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Christmas Day in Own Home
 By ETHEL COOK ELIOT

Mother, Father and Children Have Special Guests at Family Feast

I'M ALMOST glad we're not going to our Grand-mother's for Christmas this year," Mrs. Will confided to Mr. Will a week before that great day. "Do you realize we've never had a Christmas here in our own home. Just ourselves and our family?"

"Yes, I've been thinking of that," Mr. Will replied. "Let's keep it just ourselves and give the kiddies one truly home Christmas to remember."

As usual, Mr. and Mrs. Will were in complete agreement in their ideas and emotions. Mrs. Will sighed contentment. Mr. Will sighed contentment, too; for after all, such harmony as theirs is not so common in this workaday world of wives and husbands.

But as Christmas day grew nearer and nearer Mrs. Will suddenly realized she was nursing a sick conscience. There was something she had not the heart to confide to Mr. Will. Now, Mr. Will had a sick conscience, too. There was something he had not the heart to confide to Mrs. Will.

But fortunately everything was straightened out before Christmas, that day of peace, dawned.

Billy, their oldest, didn't know what the word conscience meant. Of course he had heard mother and father whispering about how nice a strictly family Christmas would be.



He had heard them, but perhaps he hadn't understood their sentiment. Anyway, at luncheon, two days before Christmas, he suddenly blurted, "Say, Mom, I've asked Jim Larkin to our Christmas dinner and the tree. You know his folks are in Europe, and he's just staying on at the school. Thought he'd like it here better. More homelike."

"Oh, bother, Billy," Lucy cried—thirteen-year-old Lady Lucy. "I've asked Patty Brown. She hasn't any folks anywhere, even in Europe. Just that snobbish great-aunt who's giving a big house party, all old folks, and doesn't want Patty around. She needs a home Christmas more than your Jim!"

Father was eyeing mother anxiously. Her bright smile amazed him. "Well, I'm sure there's room for them both. I am glad you have such kind hearts, children."

But now Mr. Will spoke timidly. "I'm sorry, mother, but I, too, have asked a guest. Couldn't help it somehow! That young Miller at the office. He's so cut up about his mother's death, and a boarding house is a dreary place to spend Christmas." Mr. Will's voice was timorous, almost pleading.

But Mrs. Will's bright smile had now turned to a calm, relieved one. "Oh, that's splendid, dear," she said. "For, do you know, I myself have invited that pretty little Gladys Haverhill. She looked so woebegone when I met her at the grocer's Saturday and asked her whether she was going home for Christmas. She said a poor school teacher couldn't travel way across a continent even for a Christmas at home. What could I do? And do you know I've always thought Gladys and Ted Miller ought to meet. They're such nice young people—and Gladys is so pretty!"

So that's what happened to the Will's precious family Christmas. But not one of the Will's felt that he had been cheated of anything. On the contrary! And Mr. and Mrs. Will are in closer harmony than ever. You see, they are the same sort of people—not a too common thing in workaday life. And Billy and Lucy are growing up rather like them.

IN MERRIE ENGLAND

The English Christmas is not unlike ours, save that we do not have their pretty custom of "bringing in the yule." In almost every family in England the boys and girls gather about the burning log on Christmas Eve to sing carols and tell Christmas legends. Often the children who live in the country assist at the dragging in of the huge log. An English child would not feel that it was Christmas if there were not a bit of mistletoe hanging in the hall, under which the unwary are kissed soundly. Little and big eat the rich and blazing plum pudding, and all join in the singing of Christmas carols and churchgoing.

A WISH

A Merry Christmas, yes, a day of laughter. And here's wish for every day thereafter: When Christmas goes, as it of course must do, May every day that comes be merry, too.

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