



The Magi came, at Christmastide,  
 Into the night, with gifts resplendent—  
 Coursers, camels, robes of pride,  
 Wealth of satellites dependent!  
 They came with pomp; they came  
 from far,  
 And followed fast the "Morning" Star!  
 Low, in a cradle made of hay,  
 A monarch from the heavens lay!  
 Was it a king in glory light?  
 No—'twas a chernub in pink and white!  
 It, too, had traveled alone from far,  
 And came in the arms of the "Evening"  
 Star!

most,  
 The Star with the train and the splendid  
 host  
 The Star of triumph? the Star of power?  
 Or the Star that twinkles at twilight  
 hour?  
 The "Love Star" tender? Now, watch  
 and see,  
 It is the Magi bend the knee!

Ah, glory of genius, pride or wealth!  
 Splendor of wisdom, knowledge, health!  
 Powers of busy brain and feet,  
 All of the treasures of earth complete!  
 All of the treasures of earth complete!  
 Spirit of beauty and love, at last,  
 At Thy tiny feet, all crowns are cast!  
 —John Ward Stimson.



Mr. and Mrs. Reminiscent sat comfortably back in soft leather chairs, watching the crackle and flame of a real log in the grate.  
 "What an odd custom it is, isn't it, John—that of hanging up one's stocking on Christmas eve?" said Mrs. R.  
 "Yes, it is queer. I wonder who first thought of it?"  
 "I haven't the faintest idea. In fact, I never even wondered about it before."

"It was a rare toy, in those days, and until that moment of my life I had never possessed anything so perfectly wonderful. It made more noise than a clock, to wind it up, and then it would go like lightning, for a few seconds. I have never known time to fly as fast as it did on that watch," and he laughed as he thought of the way the little brass hands flew around the dial.  
 "What finally became of it, dear? Did you wear it with your red stockings and copper toes?"  
 He shook his head negatively.  
 "I think the ending of that watch was the greatest blow of my life. You know Stanislaus Blank?"  
 "Yes, of course. Your cousin that you don't like."  
 "He was at our house that Christmas. He was a few years older than

ing cards can be traced back for thousands of years by the Chinese. Their New Year's visiting cards are curiosities. Each one sets forth not only the name, but all the titles, of its owner, and, as all Chinamen who have any social position at all have about a dozen, it makes the list quite appalling. These cards are made of silk or else of fine paper backed with silk and are so large that they have to be rolled up to be carried conveniently. They are, indeed, so valuable that they are returned to their owners.

**NEW YEAR THOUGHTS.**

We sleep, but the loom of life never stops, and the pattern which is weaving when the sun went down is weaving when it comes up in the morning.—H. W. Beecher.  
 We are not in this world to do what we wish, but to be willing to do that which it is our duty to do.—Gounod.  
 It is the every days that count. They must be made to tell, or the years have failed.—W. C. Gannett.  
 Soberly and with clear eyes believe in your own time and place. There is not, there never has been, a better time or a better place to live in. Only with this belief can you believe in hope.—Phillips Brooks.  
 We may make the best of life, or we may make the worst of it, and it depends very much upon ourselves whether we extract joy or misery from it.—Sudler.  
 The darkest shadows of life are those which a man himself makes when he stands in his own light.—Lord Abernethy.  
 Our life is short, but to expand that span to vast eternity is virtue's work.—Shakspeare.  
 The hour that is gone I cannot recall, to-morrow I will do better than yesterday; and all to-morrows shall be better than the yesterdays. Let us "leave behind our low-vaunted past."—Dyer.  
 Life is fruitful in the ratio in which it is laid out in noble action or patient perseverance.—Liddon.

**A New Christmas.**  
 Every Christmas should be a new center of Christ-life in this world. That is what Jesus meant when he said, "The kingdom of God is within you." He wants us to be so filled with his life that his influence shall pour out through our lives for the brightening and sweetening of the world. He wants us to start a new Christmas every day, wherever we are.—J. R. Miller.  
**A Backward Look.**  
 Christmas kin be made so much pleasanter of the stern parent will

only let his min' wander back tow the time when he made a dash fur the ol' chimney-piece himself.—N. Y. Truth.

