

A CHRISTMAS RESTORATION.

He had come into Birchville one dismal fall day, a little pack over his shoulder and a hard, hopeless look on his face. He looked so dangerous that everybody locked their doors and refused to succor the miserable wretch. Before night he was lodged in the town cooler, but was liberated the following morning. He set out down the south road and trudged wearily on for several miles. Then he dropped on the grass by the road and buried his face in his hands.

"Ah, there!" I cried. "Want to ride?" He looked up vacantly and stared. Then, as my meaning slowly dawned on him, he gathered himself up, and came around to the back of the wagon. But there were several valuable packages in the bottom of the vehicle and I didn't care about putting him in the way, or rather the seat, of temptation, so I ordered him up beside me. He looked rather uncertain about it, but finally ended by clambering in. And thus we rode along for three miles, the wretched tramp beside a wealthy farmer's son. But I had all a boy's natural love of daring and adventure, and it wasn't the first time I had ridden beside the rougher species of humanity. College life had not made me fastidious, there was too much of the farmer about me.

"Where are you bound for?" I asked, by way of drawing on a conversation. "Eh?" he said, looking up stupidly. "Come, wake up," I laughed. "You are most asleep, I guess. Want a good shaking?" and I took hold of his dirty collar.

The faintest flicker of a smile flashed across his lips, then all was blank again. But in that instant, I saw, spite of all the dirt and emaciation, a handsome face.

If only that tangled pate was straight and clean; if only that haggard face and limp body glowed with health and strength; and if vigor and cleanliness were crowned with the radiance of such a smile as I had but caught a feeble, transient flash—what a man, a perfect man!

Maybe once he might have been just such a fellow as I might have been. I felt an unaccountable interest in this strange unfortunate and I resolved to do all that lay in my boyish ability to restore him to an ideal state of mental health and bodily vigor.

"Say, old man, come home with me and have a square meal for once in your life." A hungry look came into his eyes.

"Mean it?" he asked, doubtfully. "Mean it? Of course I mean it," I said, heartily. "If you would promise one thing."

He raised his eyes to mine. "If you'll take a bath and put on some of my old clothes, you can eat supper with me and sleep in the house, instead of the cold barn."

"For a long time he sat gazing at me, but I whistled a college tune and pretended not to see. Presently I said: 'Well, do you give in?'"

"For answer he buried his face in his hands. 'Oh, come now,' I laughed. 'I'm not the fellow to stand that kind of thing. A chap has got to laugh and whistle around me, or they don't see me very often.'"

Something sparkling dropped from between his dirty fingers and flashed down on the boards. Then he spoke, slowly, and with an effort. "You are the first man on God's earth that has treated me like a man since—since—"

"Yes, I'll go home with you," he continued, after a pause. "If you are not too good to put up with a dog."

"Go on, Billy!" I shouted to the horse. "Guess you forget the oats waiting for you at home."

"I tell you," he went on, savagely. "I'm a jail-bird and everybody turns me out!"

"Oh, come! I haven't turned you out, have I? Don't you creak! I haven't even took you in yet," and I laughed and struck in, "my gal's a high-born lady. She's—"

He grabbed my arm in a vice-like clutch and growled between his teeth. "None of that, or I'll choke you so you can't squeak any more of that infernal gibberish!"

I was surprised, to say the least, but I calmly remarked, "You don't like music, then?"

Such a hard, stony look settled on his rough countenance that for a moment I thought he was really dangerous.

Well, we got home and I escorted my guest into the kitchen after we had put up the horse. Mother was not in the least alarmed, as this was not the first occurrence of the kind, but this one was somewhat out of the ordinary and she looked a little surprised when I told her to turn on the hot water in the bath-room. But she quietly went about, caring for our guest's comfort as only a mother can.

The poor fellow looked bewildered when I ushered him into the bath-room and he saw the neat pile of clothes laid ready for his use.

Father laughed when I returned to the kitchen, and poked fun at my queer looking protégé, but he did as he always had, let me have my own way.

When my charge returned from the bath-room, fresh and orderly, I was silent with admiration. Such a transformation! I made no comment, but

seeing he was faint with hunger and the exercise of the bath, made haste to the table.

"You waited for me?" he said gratefully. "Sure thing! Did you think I was going to eat alone when I could just as well have company? Come, sit

down. And pitch in he did. I never saw any one so hungry. When at last, his craving was appeased, I took him to his room, which was next to mine. The poor fellow broke down completely when he saw the clean sheets and soft pillows.

"Oh!" he cried out, "let me sleep in the barn! Anywhere but here! It is so strange, and oh, so good!"

But I paid no heed. "Soon I left him with a hearty good-night. As I passed down the hall, the bath-room door was ajar and as I stepped to close it, an object on the floor caught my attention and I picked it up. It was a soiled, worn portrait of a woman.

