CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT.

NE CHRISTMAS TIME.

HAT CAME OF KILLING A RICH UNCLE.

By MARK LEMON.

I.

"Dance with me, Letty Green," said eorge Poynter, to a pretty girl with ue eyes and "hair that shamed the orn."

Her ample ball dress was of the purest hite muslin, fastened at the sleeves and und the waist with blue ribbon—bluer an her eyes.

"Yes," answered Letty, "I want to ance with you."

The dance at an end, Letty tried to ooth her golden curls into order with r little hands, and then, opening her etty blue eyes to their full, said:

"George Poynter, I should like some range."

"Yes, Letty," said the young gentle- an addressed; "and there's lemonade d negus and such a sponge cake."

"I like dancing with you better than y one, Letty," said George, to his pretty rtner.

"Do you? Why?" replied Letty, her oice rather obstructed by the sponge ke.

"I think it is because I like you—you e so pretty," replied the young gallant.

"You mustn't say that, or mamma will old you, Georgy. She scolds every e who tells me I am pretty," said the ung lady.

But the words had been spoken, and om that night until the end of the ristmas holidays, George and Letty d they were sweethearts.

II.

Some four or five years had passed and etty Green and her mamma were tting together under the veranda of eir pretty cottage, working, and talk- g of a pleasant day they had spent at r. Poynter's, when Master George came, said, to bid them good-by, as he was turning to school on the following orning.

"And I want to ask you a favor, Mrs. reen, and Letty a favor," said George, loring slightly.

Mrs. Green would grant it, of course, d so would Letty, if she could.

"I want Letty to ride Rufus, my pony, hilst I am at school. Papa has no use r it, and it carries a lady beautifully."

"But to accept this proposal would give much trouble."

"Not in the least, Tom—that's our oom—says it won't, and papa says it n't, and I say the same; so please say u'll use the pony. Straps, the harness ker, will lend a side saddle."

Mrs. Green accepted George's offer, as tty was rather fragile, and pony ing had been declared to be good for r; but Mrs. Green's income would not ow of the expense, she said. There re people who called Mrs. Green a ean woman, and hinted that she loved oney better than her child.

George Poynter went to school very eery, because he had made such a cap- al arrangement about his pony, and he ten thought, when the weather was e, of Rufus, and wondered if Letty ere riding him. George had not for- tten, perhaps, that years—years ago and Letty had called themselves eethearts.

III.

More years had passed, and brought eir changes. George and Letty were ne together in a small book room in rs. Green's house, the windows open- g to the garden. George was attired deep mourning, and there were strips black ribbon here and there on Letty's hite dress. They had been talking of ath and sorrow until both had become ent. After a time Letty took George's nd, and said:

"Dear George, you must strive to et your great affliction with a brave irit—indeed you must."

"I have—I do strive," replied George, oking away from Letty; "but remem- r what has come to me. Two years o my father died. A year before that llain, Jackson, ruined my father— oke his heart—killed him. O Letty! hat have I done to deserve this? What n I do?"

"Trust still to the father of the father- ss," replied Letty. "We do not know hy great afflictions are permitted to ertake us any more than we can tell hy great good comes to us when we st expect or deserve it, dear George. u are young, clever, good and have any friends, and one—who is more an a friend."

She raised George's hand to her lips hen she had said this (they were true eethearts now), and he—what could do but press her to his bosom, and s her cheek burning with blushes?

Mrs. Green had been walking in the rden, evidently busy with her thoughts. e had stopped near the book room ndow, near enough to hear what the eethearts were saying to each other, d she appeared to be made more oughtful by what she heard.

When Mr. Poynter was a thriving mer- ant Mrs. Green had been more than a senting party to her daughter's ac- ptance of George Poynter's attentions ndeed, she had by several indirect ans encouraged the young people to nk lovingly of each other. But now tters were changed. Master George, he was generally called, had neither uses nor lands, nor had he "ships gone a far countrie," and Mrs. Green was rplexed how to act. She knew that tty loved her first sweetheart, and uld perhaps love him more now that was poor.

