

Eugene City Guard.

CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT.

A TIMELY GREETING.



MERRY CHRISTMAS!
CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

ING loudly, O
my soul,
A psalm to the
Lord!
His goodness,
grace and
love extol,
And for his
mercies
poured
Upon these as the
seasons roll,
Give thanks in glad
accord.
For on this happy
day
A star from heaven
was born,
To blaze out the
humble way
To where our Lord
was born,
And change earth's
twilight, cold and
gray,
To spiritual morn.
Rejoice, my soul, and know
That Christ is born anew,
His grace new mercies daily show,
His works our work imitate,
And to the world his words outgo
In endless love and true.
WILLIAM E. S. FALLEN.

"Merry Christmas"—ring it out
All ye happy festal bells,
Through the sweet magnolia groves,
From moors, or snow heaped fells,
From rills, and yule fires glow,
Spans of silver mistletoe
Shine from out the dark green pine,
Yule tide, peace and joy be thine!
"Blessed Christmas"—ring it out,
All ye festal bells,
Under cheerless hearts, wherein
Neither hope nor gladness dwells,
Streams smile, and stars shine out
All our yule decked homes about;
Angels stand within the door—
Christmas tide is come once more!
—Helen Chase.

THE MERRITT MATTER.

HELEN BLAKE BROUGHT ABOUT A
CHRISTMAS RECONCILIATION.
(Copyright, 1903, by American Press Association.)



WONDER what you'll be
like at my age," said William
Merritt angrily to his
son Albert, one day memora-
ble in the lives of both.
William Merritt was what
the people called "a hard
man to get along with." He
was hard, just, sincere and
he began mature life as a fatboat
captain, and finished his training as sheriff of
Hanna county. A born ruler, at 50 years
he knew absolutely nothing of any
other save stern command and force ready
at application. To this he added a
perpetual fault finding.
He began going over the hoary harangue,
which some old people have insulted
since the days of Homer, about
the tricks and the industrious young men
of every life and the degenerate sons of
every age, when Albert's satirical humor
said "my mighty accursed now," said
"What'll you be at my age?"
"I'll be a lawyer," said Albert, unconsciously
using his father's sneer, "I'll do like other
men—eat and tell lies about the big things
when I'm a boy."
One of those insults which some men
take as the first blow, and the second fell
when Albert, raising his broad, right hand,
pointing with rage, the father brought it
down across the son's mouth. The blood
from Albert's nose as he staggered back,
gazed an instant on the father,
then away with clinched teeth and
glaring eyes.
He sought his confidant, Sam McCorkle,
a drunken shoemaker's boy near by, who
was the same age as Albert, but knew
as much of the tricks and devices
of the law as Albert. At 10 years Sam was an
excessive drinker; at 18 he was simply
drunk.
The two had met and conferred often—
the cynical skeptic, whose father was
a well-to-do farmer of the commu-
nity, and the finished trickster, whose father
was a poor man; they often laid out wonder-
ful schemes in distant regions; but soon
the young face rose before Albert Merritt's
and he could not make up his mind to
do the face of Helen Blake, only a
year before his schoolmate. But now
she was resolved. If Helen thought of
the way and wherefore of its coming, but

for them to return, but if she were worth the
winning she would respect him more for
leaving the discomforts of his present life.
Thus he reasoned.
Late that night two lads with small
bundles might have been seen, but took care not
to be on the river road, and it was soon
known to all the community that they had
left the place.
Of farewells the boys had said none.
Albert had indeed written a brief note to
his mother, in which he had bidden her a
good-by full of clumsily worded tenderness,
and another to Helen, which he had formally
begun "Miss Helen Blake," and in which he
had as formally expressed the hope that,
though absent perhaps for years, he would
not be forgotten. These epistles he took with
him in his flight, and a day or two later
entrusted them to Sam McCorkle to post, but
that individual, fearful that the route of de-
parture would be guessed by the postmark,
calmly destroyed them, although he solemnly
declared to Albert that he had deposited
them in the postoffice of a considerable town
through which they journeyed. And so the
two boys were quite cut off from the old
world of semi-servitude.

That a father should be sorry for the flight
of a son is but natural; that he should, while
a spark of pride or anger remains, tell any
one of his sorrow would be contrary to all
recorded precedents in such cases. William
Merritt was not the man to violate pre-
cedents of discipline. He held himself stiffly,
waved away the subject complacently, and
said when he spoke at all: "Oh, he'll soon get
sick of his first—he'll be glad enough to come
back." But late summer yielded to autumn,
and autumn gave place to winter, and a sad
Christmas day had come, for Albert Merritt
had made no sign.