I carried it to the gas. Great Scott! It was my own cousin Margaret!

How came it there? I had never seen it before, yet it was she, without the shadow of a doubt. The picture had evidently been taken long years ago, for this was a fair-haired girlish figure and Margaret was "an old maid, now," as I had playfully told her once. Yes, this was surely Meggie, for there at her throat was the old-fashioned brooch that she has always kept, though locked from sight now. And here was the same beautiful face that sorrow and tragedy had lined, and here the small, dimpled hand that men yet sought in vain to win. For Meggie with her beauty had been loved by many, but herself had loved but one, and he—

Great Heavens! Could this be possible? A stealthy footstep came along the hall, passed my bed-room, and cautiously approached the door. When he saw me he bounded fiercely to my side and snatched the picture from me.

"You shan't have her!" he passionately cried. "She's mine!"

I stumbled confusedly down the stairs and found mother.

And I told her all that had happened. It was late that night when we retired and there were tears in her eyes as she put her arms around my neck. "Please God, we will save him yet! It was Providence who sent him here. God bless you, dear boy, for your charity!"

The next morning he slept late and I went up to wake him. He was breathing heavily and his face was flushed. I laid my hand on his head, but drew it away quickly and rushed down stairs.

"Mother, he is very sick," I said, hurriedly. "I'm going for Dr. Grey."

It took but a moment to saddle Flash, and off I went. The doctor looked grave when he saw him. "Brain fever," he said. "It will be a hard fight."

And it was. I shall never forget those days and weeks. Father and I took turns watching nights with him, and mother nursed him daytimes with a tenderness almost sublime. But even a faithful physician and three nurses combined were at odds with the terrible Shadow that hovered over the sufferer.

O, those awful nights of wild delirium! As he grew worse, it became necessary for both father and I to watch together, for there were times in his frenzy when he could scarcely be held in bed. After these violent spells he would sink into such deep stupor that it was very difficult to rouse him enous, to take his medicine. These sinking spells were more dangerous than his violent delirium for he became weaker with each repetition and at times the pulse was scarcely discernable and the breath so faint that I thought him dead more than once.

Sometimes he fancied he was back in the old home and he prattled on about the governor's stings and his own extravagance. Then his thoughts turned to the love of his youth.

"Peggy, don't you know how much you are to me?" he would whisper. "You are my better self, my compass, my north star, my ballast wheel. I know that if they will not let you marry me, I shall go to the bad, I will! Down, down, down!"

"They are hard, cruel—Peggy! They won't let me have you, dear! What can we do? Oh, I am going to the bad! Sinking!"

"I am here under your window, Margaret love, but you are asleep. You do not see. I am here by the rose vine where I told you first I loved you. Wish I had my guitar, I'd sing the 'Red rose song.' I'll come to-morrow night and serenade you."

"Peggy, I see a figure creeping along the grass. Don't be frightened, dear. If it's a burglar, I've got a revolver. He is coming nearer. Good God, it is your father! He hasn't seen me yet, because the red roses hide me, but he is looking for me, he must know I am here. I will step out like a man, and tell him I came to serenade you, but forgot my guitar. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Why, what's happened? My head whir! There are people holding me. Why is it? What are these things in the grass? Burglars' tools, and a heap of plate! What! Has the house been robbed? Oh! There's a pain in my head and I can hardly see. Did someone hit me?"

"What? Me, a burglar? My head hurts so. Pardon me, gentlemen, I do not understand. How sweet the roses smell! Peggy, are you still sleeping?"

"What are these things,—ropes! Hold! I am no felon! I swear I know nothing about those tools and the silver! Let me go, I say! Peggy, where are you? Save me, darling! But you are sleeping, don't waken for dreams are sweeter than grief. Dream on, dear love!"

"What is this? A prison, you say? A fit abode for a felon. Nine years? And she does not believe in me? You say she is married? And happy?"

"Father is dead? Of heart disease? He! What heart had he to die of? He broke it! Mine is broken, too. But her heart is not broken, no! She is happy!"

"Free, am I? Free! For what? What is in life before me? Nothing! Despair! Death! But I can't die without one more look at my love! One more look!"

"How cruel the world is! Too cruel for me! I will leave it, but not yet. If only someone would give me food I would be stronger to reach you, dear! I must see you! I will go now, and walk, and walk, and walk so fast! I will find you! I am coming!" and he would hold him with iron grip till his frenzy changed to stupor.

Poor Robert! At last the crisis came, and the doctor and I watched together.



Ye maids and youths of long ago, In cheery greeting meet and pass, Unless a sprig of mistletoe, Hanging low—hanging low, Above the head of Puritan lass.

