

A NIGHT'S TRAGEDY.



HE is seeking Him now, so they tell me; All children she loves in His name. In some child still hoping to find Him. Though 'twas ages ago that He came."

Natalie sang this verse of the old Christmas song over and over again, as she sat one evening in the long gallery surrounded by her beloved dolls. This gallery led to her father's suite of rooms in the Hermitage, the addition the Empress Catherine had built to the winter palace, and the reason that Natalie's father lived so near the palace, under the same roof, indeed, was that he was private secretary to the empress. Natalie was a little Russian girl, and the verses she sang were for the benefit of her last new doll, who had lately come from Paris with a great many French airs and fashions. The dainty creature seemed so different from the other homely, clumsy dolls, that Natalie felt she must be constantly explaining or apologizing for something that might not be just what mademoiselle was accustomed to. In France, for instance, perhaps they had never heard of Babousheka, the old woman who personifies Santa Claus to Russian children. She wanders eternally over the earth, looking into every cradle, and is always doomed to be disappointed, because she refused long ago to show the Magi the way when they were journeying from Persia to Bethlehem through Russia. The song told also how Babousheka is dressed like an old, old woman, with a pack on her back full of gifts for good boys and girls, and how she always carries a broom, because she was sweeping when the Wise Men knocked at her door. Natalie became quite excited as she went on, for the Russian girls and boys think almost as highly of Babousheka as we do here of Santa Claus. Perhaps, though, they stand a little in awe of her, for besides the rewards she has for good children, I believe the bad ones sometimes tremble at the thought of the punishment she could bring to those who deserve it. It seems queer that Santa Claus should



"She made them all, large and small, act in their turn."

leave to Babousheka's care those countries through which he could so easily travel with his sled and reindeer; but, perhaps, that is the very reason he allows her to attend to his work there, for in a country like Russia, covered all winter with ice and snow, where a traveler can use a reindeer sledge whenever he likes, there is not half the novelty about that way of going around that there is here, where Santa Claus is the only one who ever tries it.

This beautiful palace, resplendent with white and gold decorations, was brilliantly illuminated every night, and the rooms in which Natalie's family lived were filled with bronzes, medallions and costly marbles. So mademoiselle Parishkin, the new French doll, was very fortunate to have found so grand a residence. Indeed, she seemed more at ease there than some of the older dolls, who never got over their awkward ways and appearance. Some of them had been brought from Lap-



"Why did you come to St. Petersburg?" land and the far-away provinces, and no doubt it was the way they were wrapped up from head to foot in fur and heavy cloth that made them seem so clumsy and unwieldy.

But Natalie loved them all as friends, and often they were her only audience as she repeated the fairy pantomimes and plays she had seen performed at the empress' private theater in the Hermitage. She made them all—large and small dolls—act in their turn, and they did very well in pantomime. Of course, in the dialogues and plays, she had to make all the speeches herself,

except when her cousin Saché, or Alexander, who was about her own age, joined in her play, and when he did, he made things go on very briskly. He thought the pantomimes rather slow, and preferred the evenings when they had illuminations in the gallery. These were imitations of the grand displays made at the winter palace when the emperor held his court there, and the anniversary of every important event was an excuse for a general illumination of the palace. On this particular evening, Saché came racing down the long gallery like the blustering north wind blowing over the steppes, calling to Natalie:

"Come on, I say, let us illuminate the gallery to-night!"

"What do we want to celebrate to-day?" asked Natalie.

"Oh, anything. I don't care what!" was the reply. "The taking of the bastille, if you like."

"Oh, no, Saché," returned Natalie. "You surely remember that we had that anniversary only a short time ago, high as they designed, cut off and painted the transparencies that, with hundreds of little candles shining behind them, were to surprise her father on the evening of his birthday, when he should open the door of the long gallery leading to his library. But she did not remind Saché of the fact that the day before the birthday he told her that was the day the bastille was taken, and friends of liberty should not let the anniversary pass without a sign. She had let him try the effect of the illumination that night, and in his eagerness to make experiments, he had set fire to the decorations she had arranged on the white marble chimney piece. Saché remembered it, too, and was almost ashamed to remember how he had enjoyed the excitement of seeing those decorations burn more than he would a half dozen pantomimes. He said nothing more about celebrating anniversaries, but suddenly turning, he saw mademoiselle Parishkin leaning in a very coquettish way against one of the long windows.