When Helen Blake was told that Albert
Merritt was a "runaway boy" she merely
said, "Ah, indeed," and bent very low over
her work; but she knew why he had gone—
knew it, indeed, about as well as he did.
Ever long she and Mrs. Merritt seemed to
have a good deal to say to each other. They
seldom if ever mentioned Albert, but it al-
ways seemed that the mother was much
cheered after a visit from Helen. In her own
desponding heart the mother said: "He will
never come back, he is too much like his
father," a favorite delusion with mothers,
by the way. And so, on this sad Christmas
day, the two sorrowful women exchanged
deep sympathies without exchanging a word
on the subject nearest their hearts, and the
mother felt that night as if volumes had
been spoken on the subject, when in fact it
had not been mentioned. And thereafter
Helen came oftener and oftener, and some-
how after each visit the mother felt an as-
surance that all would be right, and felt it
just the same whether Albert's name was
mentioned or not.

Now, after the first shock was passed,
Helen Blake never felt a doubt in her bosom
that she would in good time receive some
word from Albert Merritt, and she would
have risked much on her conviction that she
would hear before either of his parents,
though she could not have told why, and
probably would not if she could, for the best
farm in Jackson township. Yet she knew it
all the same, and visited the Merritts often,
and at each visit it somehow felt out that
something rather singular happened.

On one occasion she grew quite hilarious
in reminiscences of a certain school exhibition,
and told how the teacher had photographs of
the whole class taken, a set for all, and how
childish the pictures looked now, and how
everybody had changed, though it was but
six years ago, and she brought out the
photographs—cheap, tawdry things they
were, but among them was one of a tall, fair
boy, with all the glow of class leadership in
his eye, and light hair curling around a bold
forehead, and under it, in round boyish script,
was the autograph, "Albert Merritt."
A pang shot through the father's heart,
and he looked for her to talk of his boy; but
she rattled on about Tom and Jennie and
Mattie, and soon lapsed into silence.
But the mother noticed that Helen "had
forgotten her pictures," and so they lay on
the looking glass stand for many a day,
where the father often saw the presentment
of his boy, but he never touched it, and they
lay there till Helen came again.
This time she brought a "story paper" for
Mrs. Merritt, saying that the main story in
it had interested her very much; and after
she was gone William Merritt picked it up
and pished and snarled and ridiculed the
pictures, but he read the story. It was a
commonplace novelette of a son, who had fled
from a harsh father and enlisted in the Fed-
eral army, and who was sick almost unto
death in a southern hospital, and how a Sister
of Charity wrote to the father, who came
and patiently nursed his boy back to life and
love and forgiveness. A commonplace story
—one of ten thousand war stories of the time
—but the father's hand trembled as he read,
and he rushed to the field and drove his work
with unusual energy and shouted louder than
ever at his team, and at night was stern and
silent and solemn to a degree that surprised
even his long suffering wife.

The other children would occasionally ven-
ture a reference to Albert, and now when
Helen came the father would blurt and ask-
away; but she only listened quietly and turned
if they had ever heard of him, and turned
the talk to their school days. And so two
years passed away and the third Christmas
came. In celebration of the day the Mer-
cants were to be the guests of the Blakes, and
when they gathered in the big room of the
great farm house it happened that all the
young people present were of that last day
class at the head of which Albert Merritt had
stood. Of course Helen Blake never thought
of alluding to such a fact—it just happened
so, her parents thought—but there were
plenty in a class of eight young people who
could talk as fast as they could think, and
usually did it, too. And so the conversation
rattled on about that glorious day, and the
father, whose heart was literally struggling
against his ribs, and whose internal strug-
gles were such that he could not tell whether
he was eating turkey or oak chips, talked
heavily and aggressively to those at his end
of the table, and quite overtook Mr. Blake
on politics, and finally offered to bet "the
pick of his horses again a year's call" that
his candidate for the presidency would have
500,000 majority over any man the other side
could put up next year.
Now Helen was quite satisfied in her own
mind that the little surprise had done its
work, but that evening her brother brought
home the weekly mail, and in it, after all her
home waiting, a little surprise for her. It
was a copy of The Tekeewah (Kan.) Bugle,
and great was the wonder in the family as to
the way and wherefore of its coming, but



JUMPED TO THE GROUND.

Helen knew. There wasn't a mark of any
kind on the printed sheet, so she set herself
resolutely to read every line. Never had her
western publisher in the most heated cam-
paign a more devoted reader, and at last,
in a headed article in the page headed
"Local Intelligence," she found a list of
members of a new fire company, and among
the names was "Albert Merritt." A writer in
the "County Correspondence" of the
next issue of The County Democrat told
"our fair ladies who charmed the audience
with their music" at a certain Christmas eve
church festival, and by request conveyed in
a note inclosing the stamps, the publisher di-
rected a copy to "A. Merritt, Esq., Tekeewah,
Kan." And this sort of thing went on
for eight months more, and the golden au-
tumn set in and the country was most
mightily stirred over the presidential elec-
tion, and the Blakes and the Merritts began
to look forward with strangely mingled feel-
ings to another Christmas.