**"THE WORLD IS MINE."**



"Not your own sisters?" exclaimed Alison, in a pained voice. "Oh, Rudel, you used not to be so stiff and unkind."  
 "I ain't one or the other," rousing up at this reproach. "I think it is first-rate—your coming, I mean—and you are no end of a brick to do it, and," with a sudden burst of confidence, "I shouldn't mind giving you a kiss now and then, when you wanted it particularly, if you would promise not to tell Missie; I would not ask her one—no, not if she were to give me on her bended knees—a stuck-up little minx!"  
 "Oh, Rudel, for shame! Mabel is as much your sister as I am."  
 "No, she isn't, and never shall be," growled the lad. "I tell you what, Alison, you are an out-and-outer, and no mistake, and I will help you fight all your battles, that I will, as sure as my name is Rudel, and that is better than ever so many kisses."  
 "Dear Rudel, I am sure you mean kindly, though you have such a funny way of showing it; but I have no wish to fight any one."  
 "Oh, but you will be obliged to fight Missie, whether you wish for it or not," was the cool rejoinder; but Alison was spared any further argument on this subject, as they had reached the Holms, and in another moment were driving up the gravelled sweep between rows of dusty evergreens.  
 The Holms was a singularly built house. A square, stone hall, uncarpeted and chilly looking, led to the kitchen and other domestic offices, all on a large scale and unusually roomy; a wide flight of stone steps, differing from the modern staircase by being also uncovered, led to the sitting rooms, dining room, drawing room, school room, and study, all opening on to a narrow corridor, fitted from end to end with books—books literally lining it from floor to ceiling.  
 As Alison wearily ascended the steps, a thin ladylike woman in a black gown, with a depressed, gentle face, came to the head of the staircase.  
 "I am so glad to see you, my dear," she said, kissing her affectionately. "Why, I do believe you are grown, Alison; you are taller than I expected to see you, but you are looking pale."  
 "Oh, that is nothing," returned Alison, hastily. "I am tired with the journey." For just then she did not wish her looks to be too keenly criticised. "Where are the others, Miss Leigh—father, Mabel and Poppie?"  
 "I am so sorry, Alison, that I am the only one to greet your homecoming. Mabel and Poppie are out; they had an invitation to an afternoon party at the Brownlow's; it is little Stacy's birthday. I wanted Mabel to stay at home and let Poppie go without her, but she would not hear of it."  
 "Never mind, returned Alison, quietly; but she was conscious of a hurt, chilled feeling as Miss Leigh brought out this lame excuse. This was her return home after two years' absence, and yet Roger could not be spared to meet her at the station, and Mabel could not give up an afternoon's amusement to welcome her sister. Her father was busy as usual; probably he had forgotten her existence at this time.  
 "You are very tired, my dear," continued Miss Leigh, disturbed at the young girl's sudden gravity and paleness. "Shall I take you to your room, and send you up a cup of tea? I daresay you would like to be quiet a little."  
 "Thank you," replied Alison, gratefully. Rudel skipped up after her, three steps at a time.  
 "I suppose you do not want to see Sulky now, Alison?"

**A Misunderstanding.**

"I notice Jenks doesn't speak to you. What's the matter?"  
 "I can't help it. I started to talk to him about Christmas decorations the other day and he thought I referred to the black eyes he got in a brawl with a mutual friend recently."—Judge.  
**'Twas Ever Thus.**  
 Ted—I've been trying to catch Dolly under the mistletoe, but Miss Autumn seems to be the only one I can find there.  
 Ned—It seems to be an instance of the wrong girl in the right place.—Judge.

**Christmas at the Boarding House**



Mrs. Eaton House—Well, you've got the largest piece of the wishbone, Mr. Skinnie! Now, what do you wish for?  
 Orville Skinnie—A larger piece of the meat, ma'am.

