wet eyelids, when the boy had gone away.

"Don't try, honey," that good woman returned, bending to kiss Tess' rosebud mouth. Then she drove away, snug and smiling at her husband's elbow, leaving Betty to receive yet other material tokens of the day of peace and good will. They came from every hand—fat sacks of meal and flour, apples, potatoes, preserves, homemade wine, flake crusted pies and sugary crisp sweet cakes.

Some way the superabundance wounded Betty, albeit she knew it was but some slight exaggeration of the friendly neighborhood custom. She was, in fact, a trifle morbid. She would have received as graciously and gracefully as any might but for thinking that the giving had the spur of her supposed necessity.

"There is nobody else to send anything. We can rest a little while," Trab said after supper, but even as he spoke there came a thundering knock at the front door. Nobody was there when it opened, but they heard wheels rolling away.

"Bah! Blind gooses! Don't you see the box? There! At your feet," Marian cried, darting past Trab and Pete to snatch a square wooden something from the floor in front of her brothers. When she had wrenched it open, there lay, amid wrappings of pink and silver paper, all manner of Christmas cakes and Christmas toys, fireworks galore, and at the very bottom a scrawly slip, "Tommy Adkin wishes his friends Trab and Pete and Patty and Marian and Tess a very happy Christmas."

"And I am left out entirely, though Tommy used to claim me for his sweetheart when he wore dresses," Betty said, laughing to save herself from crying. Marian kicked the box contemptuously, saying:

"We must be gettin popular when Mr. Storekeeper Adkin thinks it worth while to be good to us."

"Marian, Marian," Betty said. "What a speech, and Christmas too! I am afraid I must make you write and thank Tommy, and remember, dears, Christmas means above everything peace on earth and good will to men."

"If Christmas makes folks good, why don't they let pappy come home?" Tess asked with round, wet eyes. Patty was staring hard in the fire. Without stirring she said over her shoulder: "I believe he will come, and Lightfoot too. There is a road in the fire—a long one—and a man and a horse coming along it."

* * * * * * *

Betty slept dreamlessly that night, but all the next day she was the prey of nameless terrors. Her mind went back constantly to the beginning of the trouble. It seemed to her it had truly begun when Johnny Gates, the richest, idlest, most dissolute youngster in the county, came courting her and was sent about his business. Yet he it was who had brought her word of her father's arrest and in the same breath had begged her to marry him. When she gave him a frantic refusal, he looked at her, his face growing hard and white, his eyes burning, to say: "Whatever your father suffers, Betty, it will lie at your door. You might save him, and you let him be disgraced, and all because you fancy Ned Westfield loves you. Maybe he does, but I can tell you he will not marry you. His father would sooner see him dead."

She had turned from him in silent scorn, but how his dart rankled. It was the smart of it, with a later taunt that the Westfields fought cases for either love or money, that had impelled her to sell Lightfoot and pay a counsel fee. Yet only three weeks back Johnny had come, humbly entreating her to let him take her burdens and promising vaguely great things for her father.

One little minute Betty faltered; then her heart held her in the right way. She shook her head and left him, and when he ran after bade him never name marriage to her again. He went away, crying and cursing. She had not seen him since and was devoutly grateful for the fact.

As it drew on toward sunset Betty strolled out to the orchard. Her mother's grave was there—beside it she might dream a little of last year—and the creamy, heavy hearted roses some one had sent her upon Christmas eve. She had laid them upon the green mound, though knowing well their source. Ned's first gift, they were sacred and belonged by right to her holiest place. Snow fell and covered them. They were beautiful for weeks. Now as she looked at the flowerless swell a great sob rose in her throat. She knelt and prayed wordlessly with her face upon the earth.

The children were in the back yard full of joy in what their Christmas money had bought. The boys had yearling steers, Patty some beehives, Tess a

"I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK EVERYBODY."

young sow with four teeny weeny pigs and Marian a flock of hens with red, red combs and fine glossy neck feathers.

"Ain't they beauties?" she asked, watching them teeter and coquette in their roosting tree. It was a cherry, big and branchy, and already half of them huddled in twos and threes affectionately on the boughs.

"That's a Christmas tree right," Marian said decisively. Tess stooped to scratch the head of her least pig as she answered reflectively. "I like Sarah Lizabeth ef she an her babies can't go on a tree."