William Merritt was the same and yet not
the same. His hair, which was just graying
with gray when his son Albert had left him,
was now whitening visibly. His broad, burly
shoulders had begun to stoop. His hard
eyes had lost somewhat of their steadiness,
and occasionally there were lines denoting
mental pain visible in his austere counte-
nance. His voice, too, sometimes quavered
in a way that astonished no one more than
himself. And one day just after the sorrow
call—a wild, vicious beast, he was breaking
to the saddle—had almost thrown him on
the way to town, he had caught himself sud-
denly wishing that Albert, who must be a full
grown, strong man by this time, were there to
help subjugate the animal.



"CAN'T WE GET ALBERT BACK?"

And so when Helen next paid the Merritt
homestead a visit she found the fortress of the
old man's heart ready to yield. She had the
day before received a copy of The Tekeewah
Bugle, in which she found the following
paragraph half way down a crudely written
account of a fire in that enterprising town:
"We should utterly fail in our duty to our
readers if we omitted to take more than pass-
ing note of the heroic conduct of one of our
young townsmen, a prominent and efficient
member of Avalanche Engine company No. 1.
Of course we refer to Mr. Albert Merritt,
than whom a braver man never drew breath.
Last November it became known that a child
was in the burning building then, at the risk
of his own life, Mr. Merritt rushed into the
smoke and flames, dashed up the stairs almost
at a bound, and, groping about in the stifling
heat, found the infant, fought his way through

which, since the birth of William
Merritt, his hands outstretched with trem-
bling hopefulness.
"Come along, Sam," said one of the young
men who dismounted from the back seat of
the high stage, "I need you yet."
There was a cry, in which recognition, wel-
come and forgiveness were all blended from
the figure in the doorway, and an answer from
the taller of the travelers, who still car-
ried one arm in a sling. And a moment later
William Merritt led this one into his house.
"Mother," he said, "our boy has come
back."
In the ecstatic joy of meeting his mother,
Albert had forgotten Sam McCorkle, and
when he looked for him that individual had
disappeared. As he afterward explained, he
"didn't feel like he was any use when folks
was all a-cryin' and a-weepin' and fallin' on
each other's necks, so he just stowed."
But Albert did not look for Sam very long.
He had much to tell of his new life in the
west, where he had been fairly successful, and
his father and mother and brothers and sis-
ters had quite as much to tell him.



THERE WAS A CRY.

The next day there was such a Christmas
gathering at William Merritt's house as had
never been there before. Such juicy mince
pies, and such mealy potatoes, and such fine
white homo-made bread, and such good things
to eat generally as they who sat down at the
dinner table partook of have never been ex-
celled. All the Blakes were there, and so
were all the members of that class of eight,
whose photographs were the first weapon
Helen had employed in storming William
Merritt's flinty old heart.
And Sam McCorkle, too, the drunken shoe-
maker's son, full of far western dash and his-
torical of the time "Al rescued the baby,"
He was "Mr. McCorkle," an honored guest,
and no one received greater respect than he.
But he did not rise to the height of his glory
all evening, for at the dinner table Albert
would not suffer his own praises to be sung
to too high a key. But when Albert, seem-
ing to have something particular to say to
Helen, whose great, brown eyes sparkled un-
wontedly and whose cheeks persisted in
blushing furiously, led her away with him
into a quiet corner and left the field to Sam,
that individual chanted his hero's deeds to
his heart's content and everybody else's de-
light, though he did not let slip the oppor-
tunities to tell of some things he had himself
accomplished in the west.

The close of this veracious history may be
clipped from The Tekeewah Bugle of March
15, 1903:
"Mr. Samuel McCorkle, the gentlemanly
and enterprising agent for Flash & Hittem's
justly celebrated lightning rods, has returned
from Indiana healthy and happy. His friend
and our former townsman, Mr. Albert Mer-
ritt, has concluded to remain east, where he
will settle down upon his father's extensive
farm. A little bird has whispered that the
blessed god had something to do with Mr.
Merritt's decision to forego a share in the
golden future sure to come to Tekeewah.
Those who are curious in this matter are di-
rected to the notice in the marriage column
on another page headed 'Merritt-Blake.'"
HENRY DAWSON.

A HUMBLE CHRISTMAS DINNER.

There was not very much on the table—in
fact, it wasn't very much of a table, being
made of a dry goods box stood on its side.
The room belonged to the grocer, but he had
told them they could have the use of it for
Christmas night. In the corner there was a
little, cracked stove, which was so hot that it
shone like a big lump of Christmas cheer in
the semi-darkness.
Pretty soon "Swipsy" came in out of the
roar of the city street. He had a few unsold
papers under one arm and a small—very
small—bundle under the other. With him
was his sister Suzo. They were orphans try-
ing to make their own way. She had had
good luck and had sold all her papers. She
took what was left of Swipsy's stock and
spread a nice clean paper over the dry goods
box. Then he unrolled his bundle.
"Oh, Swipsy!" said the girl.
There was a can of cooked corn beef and a
little box of figs.

