

COUSIN JOHN.

THE STORY OF A CHRISTMAS DAY.

"Are we near Marston Station now?" I asked timidly of my opposite companion, with whom a few civilities had been exchanged during a somewhat long railway journey performed in a second class carriage. "We shall be there almost directly," she answered briskly. "You are glad, I dare say, for it has been a tiring day for you."

"Yes," I replied doubtfully, feeling inwardly a sensation little akin to gladness; for, though I was going home in one sense of the word, having no other place to call by that name, I had never been to Marston before. I was going as a stranger to accept a snifter from relatives I had never seen—going with dread and uncertainty too; for though my aunt Vereker's letter had contained the promise of a welcome, how could I be sure she really meant it? How could I divine whether my cousins would not regard me in the light of an intruder and interloper as well? But I had had no choice in the matter. All had been hurriedly settled and arranged, almost before I had realised that I was to leave my old home and go out amongst new friends and strange faces.

I knew that the Verekers were rich—at least, rich in comparison with what we had ever been; and, as my means were in future to be of the most modest description, I had travelled in a way which would probably shock them if they chanced to see me alight. But that could not be helped. I knew I was right. Very likely none of them would be at the station; at all events, there was not much time for deliberation; even then the train was slackening its speed. I was gathering up my few belongings and preparing very tremulously for the ordeal.

I had jumped out very quickly, not pausing to glance either to the right or to the left, when suddenly a voice behind me said something which in my nervousness I could not quite catch; but, looking up, I found myself facing a gentleman who, concluding who I was, introduced himself as my cousin John Vereker. He was dressed in a rough gray shooting-suit, with a wide-awake hat, which he raised slightly when he first addressed me.

"Lina is here too," he said. "We drove over together; and the cart has been sent for your boxes."

"Thank you," I answered; "but I have only one small box and what you see."

"All right," said my cousin John, though how he came to be my cousin was a mystery which was not to be explained; for I had never heard that aunt Vereker had a son. I had always imagined that her family consisted of daughters only.

He possessed himself quietly of my small property, and, leaving the way, conducted me through the little gateway to the pony-parriage where Lina sat gazing towards us with evident curiosity as we approached. She welcomed me kindly, and then proceeded to ask if I would mind sitting behind in the seat usually occupied by the groom, as she wished to drive home.

"And John would let me," she said, with a pretty plaintive gesture, "unless he sits beside me. He is such a tiresome old placid creature!"

"Nonsense, Lina!" replied John. "I mean to sit here—pointing to the back seat—"I can guide the reins just as well if you get frightened."

So I got in obediently and seated myself by Lina's side. She kept up a running fire of snatches all the way home, varied only by one or two nervous exclamations when the ponies seemed disposed to get beyond her control. When had I started? Was I very tired? Didn't I think the heat terrific? And wasn't I afraid to take such a long journey alone?

"Oh, John!"—suddenly stopping her conversation with me, during which my replies had been of the least consequence to her—"here's Mr. Haughton coming! Hadn't we better speak to him? He is sure to have made a call on us, and he will have been so dreadfully disappointed. Do stop, John!"

Walking very leisurely up the road, accompanied by several dogs, was a gentleman who I of course concluded was Mr. Haughton; he was tall and very fair, with an almost masculine and extremely handsome countenance. The features were faultless, excepting only the chin, which, sloping upwards, gave a look of indecision and weakness, which in my opinion detracted not a little from his good looks. However, he was very gentleman-like, and greeted Lina most cordially, as well as my cousin John.

Neither of them thought of introducing me; so I sat quietly by, half amused, half annoyed, at Lina's incessant chattering, and my silent desire to impress Mr. Haughton with my family. It struck me however that the latter appeared hardly grateful enough to her. His manner was a mixture of indifference and politeness; and, after the first few sentences had been spoken, he made a decided movement to depart, which Lina apparently did not notice. She rattled on most vigorously, until reminded by her brother that we ought to hasten homewards on my account; so, with a few last words, which were rather lengthy ones, we started off once more on through a most picturesque little village, then down a broad road bordered on either side by magnificent elm-trees, until we came to an iron gateway with a cosy lodge one mass of blooming jessamine, roses, and honeysuckle, with bright lattice-paned windows and brilliant flowerbeds facing them.

