

BRAVE LITTLE BORRIBOOLA GHA.

It wasn't so very happy to begin with. Christmas was a little dreary. Maggie hummed a carol because it was more her way to sing than to cry, and the carol was the only thing she could think of just then. It was the first carol she had ever learned. She could remember just how sweet her mother had looked while teaching it to her and Jimmie, the brother, who would keep his seventh Christmas tomorrow—keep it in heaven, she thought, with a gleam of sorrowful joy. The dear mother who was in the hospital now, whose Christmas would be spent in a whitewashed ward, clean, bright and tender, with kindly care, but still not so bright as the little attic room would have been if only she could have been there. Maggie's song grew very queer at this point of her reflections, and her voice was a trifle unsteady, but she persisted in humming. "It came upon the midnight clear," and even smiled a little as she laid down the cheap little doll she had been dressing for Sweetie, the dear little sister who was her darling, and who was now being cared for by kind friends of her mother's youth.

In another moment she was dashing down newspaper alley at full speed, elbowing her way through the gentry, than the average habitue of that famous locality, but pushing to the front with a dogged resolution none the less, and no sooner had she reached the door which answered to her warcy of "Trudy's" than she found herself in a long, narrow, dimly lighted room, where, along quick, Jimmie," reached her arms, then she was off with a bound, and a cry of "Papers! Papers! Here is your Christmas!" Here is your Christmas!" which sounded startlingly loud and harsh to come from that girlish throat. Down Mason street she flew, anxious to reach the "stand" which the boys of that corner had unanimously ceded to her with rough civility when she had first appeared upon the scene, timid, nervous, afraid to cry her wares. She was the first of all the crowd to reach State street. "Papers, papers! Here is your Christmas!" she shrieked in the voice which would have been sweet and clear but for its hard treatment and out of doors or rather abuse, and a queer little smile curved the corners of her mouth as she gave vent to her peculiar "trademark," as the "other boys" were wont to call the odd name which invariably closed her exhortation to buy an evening paper.

That exclamation had quite a history. When Maggie had been driven by her mother's illness and the want of food in the home on board to try paper selling, she had been afraid to cry loudly, and her conscience, home taught and tender, had forbidden her to invent news announcements after the fashion of others of her "perish." For some days she had sold very little in consequence, and the capital she had each morning invested in papers seemed in a fair way to be lost, when Irish Pat, the toughest boy in the gang, had taken her to his heart and shown her the mistake which spoiled her sales.

"Yer don't know nothing, yer don't," he had said contemptuously, striding along by her side with an exaggerated imitation of the walk of the last actor he had admired from the "peanut heaven" of the Academy and keeping level with her as she dejectedly started homeward, crying softly and wiping the tears away with her ragged but clean handkerchief.

"Yer too bloomin' scared," he said, again copying the Academy actor, both in speech and gesticulation, "an yer'll never do no good till yer makes yer rear more like a better teller yer rear more like a better teller." And he pointed to the "better teller" was Pat himself, and she never dreamed that the pause should have been filled with a compliment, well deserved, in Pat's opinion, so she said nothing, and the boy took up his parable again.

"Now, this yer's the way yer calls," he said, imitating her weak little cry to the life. "An this yer's the way yer oughter yell." And he let out a shout of "Paper here! Paper! All about the great fire on the west side! Many lives lost! Nineteen firemen go down in the ruins!" which startled Maggie and rang down the street for a block or more.

Maggie soon found this to be true, if she was to equal the sales of the other paper sellers. But still, as has been said, her conscience rebelled against the deceit. So she decided with one of the compromises possible only to innocent souls upon inventing a cry about an event which could not possibly happen, and, having read "Black House," she chose the words "Borriboola Gha" as her "cry." She said nothing to her mother of all this, although the struggle in her mind was long and severe, and she longed sorely for sympathy and advice. She had grown so accustomed to using the "yell" that she no longer thought of it at all. She called out the long word as she did that of "Paper!" and it had no more significance to her. But on this particular day, this dreary Christmas eve, as she stood mechanically repeating it, thinking meanwhile of the added pleasure for her mother and Sweetie which every penny meant, she was startled by a light touch on her shoulder and turned her head to see a kindly face looking down into hers.

"Where do you say the accident happened?" queried the tall, pleasant faced man who owned the hand which still lay on her arm. "Did you say Borriboola Gha?" "I have heard a great many queer cries used by newboys," he said with a whimsical smile at the pretty face, which bent away from him, "but yours is the most peculiar I have ever known. Did you borrow it from Dickens?"