Mrs. Green was relieved from her per- xity more agreeably than she de- ved to have been, as George Poynter led the next day, bringing with him a er from his uncle, rich old Silas eeseman, promising to provide for his y sister's only son, and hinting that orge might by good conduct look to be r to all his thrifty savings.

ilas was a bachelor, having been hted in his youth. He then took to ing money, and had been a most suc- ful wooer, as those clever people o know everybody's business but r own declared old Silas Chees- n to be worth his hundred thousand nds—"more or less."

Uncle Silas had also procured a situa- n for George in the neighboring town St. Gnats—merely a probationary sit- ion, as clerk to a timber merchant, o was under pecuniary obligations to s. All this was very cheering, and y kind of Uncle Silas, although Mr. k, the timber merchant, was indeli- enough to surmise that George was ed in his establishment as a spy, and watch the interests of his uncle. orge would have scorned such a posi- for all Uncle Silas had to give.

IV.

efore we pass on to the events of the t few years, we will introduce Chaun- Gibbs, a friend of George Poynter. Chauncey—his patronym of Gibbs was rarely mentioned—Chauncey was a good natured, good for nothing, unsettled, amusing fellow, who contrived to live a gypsy kind of life on £200 a year, steadfastly refusing to encumber himself with any employment or to incur responsibilities more (to quote Chauncey) than his hat would cover. He was a native of St. Gnats and known to everybody in the town, but he had no regular abiding place, as he chose to wander at will, and George Poynter would not have been surprised to have received one of Chauncey's brief letters dated from London, Paris, Vienna or Pekin. He mostly affected England, however, and London especially in the winter. When money was scarce Chauncey walked; when he was in funds he availed himself of any cheap conveyance which offered, sometimes never inquiring its destination, but making himself equally at home wherever he was stranded. At Christmas time he always returned to St. Gnats, and was a welcome guest at many hospitable tables in that thriving town, making his headquarters, however, with his old friend and school chum, George Poynter. He had written to announce his return to St. Gnats for the Christmas approaching the end of the two years which had intervened since George Poynter had assumed the stool of office at Mr. Bawk's, and supplies of tobacco and bitter beer were already secured for the welcome pected guest.

Chauncey had a favorite lounge in London, a tobacconist's in an out of the way street in the neighborhood of St. Mary Axe.

The proprietor was a beadle, or some official of that character, to one of the companies, and the tobacco business was conducted during the early part of the day by the beadle's wife and daughter. It was Chauncey's pleasure to sit on a snuff tub in front of the counter and smoke, in turn, all the varieties of tobacco sold at the beadle's, beguiling the time, also, with animated conversations with the daughter, whose powers of repartee were more ready than refined. It is not our intention to chronicle more than Chauncey's parting interview and what came of it, as slang from a woman's lips is our abhorrence.

Chauncey was about to leave the shop after one of his long sittings, when the younger lady said:

"You won't see me again, I expect, Mr. Chauncey; I'm going to be married."

"You married!"

"Yes, me; why not, I should like to know?" asked the lady, a little piqued.

"I'm sure I envy the happy man," replied Chauncey. "It's not the Scotchman at the shop door, is it?"

"Well, I'm sure!" said the young lady, and without another word she bounced into the little parlor at the back of the shop.

"Now you've regularly offended Becky," said Mrs. Beadle, "and such old friends as you was—and she to be married to-morrow, and so respectable."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that," said Chauncey. "Where's the wedding to be? I'll buy a bundle of water cresses and strew her way into church as an apology for my rudeness."

"Oh! she won't want no apology from you—she knows what you are Mr. Chauncey; but she's to be married at 10 to-morrow, at St. Mary Axe's, but we don't want it spoke of, as the bridegroom's nervous," said Mrs. Beadle, in a whisper.

"I'll be there in time," replied Chauncey. "I suppose her father will give her away—in full costume, cocked hat, staff, and all that."

"He will do all things that is proper, Mr. Chauncey," said Mrs. Beadle, with much dignity, and Becky at that moment calling "Mother!" in rather an hysterical tone, Chauncey was allowed to find his way out of the shop as he pleased.