"How pretty!" burst from my lips. "How lovely! Oh, it is like a picture!" I exclaimed involuntarily as we drove up the short approach and came within view of the house.

In another few seconds we drew up before the doorway. The reins were thrown by Lina to a groom, who promptly appeared; Cousin John helped me to get out; and, under his escort, I was presently ushered into aunt Vereker's presence.

I had expected to see some one very cold and formal—I had fancied she was so from her letters—but, instead, I found a youthful-looking person, dressed in most elaborate black—it could scarcely be called mourning—with a tiny little tuftle perched most coquettishly on the side of her head, which thick plaits of chestnut hair also adorned. Far from being cold and formal, she was cordial and kindly to a degree; and she repeated all Lina's enquiries, and was equally accommodating to my answers. But, although outwardly there was nothing left

for me to desire, so far as words went, something—I could not explain what—chilled me towards aunt Vereker.

Aunt Vereker had been a widow for about five years, and since then had lived at the Grange, which belonged to Mr. John Vereker, who was only her step-son, having been a well-grown boy of fifteen when his father fell in love with and married her. Perhaps it was out of love for her, perhaps it was from some innate conviction of her incapability and shallowness, perhaps from his entire confidence in his—no one knew—but the late Mr. Vereker had left his widow to the care of his son, and trusted to him to supplement, as far as he considered needful, a very moderate settlement, which was all he had made upon his wife.

John Vereker was a rich man, and, what was still more to the point in my aunt's opinion, a very generous one. She considered she had been very badly treated by her husband, and there were times when she rather murmured because her step-son did not secure to her the allowance he gave. However, those sentiments, were never uttered in his presence; it was only behind his back that John Vereker was at times accused of being "mean," "stingy," and "miserly." The girls were each to have three thousand pounds—"a beggarly pittance," aunt Vereker said; but, if John did his duty, they would have a good deal more.

Lina was her favorite; and Lina's prospects of a matrimonial settlement were just then beginning to occupy her mind. Mr. Haughton was the individual upon whom their hopes were resting; and, as I came to know my aunt better, I trusted most sincerely, for the sake of general peace, that he might not disappoint them.

It was a frequent visitor at the Grange—in fact, hardly a day passed without our seeing something of him; but, as his place was within an easy distance, and he had nothing at home to enliven him, I sometimes wondered whether it was for his own or Lina's sake that we were so often favored with his company. I had been at the Grange a little over a month, and had become day by day more convinced of one thing—namely, that neither aunt Vereker nor Lina regarded me with friendly eyes. Perhaps I was too near Lina's own age—I was nineteen; perhaps they felt I was a restraint and burden. I could not tell what it was. Of Mr. John Vereker I saw very little; and my three younger cousins, being still in the schoolroom, were seldom available as companions; so I found myself solitary in the midst of them all, an intruder and an interloper—just what I had feared when I was hurrying towards Marston on the first day of my arrival.

I had one pleasure however which none of them grudged me, and of which I could avail myself as often as I desired. Soon after I came to Marston the organist of the village chapel was suddenly taken ill; no one was able or willing to undertake the duties he could not for a time perform, and for the first Sunday the service was conducted without music of any kind.

"Aunt Vereker," I said that same evening, "do you think Mr. Haughton would let me play for him?"

"You!" repeated aunt Vereker. "Play in church! Oh, no; it would never do!"

"I used to do so at home sometimes," I answered, "when I didn't sing in the choir."

"I don't like the idea of your performing here in public," replied aunt Vereker severely. "I should never dream of allowing Lina to do such a thing."

"But Lina couldn't," put in Beatrice, with naive sincerity.

"Couldn't she?" laughed Lina, who at that moment appeared, with Mr. Haughton behind her, at the drawing-room window.