"Yes, sir," she whispered, blushing still deeper, and hurrying breathlessly into her explanation. "Yes, sir. You see, the boys said I'd have to make up a rear if I was going to sell papers, and I thought that was honest anyway."

"Poor little kid!" he thought later, as he heard her cry ring out under his window as he sat in his comfortable room at the hotel. "Poor little kid! I wish I could do something for her. She reminds me of Jennie, somehow. Poor Jennie!" And in reveries of that sort, lost sight of sister he forgot all about Maggie, and thought no more of her until he heard her again the next morning—Christmas morning.

"Not a cheerful day for a fellow who's got nothing but money to help him enjoy himself, and no one to share that with," he thought as he dressed slowly, drearily, for the day promised to be long and barren. "I only had Jennie and her babies to help me out. By Jove!" and he quickened his movements with a look of sudden interest. "I'll hunt up Little Borriboola Gha and give her a jolly Christmas. She

looks as though it wouldn't do her any harm, and I can 'play pretender,' as Jennie's baby used to say, play that she is one of Jennie's children."

Hastily completing his toilet, he disposed of a hearty breakfast, his pulses quickening as he thought of the pleasure which lay before him, the pleasure of giving happiness to another, the one pleasure which neither the world, the flesh, nor the devil has the power to steal or spoil.

Meanwhile the object of his thoughts had finished selling her papers the night before and gone slowly homeward, resisting the temptation to stay out in the brilliantly lighted streets because of her mother's well remembered request to this effect, and after buying as much candy and fruit for Sweetie as was consistent with saving a few pennies to buy a horse to go to the hospital with her and the baby tomorrow afternoon and laying enough away to buy her stock the next day she had got straight into bed.

When she awoke, it was broad daylight, the shining light of Christmas day, which had never seemed quite like that of ordinary days since that first wondrous dawn nearly 1,900 years ago, and she sprang up with the sweet Christmas joy in her heart and face, in spite of her aching toes and lonely condition.

"Now for a cup of coffee and a doughnut," she thought as she hurriedly fastened her garments, "and then for my papers."

"Well, Little Borriboola Gha," said the same kindly voice which had greeted her the day before, "merry Christmas to you."

"Name to you, sir," she answered shyly, glancing up at him with the eyes which reminded him so forcibly of his sister. "Paper, sir?"

"Well, yes, I suppose so," he responded, reaching in his pocket for a \$1 bill. "How are you going to spend your Christmas?"

"I'm going to the hospital to see mamma after I get through selling," said Maggie, who, with a child's quick intuition, had divined that this was a man to be trusted. "And I'm going to take Sweetie with me."

"Who is Sweetie?" was the next question, asked with a sympathetic intonation which somehow expressed all the kindly words he did not say about her mother. And Maggie, whose heart opened easily to any one who used the key of "Sweetie" wherewith to unlock it, grew talkative at once.

"Sweetie's my sister," she prattled, forgetting her wares in the joy of telling her love to some one. "My baby sister. And she's been specially mine ever since mamma got sick and had to go to the hospital. Auntie and Uncle Stewart have got her now, she went on, not noticing the start the gentleman gave, "but I'm going to get her back to live with us just as soon as mamma can come home."

"Is Auntie Stewart your real aunt?" queried her listener, a strange interest in his tone and manner. "And what is your mamma's name?"

"No, Auntie Stewart is an old friend of mamma's and papa's," answered Maggie, tucking her papers more tightly under her arm, "and mamma's name is Jennie Brownell."

"Jennie Brownell!" gasped the man at her side, grasping her arm so tightly that the tender flesh was bruised. "Jennie Brownell! And what was your father's name?"

"Papa's name was Arthur Brownell," said Maggie, wondering more and more at this man's odd behavior. "But he's been dead a long, long time, and mamma took care of us until she got sick and it was his big enough."

"You big enough," exclaimed her listener excitedly. "You big enough, you poor baby! Why, how old are you?"

"I'm just 13," said Maggie proudly.

"And, indeed, sir, I'm big enough. Why, I've taken care of us for nearly a year now, and Sweetie would rather stay with me than with Auntie Stewart. I give her such nice things to eat," she finished innocently.

"To say nothing of the love you evidently lavish upon her," murmured the gentleman to himself. "Well, Little Borriboola Gha, what do you say to a change? I think you must be very nice."

"Oh, then you must be Uncle Jack," said Maggie, accepting this new and wonderful state of affairs with a child's wonderful faith and belief in all things wonderful and bright and good. "Yes, you do look like mamma. She's talked of you so much that I feel I quite know you," she added quaintly.