"Why, who is this you've got here?" he said.

"That's my new doll, mademoiselle Parishkin. Isn't she imperial?"

"She looks as if she thought she might be the mother herself!" (So the Russians call their empress.) "She needs watching," continued Saché. "I and then, you know, you made a mistake about the date."

She remembered how her heart beat think you should let me train her; she might get you and herself into trouble. Do you know now, Natalie, I think she looks like a French spy!"

"Oh, no, indeed!" exclaimed Natalie. "I am sure she is not. Why, the Princess Laminski brought her to me from Paris."

"You would never know a spy even when you saw one," said Saché. "I'll tell you what we will do. We will try studying French history." "Of course, if she is not a spy that will end all the



Suspended her outside the window.

fun, but if we find out that she is, I know how to take it out of her."

"Yes, but—Saché, she has on such a beautiful dress. Please don't spoil it."

"Oh, it won't hurt a bit to try her as a spy. Of course, if she is convicted, she will have to take off that one and put on a convict's dress before she goes to Siberia. Now, I'll be the little Father (the emperor). You know I could send her right off into exile, but I will try her first in a court of Peers. Stand those fellows up in a row, Natalie."

"Now you answer for her. Why did you come to St. Petersburg?" he asked, looking very sternly at Parishkin.

"I—don't—know," answered Natalie, hesitating.

"There!" said Saché, "that convicts you. In the military catechism that every man in the regiment knows by heart, Gen. Suvarof says, 'I don't know' is worse to meet than the enemy. For the 'I won't know' an officer is put in the guard—a staff officer is served with in arrest at home. If you only had not said that!"

"Wait, then," said Natalie; "she came here for me to take care of her and love her as I do my other dolls."

"No, you must not bring in outside parties in that way. You must speak only in her name."

"But I am not an outside party at all," said Natalie. "She belongs to me and I don't want to see her convicted. I believe you do."

"Well, that's not the way to do, but you may recommend her to the emperor's clemency, and I will give her the choice of going to Siberia, or with that fellow there next to you and that one next to him—call them the Prince and Princess Poloukhyn—and let her live with them on their estates in Livonia and never appear at court until the emperor pleases."

"This one, do you mean?" asked Natalie. "Do not call this dear Saché 'that fellow'! My good Prascovie, the oldest

of them all. But she and Catiche can go with Parishkin to Livonia. Where is Livonia, Saché?"

"Oh, in your schoolroom, you know. It is very pleasant in there, only they

must stay there until I say they can come back. Hasn't she something else to put on instead of all this finery?"

"Oh! I do not intend to take off that beautiful dress as long as she lives," said Natalie.

"She is dressed too fine for a convict," said Saché, "and besides I think she is getting off too easy. Let us give her another choice. The knout or Siberia? Which do you choose, prisoner at the bar?"

"I want to know first where Siberia is," said Natalie. "Now I am myself speaking. I do not want her dress torn with any of your sticks."

French fashions ruled the world then just as they do now, and mademoiselle's costume would have been a good model for a fashionable Russian lady's evening dress. It was in the days of crinoline and paniers, and over a skirt of white tulle she wore a lovely crimson satin polonaise with long ribbon streamers of the same shade, and stockings and slippers to match.

"Well, then, she will have to go to Siberia," said Saché, "and I will hang her by one of those red strings outside the schoolroom window, where she can see the Neva frozen over. That will be Siberia, and when she comes back she will be a different creature."

Natalie consented, but only because she feared something worse might be done to the unfortunate prisoner. She showed Saché which of the ribbon loops would be the safest to bear the doll's head according to the laws of her own country in a court of justice, and see if she isn't a spy." (Alexander had been weight when he suspended her outside the window.