"Pray what can I not do?"

"Play the organ in church. Blanche has been asking mamma if she may."

"Are you musical, Miss Beresford?" asked Mr. Haughton, addressing me.

"I am very fond of music, if that means being musical," I answered, with a guilty consciousness that aunt Vereker was eyeing me severely.

"Will you play something now?" continued Mr. Haughton. "Do ask your cousin"—appealing to Lina, who seconded his request so warmly that I was obliged to accede.

Hardly had I played a few chords when aunt Vereker, interrupting me, begged that we would all recollect what day it was—Sunday—and, if I must play, she must beg me to play only chants. However, Lina and Mr. Haughton drew near the piano, at which I seated myself; and soon a chorus of voices—shrillest amongst them aunt Vereker's own—sounded through the pretty dining-room.

But music at the Grange was not like the music I revelled in when, armed with aunt Vereker's rather unwillingly accorded consent, I undertook the organist's post and practiced for it in the long summer afternoons. It was a lovely little chapel, built partly by uncle Vereker, and fully finished at Mr. John Vereker's expense. Many an hour I spent in it, many a sad thought and fancy I embodied in the grand tones which rolled forth under my fingers. When I was saddest, when things felt strangest and most desolate, I used to take the key of the chapel, and, tying on my hat, run down the shrubby walk, and, crossing the broad elm-bordered road, enter the still little edifice, and in the pleasures of harmony forget as far as I could the realities of life.

One rather drizzling day I had set forth to have some practice, and had just reached the gateway leading to the chapel, when I saw Mr. Haughton coming towards me. It was impossible to pretend that I had not observed him; I must make some civil remark; so I waited quietly until he came up, fancying that he would go on to the Grange where I knew he was already expected.

As yet he had not done his duty regarding Lina; she was still hoping daily for a declaration, the very tardiness of which might have sufficed to convince her that it would never come. I pitied Lina from my heart. What could be more wearing or more degrading than a perpetual effort to bring an unwilling suitor to the point, or more distracting than aunt Vereker's transparent little schemes to throw them together and to give him every possible facility for asking the question that was to make poor Lina happy?

"Did he say nothing to-day, Lina," aunt Vereker would—"nothing tangible?"

"No, nothing. What do you mean?" Lina would answer, angry, indignant, and disappointed.

Mr. Haughton's silence, though very exasperating, did not suffice to damp my aunt's welcome to him. He was at liberty to come to the Grange at all times, and, when there, was treated with all the honor due to a future most unexceptionable son-in-law. I have described him as a handsome man. In features he certainly was, and his general appearance was gentleman-like; but, when he stood side by side with my cousin John Vereker, the contrast between the two ought, I thought, to have been sufficient to cure Lina of her preference. For there was nothing manly about Eustace Haughton, no intellect in the pale blue eyes, no strength in the narrow white hands; whilst Mr. Vereker, with his almost plain face, gray-streaked hair, and shabby shooting-coat, had an air of quiet decision, an indescribable something which at once proclaimed him to be, what I felt from the first he was, a brave, honest, honorable English gentleman. I could have fancied it possible to face any great danger quietly with John Vereker by my side.

Before I had been long at the Grange, I knew that I had seen the one person in the world with whom life for me would be almost cloudless; but what folly it was to think of such a thing! How I tried to reason myself out of it one moment; the next, how closely I clasped the sweet secret—the secret that would be buried with me! For I loved John Vereker—I, Blanche Beresford, aged nineteen, possessed of the magnificent fortune of about fifty pounds a year, with nothing to recommend me except perhaps my voice. And I could sing; even aunt Vereker said one night that she could not listen quite unmoved when Blanche sang, for she had tears in her voice.

