DECEMBER.

On Christmas day, when fires were lit, And all our breakfast done, We spread our toys out on the floor And played there in the sun.

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The nursery smelled of Christmas tree And under where it stood The shepherds watched their flocks of sheep,

All made of painted wood.

Outside the house the air was cold And oniet all about. Till far across the snowy roofs The Christmas bells rang out.

But soon the sleigh-bells jingled by Upon the street below, And people on the way to church, Went crunching through the snow.

We did not quarrel once all day; Mamma and Grandma said They liked to be in where we were, So pleasantly we played.

I do not see how any child Is cross on Christmas day, When all the lovely toys are new, And everyone can play.



box near her plate. But she wasa't thinking of either the letters, the papers or the roses. Her thoughts were traveling back to a day years ago when she had sat before the fire in the old farm house, and beautiful actress, back to the days when she had used the chairs and cats for heroes, while she majestically play. ed the heroine, with the old table cloth thrown around her shoulders for a cloak, and how always just as she was in the most tragic part of the per-

tolled for her in the years good by, and whom she had never heard of since that Christmas Eve when she had left her. "Was she still alive?" Then there came a longing to see the old home once more, to have a

rest, and yet how could she live now without this praise and giory which she loved so well?

She got up from the table and walked to the window. Down below the bustling New York crowd was surging by. There were probably a great many people there who the night before had witnessed her triumph, and many woo envied her, and as she stood there thinking the crowd seemed to die away, and once more the visions of the old grandmother rose before her.

"How weak of me," she said suddenly, "to think of such fooligh things, I'm almost starved, and I must go to a rehearsal at eleven and there is that letter of Randolph's to be answered. I will ring for another cup of coffee, this stuff is cold."

She rang the bell and gave her directions. then passed on into the next room and sat down before her desk. "Poor boy how foolish he is," she said to herself, glancing at Randolph's note, "to suppose that I would give up what I have worked so hard for all these years, in exchange for all his money and family trees. Perhaps some day. but not now."

Then she began to write hastily, and after sealing and directing the note. wrote another one which she directed to her manager. Then she rang for her maid. "Annette, my black gown and fur jacket, then pack a few things for me I am going out of town immedi-

ately after to-night's performance, you will remain here until my return." Annette regarded her mistress wonder ingly and ventured several remarks when Mademoiselle was out of the way.

Once more that night the curtain rose again and again after every act. and once more the new star bowed and smiled her sweetest, for the enthusiastic audience.

The next morning as a Northern bound express drew into the station at South Kilks a woman clad in heavy furs, alighted from the train and waiked swiftly to the end of the platform

where stood an old vehicle which probably at one time might have been called a stage. She didn't seem to notice dreamed that she was a great and the group of men standing on the platform talking, or the curious glances

In the doorway stood a tall, raw bonaci woman, with arnas akimbo, evideatly the matron, who looked at the new comer for several minutes before answering her inquiry for Min. Tremont

"Mrs. Tremont is not over well," the said, "but come in and you shall see her.**

The old woman was lying on the bad and Margaret Tremont stepped up beside it and leaned over, taking the feeble hand in hers. Her heart was so full she could say nothing. "Be you my Margaret?" asked the old woman opening her eves. "Don't you mind her Miss," said the matron, "she saks every strange person that comes here if they are her Margaret, she was her grand-daughter and ran away one Christmas Eve and joined a show company." The simple reply astonianed her:

"I am Miss Tremont; will you kindly leave me alone with my grandmother." The old women put out her hand and stroked feebly the fur on Margaret's cont. "You be not Margaret," she said, "you're a great lady and she's a little girl, you do look something like what Margaret would look like when she grows up, if it were not for your fine clothes, but you're not my Margaret."

"Grandmother dear, don't you know me?" pleaded Margaret. "I was a lit tle girl that night I left you, when I wore my old blue fiannel dress, I have it yet. And I was a little girl when I used to act plays with your red table cloth for a cloak, but that was years ago, and I'm changed, but look at my face and you'll see your little Margaret." As she said the last words a dawning light seemed to come into the old woman's eyes, she stretched out her arms, and drew her granddaughter to her. "At last, at last!" she murmured.