**Aunt Diana**  
*The Sunshine of the Family*

**CHAPTER IV.**

It was finally settled, Alison felt that duty called her home, and soon the day came when she had to part from Aunt Diana. It was a sad leave-taking, and the tears were in Alison's eyes long after the train steamed slowly into the Chester station. Alison gathered up her numerous articles of traveling gear, and looked out with some eagerness, but Roger's tall figure was nowhere in sight, and much disappointed and perplexed, she gave a porter instructions about her traveling boxes.  
 "Will you fetch me a cab, please?" faltered Alison, feeling ready to cry again at her loneliness, and wondering at Roger's unkind desertion, and then all at once she encountered a pair of round blue eyes, very wide open. She started; yes, there was the wide mouth, the droll, freckled face that she remembered so well; of course it was Rudel, groan, but not otherwise altered, grinning affably at her.  
 "Why, Rudel," she exclaimed, reproachfully, "why did you not speak to me? I was looking for Roger, and nearly passed you by."  
 "Oh, but I should have hallooed all in good time," he returned, with another grin, shaking hands with her, but refraining from any warmer fraternal greeting.  
 As soon as she was seated in the cab he got in after her, and proceeded to put down both windows. "You would not like me to go outside, I suppose," he said, in a good-humored, dawdling voice; "these cabs are so stuffy they make a fellow feel queer."  
 "Go outside if you like," returned Alison, willing to humor him, but rather disturbed at the boy's coolness.  
 "Oh, it does not matter," was the contradictory response; "we have not far to go, and cabs are so unusually stout there would not be room for Otter. Oh, by the bye, Roger told me to tell you that father told him that somebody else must come to the station, as he could not be spared. Roger was awfully put about, for he said I should be no help, and I have not been much, eh?" with another grin that threatened to become a laugh.  
 "I wish dear old Roger could have come, but I am glad to see you, too," was Alison's polite reply. "I thought you would have kissed me after two years of absence."  
 "Oh, I never kiss girls," reddening visibly.  
 "Not your own sisters?" exclaimed Alison, in a pained voice. "Oh, Rudel, you used not to be so stiff and unkind."  
 "I ain't one or the other," rousing up at this reproach. "I think it is first-rate—your coming, I mean—and you are no end of a brick to do it, and," with a sudden burst of confidence, "I shouldn't mind giving you a kiss now and then, when you wanted it particularly, if you would promise not to tell Missie; I would not ask her one—no, not if she were to give me on her bended knees—a stuck-up little minx!"

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"No, no," interrupted Miss Leigh, "your sister is tired, Rudel; you had better go down and leave her to rest."  
 "Oh, I was not talking to you, Mother Leigh," was the boy's rude retort; and as Alison turned round to shake her head at him, she discovered him in the act of making one of his favorite faces at the back of the unconcious governess.  
 "I say, missus," he observed, "have you told Alison about her room?"  
 "No, not yet, Rudel," returned the much-enduring Miss Leigh.  
 "Then I shall. I call it a mean trick of Missie's; no one but a girl would do such a thing; here she has been and taken your room, Alison, with mother's things in it; and nothing the missus can say will get her to give it up. Missus is awfully wild about it, ain't you, missus?"  
 "Oh, Rudel! do be quiet," remonstrated Miss Leigh, in the old worried voice Alison knew so well. "What a tiresome boy you are! and I wanted to tell your sister quietly. Alison, my dear, I am very sorry, but Mabel has appropriated your room, and most improperly refuses to give it up. I spoke to your father about it last night, but he only said it did not signify, that he expected you would not mind, as your visit to us might not be a very lengthy one. I think you had better speak to him yourself."  
 "I will see about it," returned Alison, quickly, anxious to stem the governess' nervous flow of words. "Am I to sleep here to-night?" as Miss Leigh opened the door of a back room.  
 "I have made it as nice as I can," returned Miss Leigh, apologetically, "but I am afraid you will think it an ugly room; it wants reupholstering, and the carpet is dreadfully old."  
 "Oh, it will do very well," observed Alison, quietly; but she looked round her with a sinking heart nevertheless. It was Mabel's old room and very shabby furnished, and looked over the kitchen garden and the sawmills.  
 She listened with well assumed patience as Miss Leigh pointed out the various little improvements she had effected. Though Alison did not know it, the easy chair and little round table were taken from Miss Leigh's own room; the fuchsias and geraniums in the blue vase were Roger's gift; and even Rudel had contributed the big green fern that stood on the window ledge.  
 "Now, I will send you up your tea," observed Miss Leigh at last, when the boxes had arrived, and Rudel had assisted to unstrap them; "there is no hurry, my dear; you will have nearly two hours to yourself to unpack and rest."  
 Alison tried to answer cheerfully, but her head was aching in earnest now; the tears were very near the surface again, but she battled with them bravely.