I wondered what he thought. But he seldom spoke to me. Sometimes, when he seemed inclined to do so, I grew so nervous that my answers simply repelled him. I knew it, and writhed to think how utterly foolish and unnatural I must appear. I had the presumption to love him. Well, no one knew it, and time might cure me perhaps. Besides, I should not long remain at the Grange; aunt Vereker did not wish it. I could perceive that more from her manner than from anything she ever said; instinctively I was aware that the welcome of which I had been doubtful from the first had ceased to exist, and that toleration only was accorded to me by my cousins as well as herself. No suspicion of what had caused the growing coolness had ever flashed across me, never distantly did I dream of the possibility of having interfered with Lina's prospects, until this drizzling afternoon, when, hurrying to the chapel, I chanced to encounter Mr. Haughton.

"Miss Beresford," he said, when the first greetings had been exchanged, "won't you give me a great pleasure? Won't you let me hear you sing something? I know that you are going to practice. Won't you let me listen?"

"If you like," I answered, without hesitation. "Old Tufton comes to blow the organ for me; so I must go to his cottage first."

"Couldn't I do instead?" asked Mr. Haughton. "Suppose you engage me, and dismiss old Tufton?"

Tufton proved to be out; so there was nothing for it but to agree to accept Mr. Haughton's good offices or to give up my practice. I hesitated for a few seconds, and then resolved upon the latter course.

"I shan't practice to-day," I said, as we retraced our steps towards the chapel.

"Do," urged Mr. Haughton; "do Miss Beresford. I should like to hear you play?"

"You hear me every Sunday," I said smiling.

"Yes, I know that; but then you are playing for everybody's benefit. I should like you to play for mine only. Oh, Miss Beresford," he continued, with some vehemence, "if you only knew—"

"I don't want to know," I interrupted desperately—"I don't want to know anything."

Whatever he might have intended to say was checked, not so much by my entreaties as by the sudden and timely appearance of my cousins John Vereker and Lina, who just then turned down the pathway leading towards where we were.

Nice behaviour! Nice conduct. Such a cunning piece of deception had never before come under her eyes; but she knew me now—that was one comfort—knew me thoroughly. So aunt Vereker informed me, when, after a protracted interview with Lina, she came into my room to confront me with my crime.

"I don't know what you mean, aunt," I said. "I really do not understand what I have done."

"Done!" echoed aunt Vereker. "Done! Why, your own conscience might tell you! You have deprived poor Lina of all she cares for in the world; you have lured Eustace Haughton away from her, just when he was on the verge of a proposal, by your quiet sneaking ways."

"I lured—Mr. Haughton! Oh, aunt how can you say such a thing? I met him to-day by the purest accident."

"I am sure you did—an accident of daily occurrence," replied aunt Vereker. "Very accidental, no doubt! I suppose that is equally accidental;" and she threw down a letter addressed to me in an unknown hand.

"I should say that it was quite accidental; for I do not recognise the handwriting."

"Little serpent!" cried my aunt, as she turned to leave the room. "I wish you had never darkened my doors!"

How he must despise me if he thought I had laid myself out to entrap such a man as Mr. Haughton—I who had never given him a thought, far less dreamt of his preference! Yet there was his letter—for sure enough it came from him—hurried, but earnest in its entreaties to me to accept what he now offered—himself. He feared he had offended me; if he had, I must forgive him; and, if I could not give him my love all at once, he begged me not lightly to reject his, but give him the chance of winning mine.

Never was a proposal so unwarranted, never had one been so unwelcome. I sat quiet and speechless after perusing it, until roused by hearing the dressing-bell ring, which warned me that in half an hour I must meet them all at dinner.

Lina, tear-stained and indignant, was the first that greeted me; behind her was my aunt, vigorously fanning herself; whilst my cousin John was apparently buried in the study of the Times.

I approached them tremulously enough, and presently summed up courage to address

to Lina a rather unintelligible remark as to my having feared that I was late for dinner, my watch being slow.

"Oh, you are in excellent time!" responded my aunt, who took the remark as addressed to herself. "We should have had to excuse you if you had been late."