There was a crowded house that night at the Opera House, who were, elas! doomed to disappointment. There was a rustle of expectation throughout the building before the curtain rose, every one wanted to see the new star who had made such a decided hit. In the front row of the orchestra a man sat playing reationsly with his programme, every now and then he looked at his watca, wondering if the curtain was never going up. Two minutes more and it would. Suddenly there was silence throughout the building, the manager stood before the curtain. What was it he was saying? "I regret to say that owing to an illness in her family, Miss Tremont, our leading lady, will not be present tonight, her understudy will take her place." A waive of discontentment passed over the house. New Yorkers De disappointed and they sho

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formance, she would hear a heavy footstep, and there in the doorway would be her grandmother.

"Margaret Tremont," she would say. "put up that table cloth where it belongs and just stop that nonsense trien to bring disgrace on your family by bein' an actin' woman, we Tremonts that kin boast of six preachers in the family, for shame Margaret Tremont!"

She seemed to see the years slip by as every day fever had grown stronger and everyday she listened to an account of "how she was disgracin' the family with her craze for actin'." Then came the Christmas Eve, when she had run away and joined a traveling company, which was passing through the town. And those years that folhowed. She shuddered even now as she thought of them. Those long evenings when her feet and head ached so, and she had to go through her part, regardless of both, or take the stinging blows or rebuffs of the manager. Gradually, however, things had gotten a little better and it seemed as if the dream of her life would soon be accomplished. Then came that hateful trouble with the managers at Hereford and once more she had to begin at the bottom of the ladder, while she worked and toiled, with the one end in view, to fulfill the ambition of her life. to have her name on every tongue, Ler praises ringing through the world. What cared she for anything else? And now that time had come.

The night before she had chown the



"There was a crowded house that night at the opera house.

world that yet another genius had been hidden from them, that they had found another beautiful, gifted woman to pet and admire and then perhaps forget her when some new star cast her light upon the world.

And this morning she read her praises in the papers, she had also read severe criticisms. But is it not always the truest artists who are criticised the most?

There had been a pile of letters and notes of congratulations and admiration, and a men of great wealth and ancient lineage had just laid his heart and fortune at her feet, she still held his letter in her hand. And yet her mind seemed to roam far away from all this, to thoughts of her old grandmother.

"What had become of her in all these years?" che wondered. The poor old grand mother, who had worked and



"Grandmother dear. don't you know me?"

of the ancient vehicle, half asleep on over to the side of the couch. "Granhis box roused himself and eyed the bie dear. I must leave you to-morrow stranger curiously, but volunteered no questions,

"Will you take me to Mrs. Tremont's with Mr. Raymond. To-morrow is After a shirt has been to the laundry, on the Eloin road?" she asked. The Christmas Day and I shall have to be about three times it is pretty well done driver looked at her for a few minutes, then answered. "reckin as you don't know much about this ere part of the tening attentively to the account of count he is in this world until he at country, miss, if you don't know Mrs. Tremont's been sold out by the Sheriff, and sent to the poorhouse."

The woman put out her hand to steady herself. "Take me to the poorhouse," she said, climbing into the ret." murmured the old grandmother. wagon. The man watched her get in. half aloud. "Have ye known the fine then slowly jerked up his old horse and they went rattling down the street.

It was a long drive and now and then the man eyed curiously his silent passenger. "Friend of Mrs. Tremont's?" he asked after a while. "Yes," was the answer. "Haint seen her for a long time have you?" "Not for a great many years." "She's had a peck of trouble in her day. I don't know as you heard that how her granddaughter, Margaret Tremont, ran away and lined some travelin' show company, and has niver been heerd tell of since. The old lady's heart was most broke then, and she got very feeble and the money went so fast after she was took to her bed, until she had to be sold Opera House was crowded from the him. out and go on the town." The man gallery to the boxes, and once more paused as if expecting some answer but | encore after encore brought Miss Trehe got none. "There was some talk around here, as to how Margaret had become a great actress and was about the driver, after a pause, "but I don't set stock on no such things, it isn't

likely that a Tremont could ever do the like of that, the Tremont's them that boast of six preachers in their family." And so the man ratiled on while every word he said sank like a knife into the woman's heart.