And there, in that perilous situation, poor mademoiselle Parishkin passed the night—for they forgot all about her, and in the morning she fulfilled Alexander's prophecy of the night before. The snow and ice that fell during the night formed a thick coating all over her, and when she was carried to the large porcelain stove in the schoolroom to thaw, the red dye in her satin polonaise, her slippers and hose, stained her all over from head to foot, and she had indeed become a "different creature!"

A Christmas Menu.
Oyster Soup.
Chicken Pie.
Cranberry Sauce.
Celery.
Cold Slaw.
Mashed Potatoes and Turnips.
Boiled Squash.
Baked Sweet Potatoes.
Mince Pie.
Pumpkin Pie.
Squash Pie.
Oranges.
Cheese.
Nuts.
Apples and Cider.
Christmas Changes.

The Yule log has given place to the steam radiator, the furnace register and the base burning heater, but two who are warmed by any of these means on Christmas eve are quite as likely to enjoy Christmas as were our forefathers and foremothers, who used to celebrate its festivities when gathered about the old time fireplaces. There have been changes in heating apparatus, but human nature and Christmas remain as they were and will probably so remain after the present apparatus has been displaced by electric heaters. We grumble about our furnaces, our radiators and our stoves and will probably grumble about our electric heaters, but in Yule log times our ancestors were often roasted on one side and frozen on the other.

St. Nicholas, as the patron saint of the children, now termed Santa Claus, was canonized, died, according to tradition, at Myra, Italy, and was there buried in the cathedral crypt. Six hundred years later his body was taken to Bari, and there in the eleventh century the great priory of San Nicolo was built. It is at that priory that on May 9 each year the festival of St. Nicholas is held with great rejoicings by pilgrims from all parts of the world.

Carving the Christmas Goose.

One must learn, first of all, to carve neatly, without scattering crumbs or splashing gravy over the cloth or platter; also to cut straight, uniform slices. Be careful to divide the material in such a manner that each person may be served equally well. Lay each portion on the plate with the browned or best side up. An essential to easy carving is that the platter be large enough to hold not merely the fowl or joint while whole, but also the several portions as they are detached. The platter should be placed near the carver so he may easily reach any part of it. All skewers and strings should be removed before the dish is brought to the table.

Measure For Measure.

Glady's—What a horrid, rude thing that Mr. Flirtmash is! He stole six kisses while I was standing under a holy wreath and claimed he thought the holy was mischievous.

Edna—What did you do about it?
Glady's—Do? I did what any other self respecting girl would do under the circumstances—I made the horrid thing return every one of them.

Christmas Church Decorations in Italy.

More attention is paid to Christmas decoration of the churches in Italy perhaps than in any other country. On Christmas eve the young men and women assemble at the churches and spend hours in making them beautiful. At midnight a mass is said, and after this a toothsome collation is served to the youthful workers and there are singing and playing upon musical instruments.

Tom to Sue and Sue to Tom.

"Can you guess, my sweetheart," queried Tom of Sue,
"Can you fathom by love's art what I'll buy for you?"

Pretty Susan bowed her head, made a pretty frown,
Then in accents sweet she said, opening eyes of brown:

"Why, certainly not. But I'm dying to have Christmas eve come so that I can find out. I know it will be something frightfully expensive—something that will cost lots more than you can afford. You men are so reckless with your money!"

Poor Tom next day ran in debt for a diamond pin,
And he hasn't paid up yet, for he's "shy" of tin."

And he says that if he ever asks Sue such a question again it will be after he has arranged in advance for a year's board in the nearest insane asylum.

By the way, Sue gave Tom a piece of neckwear that cost 75 cents.

AN EPISODE.

CHRISTMAS OF THE JOLLY THEATER STOCK COMPANY.