"You're not going to sell papers any more," said the uncle, as they crossed the street to his hotel. "And now for a merry Christmas. It won't be possible to do anything about clothes today," with a rueful look at Maggie's garments, "but we'll do something nice anyway. What hospital did you say your mother was in?"

"St. Luke's," answered Maggie, smiling as happily as though the griefs of the morning had never troubled her.

"Are you going to see her too?"

"Yes," said Uncle Jack, smiling down at the eager face. "We're going there right away, but we'll stop and buy some flowers first."

And they set forth, only to find disappointment awaiting them at the hospital. Mrs. Brownell had left the hospital that morning in the care of a strange gentleman who had brought a carriage for her.

"Was it Uncle Stewart?" asked Maggie, and the kindly girl hesitated before replying, catching the busy nurse as she turned away.

"Uncle Stewart?" she said at length. "The old gentleman who came here with her and sometimes brings the little girl? No, it was a much younger man."

"Did mamma know him?" asked Maggie, with a shade of sadness darkening her expressive face in a manner which did not escape her uncle's notice, and again the good natured nurse staid her steps to reply.

"Yes," she said, with a pleasant, if hasty, smile, "she was delighted to see him and went with him at once."

Maggie turned away sadly, a tear falling on her shabby frock, and she did not refuse the comforting pressure of her uncle's hand as they walked down the long ward together.

"Let's go to Sweetie," suggested her uncle, with a view to distracting her. After making inquiries and finding that Mrs. Brownell had left no address Maggie, who felt that all the world was sad and her doll stuffed with sad news with a vengeance, assented drearily.

"Maybe she'll be gone, too," she said mournfully, her lip quivering with a pitiful sorrow, as she stepped into the carriage again, and she did not speak again until the horses drew up at Mrs. Stewart's door. Her uncle lifted her out. She sprang up the stairs and rang the bell, and then—the world resumed its normal coloring, and her doll was once more worth loving, for Sweetie had leaped to her arms, and there in the hall behind was mamma.

"Jack!" she said softly after kissing Maggie frantically. "Well, this must be Easter day instead of Christmas. Two reiterations from the dead? But she drew his attention to another man who had seated upon Maggie as she released her was embracing her as though he would never let her go again.

"My darling! My own little girl!" he kept repeating, and it suddenly dawned upon Maggie that it must be her papa, alive again in some wonderful, mysterious, Christmas kind of way, and come back to care for her and mamma and Sweetie.

"We won't waste time upon long explanations now," said this gentleman as he put Maggie down at last. "I have been prostrated by an accident which caused me to lose my memory until a week ago and my name was mistakenly sent to Jennie here," indicating his wife by a tender glance. "As among those killed by the collision which only injured my brain. When my memory returned to me, I made all speed to come back to her, and not being able to find the smallest trace of her I thought of dear old Aunt and Uncle Stewart. I knew they would be kind to my poor darlings. And then I went to the hospital and brought her away. We never thought of Maggie going there so early, and I was to wait for her there this afternoon. We hardly knew how to reach her room."

"Well, I lost all trace of you all while I was out west," said Uncle Jack, taking possession of Maggie again, "and I only found this little girl by the merest accident." And he lifted Maggie lovingly to his knee, for they had reached the parlor by this time.

And after that! Well, it was Christmas day, and all the stores were closed, but money will do a great deal, and it wasn't long before Auntie Stewart's scantily filled larer was plentifully supplied, and an immense turkey was roasting in the oven.

And when the dinner had been eaten and everybody had told everybody else how glad and happy and surprised they were they sat close together and made plans for the future, lovely, wonderful plans, which seemed almost too good to come true. But they did come true, many of them, and the best of all, perhaps, was Uncle Jack's plan for Maggie.

"This little girl is going to be a beautiful singer by and by," he said, with a tender good night kiss as he carried her up to the little attic room Auntie Stewart had insisted upon their using for the night, while papa followed with Sweetie, "to say nothing of being a noble woman if she grows up a brave and unselfish as she is now. I noticed how strong and sweet her voice bade fair to be the moment I heard her giving the 'row' which astonished me so much. And I am going to see that it has the best of training. And my pet name for her will always be 'Little Borriboola Gha.'"—Chicago Inter Ocean.

THE CHRISTMAS BRIGADES.

Share of the trumpet and roll of the drum. A glitter of little tin blades. And, led by their cute little captains, they come.

The curly haired Christmas brigades! Was ever an army so fair to view? And it's marching straight to the hearts of you!