A slight sob from Lina and a rustle of the Times, followed by the announcement of dinner, saved my having to reply. But what a dinner it was! The only voice was my cousin John's, who strove, vainly enough, to bring forward topics which might be generally and safely discussed. Once or twice he addressed me in a manner so pointedly that I could have broken down right there and then and sobbed my precious secret out at his feet, utterly regardless of aunt Vereker's or Lina's wrath, glancing towards me with the most unmistakable contempt and abhorrence.

Well, it would soon be over; for I could not stay long at the Grange. Very soon I should be gone; but whither? That was a question hard indeed to answer—a problem beyond my solving. I was very young. I knew nothing of the ways of the world. I had no idea how far my own small means were capable of maintaining me. I was not sufficiently accomplished to be a governess; and, without having one shade of conceit about me, I knew I was too good-looking to pass through life in the obscurity which I began to desire for myself.

The vista before me was cold and chill and hopeless. A few lines of refusal having been duly despatched to Mr. Haughton, I sat in my own room reflecting on my future. Many were the projects I revolved ere I slept. These the morning sun dispelled, for they had not been of the wisest. However, with some trepidation I sought out aunt Vereker, and told her, as simply as I could, how grieved and sorry I was, but how utterly unexpected Mr. Haughton's proposal had been.

"Not unwelcome, if unexpected," responded my aunt. "But I wish to tell you frankly that I think your behaviour has been simply abominable. Not that you probably will care for what I may say or think—as Mrs. Haughton, you will be in a position to do without my good opinion—but I wish to express it now to you, and to tell you at the same time how bitterly I regret having allowed you to come here at all."

"That I can quite believe," I answered, with some bitterness. "But you are in error if you think I am likely to become Mrs. Haughton."

"You are not going to further impose upon me, Blanche. Don't imagine that I believe you intend to refuse such an offer."

"I have refused it," I replied laconically.

"You have refused it!" exclaimed my aunt. "Well, you are the best judge of your own actions; but may I ask, if it is true that you have refused Mr. Haughton, what was your object in detaching him from Lina?"

"I never detached him," I answered indignantly; "I never dreamt of his daring to propose to me!"

"Daring to propose! Really, Blanche, I wonder if you have any idea of your own position? By birth you may be entitled to marry a gentleman; but, considering your penniless—"

"I have fifty pounds a year, aunt," I said, "and I mean to live upon that. I am very sorry that I have so innocently distressed Lina; but I shall go away to-day—to-morrow—as soon as you like; and Mr. Haughton will do me the justice to tell you that it was no fault of mine."

"As if I would discuss it with him," uttered aunt Vereker; "and as if I could, in decency, allow you to go away! No, no; you must remain where you are until I can see you properly bestowed elsewhere; but, recollect, here you have brought nothing but unhappiness, and in this house your presence can never be welcome. I am only giving you an idea of what every one, from your cousin John downwards, thinks and feels in consequence of your conduct."

This was the final blow for me. A wild sense of the injustice, the cruelty of it all surged through me. Involuntarily I started up, and then sat down, faint and trembling, speechless with impotent wrath, shame, and sorrow.

"Please do not attempt any heroics. Blanche, I am not a person to be impressed by any exhibition of the kind," said aunt Vereker got up, and, with a sneering glance towards me, left the room.

Mr. Haughton came no more to see us, and my cousin John departed to spend, first, a couple of months at his shooting quarters in Scotland, and afterwards, I gathered from what I heard, he went about paying visits. At all events, the Grange was not to see him until Christmas. How I longed for Christmas to come, and how I listened for any chance scrap of information touching the movements of my absent cousin!

One very dull, rainy morning in December there came a letter from him to aunt Vereker, headed from Grimby Castle, Lord Vaudeleur's place in Shropshire, saying that he was now really en route for home, but that Lord Vaudeleur had pressed him to remain for another week, so he would not appear at the Grange until the twenty-fourth—Christmas Eve.

"There must be some special attraction at Grimby," suggested Lina. "Isn't Miss Vaudeleur a great beauty?"

