

A Christmas Deal

By FREDERIC TREAT.

It was Christmas eve at the Eyre, the country seat of the Martins, set on a pinnacle in the hills. The place had been opened for the holidays, and the family, with a number of guests, formed a delightful "house party." Tonight general merrymaking was in order. In the hall before the great open fireplace, in which logs were blazing, sat Edith Martin with Ralph Arnold, a recent arrival from the west who had been devoted to her since they had first met, a week before.

"You are not in harmony with the occasion," he said to her. "Instead of a happy Christmas look on your face there is a troubled one."

She drew back for a moment as if withholding a confidence, then suddenly let it all out.

"I must tell you," she said, "but you are not to breathe a word to any one. He is coming by the train that arrives at 11:40 and will be here at 12. He must go back to the city early tomorrow on important business, and—here she lowered her voice to a whisper—"I am to accept him before this guy gets in over."

"Who is he?"

"John Trotter, dealer in foreign lace, a thorough business man and rich. Papa has lost a great deal of money by



THE DOOR OPENED AND MR. TROTTER ENTERED.

the shrinkage in stocks, and Mr. Trotter is going to help him ever so much to enable him to hold what he has till the market rises again."

"And the bonus is your hand?"

"That's very near the truth."

"The contract is to be signed at 12 midnight?"

"I have promised that if Mr. Trotter will come up this evening I will give him my answer."

"It will be yes?"

"It must be yes."

"That is, if he arrives."

"If he doesn't I shall have to nerve myself anew on another occasion."

"How much money is he to loan your father?"

"Papa said it was something like half a million."

"I think they might have left you to spend this Christmas happily. How miserable it is to be poor! If I were rich I might save you this sacrifice, and"—He paused reflectively.

"You wouldn't charge any bonus? She was looking very steadily at the leaping flames."

"Oh, the bonus! It wouldn't be any kindness to you to take you out of the frying pan and put you into the fire."

"I'd rather burn on a gridiron than sit in a pan."

The young man set toying with his watch chain. Had the girl looked at him she would have seen that the expression on his face was not in keeping with the unemotional tones of his voice.

"If he fails to arrive on time and it is possible for you to jump into the fire, will you do so?"

"There is no fire to jump into."

There was another pause. The logs were crackling; the fire was sending a genial warmth and light through the panelled hall. From the rooms adjoining came shouts of laughter as some one was caught and kissed under the mistletoe.

"I am a promoter," said Arnold presently. "It is my business to secure funds for carrying out enterprises. Suppose I could get this loan for your father?"

They were speaking very deliberately—so deliberately that one might have thought they were two people of business making a bargain.

"At the same interest he will pay Mr. Trotter?" she asked.

"How much is that?"

"Now I think of it, I heard papa say 4 per cent."

"That would be satisfactory."

Miss Martin may have been considering the matter of interest. At any rate, it was some time before she reached the next step.

"The bonus?" she asked under her breath.

"That would depend upon whether you would rather 'burn' than 'fly,' or, rather, whether you prefer neither to burn nor fly."

"It would not be fair to withhold the bonus. Nevertheless if it were a burden instead of a blessing—"

He did not help her out. Instead he took out his watch and noted the hour. It was five minutes to 12.

"It is understood and agreed," he said, "that if the party of the first part doesn't show up when the clock strikes 12 the party of the second part shall consider herself released from signing the contract and will make the same arrangement with the party of the third part—that in lieu of the sum of half a million dollars at 4 per cent in twelve years."

"The bonus?" She was losing her business equanimity, tapping her foot on the lion skin beneath it. There re-

mained only a few minutes to 12, and the party of the first part might walk in at any moment.

"The bonus shall be optional."

"With whom?"

"But the party of the third part?"

"Will only accept it entire. The heart must go with the hand."

"It's a bargain," she said, extending her hand, which he grasped. At the same moment the clock at the other end of the hall began to strike the hour. It was an old fashioned time-keeper with enormous weights and wheeled out its arithmetic strokes with a grinding slowness. The pair sat motionless; their clasped hands concealed under the fold of the lady's dress, their eyes turned upon the front door. Each stroke brought them nearer to a summation of their bargain. At the fourth there was a tinkle of the electric doorknob. At the eighth a servant passed the couple on his way to open the front door. Arnold put out his foot, and the man went sprawling on the floor. At the eleventh stroke the servant was on his feet and rubbing his shins. At the twelfth he proceeded on his way. There was a pressure between the two concealed hands. In another moment the door opened and Mr. Trotter entered.

But what entered with him? Christmas morning. Twenty such mornings had come in the lifetime of Edith Martin, but none that brought her such relief and at the same time such happiness as this one. Instead of being obliged to sacrifice herself to save her father she had accepted a man whom she knew to be the man she could love.