Pretty soon the others began to come in.
There was "Mickey" with a little packet of
coffee, some sugar, and (what luck!) some
cabbage that the apple woman on the corner
had cooked and given him with big tears in
her honest, Irish eyes when he told her about
the dinner.
"It ain't much, Mickey," she said, "but
may the good saints make it taste as relishin'
as 'twas as big as a barn and cooked in a
gold skillet."
There were five charter members of the
dinner party, so to speak. "Rocks" (so
named from his manner of defending himself
in his frequent "scrapes") came into the room
next. He too had a little bundle which was
undone with due ceremony. When "Piper"
came in he stopped a minute just inside the
threshold, and held the door open while he
beckoned to some one on the outside.
"Come in," said he. "The fellers'll be
glad to see yer."
Then there entered a little fellow not more
than 6 years old. He was very much em-
barrassed, and held his finger to his lips.
Piper, by way of introduction, said:
"Fellers—and Suzo—this 'ere little cove"
(Piper himself was a big cove, having seen
thirteen years, and being the oldest member
of the dinner party) "is comin' to our Chris-
mas. He's just gone into the paper sellin'
biz, an' he ain't got no boddy. I'm a takin'
care of him till he gets started. See!"
For a minute an embarrassed silence hung
over the little group. Then the little peo-
ple

opened their hearts to the newcomer and
they were big hearts for such very small
bodies, and he was one of the dinner party.
Piper explained to him:
"You see," said Piper, "we fellers and
Suzo had heard a lot 'bout Christmas. We
don't know 'gancly' what it is, but we do know
that everybody, wot is anybody, has a Chris-
mas dinner. So we jes' clipped in, and—
and" (waving his hand around the room)
"here y' are."
"But I ain't clipped in," said the new-
comer.
"Well, wot if y' ain't. Y' can nex' time."
So that was settled.

Suzo, in the meantime had produced a pail
from somewhere, and an old stew pan from
somewhere else, and some broken crockery
from still another place.
"You'll make the coffee and warm the
cabbage and meat, darlint," said Mickey.
"You are the only woman here."
So Suzo went at it.
It wasn't long before everything was
ready, and they gathered around the box.
The savory odor from the coffee pot and
stew pan had tickled the twelve little nostrils,
and the six mouths were as eager to taste the
poor little dinner as ever yours was to pick
your succulent Christmas turkey bones.
They fell to at once.
"I'm 'fraid the coffee ain't very good," said
Suzo. But she smiled the satisfied smile that
every homewife smiles while decrying her
own dainties, and was as pleased as you ever
were, my fine lady, in similar circumstances,
when Rocks exclaimed in answer:
"Finner's Delmonico's, I'll bet."
Before very long the dinner had been
eaten. They sat around and talked for
awhile, and the little 6-year-old fell asleep
with his head on Suzo's knees, and her fingers
passed lovingly over the little fellow's dirty
forehead, and by-and-by she leaned over and
kissed him.

The tallow candle burned low in its green
bottle candlestick, and when Piper rose and
quered:
"Well, fellers—and Suzo—has we had a
merry Christmas? A fervent 'You bet!'
went from the mouths of every one but the
6-year-old, and he smiled in his sleep.
The dinner party was over. D. E. M.

The Drumstick.

Behold my round wealth of meat,
With all its juices, rich and sweet!
How firm, how solid, are my parts,
Of children, with distended jaws,
In wait to hide me in their maws.
Ah! how I love to lie in state
Upon the table, while you wait
With eager eyes and teeth that burn,
Until it comes to be your turn.
How crisp my skin, and oh! how brown,
And how I tickle going down;
And then, my bone, oh! what delight,
To pick it till it's clean and white.
How would you like, on Christmas Day,
To tramp till noon and then, we'll say,
To come back home, well almost starved,
And find me waiting, nicely carved?
Between your finger and your thumb
You hold me up, thus (yum, yum, yum!)
I tickle every nerve, I thrill
Your stomachs, and I fill the bill.
And with all men I'm nothing lack—
In fact, I have the inside track.
TOM MARSH.

A Wise Bird.

"Why don't you eat, Mr. Gobbler?"
"Because I don't wish to be eaten, my
friend. Are you not aware that Christ-
mas is coming?"—Harper's Young Peo-
ple.

Boys Are Human, of Course.

The boy who finds his stockings well
filled on Christmas morning doesn't care
what the other fellow got.—Judge.

Christmas Gift!



A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE.

His New Horse.

"Say, mister, why don't yer let him out
for a scrubbin' board?"—Life.