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A Christmas Bride

Jack Hathaway bought a half-penny evening paper as he came out of the foggy underground railway station into the equally foggy street on a cold December afternoon. It was the Saturday before Christmas, Christmas day was on Tuesday, and Messrs. Harlem & Co., Jack's employers, had arranged to close their offices until the following Thursday.

Jack Hathaway—a handsome young fellow of four-and-twenty—was lingers on the edge of the pavement for a moment, lost in thought, was the recipient of many an admiring glance from the bright eyes of the young women who passed him, hurrying homeward through the cold mist that was gradually wrapping London in a thick grey veil.

But Jack did not even see them. And if he had it wouldn't have made any difference to the rather melancholy train of thought into which he had fallen. He had come from the city through a crowd of high-spirited, happy people, most of them parcel-laden, and all of them with an unmistakably Christmas air about them. But though he wanted to look Christmassy like everybody else, he couldn't manage it. He had tried in the crowded third-class carriage in which he had traveled from Moorgate street to Gowery street, to imitate the smiling countenances of his fellow-travelers, and had signally failed.

The fact was that Jack, with the Christmas holiday in front of him, was worried by certain difficulties which stared him in the face in connection with his due and proper celebration, and he had for many days previously constituted himself a committee of ways and means, and as chairman he was quite unable to put the matter to the meeting on a sound financial basis. He must give his dear old father a Christmas present, however small. There were many things the old gentleman wanted badly—necessities, not luxuries—and one was a new winter overcoat. Then there was the sweet girl to whom he had been engaged for over two years, and whom he was going to marry "some day"—a distant day it must be, they both of them knew, but they were sure that they loved each other so well that they would wait in faith and hope for the fulfillment of their dreams, even if it was until they were sedate middle-aged fogies. And Jack's salary was just £3 a week, and out of that he had to keep himself and his father, dress like a gentleman in the city, and give 6 shillings a week to the old lady who came in to do the cooking for the old widower and the young bachelor. The landlady and the general servant in the house where Jack had taken three unfurnished rooms at a moderate rental could not be trusted. The old gentleman fared badly left by their tender mercies, and so Jack went to the expense of specially engaging old Biddy McGuire, the charwoman, to come in daily and see to bed-making, fires, and the cooking of the frugal meals. Old Mr. Hathaway liked the arrangement. He had grown quite despondent under the continual grumblings of the landlady, and the neglect of the slatternly-maid-of-all-work, who "dratted" everybody who rang a bell and looked upon the lodgers as her personal enemies, leagued together to make her life a perpetual treadmill of stairs.

His salary, which he had just received, was all he had in the world, for he had been quite unable to save more than the money for his dear old father's overcoat, which he had paid for, and it had been promised home that afternoon. But he had been compelled to spend a sovereign upon his late odds and ends which he was bound to have for his own wardrobe. That left him £2 to pay the rent and living and go through the holidays. Out of that he feared it would be the height of imprudence to give 5 shillings for that pretty little purse which he had known was just what Ethel wanted. And yet—well, it was dreadful to be engaged to the dearest little woman in the world and not even able to spend 5 shillings on a Christmas present for her.

He almost hated the people who looked like two-legged Pickford's vans, so heavily were they laden with cardboard boxes and brown paper parcels. He felt inclined to look upon the Christmas displays, in the shop windows, labeled all over "useful Christmas presents," as immoral exhibitions calculated to arouse un-Christian feelings in the hearts of her Majesty's poor lieges. He thought it cruel that the purchasing power so insolently in the public highway, and he wondered whether Tantalus would not have been far more severely tortured and had been turned loose in London on the eve of Christmas with an old father and a young sweetheart, and not a shilling to spare in his pockets.

What he had thought in the city, what he had thought in the train, he was still thinking as he stood on the edge of the curb at 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the Saturday before Christmas. Presently, with a deep sigh, he dismissed the subject from his mind, pulled himself together, folded his evening paper carefully, and put it in his coat pocket and strode off sharply towards the Euston road, in which unfashionable thoroughfare his Englishman's castle was situated.

When he entered the little sitting room on the second floor, his father, who was covering in an easy chair over a black fire, looked round and questionably began to upbraid him

"You're late, Jack," said the old gentleman. "I've been expecting you this hour or more. Biddy hasn't been near me since 2 o'clock, and I can't get the fire to burn, and I'm frozen to the marrow, Jack—frozen to the marrow."

"Well, soon put that right, dad," said the young man cheerfully, and in a moment he was down on his knees, stirring and coaxing the obstinate fire and breaking up the caked coal till at last it threw up a bright, dancing flame. "Come, that's better, isn't it? Any parcels come?"

"Yes, Jack; there's one for you—it's in your room."

Jack went to his room, and found that the tailor had kept his word and sent him the new overcoat for his father. He put it away in a drawer, intending to do so on Christmas morning, and then came back, lit his pipe and sat down in a chair by his father's side.