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Three weeks before the holidays, and the outlook for a merry Christmas was a gloomy one, at least so far as the members of the stock company of the Jolly theater were concerned. Salary day had come and gone, and as yet the ghost had shown no disposition to walk, and it was because of the nonappearance of that most welcome specter of stage-land that the rumor had started and was rapidly gaining ground that Messrs. Hustle and Hardup, proprietors and managers of the Jolly theater, were "in a hole again."

The piece which occupied the boards had proved a flat failure, and receipts at the box office had fallen in consequence to a plane never before reached in the history of the house. Moreover, no new play had as yet been put in rehearsal, and an atmosphere of ominous gloom and apprehension pervaded the region behind the footlights and weighed heavily on the spirits of everyone there, from Pearl Livingstone, the talented emotional actress who played the leading female parts, down to little Kitty Sullivan, who was only 7 years old and was in the depths of despair because for fully three weeks she had been out of the bill. In short, every member of the company was in a condition of mingled uncertainty and curiosity in regard to the future of the playhouse and the projects of its managers, who as yet had given no sign of their intentions and had, in fact, been invisible to the members of their artistic staff ever since the last day on which salaries became due.

On this particular night, which happened to be one of storm and rain, two or three of the principal actors had gathered together for a serious talk about the situation, when Tom, the programme boy, appeared suddenly before them in an almost breathless condition and exclaimed: "Mr. Freeland is back from Chicago. He's in the office with Mr. Hustle. They've got both doors locked."

"Mr. Freeland!" cried Miss Livingstone, her face lighting up with joy, precisely as it does in her scene in the second act where her lover comes back from India, or rather as it did light up in that scene before the business became so bad. "Are you sure it was Mr. Freeland, Tommy?"

"Sure!" rejoined Tom, with emphasis. "I seen him myself when he come in."

"Then, Tom, you be sure and see him when he comes out and tell him that I am particularly anxious to see him back here as soon as the curtain goes down on the second act. Here's a quarter for you, Tom, and you'd better keep it as a curiosity, for it's getting to be a very rare sort of bird in the Jolly theater preserves."

"Thank you, mum," said Tom as he pocketed the coin, with a grin.

"I fancy I see a gleam of light on the distant horizon," remarked the venerable Mr. Borders in a tone similar to that which he assumes in the great melodrama called "The Ocean Blue," in the scene in which he is discovered sitting on a raft in midocean on the lookout for a passing sail. "In the meantime," he added, "I think we had better wait and hear what Billy has to say before we take any further action in the matter."

Up to that moment they had taken no action whatever, but the phrase sounded well, and so Mr. Borders employed it.

Now, Mr. William Freeland, called by his intimates Billy, was and is today one of the best known figures in the theatrical affairs of the town, and, as every member of the stock company knew, he had on more than one previous occasion come to the rescue of his old friends, Messrs. Hustle and Hardup, and that, too, when they were in even more deplorable financial straits than they were at the present moment.

It was his reputation as a mascot fully as much as his remarkable talents which caused the whole avant scene to brighten up at the news of his presence in the theater, for playfolk are notoriously superstitious and have an unbounded and childlike faith in the efficacy of a mascot as well as in the destructive qualities of a "jinx."

Just as the curtain fell on the second act Mr. Freeland appeared behind the scenes and received the rapturous greetings of the company. Then Miss Livingstone took him by the arm, detached him from the "little group which surrounded him, led him gently but firmly into her dressing room, placed him on her zinc trunk, and standing before him with folded arms said, "Billy, what's going to happen?"

"My dear," replied Mr. Freeland persuasively, "everything is all right, and I just left Hustle for five minutes to come back here and tell you so. We are going to put on a new piece, and there's a part in it that's simply great—out of sight, in fact. We are not quite sure who'll be cast for the part because it's a very heavy emotional one, and if we put a woman in it who didn't know how to read lines she would go all to



"MR. FREELAND IS BACK" pieces and the bottom would drop out of the whole play. I thought I'd speak to you about it because Hardup has caught a new 'angel' and said some-

thing to me about Kitty Bracebridge"—"If that wot puts her foot in this theater!"—began Miss Livingstone, but Mr. Freeland interrupted her by placing his hand over her mouth and saying: "Wait for me after the curtain goes down, Pearl, and I'll talk to you about it. Shadrach's waiting in the office, and I've got to give him a 'jolly' so as to get the costumes out of him, but I'll be back here after the last act."

