# A Conscript's Christmas.

BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

### From The Century:

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Just then a hickory nut dropped on the roof of the house, and the noise caused the girl to start up with an exclamation of terror.

"You thought they had me then," said Israel as he rose and stood before the fire, rubbing his hands to gether, and seeming to enjoy most keenly the warm interest the girl manifesied in his welfare,

"Oh, I wisht you'd cut an' run.' Pleaded Polly, covering her face with her hands; "they'll be here therreckly."

Israel was not a bad-looking fel low as he stood before the fire laugh ing He was a very agreeable veria tion of the mountain type. He was was angular, but neither stoop shoulded nor cadaverous. He was awkward in his manners, but very gracefully fashioned. In point of fact, as Mrs. Powers often remarked. Israel was "not to be sneezed at." After a while he became thought ful "I jest tell you what," he said kicking the chunks vigorously, and

sending little sparks of fire skip ping and cracking about the room. "This business puzzles me-I jest tell you it does. That Wes. Love joy done like he was the best friend I had. He was constantly huntin' . me up in camp, an' when I told him I would like to come home an' git mammy's crap in, he jes laughed an' said he didn't reckon I'd be missed much, an' now he's a houndin' me down. What has the man got agin me?"

We Polly knew, but she didn't say. 11 Mrs. Spuriock suspected, but she 10 no effort to enlighten Israel. Polly in knew that Lovejoy was animated w. by blind jealousy, and her instiact 8.6 taught her that a jealous man is usually a dangerous one. Taking advantage of one of the privileges m ef her sex, she had at one time carde ried on a tremendous flirtation with Lovejoy. She had intended to Store amuse herself simply, but she had kindled fires she was powerless to quench. Lovejoy had taken her w seriously, and she knew well enough cr that he regarded Israel Spurlock as

"Oh, I do wisht you'd go on," she cried; "them men 'll shorely ketch you ef you keep on a stayin' here a-winkin' an' a-gwine on makin' monkey motions."

"Shoo!" exclaimed Israel. "Ef the house was surrounded by forty theusan' of 'em, I'd git by 'em, an', if need be, take you wi' me."

While they were talking the dogs began to bark. At the first sound Polly rose from her chair with her arms outstretched, but fell back pale and trembling. Israel had lisappeared as if by magic, and Mrs. Spurlock was calmly lighting her pipe by filling it with hot emers. It was evidently a false alarm for, after a while. Israel backed into the door and closed it again with comical alacrity.

"Sh-sh sh!" he whispered with a warning gesture, seeing that Polly was about to protest Don't make no fuss. The d gs has been a bark n' at sperits an' things. Jest keep ight still."

#### [To be Continued.]

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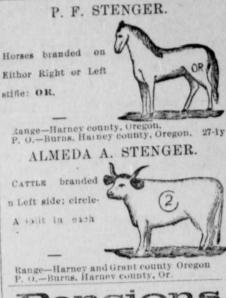
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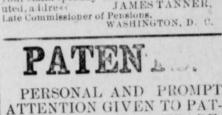
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81 a rival. She had reason to suspect, m too, that Lovejoy had pointed out M Israel to the conscript officers, and s): that the same influence was controln r fit ing and directing the pursuit now going on. 81

Under the circumstances; her concern-her alarm, indeed-was natural. She and Israel had been sweethearts for years .- real sureenough sweethcarts, as she expresed it to her grandfather,-and they were to married in a short while; just as soon, in fact, as the necessary preliminaries of clothsmaking and cake-baking could be disposed of. She thought nothing of her feat of climbing the mountain in the bitter cold and the overwhelming rain. She would have she would have faced any danger m her mind could conceive of. And srael appreciated it all; nay, he fairly gloated over it. He stood be- ful to state now that since she took Paster Keefor the fire fairly hugging the fact stack within your months. to his bosom. His face glowed, and his whole attitude was one of Colo. says: Pastor Koodg's Nerve Tonie is of Ble exultation; and with it, shaping great benefit to me; it has had the desired effect by stopping the fits. every gesture and movement. was a manifestation of fearlessness Pc which was all the more impressive et. because it was unconscious.

This had a tendency to fret Polly whose alarm for Israel's safety was genuine.



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