A magical challenge seems to be, Which tempts in boldness to pursue; All coy and willing too is she, Yet not too vainly flee, Before submitting that is due.

"We must save him," I demanded, "it is very necessary." So we two sat in the stillness of the night and watched the faint and fainter breathing of the sufferer. Dr. Grey had done his best and all his best. No one but God could help him now. I knew mother was spending the night in prayer, and not sleep, and I prayed that her petitions might be heard and answered. How fast he was sinking! Could

"Nothing."

At this moment a carriage drove up and a woman alighted, a pretty little woman with an old-fashioned brooch at her throat, and red roses in her cheeks and hands. I looked at Robert. He was white as a ghost and trembling like a leaf. I hastily left the room. This supreme moment was his, not mine.

So I can only tell you that I heard a choking cry from both as I closed the door.

A long time afterward, I opened the door a crack and said: "Peggy, the minister is here!" I didn't wait to see the effect of my words.

I'm not going to tell you any more about my tramp, except that there was a wedding that afternoon in our parlor, a grand, solemn, sweet ceremony, in front of the bank of palms.

And it was Peggy, not I, who went down to Burlington with him next day. —Mary B. Odell.

How Johnny Got His Christmas Apple.

nothing save him? The doctor took out his watch and felt the pulse. Suddenly, Robert's eyes flew open and there was a sickening blur on them.

"Margaret!" came the faint whisper. Some instinct moved me to reply. "Yes, Robert," I said, placing my lips to his ear.

"You love me yet?" he asked. "You are true to me, Margaret?"

"Yes, dear, always," I answered. "Kiss me, dear love!" And I kissed him on the forehead.

He sank to sleep, and for a while we thought the suffering breath would stop altogether. But at last the doctor rose and put on his coat.

"Take good care of him, nurse him carefully. He will live." And after a few more directions, he left the house.

He did live, and improved so steadily, although slowly, that towards Christmas time he was up and about and gaining strength. With his clean-shaven face and orderly attire, he looked quite young and handsome again. And as the days flew by, he gained in vigor both of mind and body so that we were very proud of him.

It was a day or two before Christmas when he braced himself up and proposed leaving us.

"I must be jogging on towards home," he said. "If the weather holds out good, I'll be in Burlington by the first of January."

"Burlington!" I exclaimed. "Why, I'm going there myself the day after Christmas, and I declare! I won't have to go down alone, will I? How jolly!"

He looked serious and doubtful. "But—" he objected.

"Oh, very well, if you object to my society, there is no more to be said!" and I tried to look offended.

"Well, I'll go down with you," he laughed. "But that isn't it, —"

"Oh, how relieved I am! I really thought you didn't care for my company," and I left the room, to avoid further discussion.

Christmas Day was fine. The sunshine poured through the windows and its radiant influence made the house as cheerful as a June bower. We had decorated the rooms with holly and flowers till it seemed like a veritable paradise. For we expected company, and Robert Crane was very useful in the preparations. He had emerged from his taciturn mood and I had begun to think the fever had improved him.

I watched him put the finishing touches to a bank of palms and thought how very handsome he was. Once he smiled at some trifling remark of mine.

"By Jove, man!" I cried, in utter admiration.

"What's the row?" he asked, looking

fe maids and youths of long ago, Aren't much changed, except address; They're just as happy and as gay, Full of play—full of play, And yule-tide games are best.

The magical spell of mistletoe, Of holly branches, of Christmas bells; To lips and cheek bring rosier glow— Some may know—all may know, Sweet secrets this mistletoe tells.

—S. E. Hampton.

At this moment a carriage drove up and a woman alighted, a pretty little woman with an old-fashioned brooch at her throat, and red roses in her cheeks and hands. I looked at Robert. He was white as a ghost and trembling like a leaf. I hastily left the room. This supreme moment was his, not mine.

So I can only tell you that I heard a choking cry from both as I closed the door.

A long time afterward, I opened the door a crack and said: "Peggy, the minister is here!" I didn't wait to see the effect of my words.

I'm not going to tell you any more about my tramp, except that there was a wedding that afternoon in our parlor, a grand, solemn, sweet ceremony, in front of the bank of palms.

And it was Peggy, not I, who went down to Burlington with him next day. —Mary B. Odell.

How Johnny Got His Christmas Apple.

nothing save him? The doctor took out his watch and felt the pulse. Suddenly, Robert's eyes flew open and there was a sickening blur on them.

"Margaret!" came the faint whisper. Some instinct moved me to reply. "Yes, Robert," I said, placing my lips to his ear.

"You love me yet?" he asked. "You are true to me, Margaret?"

"Yes, dear, always," I answered. "Kiss me, dear love!" And I kissed him on the forehead.

