HANGING OF THE HOLLY.

With Polly I chanced to be hanging the holly,
With Polly, the roguish, with Polly, the sly,
With Polly, who's brimming with frolic and folly,
A quip on her lip and a jest in her eye.

The wind, it was grieving, and shadows were weaving
Their dark web without o'er the face of the sky;
Within it was merry with green leaf and berry,
And Polly, close by, with a gleam in her eye.

"This holly, I know, sir, you wish mistletoe, sir!"
Cried Polly, as o'er us a wreath we hung high;
I looked at her, laughing, to see were she chaffing,
And oh, what a glint there shone out from her eye!

How like the rose petals on which the bee settles
Her cheeks were! Her lips were the holly fruit's dye;
"Be it mistletoe, dear, a minute or so, dear!"
"A minute?" breathed Polly, with mirth in her eye.

So it's oh, to be hanging the holly with Polly!
With Polly, the mischievous, Polly, the sly,
With Polly, the genuis of all that is jolly—
A lure on her lip, and with love in her eye!

—Smart Set.

WHAT CHRISTMAS BROUGHT

BY GENEVIEVE ULMAR.

"I do' know as we can make much Christmas fer th' children this year," said Mrs. Shaw to her husband a few days before the holiday. "I don't see no way 'thout money, an' I guess it's just about as scarce as it kin be this year."

"It's not only skurce, Mary," said Mr. Shaw, "th' simply ain't any."

"Well, we c'n sell the melodeon, and that's good for $15, y' know."

"Yes, but Mary, I giv' ye that th' fust Christmas we kep' house, and I feel repugnant to partin' with it," said her husband.

"No more than I do," she answered. "An' it seems to me that I jest couldn't bear to see it go away. But we must have a little money for Christmas, an' the's that $6 balance to the doctor."

"I suppose th' chil'ren'll feel putty bad if they don't hev no Chris'mas," said Mr. Shaw, reflectively. "Well, I'll see Persser Wilson to-day."

Times had once been good with the Shaws, but an ambitious brother had dragged Samuel into indorsing notes, with the almost invariable result. He had to mortgage the place, and the interest kept them poor. Then came the mysterious loss of a thousand dollars in carefully hoarded government bonds. There were two boys at home, Fred and Egbert. To-day they were out coasting. Recently a chum had become possessed of a number of literary works, bearing chiefly on the adventures of one Keen Knife, otherwise the "Prince of the Prairies," and the boys had spent long and delightful afternoons in a hay mow in perusal of the books. But even these novels were forgotten now in the atmosphere of Christmas, and possibilities of new carpenter's tools and a small printing press.

The melodeon was always treated with great respect in the Shaw family. The boys had not heard it in years. The last time was on a soft summer evening, when Mrs. Shaw's young sister was there. She was to sail for Europe the next day as companion to a rich woman who had taken a great fancy to her, and played and sang such sweet, old-fashioned airs as "Then You'll Remember Me" and "Home, Sweet Home." That was four years ago, and some sentiment respecting the absent sister had caused Mrs. Shaw to generally keep the melodeon locked ever since.

Mrs. Shaw was engaged in her usual occupation of mending when her husband returned. "I've sold the melodeon," he said, putting three $5 bills in his wife's hand. "Perfesser Wilson said he wouldn't send for it till the day after Christmas."

So they sat and planned what should be done with the money—about $4 for presents for the boys, $4 to the doctor, $2.50 for little tokens for others, and the balance was to be expended on good things to eat. Monday was a busy day in the Shaw household. The boys' presents were safely hidden away. A miniature pie was made for each, and the turkey was, for the time being, of more absorbing interest than even the venison steak and the roasted ears of corn upon which Keen Knife regaled himself in spare moments.

When the boys had gone to bed, the stockings were filled. There was a rousing snow storm just beginning; the air had a penetrating chill. Mr. Shaw took but a brief survey of the scene, remarking:

"Well, I guess, mother, we're goin' to hev real Christmas weather."

"Wouldn't mind anything, Samuel, 's long's the boys had a good time, except th' melodeon," she responded, patting the instrument tenderly.

