

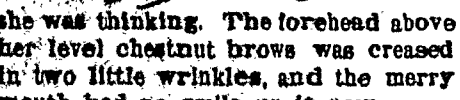


1899 A 1899
S. E. HAMPTON

Winged goddess with wild hair,
Freckles in cheeks clear,
The midnight hour that ushered in
Another glad New Year!
Sing out the Old Year benighted;
Sing in the New Year young and gay!
Sing out, and with the New Year's Ark,
Sing universals on earth!
Sing loud and clear, O virgin maiden,
Sing Christ into the heart of man!
Sing out the old year's sins and shame,
Sing joyful tidings in a new
Sing out the glad New Year,
The message of this night!
S. E. Hampton.

Margery Daw

A New Year Story



MARGERY BAIN was thoughtfully drawing on her gloves. They were by no means new gloves, and the shabby finger tips were not calculated to inspire pleasant thoughts, but it was not of the gloves at all she was thinking. The forehead above her level chestnut brows was creased in two little wrinkles, and the merry mouth had no smile on it now.

"A knife for Andrew, a ball for my little William, a doll of course for Dot, and that's perhaps a dollar gone, and there's old Aunt Sallie, and Uncle Bob, and Mrs. Curtis, and the washerwoman, and—oh, dear!"

"Good-by, mother," she called out cheerily, as she opened the front door. Out in the street a winter breeze was blowing, swirling the dead leaves under her feet, and fluttering her skirts. It blew little tendrils of hair about her ears and kissed warm color into her cheeks. The sun was shining on the chrysanthemums in the yard as she passed, and made the red-bird in her hat a brilliant spot of color.

Margery, Bain and her mother lived in the brown cottage that had always been home to Margery. Her father had been the village doctor, and his kindness of heart and generosity having gone hand in hand with his practice and popularity, he had left only a small competence to his widow. It was barely sufficient to maintain them, as Arthur, the boy, was sent to college to follow his father's profession; and the mother and Margery at home were obliged to use the strictest economy that Arthur might graduate.

To Margery, who had inherited her father's generosity as well as his popularity, this economy was sometimes a sore trial. And now this holiday season had caught her with no preparation made for remembrances, and with a scanty purse. That the old people, or the young ones, whom she had always remembered should think she had forgotten them this time was a bitter thought.

To take poor old Aunt Sally, crippled with rheumatism, a bright chrysanthemum on New Year's Day, when what she needed was a thick, warm, shawl, looked like mockery to practical, generous Margery. The probability for the substitution of the chrysanthemum, however, because of the general impudence of her purse made a salt tear well up in Margery's eyes. And the washerwoman without the big turker Margery wanted her to have—it was dreadful!

There was to be a New Year's entertainment at the church, and the Christmas exercises had been postponed until New Year's eve, when all the exercises were to be held, including the Christmas tree. Her Sunday school class must each receive a gift. Margery had taken hold of the idea with great enthusiasm; but now her heart sank when she remembered her purse. She also remembered several invitations she had issued to outside children and various dependents to be present at the tree. All must receive a present—but how?

Turning sharply round a corner she ran up against somebody. "He was a tall, well-built somebody, and raised his hat."

to her. It was an inspiration, and she grasped it. Perhaps he could help her, perhaps she could find some work to do, and be paid for it.

"I will tell you," she said quickly, as though half afraid her determination would fall her. She planted her umbrella before her and clasped her hands over it and faced him. "I want you to find somebody to give me some work to do, and pay me for it."

"Work!" he echoed. "Pay for it! Why, what's come over you?"

"Don't laugh, Philip," she said. The big eyes looked as though they were dangerously near to welling over again. "Do be good and help me!" she begged again.

"But what new scheme is this?" he asked. "What scrape are you in now?"

"It isn't any scrape," she said, turning away. "I see you don't want to help me, and I can ask some one else."

"Come now, Margery," he said, "brace up and tell me all about it. Let's walk on."

So she told him the grievous difficulty that had befallen her, and he listened gravely enough, and promised to do what he could. When Margery left him he stood staring after her, while the bright red of the bird in her hat went bobbing gayly along.

They had been children together, and Margery had in those days shamefully imposed upon and abused Philip Lake. The day came when Philip went off to college. When he returned little "Margery Daw" was Miss Bain and when he tried to take up his old familiar footing there was a jar and discord which surprised him. Margery resented his taking it for granted that she remembered all that "childish nonsense," she refused to be called "Margery Daw," as of old, she shrank from his brotherly friendliness.