**CHAPTER V.**  
 A cup of excellent tea was very restorative in its effects, and when Alison had freshened her tired face with cold water, and brushed her disheveled locks, and exchanged her traveling dress for a light, cool-looking, saphyr cloth costume, she felt less reluctance to present herself to the critical eyes of her father and Mabel.  
 "May I come in?" questioned a voice that she knew at once was Roger's, and in a moment she had sprung joyfully to the door.  
 "Oh, Roger, you dear old fellow, I am so glad to see you again!" she exclaimed, forgetting all her troubles in the sight of his familiar face. Evidently her pleasure was reciprocated; a pair of strong arms almost lifted her off her feet, and bore her across the room toward the window, and, after a hasty kiss or two, Roger put his hand under her chin and gravely inspected her.  
 "I suppose you are glad to see me," he observed at length, "as you have been crying evidently at the pleasurable anticipation. So you are sorry to come home, Alison, eh? and yet"—rather reproachfully—"you are wanted very badly here."  
 Alison's only answer was to lay her face down on his arm; this was a little too much for her jaded spirits, a few more tears would come. Roger had found her out, as she knew he would.  
 "Come now, this won't do, Allie," he said, with a sort of soothing roughness; "we shall pack you back again to Aunt Diana, if you are going to fret. I looked for rather a different greeting after two years' absence."  
 "I can't help it," she said, trying to dimple her cheeks; "I am tired, and everything seems strange to-night, and I do miss Aunt Diana."  
 "Yes, she has spoiled you for us; you have grown a dainty little lady, Allie."  
 "Oh, no; I am not spoiled in that way," she interrupted him breathlessly. "You can not quite understand, Roger; but there is such a mixed feeling. I have wanted you all these two years; you have never been out of my mind a single day."  
 "Well, I am glad to have you back to scold you properly. What color are your eyes generally, Alison? They are as pink as an Albino to-night."  
 "It is my turn to look at you," she returned, trying to pluck up a little spirit. "Why, you have grown a nut-crack, Roger. How well it suits you!"—but Roger only broke into a merry laugh.  
 "Did you ever see such a handsome fellow? Really, Rudel and I are marvelous specimens of manly beauty. He beats me in freckles, though, ha, ha!" And Roger quitted rook himself in merriment.  
 "I like the look of you very much," returned Alison. "Your hair is a little rough—and, oh! your boots are muddy. You have wanted me to keep you in order."  
 "I don't seem to match you, somehow," he observed. "Do you always look as though you were just turned out of a handbox? I wish you would take Missie and Poppie in hand; they drive Miss Leigh crazy with their untidiness. Oh, we are a happy family, Allie—nothing but billing and cooing, and that sort of thing going on from morning to night. You might take Rudel and Missie for a couple of love birds, the sweet young creatures are so fond of each other, and as for Poppie and Missie—look, there is a specimen of the home music dulcet strains floating up the staircase. There goes Missie."  
 Alison's brow knitted with some perplexity as she listened. "Flora, will you go into your own room? I insist on it—you are not fit to be seen in that torn frock," in a sharp, girlish voice.  
 "What does it matter? She won't be in a shrill, childish treble; you are so cross, Mabel. Do let me come in with you and see Alison."