"I believe she is," returned aunt Vereker; "but John isn't a marrying man, happily for us. He has often said he would never marry."

"That's the very reason he will," replied Lina petulantly. "A nice thing for us to have to bundle out of this house and go off to some poky hole!"

"Don't distress yourself, Lina," said my aunt. "John isn't attractive enough to please the Honorable Miss Vaudeleur. She expects to marry nothing under a duke."

"I hope she won't be disappointed," sighed Lina; "but I agree with you, mamma—more brightly. 'John isn't a beauty.'"

It was late when he arrived, looking browner and more stalwart than ever, and just as quiet, grave, and nice as he had been since I first saw him. I was very nervous when he advanced to shake hands with me. Perhaps my state of my mind accounted for the sudden pallor which must have overspread my face, for my cousin John said kindly—

"Blanche is not well, surely?"

"Oh, yes, I am—quite well!" I said quickly.

"What is the matter?" asked aunt Vere-

ker sharply, turning towards me just in time to see a burning blush covering my face. "I see no signs of illness."

"Don't you?" I heard my cousin John say; and then the lights began to flicker strangely, and vague noises like the rushing of many waters sounded in my ears. I made a wild stumble forwards, and then, failing to reach a friendly chair, was conscious of sinking downwards into darkness, and I presently revived to find that I was borne up-stairs in a pair of strong arms; and I recognized, bending over me as he laid me down, the face of my cousin John.

"She is better now," he said softly. "It was a fainting fit, I suppose. 'Has it happened before?'"

"Never," answered a voice which I knew was aunt Vereker's; and then cousin John went quickly from the room, leaving me with a tittering sense of humiliation and shame to recover.

What could they all think of me? I could fancy aunt Vereker setting my illness down to heroics and a desire to attract; I could imagine my cousin John himself being once more and for ever "disgusted," and Lina's innumerable suppositions as to what had caused the seizure. I lay there all the evening alone. Only once Beatrice came up, to see if I would have some tea, as I had missed dinner altogether.

No, I would have nothing—nothing at all; I was glad to be a martyr, as some sort of self-punishment for my weakness. As I had a dim hope my refusal might be made known to cousin John.

It was a wretched feeling. I owe; I should really have enjoyed a cup of tea immensely—still more should I have liked to have been down-stairs, instead of spearing my Christmas Eve in such a miserable fashion. At last kind nature's sweet restorer closed my tired eyelids, and I brushed my weary thoughts; and, when I awoke, Christmas Day had fairly dawned.

Such a bright lovely day! was the ground; and trees covered with snow; hedges were hanging in crystal glittering loveliness, and the great elm-tree branches were bowed with drips of half-melted snow, which crumbled into powder when a bird lighted on a bough, or dropped grandly in soft fragments to the ground. All was still, white, and lovely when I looked out of my bed-room window, lit up as the landscape was by the reflection from the sun on the otherwise colorless scene.

Service was to be at eleven o'clock; so I hurried to the chapel to perform my duties there, not waiting to hear whether the rest of the party meant to follow or not. At the preliminary voluntary came that wondrously beautiful hymn—

"Hark, the herald-angel's song
Glory to the new-born King!"

Then, standing up, I saw in the Grange pew aunt Vereker, Lina, Beatrice and my cousin John, whilst in the Brampton Thorpe one I beheld Mr. Haughton.

The latter's unexpected visit annoyed me more than I can say. I feared he might wait for me, and offend my aunt more than ever by attempting to renew his request. So, when the service was over, I remained quietly in the organ-gallery until I thought every one must have gone. At last I ventured out. How pale and silent everything was as I passed through the little churchyard—passed with hurried footsteps, rendered noiseless by the heavy snow—as noiseless as those which overtook me, for I heard no sound until the voice—not of Mr. Haughton, but of my cousin John suddenly addressed me.

"What were you doing, Blanche?" he asked. "I thought you were never coming."

"I was arranging my things for the evening," I answered.

"I don't think you ought to play to-night," he said very kindly.