"Oh, say, wouldn't Logan an Bright look fine, hangin up in a cedar bush?" Pete said in gasps, laughing as he had not done for weeks. Marian nodded. "An put on Patty's bees, too, an then send for Tommy Adkin to distribute the presents. My, but I'd like to see him. Both his eyes would be shut a week."

Betty, coming back to them, opened her lips for gentle reproof, but before she spoke it they caught her in tumultuous arms.

"Come in to the fire, sister. I 'most thought you wus lost," Tess declared, nestling close to her.

"Yes, do come. I put an egg to roast for you," Marian said, catching the other hand fast, while Trab said discontentedly: "I wish it would get good an dark. My firecrackers are just achin to go off."

Patty was already indoors. They found her again staring at the fire. Marian pulled her braided hair, Trab flipped a chestnut against her cheek; still she did not rouse from her rapt contemplation until Betty bent and said softly, "What is it, Patty, dear?"

"It's all crumbled down," Patty said with a little impatient sigh. "But the

"PAPPY! PAPPY! PAPPY HAS COME HOME!"

same road was in the fire—the same man an horse—an it worries me that I can't find out if they are comin here."

"We'll know when they get here," Trab began. A hail outside cut him short. Ring, the watchdog, gave a long, joyous howl that sent all pellmell to the door. Through the dusk they could make out moving figures at the gate. It swung in, some one darted through and caught Betty and Tess in the clasp of trembling arms, while the other children shouted wildly: "Pappy! Pappy! Pappy has come home!"

As he loosed Betty Ned Westfield caught her hand. He meant only to give her friendly greeting, but Uncle Billy Trotter behind him sung out, "Ef ye don't kiss her right here an now, Ned, I'll never vote ner 'lectioneer fer you—never in the world."

So Ned kissed her handsomely in the face of them all. His father at his back said with a beaming smile:

"So you thought, Betty, I did not want you for a daughter."

Tess, high in her father's arms, broke in gravely, "Betty is our daughter, an nobody else can't have her, but if you come in we have got a heap of Christmas, an you may have some fer bringin pappy home."

"They may have it all fer bringin Lightfoot," Trab said as he clung fast to the neck of his recovered treasure. Betty turned to Ned.

"Tell me, am I awake?" she asked. "I have dreamed so often. Tell me, too, when you began to work miracles."

"It ain't nothin short o' a merakle—anybody gittin that pore, lyin Toad Burley ter speak the truth," Uncle Billy said, taking Tess from her father's clasp. As Mr. Walton met Betty's inquiring gaze he smiled and said:

"You will have to let Ned tell you, dear. All I know is that this morning a pardon was read to me. I was told my friends waited outside, and there I found Ned, Tobe Pellew and Uncle Billy, and all bent on bringing me home with a hurrah."

Then Ned told briefly yet clearly how Burley had plotted with Johnny Gates and a reckless stranger whom they later spirited away against the good name of Betty's father; how Burley had personated Mr. Walton in carrying off the other horse, and afterward put the beast the stranger had got in the trade back where it had been first stabled by its owner. Then poor Toad, as the agent of the Christmas conspirators, had seen and heard what had sent him straight to Ned Westfield and confession. "Of course I let him go free," Ned wound up. "He is safe in Texas now, but his name is not Burley, and we will wish him luck. All the rest was ridiculously easy. Fortunately I know the governor well enough to tell him outright when I am in a hurry for anything."

"But Ned ain't told you yit, Betty, how he took an chased off like er streak o' lightnin ter the Eelency, found that t'other feller an got his affydavit," Uncle Billy said with a fresh and more vigorous chuckle. Betty gave him a heavenly smile, then put her arms again about her father's neck, saying:

"So long as we have him home free and sound and safe it does not matter in the least how it came about."

"Yes, it does," Marian said, clinching her fists hard. Then through a rain of tears: "I—I cain't hate anybody, not even Johnny Gates, like I want to. I am so glad to see pappy again, the hate all slips away."

"But love and peace abide forever," Ned whispered in Betty's ear, and Trab said slowly as they all went inside:

"There never was in the world such another happy Christmas."

Celebration of Christmas.

The celebration of Christmas is said by the church historians to have been formally instituted by Pope Telesphorus, who died A. D. 138.

POSTMASTER GENERAL.

Second Annual Report Issued by William L. Wilson.

ABUSE OF THE POSTAL SERVICE.