On the following morning Chauncey was at the church of St. Mary Axe a quarter of an hour before the time appointed for the ceremony which was to unite Miss Beadle and somebody to their lives' end.

A hale old gentleman between 60 and 70, perhaps, was the next arrival. Having made some very confidential communication to the old pew opener, he was conducted, evidently in great trepidation, to the vestry, and there immured until the arrival of the tobacconist and family—but without the emblematical Scotchman. Chauncey concluded, therefore, that Miss Beadle had captivated the old gentleman now awaiting his doom in the condemned cell called the vestry.

The Beadle was in mufti, but his costume still partook of the splendor of his office, and a canary colored waistcoat with glittering buttons of ruby glass rendered him somewhat conspicuous even in the gloom of St. Mary Axe. His general expression and bearing was that of a tempered indignation, as though he were about to consent to the infliction of some injury which he could avoid if he pleased. A word, a look, might have provoked him to have torn the license from the parson's hands and to have dragged his daughter from the altar. He was therefore allowed to walk up the aisle unmolested.

Mrs. Beadle was very lively on her entrance to the church—more lively, perhaps, than black tea and the occasion warranted; but, whatever had been the stimulating cause of her cheerfulness, it ran in plenteous drops from her eyes as she approached the altar, and must have been exhausted entirely by the end of the ceremony. Niobe weeping for her children would have been a dry nurse compared with Mrs. Beadle.

Miss Beadle was resigned, as became her to be at 31. With closed eyes and drooping head she leaned upon her mother's arm until, with pardonable confusion, she released her hand to put up her parasol as she drew near the altar. Chauncey rushed to her relief, and with some difficulty possessed himself of the incumbrance, and as there were no attendant bridesmaids the impudent fellow attached himself to the wedding party, to be, as he said, "generally useful and to pick up the pieces."

The ceremony proceeded with all proper solemnity, but there was some association with the name of one of the contracting parties which made Chauncey fairly start, and then determine to witness the signing of the certificate, to satisfy a doubt which had suddenly entered his mind.

The wedding party retired to the vestry when "Amazement" had ended the ceremony, and proceeded to sign the registers attesting the union which had just been solemnized. Mr. Chauncey Gibbs being, as he said, a friend of the family, signed also, and there read—what had better be revealed in the next chapter.

V.

Any one had only to have walked down the High street of St. Gnats to have known that Christmas was at hand. The grocers' windows were overrunning with lusciousness; the butchers' shops were so choke full of beef and mutton that the butchers themselves would have to cut their way out into the street; the poulterers had laid in such stocks of turkeys, geese and chickens, that Mr. Babbage's calculating machine could alone have computed them—mere human intellect would have failed. The window frames of the houses seemed sprouting with holly and "the ivy green," and no doubt but mistletoe hung, kiss provoking, within.

Mrs. Green had made every room in her cottage an anagram of her name, as it was holly decked everywhere. Nor was the sacred bough forgotten—"on the young people's account," she said, "though Letty and George had long ceased to want an excuse for a kiss."

George Poynter was waiting the arrival of his friend, Chauncey Gibbs. A glorious fire blazed within the grate; the table was spread to welcome the coming guest, for whose delectation a faultless rumpsteak pie was browning in the oven. The train, punctual to its time, was heard screaming into the station close by, and in a few minutes after the two friends were together.

If you are hungry it is tantalizing to listen to the particulars of a dinner you are not to share; if you are sated, you are bored by the recapitulation of dainties you care not to touch, and therefore we will allow the friends to take their meal in peace. Neither will we join their after revel when two or three old cronies came in and made a night of it, until George and Chauncey sought their beds fairly tired out with jollity.

When breakfast was over the next morning, and Chauncey found that George had excused himself from attendance at the timber yard, he said:

"I am glad you can give the morning to me, as I have some news for you that may, perhaps, surprise and annoy you."

"Indeed!" replied George. "What is it?"

"I would not touch upon it last night, although I think some immediate action should be taken by you or your friends," continued Chauncey, looking very serious.

"Pray speak out," said George.

"Oh yes. I must do that, for I have no tact, never had, to make an unpleasant matter agreeable. Have you heard from your uncle lately?"