"Suppose she had come too late." she thought, "suppose that weary old soul bowed down with grief and sorrow should have passed away before she could reach her to beg for forgiveness." Then a sudden fear selzed her. "Perhaps she will refuse to forgive me," she said to herself.

As the wagon drew up before the building, the driver looked curiously at the face before him. Somehow it had changed since they left the station. 'Do believe that's Margaret Tremont herself," he thought, as he whipped up his horse and drove off.

it. The man in the front row of the orchestra, who had been playing with his programme, rose and left the building hurriedly. The curtain went up, the performance was a failure, the understudy was pronounced, "very poor." It was a disgusted crowd that left the building at the close of the performance, and it was a weary and disappointed man, who sat in the manager's chair that night.

In the little New England village of South Wilbur a bright light shone once more in the Tremont cottage. Mrs. Tremont lay on a couch watching every movement of her grand-daughter, as she flitted around the room arranging chairs and tables, and putting the room in order.

"And you'll never leave me again, Margaret, my child," said the old lady, which they threw at her. The driver gazing wistfully at her. Margaret went for a few days. It would not be right for me not to fulfill my engagement to make a friend of him.

> in my place." She tried to soothe her, up. and before long the old lady was lis- A man never knows how little ac-Margaret's triumph; of all the things tends his own wedding. the papers had said of her; of the flow. about Randolph's note.

"And all that for my little Margagentleman long Margaret my child, and why did you not take him?" have known him every since that night

at Hereford when he helped me out of the trouble with the manager, and he marry, and overlook after ward. has always been very good to me, but Grannie, I didn't take him because-" There was a knock at the door and manly woman. Maggaret rose and opened it, and the light fell on a tall, handsome man, who stretched out his hands to her. footlights "Margaret!" was all he said. "Come Will, and see grandmother," she answered, closing the door, and leading him into the room.

"Grandmother, here is Mr. Randolph." he is going to be your grandson." Christmas night, and once more the tion and not a theory that confronts mont on the stage.

Again the man in the front row of the orchestra plays with his programme. to marry some rich man," continued and looks impatiently at his watch between each act. But this time he is not alone, for an old lady site by his side, and watches every movement ! of the graceful figure on the stage, on which every eye is fixed.

"I haven't had, a Christmas present for many years," whispers the old lady i islands all over the world. once between the acts, to the man beside her, "but I've gotten a blessed one this year and to think she's my grandchild." And Randolph thought as the curtain rose, that one Christmas gift had done for two people this time, and that he was well satisfied with his solving lump sugar in the common ins share of it.--Mabel Jacques.

An Optimist. May-My, I'm glad Jack isn't a peesimist, if he is near-signted. Maud-Why?

May-Why, he can't tell whether a bunch of anything is mistletoe or not, happy. but he always hopes for the best.

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The man who slways pays cash often leeps ontick. No season is to brief as woman's

love, unless it is man's. The best way to destroy an enemy is

When a girl makes an assignment of ers she had received; and last of all her love her aweetheart is immediately appointed as receiver.

LACONIC PHILOSOPHY.

As an ear-trumpst the average woman is not a success.

Happy are they who look before they There is nothing a manly man ad-

mires more than a girlish girl or a wo-An actress is often indebted to the

forist for the flowers she gets over the It doesn't always make a man happy when a girl returns his lowe especially

when it's returned because she has no Before marriage every man has a theory about managing a wife, but after marriage he finds that it's a condi-

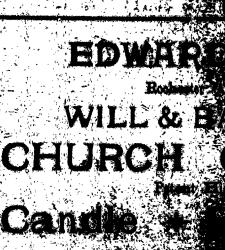
CULLED FROM ALL SIDES.

England makes \$20,000,000 a year profit out of its Post Office Stammering, is practically unknown among unclvilized people. The Victoria Cross carries with it life pension of \$250 a year. Conra is a preparation of the cocos-

nut made in great quantities in tropical Bombay is said to be the most deuse. ly populated city in the world. In certain areas the number of inhabitants is

760 to the acre. Copying ink may be made by disused in the proportion of one drachm of the former to one ounce of the lat-

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