He opened his paper and began to read the bright news paragraphs of the new journalism, the little odds and ends of information that in the old days he longest rather to the back pages of the Family Herald and kindred publications, but without which in the present day no newspaper is considered complete. Mixed up with the crown-coloured doings of the day, were such items as "How the artificial eyes are made," "The six or seven men of Hopsot," "The six or seven men of the world," "How to clean bones in the kitchen," "Our paper pattern for children's nightgowns," "There was an actor of a football," the early ventures of a comic singer, and the career of a football manager concerning the forthcoming pantomime.

Jack, hoping to interest and amuse his father, read the paper through, but the old gentleman took very little notice of a grand dinner party to which Mr. Solomon Epstein had invited all his friends and admirers in the city, and the cost of which had been calculated at £12 head.

"It's wicked—wicked—wicked!" groaned the old man. "I don't know what the world is coming to. These millionaires seem to me to fling their money about in the face of Providence."

"And their fellow-creatures," said Jack quietly. "The papers are filled with these—their—outrages in gold. Twelve pounds a dinner! And the worst of this Epstein seems one of the worst offenders. I can't pick up a paper without reading of his ostentatious splendors and extravagances."

"Epstein—Epstein," murmured the old man. "I remember your reading to me about him before. Who is he?"

"Oh, that's some people say that he about him to South Africa with the money he'd collected for a goose club; that he was a broken down gambler and started as a barrow and a drink saloon there. He's a miser, and he went there as a consequence of a family quarrel; but the one thing that I like about him is that after there is no doubt about it that he has many years—twenty, he says—absence from England, he came back with fabulous wealth. He has a wonderful reputation in the city."

"I should care," exclaimed the old man sorrowfully, "wealth's a great thing, though the philosophers sneer at it. And it's awful to be poor when you've been well off." "I never thought I'd be poor again," said Jack, "but we're in different ten years ago!"

"There, there, dad!" said Jack, kindly; "we're not going to talk about that now. What's done can't be done; and, thank God, poor as we are, we have a roof over our heads, and we manage to be happy now and then."

"Yes, Jack, thanks to you, my good; brave boy! I wanted you to be a great man, Jack. You were to have gone to the army, and—ah! thank God, your poor mother died before the blow came. I was at least able to make her life happy."

Jack put the paper away and turned to the conversation. He knew well, if he had not known before, that when his father's mind began to dwell on his altered circumstances, for he would be miserably and despondent for the rest of the evening. It was an old story, and he tried to turn his thoughts away. It was a new generation of traders, Manchester warehousemen and furriers, most foreigners and Jews, had invaded the old street. Jack had tea with his father, and he would return to supper, went out, as his custom on Saturday evening was to spend a couple of hours with his sweet heart, Ethel Merrick, who lived with her father and mother in the Hampstead road.

The quiet evenings he was able to spend now and then with his sweetheart, were the happiest of Jack Hathaway's hard-working, self-denying life. Some day they hoped to be together always; but that day was far ahead, and Jack could not wish it nearer, that would mean that his father would be dead. The old gentleman was an invalid and querulous, very trying and exacting at times, but there was nothing to prevent his living another ten years or even longer. Jack had never faltered in his duty. When his father had lost, and how different the closing years of his life must be, he had taken his father's hand in his own and said, "Dad, as long as I live, your home shall be with me, and I will be a good son to you." And he kept his promise manfully.

Ethel Merrick ran to the door of the little house in the Hampstead road when she heard her lover's knock. It was lucky that it was a foggy night and nobody could see for he took her in

his arms and kissed her under the dim hall lamp.

Mr. Merrick was out, he always was out on Friday and Saturday evenings, because he held a very good position on a weekly paper and that entailed heavy night work at the end of the week.

Jack and Ethel were rather glad of that, because young lovers are apt to be in father's way in a small house. Mother didn't matter so much. She had a pleasant habit of falling asleep in her easy-chair and taking a rest, because on Sunday mornings father returned about 4 o'clock, and she always sat for him and had hot coffee and toast ready for him before he went to bed.

So mother dozed in the big armchair and the cat dozed on the big sofa and Jack and Ethel sat on the bed, and talked and talked and talked till Jack had a more assured position and sufficient to support a wife and family in ordinary comfort.

It was quite understood in the family that there would be no talk of that while Jack had his father and himself to keep on £3 a week, and was in a city office, from which he could at any time be dismissed at a week's notice.

Mr. Merrick was very fond of Jack and had consented to the engagement, but on the strict understanding that there was to be no idea of marriage until Jack had a more assured position and sufficient to support a wife and family in ordinary comfort.

To Be Continued.

GEN. KITCHENER TO WED.

HIS ENGAGEMENT JUST ANNOUNCED IN ENGLAND.

The Hero of Omdurman Will Become Married to a Titled Family and May Not Return to Egypt.

Lord Kitchener, who during the last week has received the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, which is the highest order conferred for naval or military services, has just become engaged, and it is asserted that the wedding will take place shortly.

The future Lady Kitchener is possessed not only of a more than ordinary share of good looks, but is likewise an heiress, the latter a fortunate circumstance in more senses than one, since it will enable the newly created peer, who is without personal fortune, to maintain with befitting splendour and dignity his new rank.