"Why not?" I asked, so brusquely that I was utterly disgusted with myself.

"You are not fit for it," said cousin John. "I did not know you had been ill when I was away."

"I wasn't ill. I never was better!" I exclaimed; but my face must have contradicted my words, he looked so incredulously at me.

"You weren't happy, Blanche. I know it; and I have a message for you which may make you happier. I have promised to deliver it to you, and to ask you to—weight it—these last words said very slowly.

"Eustace Haughton told me to tell you that he has not accepted your answer as final. He hopes still; and I have promised to tell you so. It is my duty, Blanche. He is rich. I believe he is all that we could desire; and you must weigh matters well. There are advantages—"

"There may be," I interrupted, "many advantages; but I could not care for him, not even if—"

"If what, Blanche?"—and my cousin's voice was strangely changed.

"If I had seen no one I cared for more," I answered, with a desperate headlessness of consequences.

"You love some one else then?"

"With my whole heart!" I answered. "And then there came a silence, a long awful silence, during which I noticed with strange acuteness the heavily-laden snow-covered palings and the bent branches of the fir-trees in the shrubbery."

"Can you name him? Blanche, is he worthy? Have compassion, Blanche—have compassion upon me!"

What words would convey the depths of happiness sounded on that snowy Christmas morning? What heart was so joyous or so thankful as mine, when it dawned upon me that cousin John had loved me from the first? But, from his imagining that the disparity in our ages was too great, and from other groundless causes, he never dreamed that his preference could be returned.

Six weeks after that Mr. Haughton not only got over his disappointment, but consoled himself not long afterwards by marrying, not Lina, but a Spanish-looking beauty who looks down with great condescension on Mr. and Mrs. John Vereker.

So my eventful Christmas Day ended in being a merry one. And I cannot do better for my friends than wish them as merry a one, and as happy a New Year, and many of them, as fell and have fallen to my own share.

A new religious sect has arisen in England which worships Mother Eve. All daughters of Eve are worshipped by the sects.

OUR Y

What on earth opened? The Ginn's house. He was a big cousin of Tom's fellow said the more she had once that he had.

Now that but won't mention the wickedness always to be done by anybody like the Pharis knew for certain Ginn's cousin more I thought of.

If there is a there is how a house, so he carried unless he carried and if he did the ends enough to. And then how things all over how does he manage all full of smoke Christmas? But he may be super word up in the.

The story Tom kept on worrying think how perfect there was any there was any there was any and of children and Aunt Eliza here already.

Eliza talking about and they agreed sleep on cot bed so that they could get together, and not there's a big fire children can have chimney."

Now I know I because I did not disappointed. others and so on been grateful if a Santa Claus for being out of the mother, though the fire-place in never have happened to have me, since I was Christmas business.

It all happened Ginn had come and gone out to the boy Harry, Christmas, and the children were there, and how the was just the thing went and looked said to Tom what and some down to be Santa Claus the children were grown-up folks ways wanting us to Tom agreed with splendid fun, and coming down the do it easily on the thought I ought to house; but I said it would be near give him of any sort. He said to well, and that he with our children afraid that he was the chimney. He, and agreed to be, of course he asked him, I being, and is so with Tom and me he asked him to Well, Harry to and I boosted Harry the chimney after he did down. He didn't know e way the chimney hurried down to him; but he had the fire-place was We supposed was to rest; but after heard a noise, there was a great way of, thinking I back up the chimney. When we got out could hear him pling and yelling for about half-way of couldn't get either.

We talked it over and decided that the best way to let it down. So I got down, but Harry's his sides, so he said we ought to get it over Harry that way, but Harry strong, and I might come apart. Then I proposed to push Harry down, but after that we couldn't we had to give Harry was ordered way, although said for him. The boys never always discontented. As we couldn't let's try to put Harry to be patient down-stairs. I could we could Harry. Bushel over everything Harry with the pole to feel discouraged by for Harry, because I would be in a Then I thought the fire the draught. Tom thought I started a fire, a lit, and went in.