Ralph Arnold was indeed a promoter and had made a fortune in organizing gold mines. The day after Christmas he telegraphed his acceptance of an offer he had had for his principal mine and loaned the proceeds to Mr. Martin, who in six months regained all he had lost. Mrs. Ralph Arnold on last Christmas eve, sitting before a blazing fire beside her eldest daughter, now sixteen, told her the story of her Christmas day.

Christmas Service In Stable.

At Santa Cruz, Cal., there is an old Spanish church in which the people worship only on Christmas eve. Externally it looks like a stable and has no chandelier. The floor and walls are of stone, and on the eastern side there is a manger, looking through the bars of which one sees the scenes of the Nativity, with the towers of castles and palaces in the distance. In the foreground the Virgin sits by the manger, holding the infant Saviour, with St. Joseph leaning over her and the wise men offering sheep, oxen and various precious gifts. Outside this exterior stable there are figures of men carrying sheep and calves on their shoulders, hastening to the sacred scene. In this chapel worshippers remain all night on their knees. This manger side of the church is against the east wall, high upon which is the only window in the edifice, so that the first rays of the morning sun irradiate the scenes of the Nativity. The rays lend a rosiness glow, and as soon as this reaches the worshippers they leave the church, light cigarettes and begin their festivities.

A Christmas Game.

A Yuletide version of the donkey party is played thus: On a sheet sketch or paste a design of a Christmas tree. Have each branch of the tree terminate in a circle containing a number, using the numbers from one to ten or one to twenty-five, according to the size of the tree. Each person playing is blindfolded in turn and is given a rosette with which he must "decorate the tree." Each person aims to pin his or her rosette on or near to the highest number of the tree. Each competitor has three trials, the three numbers to which he pins nearest being written down to his credit by the hostess, who keeps tally. The one whose three numbers added together gives the largest sum total wins the first prize.

Genuine vegetable parchment butter wrapping paper for sale at this office. Size, 9x13.

New dates at Messingers.

Mrs. Vroman, the milliner, wishes to announce to the ladies of this city that all her millinery goods will be sold at greatly reduced prices. She now has a good line of children and misses caps, and ladies' and children's, trimmed hats, all of which will be sold at reduced rates. Call and see her before you buy.

The Day of Hope.

The day of the Nativity is the day of hope—the day of hope to the struggling conscience of man; to the human nature which is uplifted in Christ and made partaker of God; to the families of men who believe that sacred human love is not given to perish with the earth, but in Christ is destined to some eternal purpose; to all who labor and pray for the coming of a kingdom where God shall reign in men, and men shall live in peace and good will, where the war drum shall throb no longer and the battleflags be furled in the parliament of man, the federation of the world.

—Right Rev. Davis Sesamus, Bishop of Louisiana.

Limited.

"Do you feel thankful this Christmas?"

Edmonia—"You give me back all the things I've given you that you didn't like, and I'll give you all the things you gave me that I didn't like."—Detroit Free Press.

Christmas.

A chandelier.
A mistletoe.
A lover near.
A maid below;
A scuffle dear.
A kiss or more.

And that is Christmas don't you know?

—Elliot Kays Stone in Lippincott's.

At Cate's you will find a splendid lot of groceries, fresh and clean; also all kinds of vegetable and garden truck, including crisp lettuce and celery. All orders promptly delivered.

Xmas cigars, 12 in a nice neat box, at Messingers.

Buy "Our Best!" It's a Valley Flour. For sale by J. W. Hartampf.

Facinators, pillow tops, doilies, Fluo and Royal silk floss, handkerchiefs, linens, in fact everything needed to make up your Christmas presents.

H. Wehrung & Sons.

Plum Pudding.

One pound of grated bread, one and a quarter pounds of grated suet, one pound of sugar, twelve eggs, well beaten; two wineglasses of brandy, one-quarter pound of citron, cut fine. Mix all these the night before. In the morning before putting it in the cloth stir two tablespoonsfuls of wheat flour, beat the cloth and sprinkle with flour. Tie tightly and boil four hours. Put a plate turned on the under part in a pot under the pudding, add cinnamon and nutmeg if liked.

All goods bought at Cate will be delivered promptly at any hour during the day. This includes meats as well as groceries.

A Friendship Christmas.

Eustada—"What shall we do this Christmas?"

Edmonia—"You give me back all the things I've given you that you didn't like, and I'll give you all the things you gave me that I didn't like."—Detroit Free Press.

The Forfeited Shopper.

With Christmas near I'm not distressed. With thoughts of what to buy; No gifts to seek, my soul's at rest—I bought them last July.

Desirable Home For Sale

Two acres of land, good six-room house, young orchard, plenty of fruit of all kinds, ground all fenced, picket fence in front, three minutes walk from post-office, fine well, small barn and chicken coop. Very desirable for a home. Situation on Main street, Hillsboro. Terms reasonable. Inquire at this office.