"Yes, two days ago—principally on Mr. Bawk's business," replied George.

"My old boy, your uncle never intended you any good when he shut you up in that log house of Bawk's. He put you there for his own selfish purpose and nothing else."

"Why do you say that?" asked George.

"He has led you to suppose that you were to be his heir some day, has he not?"

"He has never said that in direct terms; but he certainly has hinted at such a possibility."

"Then he's an old scamp, if he don't deserve a harder name," said Chauncey, thumping the table. "Two days ago he did his best to disinherit you. You may stare, but I saw with my own eyes, heard with my own ears, that old ragamuffin marry a bouncing woman of thirty."

"Marry! Uncle Silas marry!"

"Fast as St. Mary Axe could do it, to a snuffseller's daughter;" and then Chauncey, to the astonishment of his friend, narrated what we already know of the wedding at which Mr. Chauncey had so officiously assisted.

"This is indeed a terrible blow," said George, "an unexpected blow."

"Yes; I am afraid, knowing the hands he has fallen into, that he won't have a will of his own when a few months have passed," said Chauncey. "I found out how the matter came about. Old Silas was very ill, and wouldn't have a doctor; but—a Beadle, I call him—got at him, and then introduced his daughter as nurse. They first physicked him nearly to death, and then brought him round with bottled porter. They told the old fool they saved his life, and he believed it; and out of gratitude, and the want of a nurse, he proposed to Miss High-dried, and married her."

"This hits me harder than you know, Chauncey—much harder. Poor Letty and I can never hope now"—

"Oh, nonsense!" replied Chauncey. "Keep your uncle's secret, as he will if he can, marry Letty, and let Mother Green storm afterwards."

George shood his head, and then said:

"Chauncey, you advise that which is dishonorable."

"All fair in love, old boy," replied Chauncey, with a laugh; "and if I were you, to gain the woman who loves me, whom I love, I'd kill my uncle."

"Great heaven! what do you say? But I see—you were joking. No; my course is perfectly clear so far as Mrs. Green and Letty are concerned. I go to them at once, and tell what has taken place. If I am forbidden to continue my visits by Mrs. Green she shall be obeyed. Letty, I know, will be always true to me; and when I can make a home for her, I can claim her with honor."

"Devilish pretty speech," said Chauncey," and all right, I have no doubt. I still say, kill old Silas Cheeseman, and get married; or, stay—perhaps—yes—you shall write to him, now that he's honeymoon struck—tell him you want to follow his example, and require ten thousand pounds to do it."

"I understand this nonsense, Chauncey," replied George, with a sad smile. "Your friendly chaff is well meant; but my case is very serious. And so good-by for an hour or two. You will find me here after that time."

The road to Mrs. Green's cottage never seemed so long before to George Poynter as it did now that he felt his fate. The happiness, for a time at least, of his darling Letty depended upon the interview he was seeking with her mother. He was not without some justification for the misgivings which beset him, as Mrs. Green had more than twice or thrice casually hinted at what a mother's course should be to prevent a child "marrying into poverty." Indeed, she had once told him, when Letty was not present, how glad she was when his uncle's recognition of him produced such a favorable turn in George's fortunes, as it had spared them all the pain which she should have felt it her duty to have inflicted. The crisis had only been deferred. There were tears from Mrs. Green—regrets and pity; but there were were also cold, cruel words, which were not to be gainsaid, unless Letty could disobey the mother who had loved her all her life, and lived only to see her happy.

George spared his Letty and her mother any contest as to the decision to be made. He promised to obey Mrs. Green in all she required of him; but he promised Letty also, when they were left alone, that his love never should change, nor should a doubt ever have place in his thoughts that she could change one tittle in her love for him. And as he held her to his beating heart—not for the last time, no! no!—he told her how he would strive to make a home for both—that their probation would be short if a brave resolution could only find the means to work with. And they would come—they always did; for had not they been promised by the one which could not lie?

Poor hearts! they parted very sadly; but a good angel was already busying himself for their reunion. And such an angel!—Chauncey Gibbs!