So Philip Lake dropped into teasing her and coaxing by turns; never angry when her mood turned into anger, and the first to welcome the dimpling smiles after the frowns. When their names were coupled by the gossip, Margery vigorously denied the accusation, and purged up her mouth in a charming point.

Next day Philip Lake presented himself at Mrs. Bain's door. He carried a large box and a long book. Margery, spying him from afar, had rushed down to meet him.

"Well, Philip, how do you do?" she exclaimed. "Do come in. I'm so glad to see you, for you look as if you had good news. Tell me right away."

He came in, deliberately, and slowly divesting himself of his overcoat and hat. Margery pranced about him excitedly. She would have liked to have shaken him—but he was too hopelessly tall.

"Now, Margery," he said finally. "I have found you some work, but there's one great objection to it."

"And that?" she said, eagerly. "Well, it's work for me. I was afraid you'd object."

She was looking joyfully at him. "I'm not objecting," she cried. "Does it pay?"

"Oh, yes, it pays. Five dollars a thousand names. I need some envelopes directed, and if you care to do it all right. But you never do care to do anything for me."

"Never mind; please forgive me, Philip. I'm so glad you needed envelopes. So these are the envelopes in this box? Where are the names? I'll start right away."

"I'm going to be very business-like with you," he said. "You must not get a single blot on them nor on the book. Do you hear, Margery Daw?"

"And if I do—what then?" she said, tugging the book to her. "I won't pay you!" he cried, as he opened the door. "Mind that, Margery Daw!"

The work of addressing the envelopes went on apace. Philip Lake was obliged to call daily to receive the envelopes that were completed. Once he

"I beg your pardon," he said gravely, scolded her for a tiny blot. She reddened and dropped her eyes, confused and ashamed. And when she faltered out that she was sorry, he longed to take her in his arms and tell her he was only joking. But Margery had taken the business arrangement quite seriously.

When the first thousand was nearly completed she showed him her list of gifts. Every one was remembered. His eyes blurred a little as he went over the list—it was such a loving heart that had prompted it. Her eyes were shining with delight. He would not have acknowledged that he was looking for his own name on the list, but a faint hope made him read each name carefully. His was not down. Another name was there, to which he returned and read again.

"Pray say nothing more," said Philip, stiffly. "I beg your pardon."

There was a silence. Philip rose, still fingering the list. Margery patted her foot upon the floor and began to hum a tune airily. Philip fidgeted; he walked from the mantel to Margery's chair, and suddenly bent over it.

"You know, Margery," he began, "I have never cared for any one but you, but I hardly thought you would act this way. I thought you would have told your old playmate about your engagement when it had gone so far as to exchange rings. I believed you when you said your mother had given you the ring you wear."

Margery looked up indignantly, but at once looked down again. She tried to release her fingers.

"No, please sit still," he said. "I have not much more to say; what can I say?" he added bitterly. "I believed you all that was frank and open and lovable. Had any one else told me this I would not have believed it."



"Pray say nothing more," said Philip, stiffly.

She sat perfectly silent and quiet. He picked up his hat and walked to the door. Even there he turned, hoping that in some way he would find out it was all a mistake. But the still, upright figure beside the window had not stirred, nor unclasped her hands, nor looked toward him. She was proudly indifferent to his coming or going.

But when he had gone, two small, white hands stole up to her eyes and wiped away the blinding tears, crushing the violets upon her breast. Rebellious, indignant thoughts came to her; anger and grief struggled till grief conquered, and she rose and put away the envelopes in the long box and tied up the book with it.

When, next day, a courteous note came from Philip, asking for the completed envelopes and inclosing a crisp five dollar bill as payment, a note came back in reply, also inclosing the self-same crisp five dollar bill, and stating that, as she did not care to finish the work, she did not feel entitled to the money. She also returned the envelopes and book.

A few moments later Philip was staring at her note and the money. He was not surprised. But he thought of her bitter disappointment over the Christmas presents and the tree.

"Hang it all!" he said. "Poor little Margery. I'm sure I could not help it." But he did no work that afternoon, occupying himself with unpleasant and unhappy thoughts instead.

When twilight fell he rose from his chair, shoving the note into his pocket. His fingers fell upon an scrap of paper; he found her list crumpled up. Smoothing it out, he scanned again the names.

Monday morning dawned bright and beautiful. All was activity in the little church in the afternoon. The tree had been set up and many fingers labored over its decoration. Philip passing by stopped in and his eye searched the church for the bright curly head that was so sure to be there.

