so small a sum (80 pieces of silver, valued at \$32), when he might have got a much larger one. Their horror of the crime is forgotten in the meagreness of the payment.