"He won't write to old Silas?" Then I will," said Chauncey, half aloud, when George had left him. "He won't kill his uncle—an old fool? Then I will." He opened the long blade of his penknife and—trimmed a quill which he found on George's desk.

There were paper and ink, as may be supposed, and there was also the ready writer, Chauncey, who began:

"St. Gnats, Dec. 20, 18—.

"Dear Sir—As my friend, Mr. George Poynter, is unfortunately suffering at this time from a severe blow in his chest—('That's perfectly true')—I have placed myself at his service; and although I shall not express myself as he would have done on the subject—('That's true again, I fancy')—I hope you will take the will for the deed. News has reached us here, dear sir—('He'll like that dear sir')—that after many years of deliberate calculation—('No, not calculation')—consideration, you have discovered that man was not made to live alone, and therefore, with a wise regard for your own happiness, you have sought connubial felicity at the altar of St. Mary Axe. ('Very good!' muttered Chauncey; 'the name of the church will show that his secret is known to us.') I know not whether it is your wish that your blissful union should be made generally known; but I cannot hesitate (on the part of my friend, I mean) to offer you my sincerest congratulations, and to wish you all the happiness you deserve. ('That's true; and I should like to add, all you are likely to find.') I am aware that what you have done must necessarily interfere largely, if not entirely, with those expectations which you once or twice—('Shall I say promised? No')—encouraged me to entertain—('What would old George say to that?')—and though I descend from the clouds—('Good figure that')—to the substratum of daily toil and permanent anxiety, I shall know that you are sitting happy at your domestic hearth, smoking the pipe of peace—('It wants something else to round off the sentence')—and—and—('Oh, blow it!')—rocking the cradle.

"May I request—if not asking too much at this blissful period of your life—a line, to tell me that I may add to my affectionate remembrances an Aunt Cheeseman?

"I remain, dear sir,

"Your affectionate nephew,

"For George Poynter"—

Chauncey paused. "It won't do to sign my name, or Mrs. C. will remember it. Yes—I have it—they never heard the name of C. Gibbs."

Having sealed and directed his letter, Chauncey proceeded to post it.

In traveling down from London Chauncey had learned that a projected branch railway from St. Gnats was in high favor with all the moneyed interest of the place; and when he suggested the propriety of killing old Silas he had this railway in his mind, as on the following day the allotment of shares was to take place. Chauncey knew—as he knew everybody—Mr. Golding, the banker and chairman pro tem. of the projected company. Without the least misgiving or hesitation he called upon that highly respectable gentleman, and, after a few minutes' interview, gave the conversation an extraordinary twist, o[illegible] as thus:

"You've heard of the great [illegible] to our townsman, George Poyn[illegible] I suppose," said Chauncey. "No? Well, perhaps it was hardly to be expected, seeing what a retiring fellow he is."

"What is it?" asked Mr. Golding. "He is a young man for whom I have the greatest respect. I shall be glad to hear of any good fortune to him."

"And it is a good fortune! His uncle, you know, was immensely rich," said Chauncey. "The old bachelor is no more—went off three days ago—and my friend George was long ago his appointed heir."

"Silas Cheeseman gone!" remarked Mr. Golding, with a shrug; "a very money getting man; and must have died very rich—very rich."

"E-nor-mously rich! Single man many years; no expenses, you know," said Chauncey. "I witnessed the last moments of the old bachelor at St. Mary Axe. Went off quite composedly after his will was accomplished. By the bye, it strikes me you might secure the interest of young George."

"How, my dear sir?" asked Mr. Golding; "we are always glad to secure a good client"—

"And with such wealth!" said Chauncey. "You allot shares in the St. Gnats Junction to-morrow, do you not?"

"Yes," replied the banker; "and the applications exceed anything I ever knew; the shares will be five or six premium before to-morrow is over."

"That's your plan, then! Secure him a thousand."

"A thousand!" exclaimed Mr. Golding.

"Well, half a thousand—say five hundred—for George Poynter; I'll let him know whose influence he has to thank for them. You'll be the banker of his immense wealth—his friend—adviser."

"But he has not applied," said Mr. Golding.