What shall we do 'gainst an army like this. That is best of the angels above? It comes but to challenge a mother's sweet kiss. And its beautiful banner to love! For never was army so fair to view, Or marched so straight to the hearts of you!

Come on with the trumpet, the little toy drum! Come on with the little tin blades! Our hearts beat a welcome and cry to you. "Come, Oh, curly haired Christmas brigades!" Come on, little heroes in gray and in blue, And we'll capture and kiss every soldier of you!" —F. L. Stanton.

CHRISTMAS AT KENO.

How Hard Luck Hankins' Tree Was Decorated.

"Speakin' of Christmas trees," said Cyclone Murphy as he snuffed a candle on the topmost twig of the Keno Gals' Sunday school tree with his pocket six shooter and then nipped remonstrance in the bud by getting the drop on the Sunday school superintendent, "reminds me of a paloot named Hard Luck Hankins, who lived up on Tenderfoot ridge and who was the biggest feller that ever kicked. This yer Hard Luck Hankins lived in a cabin on top of the ridge and p'tended as how he was a miner, but he didn't never seem to mine anything and was generally regarded as a fellow without visible means of support. Some folks said he was a Loser and others opined as how he was a might be the mine he was in."

"The only thing Keno Gals ever really knowed him to be doin' was puttin' up a powerful kick about one thing or another. He aliers had some hard luck story to tell, and that was why folks called him Hard Luck Hankins."

"There wasn't a decent lookin' tree on top of the hill ridge except one, and that tree was a mighty handsome pine that stood right in front of Hard Luck Hankins' shanty. 'She's my old Christmas tree,' Hankins would grovel every time Christmas came around. 'But, dern me, I can't hide, Santa Claus 'n' you'll never hang nothin' on her fer me."

"That was Joe Hard Luck's pecky and onery way—allers kickin' about somethin'—and that handsome tree never havin' anything hangin' on it for him seemed to him 'specially every year."

"What's the use havin' a handsome Christmas tree that never don't have nothin' hangin' on it?" he'd grovel. "Have a dern good notion to cut her down!"

"This went on year after year, and the boys kept a-rendarin' and a-wonderin' how Hard Luck got a livin'. One Christmas eve they found out, and it put an end to Hard Luck's quarrel with his big pine Christmas tree."

"For the very first Christmas since Hard Luck had been livin' in Keno there was somethin' hangin' on his Christmas tree."

"What was it?" repeated Cyclone Murphy as he snuffed another candle. "Why, it was old Hard Luck Hankins' self, and he was—kickin'—as usual, and kickin' with both feet."—Selected.

FATHER CHRISTMAS.

A Suggestion to the Boys For Christmas Celebrations.

Why couldn't our boys get up some holiday plays similar to the immortal "Father Christmas" play, in which the little of this play is so much fun? The origin of this play is lost in antiquity, but it deals with knights and their adventures, certain of which challenges and fight the followers of Father Christmas, and are the Black Knight who is mortal combat, the latter, of course, being wounded.

The boys are dressed in fantastic style, with tall paper caps and paper fringe around their jackets, wearing masks to conceal their identity. They are called the "minstrels," and go from house to house of their friends, invariably receiving a kind welcome and a little treat at the end of the performance. They also take up a penny collection, and everybody has a party for the minsters who afford so much amusement.

In our early history there is abundant scope for the youthful playwrights, and the object of their performances in holiday week might be some charity in which boys are the benefactors, such as a treat of "ghosts" to a dozen new boys or bootbacks, to get supplies for

a sick boy or the like.

The Irish in our early history is as good as the knight element for a stirring play for minsters—Massachusetts and its tribes, in war paint, feathers and blankets, on the one side, and on the other the pure Puritans, in broad trimmed hats and short breeches.

Or the Pocahontas and Powhatan drama, with John Smith, the hero, and a band of cavaliers to make it lively. The boys of Boston Common and the Red Cross is an episode to inspire their fraternity of today, and it would be great fun for our laddies in Christmas week to dress up and illustrate the valor of the brave Puritans, as their English cousins annually commemorate some otherwise forgotten achievement of feudal days.—Philadelphia Record.

CHRISTMAS CHEER.

At Christmas play and make good cheer, For Christmas comes but once a year.—Tusser.

Be merry all be merry all! With holly dress the festive hall; Prepare the song, the feast, the ball To welcome merry Christmas.—W. R. Spencer.

It is the Christmas time; And up and down 'twixt heaven and earth, In the glorious grief and solemn mirth, The shining angels climb.—D. M. Mulock.