"Miss Bain?" said one of the girls, in reply to his inquiry. "Why, she sprained her ankle climbing up that ladder, and has gone home."

The tree suddenly lost interest for Philip. He told himself he need not care if she were hurt; he had no right to care. It was another's right. He did not care to say whose. When night came and the tree was lit, and the little church was full of delighted and wild-eyed children, Philip came again. He had wandered restlessly about all day and found no peace. A laugh and a pair of eyes haunted him.

He suffered pain as he thought of a bruised and aching ankle. "Better her ankle than her heart," he said savagely, to himself.

Up in the choir gallery, wrapped inshawls and behind the choir, sat Margery Bain. She had begged to come, and her mother had yielded. So a neighbor's carriage had brought her, and, anxious to avoid notice, and sad at heart because of her disappointment, there she sat while gift after gift was plucked from the wonderful tree, dazzling with its candles and tinsel strings. Her poor little cards of greeting were called out, and she saw her class file up to receive them. But what was this? She leaned forward in surprise. Not only the little cards were given, but more; a doll for Dot, a pearl knife for William, a football for Andrew. The roses flamed in her cheeks when a warm shawl was handed out for Aunt Sally. So on through her list; her own list which she had been obliged to discard. She sank back amazed; who could have done it? She thought of a certain small envelope hanging on the tree. It was addressed "Mr. Philip Lake." When she had hung it there her foot had slipped, and it was there she had received the ugly strain.

The strain had been punishment enough, but now her cup of unhappiness would be full. In a moment the envelope would be called out, and she would see Philip step out to receive it. Shivering and hot by turns, she waited for that moment. It did not come. She witnessed the surprise and delight of each child at his present; no one was forgotten. She heard her own name called at last, and saw her friend take possession of a small box. But it was all in a dream. She was confused, bewildered and uncertain.

There was a step on the choir stairs. "Yes, I am quite ready, Mrs. Norris," said Margery, faintly. "I shall be glad to get home."

There was no answer. She looked up, and it was Philip. He held out his hand, but she would not see it. "It is not Mrs. Norris," he said. "Please tell her I want to go home," said Margery, and then she forced herself to look at him, proudly, coldly. He caught her hand, proudly she would or not.

"Margery! dear little Margery; please forgive me. I have been such a fool. I know you don't care for me, but I am sorry, very sorry, to have spoken to you as I did. Just let me tell you that I was with the minister a moment ago, and he introduced me to his cousin, Allen Muir, and his bride. I know now there was some mistake, but you did not tell me then."

"How could I?" she threw at him. "You did not ask me. You took it on yourself to accuse," she said.

"Yes, Margery, I know I was a brute," he said humbly. "But let me take you home. You must, Mrs. Norris is gone, for I told her I would see you home."

She permitted him to wrap her up and help her down the steps. The cold little hands in his and the clinging arm made his heart ache. He drove away in silence. Only once during the drive she spoke. "Will you please tell me how it was that the children received those presents?"

"I found your list," he answered, "and I took the liberty to send them—"

"It was a liberty," she said coldly. "You need not have used my name. I did not send them."

"Margery," he said, very gently, checking his horse into a walk. "At least let us part friends. I have said I was sorry to have wronged you. You wronged me when you refused to finish the work for me. It was a most unpleasant little note you sent me, and it was just because I did not want those children to be disappointed that I sent the presents to the tree. I want you to say you forgive me, and be friends again."

His voice shook just a little. There was no answer. "Please, darling Margery," a stifled sound came from behind the laprobe and coverings.

"There—there was something on the tree for you," she whispered. "I must tell you. It was an envelope with—"

"With what?"

"I can't tell you," she whispered. "You can look on the tree for it tomorrow. Please let me go."

"We are at the gate," he said gently. "Tell me we are friends, Margery. I have loved you so much, dear little girl."

No answer came. He pushed down the laprobe and tried to help her out. "Will you tell me we are friends again?" he asked.

"No, no," she said faintly. "Never!"

His hand shook on her arm, and as he moved he felt that arm steal up to his neck, and Margery said in a voice that came from somewhere about his coat collar:

"Because, dear Philip, we can't—because—oh, Philip!" and the rest was lost.

The thousand stars were twinkling in the deep, dark sky, and the clear night rang with distant bells.