"But you have. What's a paltry five hundred to you in comparison to after gain—or to him? He won't care for the money, but the friendliness of the thing," said Chauncey, with a flourish of the hand, as though he were proposing the merest trifle of a sacrifice.

"And you, my dear sir?" asked Mr. Golding.

"Oh, nothing; I want nothing; and you may rely upon my secrecy."

Mr. Golding pressed Chauncey's hand, and thanked him for the friendly sugtion.

Mr. Golding had but one confidant, Mr. Baxter, who at that moment entered the bank, and was announced as being there.

"Do you object to my naming the matter to my friend Baxter?—great influence at the board," said Golding.

"Not in the least; perhaps he may help you to make the allotment a thousand," replied Chauncey.

"Oh, impossible, my good friend," said the banker. "Show in Mr. Baxter."

Chauncey's communication having been repeated to Mr. Baxter, the diplomatist thought he had better retire; but he had not gone many yards from the bank when Mr. Baxter overtook him.

"Delighted to hear what you have told us concerning your friend Poynter—an excellent young man, and deserves all he gets."

"I am sure of that," said Chauncey, "whatever good it may be."

"He'll reside at St. Gnats, I suppose?"

"Yes," answered Chauncey.

"And will want a house suitable to his new position?"

"Yes."

"Now I am wanting to sell Prospect House yonder—fine garden, abundance of water and all that—would it suit him, do you think?"

Chauncey was rather posed by this inquiry, and said therefore, "Perhaps."

"I think it would; £3,500 is what I ask—and could get it, but I dislike the man. You know Capt. Ranger—of course you must," said Baxter, with emphasis.

Chauncey did not and would not know Capt. Ranger.

"He is a troublesome fellow, and I should be glad if he would leave the place," said Mr. Baxter. "If Mr. Poynter will buy he shall have the preference."

Chauncey saw no objection to that, and promised to speak to his friend if Mr. Baxter would make the offer in writing; but £3,000, he thought, would be the utmost that Mr. Poynter would give for a house.

Mr. Baxter paused [illegible] and as they were opposite [illegible] house he invited Chauncey in [illegible] gave him a letter to Mr. [illegible]oynter, containing an unconditional offer of Prospect House for £3,000. Chauncey carefully put away the letter and bade Mr. Baxter good day.

Poor George had returned to his lodging when Chauncey had transacted all the important business we have recorded, and not all his friend's good spirits could rouse him from almost despondency.

"My old boy," said Chauncey, "you'll sink down, down, if you show the white feather in this way. You're young enough to work, and like it—I never did."

"It is not hard work—hard fighting with the world, that I am fearing; it is the effect of this day's cruel trial upon poor Letty."

And then George told Chauncey all that had passed.

"Well, you would be so hastily honorable," replied Chauncey; "you had better been advised by me—waited a day or two until you had killed your uncle."

George looked at his friend and saw a cunning twinkle in his eye; but Chauncey had his own reasons for saying no more on the subject.

George was very ill the next morning—too ill to go to the timber yard; so Chauncey offered to see Mr. Bawk, and, if business pressed, to supply George's place for a day or two. Mr. Bawk declined Mr. Chauncey's services, and was so excessively polite and anxious in his inquiries about Mr. George that Chauncey thought the story of yesterday had reached Mr. Bawk.

It was not so; but Capt. Ranger had been to the timber yard to see Mr. Poynter, and had surprised Mr. Bawk by assuring him that his clerk must have come into money, as he had bought Prospect house at a sum which he (Capt. Ranger) had refused to give. He had, however, left a commission with Mr. Bawk; and Chauncey wormed out of the timber merchant the following particulars:

Captain Ranger, it appeared, had married a lady with money—not always a desirable exchange for a man's life—and the lady never allowed him to forget the pecuniary part of their engagement. She had taken a fancy—the word is not strong enough—a longing for Prospect House, and the captain had undertaken to obtain it; but, being fond of a bargain, he had disgusted Mr. Baxter with a tiresome negotiation, and the house had slipped from him. To confess this to Mrs. Captain Ranger would be to invoke a conjugal tempest; and in his extremity he had come to Mr. Bawk to intercede with his clerk to transfer his purchase.