He sank to sleep, and for a while we thought the suffering breath would stop altogether. But at last the doctor rose and put on his coat.

"Take good care of him, nurse him carefully. He will live." And after a few more directions, he left the house.

He did live, and improved so steadily, although slowly, that towards Christmas time he was up and about and gaining strength. With his clean-shaven face and orderly attire, he looked quite young and handsome again. And as the days flew by, he gained in vigor both of mind and body so that we were very proud of him.

It was a day or two before Christmas when he braced himself up and proposed leaving us.

"I must be jogging on towards home," he said. "If the weather holds out good, I'll be in Burlington by the first of January."

"Burlington!" I exclaimed. "Why, I'm going there myself the day after Christmas, and I declare! I won't have to go down alone, will I? How jolly!"

He looked serious and doubtful. "But—" he objected.

"Oh, very well, if you object to my society, there is no more to be said!" and I tried to look offended.

"Well, I'll go down with you," he laughed. "But that isn't it, —"

"Oh, how relieved I am! I really thought you didn't care for my company," and I left the room, to avoid further discussion.

Christmas Day was fine. The sunshine poured through the windows and its radiant influence made the house as cheerful as a June bower. We had decorated the rooms with holly and flowers till it seemed like a veritable paradise. For we expected company, and Robert Crane was very useful in the preparations. He had emerged from his taciturn mood and I had begun to think the fever had improved him.

I watched him put the finishing touches to a bank of palms and thought how very handsome he was. Once he smiled at some trifling remark of mine.

"By Jove, man!" I cried, in utter admiration.

"What's the row?" he asked, looking



We're Laying Furs Away for Xmas.

Holiday shoppers tell us that our styles, varieties and the prices we name are just a little more attractive than elsewhere. Come in either of our stores and you are sure to find what you want in furs.

Collarettes.

French Seal Collarette, fancy silk lining	\$4.00
Russian Seal Collarette, fancy silk lining	5.00
French Seal, Astrakhan yoke, fancy lining	6.50
French Seal, Astrakhan yoke, ten fur tails	7.50
Best XXX Electric Seal, Persian yoke	\$8 to \$10.00
Best XXX Electric Seal, Krimmer yoke	\$8 to \$10.00
Alaska Sable, Persian yoke and heads, fancy lining	\$10.00
Alaska Sable, Electric yoke, fancy lining	15.00

Capes.

Electric Seal Capes, eighteen to thirty inches in length	\$10 to \$15.00
Astrakhan Capes, thirty inches long	20 to 30
Best XXX Electric Seal, Sable trimmed and collar	30 to 40

A complete line of small furs of every description, including Children's Sets. SEE OUR WINDOWS. Ladies' Fine Seal Garments—a Specialty.

MENG & SHAFER

Leading Manufacturing Furriers and Hatters.

11 State St., Powers Block. (156 East Main St.)
14 West Main St., Powers Block Opp. Williams' Bank

Sole Agents for the Celebrated Danish Seal.

Weaver, Palmer & Richmond

Universal Feed Chopper



THE OLD WAY.

A Few Advantages

It will cut anything and every thing that can be cut in a chopping bowl in one tenth the time.

So easy to clean that not even the odor of fish remains.

No quantity too small to cut.

Adjustable so as to chop all kinds of food into clean cut, uniform pieces as fine or coarse as wanted.

Perfect in operation; no waste, nothing left in the machine after use.

With a single stroke, able to prepare whole hams, turkeys, ducks, chickens, etc. Chopper, would save time and strength.

"Hard times" is the reason why the very best quality of food is actually saved.

In fact, a single one you will ever get along with.



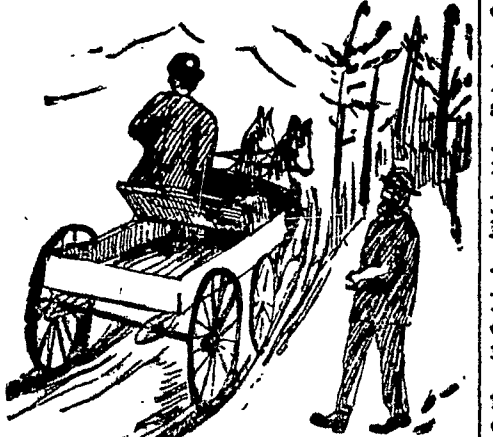
THE PERFECT WAY.

We unhesitatingly recommend it.

COME IN AND SEE

Weaver, Palmer & Richmond

31-33-35 East Main St.



seeing he was faint with hunger and the exercise of the bath, made haste to the table. "You waited for me?" he said gratefully. "Sure thing! Did you think I was going to eat alone when I could just as well have company? Come, sit