Mrs. Shaw sat down before it and began an old air she had known when a girl, and then suddenly the sound ceased, though her hands still touched the keys.

"Why, what's the matter with it?" she exclaimed. "It must be broken."

Mr. Shaw looked it over. Then he carefully removed the top. Some papers lay upon the bellows.

"Something the boys have dropped in!" exclaimed Mrs. Shaw.

"No, 'tain't," he replied. "Let me have 'em. They look like—like—they are—mother, sure's you're born, they're the bonds!"

Yellow and dusty and wrinkled—there they were, those precious bonds, a thousand dollars' worth of good negotiable government promises. The couple looked at each other in astonishment.

"They've been there more'n three years!" exclaimed Mrs. Shaw.

"Yes, an' I reck'lect now how it was, too," said her husband. "'Twas that warm night in September I threw my coat across th' melodeon. I never thought about the bonds not being in my pocket till I went to the bank in th' mornin'."

Mrs. Shaw again seated herself. "We'll sing one verse, even if it does wake the boys," she said, and the little instrument enthusiastically responded to "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

The snow was still coming down when the family were at breakfast Christmas morning. The window sashes were piled high with it, and the drifts were deep in the front yard. All hands went into the shoveling business, and a way to the front gate had scarcely been cleared when the big sled belonging to the Beebe house came around leaving the arrivals from the early train.

"What on earth is it stopping here for?" exclaimed Mrs. Shaw.

But when a pretty young lady ran up the sidewalk, Mrs. Shaw burst into joyful tears. "It isn't Lucy?" she cried.

"But it is, sister!" answered the young woman. The boys crowded around, and helped carry the many packages into the house. Lucy explained how Mme. Bronson had died three months before; had left her several missions to perform in Europe, and had made the young girl her heiress.

"And I'm coming back to live with you," she announced. And when they told her of selling the melodeon, and how they found the bonds in it, Lucy said: "You can give it to me for my Christmas present."—New York Mail and Express.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.

We Must Not Allow Ourselves to Forget Its True Meaning.

We must not allow ourselves to forget the true meaning of the Christmas spirit. It will bring happiness to us just in proportion as we bring happiness to others. To some the day will this year bring other than happy thoughts and memories. Sorrows are harder to bear on festal days than at any other time. But no sorrow should crush the Christmas spirit from our hearts. It is not in the amount that we do, or are able to do, that we shall find happiness for ourselves and for others. The simplest pleasures and acts ofttimes make the hearts of others to overflow with happiness. To fail to do something because you feel that you cannot do much is wrong. What seems ever so trifling to you may make some heart sing all day long, which but for you might pass the day without a note of happiness.

Let us not disturb the Christmas traditions. It is a duty to ourselves to keep this day as unlike any other. And we can only do this by fanning into flame the smouldering embers of the Christmas spirit which is in every one of us. God implanted it there. It was good that we should have it, or he would not have given it to us. In childhood the fire burned brightly enough within us; in old age the light of Christmas will reflect in our faces and our natures. But in the meantime we must keep the spirit alive, so that it may glow the warmer and softer in old age. Let us have an old-time merry Christmas this year—a real, old-fashioned, happy one. Let us make everybody forget that there is anything in the world but good fellowship and happy laughter. To the sick let us bring forgetfulness of pain; to the sorrowful, the sweet balm of a happy smile; to the aged, loving thoughts of consideration; to the poor, a suggestion of the greater material blessings which are ours. Then, as we bring light to other eyes, color to other cheeks, happiness to other hearts, we shall be happy ourselves. The Christmas spirit will keep alive within us.

Mince Pie History.

Christmas mince pie was originally a compound of the choicest spices and edible productions of the Orient. It was eaten in commemoration of the offerings of the three wise men who carried rare spices, frankincense and myrrh from afar to the infant Christ born in a manger.

Bowed Out.

I kissed her under the mistletoe bough;
She said to ask her father. I don't know how
It ended, but this is a fact, I know,
That he had also a mizzle-toe.

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