"Well," said Chauncey, "George is a good natured fellow—too good natured—and I will undertake to say that the captain shall have Prospect House for £4,000."

"Four thousand pounds!" exclaimed Mr. Bawk.

"And not one shilling less," said Chauncey firmly. "The house is worth it as it stands; but compute its value to Captain Ranger, and it is cheap at any money."

Mr. Bawk pleaded to a stone agent when he tried to soften Mr. Chauncey; and Captain Ranger coming into the counting house at the moment, heard the terms proposed, raved like a maniac for ten minutes, and then consented to be swindled—robbed, for the sake of peace and quietness.

Chauncey could be a man of business when he pleased, and he was now in a business mood. He therefore trotted off the angry captain to an attorney's, made the transfer, and secured a prospective £1,000 for his friend George by killing his uncle.

As the day wore on, Chauncey waited upon Mr. Golding, and found that gentleman writing to Mr. Poynter, and expressing the great pleasure it gave him to hand him a letter of allotment for 500 shares in the St. Gnats Junction, etc. etc. etc. Railway; adding a hope that the firm of Golding, Silverton & Co. might have Mr. Poynter's name on their books as an honored client.

Chauncey undertook to deliver the letter, and to use his influence with his friend to make the only acknowledgment he could for such disinterested generosity.

Poor George was very ill at ease when his friend Chauncey returned, and at first was disposed to be angry at what he felt to be his inconsiderate raillery.

"I am serious, old boy, quite serious," said Chauncey, throwing Golding's letter and the transfer on the table. "I have killed old Silas Cheeseman, and there are some of the proceeds of the transaction. Open—read and satisfy yourself."

George opened the envelope containing the transfer, and then Mr. Golding's letter. He was in a mist. He thought he was delirious and had lost his reason; and Chauncey was a long time making him comprehend how he had come to be possessed of—

Profit on transfer	£1,000
Profit on 500 shares, premium 5 per share....	2,500
Total	£3,500

and all by killing old Silas Cheeseman!

Poor George was hard to satisfy that these large gains were honorably come by, and when he went to sleep he dreamt that he had robbed the bank and had set Prospect House on fire. The following morning brought a letter from Uncle Silas.

The poor old dotard expressed himself so pleased at his nephew's forgiveness of an act which he had thought would have provoked only revilings and wicked wishes, that he enclosed a check for £1,000 and his avuncular blessing.

Was ever another fortune made by such means?

George had all the money; Mr. Golding begging his retention of the shares, as his commercial acuteness might be damaged by a disclosure of the trick which had been practised upon his cupidity, and Capt. Ranger was submissively satisfied, having told his cara sposa that he had bought Prospect House a decided bargain.

Mrs. Green would have had to endure many mortifying reflections had it not been Christmas time when Letty and George, and all other estranged friends, are willing to forget their old grievances, and, in thankfulness that such a season was vouchsafed to erring man, humbly imitate the Great Forgiver.

JACK TAR'S CHRISTMAS.

The remarks of the Chinese sailor enlisted aboard a United States man-of-war, "Mellee Clistmas, me no sabey he!" as he came down from the foretopsail yard, where he had been lending a hand to furl the remnant of a topsail, blown almost to ribbons by the fierce winter's gale that was howling one Christmas morning, and began blowing on his frost bitten fingers and rubbing them in the snow which covered the vessel's deck, is a very good exposition of the practical side of our universal Christian holiday, as frequently seen by the hardy toilers of the sea. Stern necessity sometimes demands that the work must be done and the ship made safe and snug before Jack Tar can think of bean soup or Christmas pudding and other fixings, and not infrequently, as the sea remembers nothing and pays no homage to customs, no matter how ancient, imagination of a grand banquet can alone be relied upon to appease the appetite; as "hot water and spoons" are very apt to be about all that can be obtained in the way of a square meal, and even the luxury of the hot water is often omitted, as the tossing, restless ship, lurching about from side to side, makes it impossible to keep anything on top of the galley stove, if, indeed, it be a practicable thing to keep up the fires at all. In such a case the cud of discontent, so to speak, must be represented, as the song gives it, by the starboard side of an old sou'wester.