"No, no; do as I tell you; you shall come in presently. There! you have spoiled on my dress and torn some of the tell papa if you are so naughty, and then he will not let you come down to tea." Here an expressive roar on Poppie's part interrupted the discussion. Alison quickly to the door and opened it, a pretty looking, fair-haired girl, dressed somewhat untidily and in bad style, with a faded face, was standing just outside Alison's little girl between eight and nine years of age, rather small in stature, and with a droll, freckled face like Rudel's, only it was just now puckered up with crying—a red, inflamed spot on one cheek was evidently the result of a smart blow on her sister's part in payment for the last trimming.  
 "How do you do, Mabel?" she asked with a somewhat cold salute of Mabel's cheek. "Please do not prevent Poppie coming to me. I could not help hearing you spoke so loud, and I do not mind one bit how she looks. Come here, Poppie, dear; but the child, evidently shy and upset by the late fracas, held back in an embarrassed manner, until Missie gave her a rough push. "Why don't you go to Alison, you stupid little thing?" she said crossly, for she was put out at her sister's sudden appearance on the scene.  
 "Please do not force her to come to me; we shall be very good friends directly," returned Alison, sorry for the poor child's awkwardness. "Come with me, Poppie dear; Roger is in my room, and I will show you the pretty new game I have brought for you."  
 The child's face brightened in a moment, and she moved instantly to take Alison's hand; again Missie interposed. "She must change her frock, Alison; tea is just ready, and I hear papa's key in the garden. He will be very angry if Poppie looks rough or untidy; and I can not allow him to be vexed," pursing up her lips with a virtuous expression.  
 Alison controlled a quick retort with some difficulty. She had fully expected to find Missie a most aggravating little person, or why should Miss Leigh complain of her so bitterly? But the reality was worse than she anticipated.  
 "Never mind," she said, calmly; "we must not vex papa, must we, Poppie? I will help you change your frock, and perhaps after all we may have time to look at the fish ponds." And without another glance at Missie, Alison made Poppie cheerfully lead the way, as she did not know her room.  
 As Alison, after dressing Poppie, came down the staircase with the child still clinging to her, Mr. Merle suddenly made his appearance from the study. He almost started at the sight of his daughter, and an expression of pain crossed his handsome, careworn face. In the dim light Alison recalled her mother too plainly to his eyes.  
 "Oh, papa," she said, hurrying to him, and putting up her fair young face to his. He kissed her kindly, patted it, told her that she had grown into a woman since he had seen her, and questioned her with some interest about her journey.  
 The dining room, a large, handsomely furnished room, looked sufficiently gay as they entered it. Missie was in the seat of honor; she gave a little smug laugh as Alison entered with her father. "I suppose this will be your last to-morrow," she said, for, as Alison replied simply, "I suppose so, but I do not disturb you to-night," a red hot cross Missie's face, but as Mabel was already grinning in hopes of a new seat prudently disappointed him.  
 When they rose from the table, Mabel's first words were a peremptory order for Poppie to put away her toys and go to bed. This led to a feeble protest on Miss Leigh's part.  
 "It is not so very late, Mabel, and Poppie has not seen her sister for two years. I think she might wait a little longer."  
 "I am not going; there now!" observed the child, defiantly, quite oblivious of her father's presence.  
 "Go it, Pops, I'll back you," whispered Rudel, rubbing his hands; "she shan't touch you as long as I am here."  
 Mabel's eyes flashed. "You horrid, rascally boy, Papa—" But here Alison quietly interferred.  
 "You will go to bed now, dear, will you not?" she whispered in the child's ear, "and I will come and tuck you up, and wish you good-night." And then prophylacted, Poppie's sullenness vanished, and she trotted on at once.

**Germs Everywhere.**  
 At no instant in any man's life, waking or sleeping, is he free from assaults by swarming myriads of tiny, but powerful, unseen enemies of life—those warriors of death's dark legions, the germs or microbes of disease. If it were possible to wear spectacles of the magnifying power of high-priced microscopes, we might see the very air we breathe thick with the monstrous shapes of so-called billions of bacilli; and that is, about, or upon the water we drink, the food we eat, the hands we shake, the car straps we hang to when going to work, the clothes we wear, the hats we comb, the lips we kiss, the cats and dogs we fondle, the books we read—in short, always and everywhere, the armies of death surround us, and incessantly make war upon us. And not only do they attack us from every possible exterior vantage point, but they carry by assault the citadel of life from within the lines of our own defenses. Germs thrive and multiply in the mouth, in the nose, and especially in the intestinal organs. Thus it can be said that not only do we live in the midst of death, but that death lives in our midst. The wonder is not that we are ever ill, but that we are ever well.—Success Magazine.

**Changed His Views.**  
 She—Do you believe the good boy young?  
 He—I did when I was a boy—but not now.  
 Cancer of the stomach causes about 9,000 deaths a year in the United States and nearly 5,000 in England and Wales.

I, and it makes a good deal of difference between the ages of 6 and 10.  
 \* \* \* I handled that little brass watch as if it had been sacred. But about an hour after I had taken it out of my stocking, 'Stan' got it away from me."  
 "John!"  
 "Yes, he did! And when I cried, he called me a baby. So I choked down my tears, and didn't even tell anybody, because he threatened to call me a tattletale if I did."  
 "And didn't he ever give it back?"  
 "Yes—later in the day. But by that time he had broken the stem winder, and the rest of the works. I know you have wondered why I never liked Stanislaus Blank, but I have never told any one before."  
 "But you didn't cheat him in business the way he said you did, last year?"  
 "No, dear. I never cheated any one. I just got him in a corner, that was all. And all the time he was worrying for fear he was going to lose his money, I was thinking of that little brass watch and the way he made me suffer when he took it away from me. Maybe it wasn't a very manly spirit, but I can't help it. It's human nature, and a fellow is awfully human when he's only 6!"—Detroit Press.

**New Year's Calls.**  
 The custom of visiting and sending presents and cards on New Year's day is recorded almost as far back as history goes. The practice of using visit-

"Well, what became of it?"