In spite of the storm outside and the dispiriting atmosphere within the performance given that night by the Jolly stock company was a notably brilliant one, for the news had spread that there was to be a speedy change of bill, and hope was once more in every member's breast. Mr. Freeland invited Miss Livingstone out to supper just as she was on the point of declaring that she would not go on again unless she received every cent of the back salary that was due her, and before they left the restaurant she had meekly agreed to study the great emotional role which had been intended for Miss Bracebridge and to say nothing more about back salary.

The next morning, in accordance with a call posted in the stage entrance, the company assembled to hear the new play read by the gifted Mr. Freeland, and such was that gentleman's elocutionary power that when he laid the manuscript aside expressions that ranged from mere satisfaction to rapturous enthusiasm were heard on every hand, and there was scarcely an actor or actress present that did not feel confident of a personal success in the new production.

The reading over, Mr. Freeland took Miss Livingstone, Mr. Borders and one or two other rebellious spirits aside, and, as he expressed it in a subsequent interview with Mr. Hustle, "stiffened their backbones" with the assurance that everything was all right and that the piece was to be done on Christmas eve in order that they might have a really merry Christmas on the prospects of its success. After that, he assured them, their back salaries would pour in upon them in a perfect avalanche.

As Mr. Freeland was leaving the theater he felt some one tugging at his coat, and on looking down saw little Kitty Sullivan standing beside him and saying, in earnest tones, and with a sad, wistful face, "Billy, isn't there any part for me in the new piece?"

The child called him by his first name because she had always heard him spoken to in that way by other members of the company, and Billy rather encouraged her in the idea because it sounded funny to him to hear himself addressed in such familiar terms by an infant of her size.

Kitty was a veritable child of the avant scene, and had been an actress from her very earliest infancy. She was now about 7 years of age, and was just beginning to comprehend the difference between the real things of life, such as houses, trees and streets, and the painted imitations of stageland. And yet it was only two years and a half ago that she beheld the ocean for the first time, and it is related of her that on that occasion she stood with Billy's hand tightly clasped in hers, watching the waves as they broke upon the beach, and finally turned to her companion and said in her serious way, "Billy, how do they work 'em'?"

And now she was here beside her old friend, with her small, pathetic face upturned, and inquiring earnestly if there were a role for her in "The Giant's Causeway."

"See here, Kitty," exclaimed Mr. Freeland, touched by the child's grief, "I'll tell you what I'll do for you, and what's more, I wouldn't do it for any one else in the company. Are you listening?"

"Yes," said Kitty, turning her head around.

"Well, I'll write in a part specially for you, and that's something that an author like Sardou or myself rarely does for any one except a Bernhardt or a Duse. Now, run along and be here to-morrow at 11 for rehearsal."

The child darted away, wiping the last tear from her cheek as she ran, and Barney said approvingly, "That's the best deed you'll ever do in your life, Mr. Freeland, and, mark my words, the child'll bring good luck to the house."

How Billy succeeded in persuading the economical Hardup that the piece would prove a failure unless a child were introduced into it and how he contrived to write the part in for her that very night are matters that had best be left to conjecture, but the very next day Kitty received the typewritten copy of her lines, and rehearsals of "The Giant's Causeway" were carried forward under Mr. Freeland's direction with the energy and spirit that mark all of that gentleman's undertakings.

The opening night, Dec. 24, found the house well filled with an audience which made a favorable impression on the venerable Mr. Borders as he looked out through the peephole in the curtain, while behind the footlights feverish excitement and anticipation prevailed.