Buy "Our Best!" It's a Valley Flour. For sale by J. W. Hartampf.

CHRISTMAS CHILDREN.

Some Famous Men Who Were Born on Christ's Birthday.

Even were it not for its celebration as the birthday of the Saviour, Dec. 25 would rank as quite a notable date in the year for the number of eminent persons whose natal day it is. Curiously enough, however, we seldom think of the day as the beginning of the career of any one on earth other than He to whom custom has assigned it.

We know that historical events of all sorts—battles, sieges, and so forth—have occurred on Christmas, for articles almost without end dealing with this interesting side of the history of the day have been written, but of its biographical side little has been said, the more odd this because the fact that many notables have been born on the day cannot fail to prove of interest.

The biographical index of Christmas is comparatively long and includes such names as Sir Isaac Newton, William Collins, the lyric poet; P. S. Gilmore, the musician and bandmaster; Richard Porson, the greatest classical scholar England ever produced; Johann Jacob Reiske, the celebrated German orientalist; Clara Barton, Admiral S. C. Ross and a number of others. Unhappy little shavers they must have been in their childhood with their birthday and their Christmas rejoicings all merged in one.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

CHRISTMAS IN WEST INDIES

How the Darlings of the Antilles Celebrate the Holiday.

Christmas in the West Indies is a very joyful, rollicking affair—at least in the estimation of the darkies. The great feature of the season is the series of masquerades or mystery plays enacted by strolling negro performers.

These are of two sorts. Representations of such Biblical stories as that of David and Goliath—when you may see the dramatic personage clad in such historically accurate garments as "bedrilled" trousers and crotchetts coats of flaming pattern—and those of a purely local character. Of these last is the mongoose play, which is peculiar to St. Kitts, and the object of which is to wage mimic war against the destructive pest which is the curse of the island. These strolling players are the chief feature of Christmas celebrations.

They are quite an imposing lot of men, with a good ear for music, and as you watch their antics you might easily imagine that, instead of being in a civilized British colony, you were back in the heart of Africa, assisting at some savage death dance or other heathen rite.

Christmas in Tibet.

Tibet, the home of the strangest and least known people on the face of the earth, is also the home of the strangest of Christmas customs. The feast of Queen Winter in Tibet corresponds with our own Christmas festival. The figure of this queen, or goddess, is painted blue and mounted on a camel, surrounded by a string of human skulls. The dance celebrated at this feast is called tsam, and the masked figures which take part in it would be comic if they were not so horrible. One represents a horned bull, another a deer, but this deer, peculiarly enough, has a horse's head, an ancient symbol among the Tibetans of the messenger of death. There are evil spirits in hordes, demons and other bad spirits to shock the ignorant people into blind obedience to the lamas. One god curses another, and every town has its local protecting deity. There are serpent gods representing the spirit of evil, but they are fought by such protecting divinities as Guruda, who is always represented in lamassus with a stout body, human arms, wings and the head of a bird.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Christmas Cards.

The Christmas card as we know it has an origin easily traceable, and it is doubtless at least sixty years since the first was designed. The artist who claimed to be its originator and who was, at any rate, the first to see its possibilities was W. C. T. Dobson, R. A., who, when quite a young man, in 1844, was prompted at Christmas to make a little sketch symbolic of the season's joys and festivities and to send it to a friend. It seemed to give great pleasure, and the next year Mr. Dobson determined to follow up the idea on a larger scale, and by having his card photographed was enabled to send copies to twenty-five or thirty friends. The delight with which they were received was so great that Mr. Dobson was quick to perceive that he had found out a new pleasure for Christmas.—New York Mail and Express.

Man Wants but Little.

"Made known your wants for Christmas yet?"

"Sure. Asked the forty-seven friends who sent me suspenders last year to send trousers to match them this."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

"Yes. The rest are poor."

"Well, I will drive around and collect the subscriptions."

Christmas Day.

Oh, blessed day which gives the eternal life. To self and sense and all the brute with-in.

To hall and herald come to all who toll.

Ter. down' de Christmas.

Lawd sen' de Christmas.

Of peace ter de po'!

Lean wolf a-howlin'.

Out dur' in de snow.

Lawd sen' de Christmas.

Of peace ter de po'!

Sweet H'll chillin'.

Wid nowhar ter go.

Lawd sen' de Christmas.

Of peace ter de po'!

—Atlanta Constitution.

Fresh Corn Meal made out of Eastern corn at Climax Mill.

During the months of August, September and October the Northern Pacific carried east 4,100 cars of wheat. This business was not anticipated by the railway officials and is an innovation in the traffic movements from this coast.

Call at Cate's for your hop-wire and fertilizer. Prices right.