Postmaster General Utters a Vigorous Protest Against Free Transportation of Certain Matter—Plan to Make the Postoffice Self-Sustaining.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9.—A vigorous protest against the abuse of the postal service is made in the annual report of Postmaster General Wilson. He quotes figures which show an excess of expenditures over receipts of $8,127,088 for the past fiscal year, which, however, is a decrease in deficiency as compared with the previous fiscal year of $1,679,956.

This satisfactory exhibit for the past year has been made possible, the postmaster general says, by a vigorous policy of bringing suit or pushing collection on bonds immediately after default, which is the only safe practice for the interests of the government and those of the obligors. The postmaster general says that he thinks congress may properly grant relief in cases of hardship and injustice following collection after the lapse of years by a general bill or otherwise.

The report says: "Notwithstanding the gratifying increase in the earnings of the department, which would have been fully up to if not in excess of my estimate for the fiscal year but for the halting of business activity in its closing months, due to the uncertainties of the political campaign about to begin, the total deficiency, even after omitting the amount credited to the Pacific railroads, was $8,127,088.44, which was a charge on the general treasury. There is no necessity for this annual deficit. The department is powerless to prevent it, but a few lines of amendment by congress to the postal laws will wipe it out and give in its place a steady surplus. It has its chief source in the transmission at second class rates of a large and rapidly increasing volume of matter never in the contemplation of the law, which gives the nominal rate of 1 cent a pound on such matter, and assuredly outside of the policy of the law as to newspapers and periodicals."

The report recites the strenuous efforts of the past to secure legislation designed to protect the postal service from this waste of its earnings and the tax payers from the large burden imposed on them by the regular deficit. But, it says, up to now, the combinations and active efforts of the beneficiaries of this abuse have parried all appeals of the department. The postmaster general says he would have taken the responsibility to modify and reverse the successive rulings through which this inroad on the service has been effected, and to exclude from the benefit of second class rates the social libraries and other publications not in the policy of the law, but for the hope of the enactment of what is known as the Loud bill now pending in the house.

This would have imposed upon those who profit at the public expense by existing practices the necessity of seeking, through the courts or otherwise, the restoration of their special privileges.

As to second class matter the report says: "The increase in the weight of second class matter for the year was 57,000,000 pounds, as against 18,000,000 pounds last year.

The mere cost of transportation of this matter is estimated at 8 cents per pound. The postage revenue received from it was 8¼ mills per pound. Thus, 849,000,000 pounds in round numbers, at 8 cents for transportation, cost $67,920,000; postal revenue received at 8¼ mills per pound, $2,966,403, a loss on transportation alone of nearly $65,000,000.

"But this does not cover the full loss to the government on second class matter. Setting off the cost of mail services on public and official matter, as above stated, by the use and rental of public buildings provided for the postoffice department, we have as the great weight of all non-governmental matter handled by the mails during the last fiscal year an aggregate of 512,997,333 pounds. The gross money expenditures of the department were, as already stated, $90,626,296.84 and including the earnings of the Pacific railroads, to wit, $1,558,898.69, an expenditure of $92,186,185.53 to handle this matter. It thus appears that from two-thirds of the matter handled the last fiscal year the revenue was less than one-thirtieth of the cost mail service."

Postmaster General Wilson discusses the proposed 1-cent letter rate, the cheapest postage in the world. He said it would yield a great profit, but it is idle talk such reduction while two thirds of o[illegible] mail matter handled at a small fracti[illegible] of its cost, [illegible] the deficits of the department in consequence aggregated in 11 years (since the act of March 3, 1885) the enormous sum of $71,377,480.

The estimates for the current fiscal year and the year 1898 follow:

Estimated revenue for 1897, $89,099,146.0[illegible]; expenditures estimated for 1897, $92,571,564.22; deficiency for 1897, $3,472,419.15. Total estimated revenue for 1898, $96,927,076.66; expenditures estimated for 1898, $97,515,411.15; deficiency for 1898, estimated $1,288,334.47.

Ambassador Bayard Declines.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 7.—Information received here from London states that Mr. Bayard has declined the gift proposed to be made to him in recognition of his efforts in the cause of peace and good will between the United States and England. In his declination Mr. Bayard cordially thanks the London Daily Telegraph and those who supported its proposal, but says that his position as ambassador would prevent his acceptance of any testimonial.

Deputy Harrington Arraigned.