Christmas away from home is, however, always kept in some way or another, even under such adverse circumstances as those mentioned; as a little something to warm him up is quietly given to the half frozen man by some kindhearted officer as he comes down from aloft, and before drinking he manages, as a rule, to pull off his cap and to say "Merry Christmas," which is about all the circumstances of the case will admit of. Wind and weather permitting, however, only the absolutely necessary things are done, and the Christmas dinner is made as sumptuous as the paymaster's stores will permit, or the foresight of the mess caterer in laying in something extra before the ship left port has provided. The ration gives more or less variety of things that put up to keep during the cruise, but Jack prefers the things that are not made to keep, and, being proverbially improvident, the day generally finds him depending on plum duff as the grand piece de resistance, and no matter how much of the resistance there may be about the compound the relish with which it disappears is proof sufficient of its ability to take the place of other possibly more digestible articles. The bags containing the sailors' personal effects are piped up and the men given an opportunity to overhaul their clothing, write letters or do whatever the limit of the ship will admit. Smoking is permitted outside the daily regulation hours, and everything is done to make the men as comfortable and the day as much of a holiday as possible, having, of course, due regard for the handling of the vessel.

When, however, the ships are in port, and it happens to be one where there is a good market, all that it affords is brought off to grace the board, and the scene presented on the berth deck of one of our men-of-war on such occasions is lively and picturesque in the extreme. The mess tables are screened off with canvas and bunting, and very often evergreens are used to complete the ornamentation, each mess vying with the others to see which can make the prettiest show. An extra dollar or two apiece is usually served out, "to put in the mess," the aggregate sum making great possibilities in the way of procuring the good things which are not found in the daily ration. The tin pot, pan and spoon which form Jack's cover are made to shine like polished silver, the mess cooks taking a pride in getting the brightest of polishes for the occasion. Some more stylish, though perhaps less thrifty, messes, get crockery from shore, which sets off the table very prettily, and possibly to some of them seems more homelike and gives an air of paying a little more attention to the observances of the day: one might say, I suppose, a little better relish, perhaps, to the feast. But whoever knew of a sailor's not being ready for a good square meal at any hour of the day?

One who has watched the rush for the hatchway when the order "pipe to dinner" is given, is quite apt to be convinced that Jack's "stomach is as sharp as a shark's," and that he "never was in finer condition for feeding" at any one time more than at any other. When every preparation has been made for dinner and the viands set forth, the officers are, as a general rule, invited to inspect, and very often to sample, the good things; the captain of the vessel generally grants the request for a bottle of beer or light wine apiece, and in fact most any reasonable departure from the ordinary daily customs is allowed. In the afternoon, if the request is made, a large liberty party goes ashore, and is permitted to remain away from the vessel until the following morning. Boat racing is frequently the amusement, especially if there are foreign vessels in the same port, and great is the excitement in the international contests. Prizes are offered, and as many boats are entered as can be spared from the different ships. Water tournaments, catamaran races and various other aquatic sports are indulged in, as Christmas is not always in the winter season, much of a vessel's cruising being done in the southern hemisphere, and the 25th of December often finds the thermometer so high that a plunge in the briny is an immense relief.

The great evening amusement is a minstrel or variety show, which brings out an amusing display of talent that one would hardly believe possible until he had witnessed some of the character pieces or listen to the fine singing often heard in a ship's company. The original jokes, which very often spare nobody, from the cabin windows to the hawse poles, are always amusing, and serve for many a day after to hurl at the head of the poor unfortunate whose peculiarities have been sufficiently pronounced to catch the ever ready eye or ear of the humorist, who has them carefully stowed away until some such occasion as this gives him a chance to unmercifully bring them forth. When "pipe down" comes, the verdict is that, although away from home, relatives and the conventionalities of the holiday season that one's earlier years have been accustomed to, the day has been what the morning greeting intends it should be—a merry Christmas.

The Boston Dictum.

New Barber (in Boston barber shop)—Next gent.

Boss—Ven you say ager "next shent" I discharge you at vonce. Ve no say shents, ve say shentlemen.—New York Sun.