She is Miss Marie Evelyn Moreton, daughter of the Hon. Mrs. Richard Moreton, who is lady-in-waiting to the Royal Duchess of Albany. Miss Moreton's father was private secretary to the Marquis of Lorne, and to the Princess Louise throughout their stay in Canada, and as such is no stranger in this country, while at the present moment he holds the office of Marshal of the Ceremonies to her Majesty. He is a son of the late Earl of Ducie, and consequently Lord Kitchener will be married to a nephew of the present Earl of Ducie and allied to nearly half the British peerage.

Lady Kitchener's fortune comes to her through her mother's father, Thomas Ralli, at whose house in Belgrave square Lord Kitchener is making his home while in London. The Rallis, as every one knows, are the oldest, most respected, and wealthiest of the Green colony of merchants and bankers established in London, and are connected with the leading clubs and also with many of the houses of the aristocracy.

MAY NOT RETURN TO EGYPT.

It remains to be seen whether Lord Kitchener will return to Egypt as commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army, now that neither fortune nor rank is any longer much object to him, and that all prospect of active service in Egypt is at an end for some considerable time to come.

He made a strict rule while in command of the Egyptian army that none of the English officers serving under him should marry. The only exception to this rule being Colonel "Conky" Maxwell of the Black Watch, who commanded one of the Egyptian brigades at the battle of Omdurman, and who is married to an American girl, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bonyne of San Francisco.

Lord Kitchener, having made this rule about married men can hardly set the example of his infraction, and it is this that leads people to believe that he will not return to Egypt, where his position has always been one of extreme difficulty, owing to the undisguised animosity of the young Khedive, who alone has neglected to congratulate him on his victory at Omdurman, or to recognize his services in any way.

The Khedive cannot forgive or forget that he was on one memorable occasion compelled to publicly apologize in Arabic and in English for a gross and public personal affront which he placed upon the Sirdar.

NOT THE WORST OF IT.

At the country house of a certain popular baronet some time ago the butler came into his master's room early one morning wearing a most woebegone expression.

"There's very bad news for you this morning, he said.

"What is it, John?" inquired the baronet.

"Poor Mr.— mentioning the name of a gentleman in an adjacent village, has been an' gone an' hung himself. An' that isn't the worst by any means, Sir William; that there fox has been into the preserves again and killed twenty of the young pheasants!"

PROOF OF IT.

First Clerk—What makes you think she isn't rich?"

Second Clerk—Because she always tries to make believe she is not counting her change.

Newspaper Laws.

We call the special attention of Postmaster and subscribers to the following synopsis of the new newspaper laws:

1. If any person orders his paper discontinued, he must pay all arrears, or the publisher may continue to send it until payment is made, and collect the whole amount whether it be taken from the office or not. There can be no legal discontinuance until payment is made.
2. Any person who takes a paper from the post office, whether directed to his name or another, or whether he has subscribed or not is responsible for the pay.
3. If a subscriber orders his paper to be stopped at a certain time, and the publisher continues to send, the subscriber is bound to pay for it if he takes it out of the post office. This proceeds upon he must pay for what he uses.

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A Discovery, Based on Scientific Principles, that Renders Failure Impossible.



SOUTH AMERICAN NERVINE

In the matter of good health temporarily, while possibly successful for the moment, can never be lasting. Those in poor health who are using Nervine are using the best medicine simply a passing incident in their experience, branding them up for the day, or something that is getting at the seat of the disease and is surely and permanently restoring.

The eyes of the world are literally fixed on South American Nervine. They are not viewing it as a nine-days' wonder, but critical and experienced men have been studying this medicine for years, with the one result—they have found that its claims of perfect curative qualities cannot be gainsaid.

The great discoverer of this medicine possessed the knowledge that the seat of all disease is the nerve centres, situated at the base of the brain. In this belief he had the best scientists and medical men of the world occupying exactly the same premises. Indeed the ordinary layman recognized this principle long ago. Everyone knows that let disease or injury affect this part of the human system and death is almost certain. In fact the spinal cord, which is the medium of these nerve centres, and perhaps is sure to follow. Here is the first principle. The trouble with medical treatment generally, and with nearly all medicines, is that they aim simply to treat the organ that may be diseased. South American Nervine passes by the organs, and immediately applies its curative power to the nerve centres, from which the organs of the body receive their supply of nerve fluid. The nerve centres, which has shown the outward evidence only of derangement, is healed. Indigestion, nervousness, impoverished blood, liver complaint, all owe their origin to a derangement of the nerve centres. Thousands bear testimony that they have been cured of these troubles, even when they have become so desperate as to be regarded by the most eminent physicians, because South American Nervine has gone to headquarters and cured there.

The eyes of the world have not been disappointed in the inquiry into the success of South American Nervine. People marvel if it is true, at its wonderful medical qualities, but they know beyond all question that it does exactly what it is claimed for. It stands alone as the one great certain curing remedy of the nineteenth century. Why should anyone suffer distress and disease while this remedy is practically at their hands?

For sale by McFarlane & Co.,