As for Kitty, she had become so wrought up over her role—the longest one she had ever been entrusted with—that she seemed in danger of losing her balance and forgetting every one of the lines that she had, by diligent study, crammed into her small head. She was standing in the first entrance, with her hand clasped in that of Mr. Freeland, when her cue came, and as she walked out on the stage, the ideal of childish loveliness, a murmur of delight ran through every part of the crowded house.

"They're going to foreclose the mortgage on the old mill tomorrow night, and if that child lives I am a beggar," said the polished, cigarette smoking villain, and then a youngster in the parquet set up a pitiful howl of despair, which was followed by a general ripple of merriment that might have proved fatal to the piece had not Kitty gone on with her lines with the coolness and gravity of the born and experienced artist, which she was displaying there by a presence of mind which won for her, on her exit, the first real applause of the evening.

Kitty Sullivan was, as the eminent dramatic critic had observed, an old hand at the business, despite the fact that she was but 7 years of age, for she had been born and brought up on the stage and was as much at home in the presence of a great audience as an ordinary child is before a nursery. As the piece went on she realized that she was making a hit—a far greater one than she had ever made before—and, young



HE FELT SOME ONE TUGGING AT HIS COAT.

as she was, she was enough of an artist to appreciate the importance of keeping a restraint on herself and not overdoing her role.

She was looking forward to a certain scene in the last act—a scene which she had rehearsed with much delight, and in which she firmly expected to make a great impression. Billy, who had been waiting with some anxiety for the same scene, came down and took a seat in a proscenium box, and as the child stood in the wings waiting for her cue she saw him smiling encouragement to her. The scene represented a barren, wave

washed rock near the coast of Ireland, and on this rock was standing the virtuous heroine, just where she had been left by the villain. The lights grew dim, the moon arose from beyond the scene, and the Philadelphia quartet, stationed behind the scenes, warbled plaintive Irish melodies.

"Must I die here alone?" moaned the heroine as the tide rose higher and higher about the rock on which she stood and heavy clouds began to gather above her head. And just at this moment, a rowboat, propelled by childish arms, came swiftly around the rocky point at the left of the stage, and Kitty Sullivan, throwing aside the oars, stood up in the boat with her foot on the prow and exclaimed in a clear, infantile treble, "I have come to save you for the sake of old Ireland!"

Commonplace as it was, with its old, well worn melodramatic effects of soft music and moonlight, nevertheless the situation had taken a strong hold on the audience, and the sudden appearance of the sweet faced child, who had charmed every one during the earlier portions of the play, sent a distinct thrill through the entire house, and then came such an outburst of spontaneous applause as had not been heard in the Jolly theater for many a year.

Even Billy Freeland felt a touch of a magnetic current with which the atmosphere was charged, and might have



KITTY MAKES A HIT.

been heard to remark half audibly, "The kid's knocked 'em good this time, sure, for a thing's got to be good if it gets me."

And as the audience dispersed that night it seemed to Mr. Freeland, as he stood alert and watchful in the lobby, that there was but one name on every tongue, and that Kitty's sweet face and infantile art had made their way into the very heart of an always fickle public.

"You were right about her, Billy," said Hardup.

"I told you the young one would bring us good luck," said old Barney at the stage door.

"The idea of making such a fuss over a 7-year-old brat! That shows what art is coming to in this country!" exclaimed Miss Livingstone as she swept through the drafty passage, leaving an odor of skunkin, tuberoses and sachet powder behind her.

The members of the stock company had their Christmas dinner in the wardrobe room between the matinee and the evening performance, Messrs. Hustle and Hardup footing the bill and Mr. Freeland presiding, with Miss Pearl Livingstone on his right hand and the venerable Mr. Borders on his left. And it is a matter of record that no toast offered that evening was drunk with heartier applause than was the one proposed by Mr. Freeland to Kitty Sullivan, "the mascot of the Jolly theater and the founder of this feast."

JAMES L. FORD.

In England the day after Christmas, "boxing day" as it is called, is a day of greater festivity among the working classes than Christmas itself. "Boxing day" is so called from the Christmas boxes, each containing money given by the rich to the poor in olden times.