BUFFALO, Dec. 9.—Eugene W. Harrington, former deputy city comptroller, who is under a cloud pending the investigation of his care of the city's moneys, was formally arraigned in police court. The charge was that he had converted to his own use the sum of $1,500. Harrington pleaded not guilty and was held for the grand jury. His bail was fixed at $2,000.

Cornell Football Season Profitable.

ITHACA, N. Y., Dec. 8.—Cornell closes the football season with a balance of $3,000 above expenses. The Harvard game was well attended, but the expenses were large, and ate up the profits. Cornell received $9,000 as her part of the receipts of the Pennsylvania game. The football balance goes into the general athletic treasury.

SIX-DAY CYCLE RACE.

Fast Work Done by Some of the Men. Other Sports.

NEW YORK, Dec. 9.—The great throng which cheered the wheelmen in the 6-day international cyclist contest, now being held in Madison Square garden, was repaid for the bravery displayed in facing a stiff wind and a nasty mist which fell.

When the band began playing the riding was most spirited. Teddy Hale, the young son of Erin, had just scored his 700d mile and Rice had 698 miles to his credit. Schock did some very fast riding.

Pierce, who had been sleeping between 5 and 7, came on looking refreshed and went to work in earnest. He soon jumped ahead of Elkes and it soon became apparent that he intended to travel ahead of some of the favorites.

Little Taylor, the darkey, carried a grim that was amusing as he bent far over his handle bars. Hale rode steadily and did not appear to exert himself, as did Rice, who had been slowly moving.

Toward 9 o'clock the 16 men in the great race made a great spurt, this one being in unison and seemingly inspired by a lively waltz which the band commenced to play.

Following is the midnight score, odd laps omitted:

Hale, 770 miles; Moore, 675; Reading, 701; Taylor, 686; Schock, 714; Ashinger, 686; Rice, 742; Pierce, 672; Forrester, 701; Elkes, 696; Smith, 686; Maddox, 618; Gannon, 559; Cassidy, 578; McLeod, 472; Glick, 590.

SENSATION AT AMSTERDAM.

Prominent Citizen's Odd Way of Exposing Florence Haun's Cause.

AMSTERDAM, N. Y., Dec. 9.—Raymond Christman, a prominent business man and trustee in the Baptist church, has created a great sensation in this city by erecting in his family lot in Greenhill cemetery a handsome and costly monument for Florence Haun. It is inscribed "Florence Viola Christman, erected to the memory of a wronged child. Dead to the world but alive in Christ."

Mrs. Haun shot and killed her lover, Charles Laundry, in this city, in November, 1895, and is now serving a life sentence for the crime in Auburn prison. Christman has become [illegible] in the woman. He had himself appointed her guardian, has given her his name and is trying to secure a pardon for her. He claims she is dying with consumption and that this is the reason why he erected the monument.

Clemency for Murderer West.

ALBANY, Dec. 9.—Governor Morton has reduced to 40 years, subject to commutation for good behavior, the sentence of William West, a life prisoner in Sing Sing. West was a convict in Sing Sing and in a quarrel killed one of his fellow convicts. He was at that time 19 years of age. West will be at liberty in September, 1908, if he behaves.

Spaniards Deny a Report.

HAVANA, Dec. 9.—The report published in the United States that Captain General Weyler had been wounded is declared to be absolutely false.

THE MARKETS.

New York Money Market.

NEW YORK, Dec. 9.

Money on call, 1½@2 per cent.
Prime mercantile paper, 4@5 per cent.
Sterling exchange: Actual business in bankers' bills, $4.86¼@4.86½ for demand; $4.83⅞@4.84¼ for 60 days. Posted rates, $4.84@4.84½ and $4.87@4.88.
Commercial bills, $4.83¾.
Silver certificates, 65½@66½c.
Mexican, 50½c.
Bar silver, 66½c.

New York Produce Market.

FLOUR—City mills patent, $4.25@4.60; city mills clear, $4.25@4.10; winter patents, $4.20@4.40; winter straits, $3.60@3.85; do extras, $2.85@4.00; do low grades, $2.40@2.65; Minnesota patents, $4.30@4.60; [illegible]; Minnesota bakers', $2.00@2.15; low grades, [illegible]; winter wheat, low grades, [illegible]; Kansas straights, [illegible]; Kansas clears, [illegible]; Nebraska patents, [illegible]; Nebraska bakers', [illegible]; Nebraska clears, [illegible]; Minnesota bakers', [illegible]; Minnesota clears, [illegible]; Minnesota patents