The time draws near the birth of Christ; The morn is hid, the night is still; The Christmas bells from hill to hill Answer each other in the mist.—Tennyson.

Heap on more wool! the wind is dull, But let it whistle as it will, We'll keep our Christmas merry still.—Sir Walter Scott.

This is the time when the very old man Leans back to the days of youth; When he looks on his hair no longer, But flush and steam with truth. Oh, then is the time when the soul exults, As was Uncle Jack's plan for Maggie. When we love and bless the hand we press. When the Christmas log is burning!—Cook.

We speak of a merry Christmas, And many a happy New Year, But each in his heart is thinking Of those that are no more.—Longfellow.

They who do their souls no wrong, But keep at eve the faith of morn, Shall daily bear the angel song, "Today the Prince of Peace is born!"—James Russell Lowell.

CHRISTMAS IN THE ARMY.

How the Soldier Boys Celebrated During the Sixties.

The Army of the Potomac, under General George B. McClellan, was camped about Washington from August, 1861, to March, 1862, and most of it in Virginia as far down the Potomac as Alexandria, as far up as Chain bridge and as far toward General Beauregard and his tenacious Americans as Knicker's hill. Early in December word came to the soldiers that railroad and express companies would carry free packages intended for Christmas presents and dinners for the soldiers.

That year there was a Christmas dinner for every mess. From the rich homes of the large cities had come the best in the market. From tens of thousands of farms had come the daintiest dishes that mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and sweethearts could prepare.

On Christmas, 1861, the army was shivering along the rivers Rappahannock and Rapidan, and as far out as Culpeper Court House. It was too cold, and the men were too poorly housed to enjoy the day. It was not a holiday to many—a day of misery, instead. That was the coldest Christmas the south had seen for 50 years, and it has not seen one like it since.

Christmas dinners were the order of the day in 1864. The army was strung along behind fortifications from Richmond to below Yellow House, on the Weldon railroad, a distance of nearly 40 miles. The sanitary and Christian commissions had arranged to supply the army with a Christmas dinner. Few men were overjoyed. Except that in 1861, it was the happiest Christmas for the Union army since the trouble began. There were many signs that the next Christmas would be enjoyed at home, and so it was by all who escaped the hot times from March 29 to the evening of April 9, after Grant and Lee met at Appomattox.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

Christmas Table Decoration.

A very pretty decoration for the table at the Christmas dinner is a tiny Christmas tree. Candles, fruits and gilded and silvered walnuts make it bright and seasonable, while a little frosting with the powder that comes for the purpose makes it a beautiful object under the glitter of the lights. The tree will be trimmed and prepared for you by any florist and should be planted in a fancy low vase or dish. The picturesque dwarf evergreen that comes from Japan are most effective when used in this way, and yet they are as costly treasures that few who own are willing to make table decorations of them.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Adorning the Christmas Tree.

The foliage of a Christmas tree may be brushed here and there with mud, and then sprinkled with common salt and a very pleasing result is obtained. A pretty drape for the tree is made by cutting long strips, about four inches wide, of tissue paper, then cutting it closely, partly, but not entirely, along the width, making fringes. If the strips be dampened and held over a hot stove, the fringed edges will curl and look quite ornamental.—Omaha Bee.

Not Dissuading.

That an ancient man be cheerful and yet far from re-creating is once more proved out of the mouth of a young Irishman.

He was acting as guide to a party of Americans who, in the course of a day's excursion during their visit to Ireland, were wandering over a picturesque, deserted castle.

"It seems very unsafe," said one of the party, as they groped and stumbled along a dark passage. "These floors are loose, I know."

"Yes," said another timid person, "and I wish I could see the blue sky above me. This seems like a dungeon, not a ruin!"

"Is it the blue sky ye'd be seein', miss?" said the voice of the guide, some feet in advance. "Why, may the saints preserve ye for an innocent! It's the roof, an' how else, that kapes the walls together, miss!"—Youth's Companion.

When he was a Harvard student, the late Sherman Hoar became famous as a maker of epigrams. One evening he had been indulging in his usual style of conversation in the rooms of Professor D., a man after his own heart, but too apt to interlard his lectures with apparently original witticisms taken, however the manner of Moliere, whenever he found them. When Hoar and a fellow student had left the academic presence, the latter enthusiastically cried: "It's Jove, Sherman, how do you manage it? I wish I could remember all the bright things you said just now."

"Go to D's lecture tomorrow and take notes," said Hoar. "You'll get them then."—Exchange.

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