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### The Christmas Chef

(Continued from inside front cover)

and things."

At 1 o'clock sharp a cab rolled up to the door, and a girl alighted. Mrs. Botsford's countenance fell a little, but rose as the girl opened the gate and went toward the side entrance. It was the chef, though but a girl, and the fact of her coming in a cab and being well dressed was significant of a day.

Mrs. Botsford did not wait for the second girl to answer the bell, but hurried to the side entrance. The occasion was too momentous for economy. As she threw open the door the girl was bending over a fine clump of late chrysanthemums that were smiling

upon them with face full of consternation.

"The chef?" she gasped. "She's gone left entirely! I was at the range, watching the turkey, and she came in with her hat on and said that everything was ready, so I could attend to it now, and she left this note for you."

"But why did she go?" gasped Mrs. Botsford. "I thought—"

"She said everything was all ready," Sarah repeated, stolidly, "and that I could attend to it now. There," as a dear car tickle sounded outside, "that's her car starting now. She said she wanted to catch the 9 o'clock."

Mrs. Botsford opened the note with trembling fingers. As she read she frowned, looked mortified, laughed and finally passed the note to her husband, with shining eyes. "She's all right," was her only comment. The note read:

Dear Mrs. Botsford—You really must forgive me. I had an errand downtown and so called at your house an hour earlier than I intended, thinking that I would stop there awhile, and then perhaps you and I would do the errand together. A sight of your lovely chrysanthemums drew me straight through the gate to the side entrance. Then you opened the door, and some way we drifted into the kitchen before I quite realized what I was doing. Then your straits and a remembrance of former triumphs conspired to do the rest. I really do love cooking and have taken a lot of courses in special things. I think I have excelled myself this time and believe you will be satisfied with the result. Sarah and the second girl can manage the rest very nicely. I shall do my errand now and will stay with my aunt at the Marlborough tonight. It will be more convenient. You may expect us quite early tomorrow morning. Lovingly,  
MARGUERITE LENOX.

In the Kitchen.

Miss Ella (the cook)—Go 'long, now. Mistah Johnsing! How dare yo' kiss mah ruby lips?

Mr. Johnson—Fo' de Lawd, Miss Jacksing. Ah Jess couldn' erist claimin' de privilege when Ah seen dat mistletoe.

Miss Ella—What mistletoe yo' all 'sikin' 'bout?

Mr. Johnson—W'y, dat hangin' 'om de shelf right 'bove yo' beautiful haid.

Miss Ella—Huh! Dat's nothin' but a bunch o' spinach!

For the Present.

"I am very glad to learn," said the girl friend who had come to spend the Christmas holidays with her, "that you are on good terms with Mr. Smiley for the present."

"Yes," replied Miss Smiley, "just for the present, you know."



"NOW YOU MAY LEAVE ME IN CHARGE."

phone rang. She went to the telephone herself.

"What's that you say? Can't come! Why, that's too bad. But you will be here tomorrow, of course? What'll I send you? Yes. Well, come as early as you can."

An hour later the note came. Mrs. Botsford read it with a perplexed face and passed it to her husband.

"I didn't know she spelled her name that way, John," she said, "though of course we never saw it spelled out. I'm afraid she's not so well educated as we thought. And of course a lover's spleen isn't always reliable. Poor Edward!"

Mr. Botsford nodded vaguely and opened the note, which read:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Botsford—Sorry I cannot come according to agreement. Imperative business elsewhere. Will see you tomorrow. Faithfully, etc.,  
M. LEHNCKES.

"Rather abrupt for good form, isn't it?" queried Mr. Botsford. "The name might misquote almost any nationality that's foreign, but never mind, Julia. We must be as nice to her as we can for Edward's sake."

At 9 o'clock that night after the pains and mistletoe and holly had been crumpled Sarah suddenly burst

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