In a little church that moment, where stood a dismantled tree, its many candles burnt out and its gay fruit stripped, a tiny edge of an envelope hung over an extinguished light; the heat of the candle had scorched and burnt the little missive, and only an edge remained. No one noticed it, and only one could ever have told its origin or contents.

In Philip Lake's pocket was another envelope. It was the only item on the Christmas list which was never delivered. In the envelope was a gold ring, marked with a tag, "Allen Muir." But Allen Muir never received it, for another ring had gone to him instead, the ring which he had asked Margery to buy for his wedding day, and which even now was shining lovingly on that happy bride's hand.

A silver star shot from its place in the sky like a jewel from its setting. Tiny sparks trailed from it as it sped, and lit up the ether. A sudden chime of bells pealed out. But to "Margery Daw" the whole world was chiming, and the light of his life shone in her upturned eyes.

"You did not ask me, Philip," she was saying. "And I can't help laughing at you now, because you must remember you were so sure I didn't care at all!"



YOUNG YEAR? OLD YEAR?

Young Ninety-nine,
On time—on time,
In horseless carriage speeds this way;
From smiling earth's
Remotest girth
Ring welcoming shouts, "Hooray,
Hooray!"

Old Ninety-eight,
It's fate—it's fate,
With you the jaded nag's lost away.
It seems too bad
That joys half sad
Must linger while we say "good-day!"
—S. E. Hampton.

'Twill BE A MERRY DAY

No More Sewing and Re-binding for Her to Do.

There is one little woman in a big city who is sure of a Happy New Year, and there is lots of romance in real life yet, though pessimists pretend that it's all dead.

So many people are ready to tell their troubles that it seems good once in a while to see the "high light" of happiness.

"I have a pretty hard time," said the little woman, with a joyful choke in her voice. "Going out dressmaking by the day is constant struggle, first to get the work at all, then to do as much in nine or ten hours as people expect."

"I can hardly realize that I have never got to alter any more sleeves, or contrive a sheath shaped skirt out of a seven gored godet pleated affair, or turn an old tailor made into a satisfactory bicycle suit with neatness while I emphasize the despatch."

"It seems like a fairy tale all that happened last week, and oh! I came so near to missing my joy."

"You see, I had told the lady for whom I had been sewing that I would if possible, come on Friday morning to rebind a skirt."

"When Friday came I was so exhausted it seemed as though I could not go, and as I had not positively promised I was almost tempted not to do so, but the money, the money! I needed it. How glad I am now that I was just so poor."

"I thought the lady a little cold-hearted not to ask me to take any luncheon, as it was noon when my work was done, but that was a blessing in disguise."

"As I left the house a gentleman was coming up the stoop."

"Does Mrs. Edward Milbank live here?" he asked, and then said:—

"Why, Christine, is that you?"

"I stared at him. I didn't know him from Adam until he said:—

"Oh, Chrissy, you are not angry with me after all these years?"

"I didn't faint, Miss Polly, I was too much afraid he'd get away, but I had to hold on to the railing."

"We had been very good friends in the old days, but I thought he didn't care, and he thought I didn't, so we drifted apart, though I never loved any one else. No more drifting, no more parting; I feel as though I wanted the whole world to know that New Year is to be my wedding day."

POLITENESS PAYS.

Of course we all intended to take time by the forelock—poor old Father Time! I should think he'd be a trifle bald, so many seizing him by the hair—and be beforehand with our holiday shopping.

One of the reasons we cannot, even if we tried, is because the real novelties are not put forward much before the first of December, and then shopping is so tiresome, comic paragraphers to the contrary notwithstanding, that people try to persuade themselves until almost the last moment that they won't get a gift for any one but the children.

I really think it would pay the managers of some of the big department shops—yes, and little undepartment ones, too—to pretend to be customers and have a "customer drill" on rainy days of when business was dull, and train the salesmen and women, particularly the women, though I hate to say it, to treat those who come to buy in a businesslike way.

In some of the high class shops the saleswomen are too supercilious for words.

I know, I know that it is hard to stand behind a counter from morning until night, but rushing about trying to get something to please a friend isn't an unmitigated delight. One could be forgiving just these few weeks, but it's all the year round.

An acquaintance of mine, the wife of a millionaire, visited the cloak department of such a shop the other day. She dresses plainly and is unpretentious. Seeing a garment that pleased her, she asked one of the finely formed maiden in attendance the price of it, placing her hand upon it as she spoke.

"That's a high cost garment," was the reply, as her hand was pushed aside. "You'll find what you want at the lower end of the room."

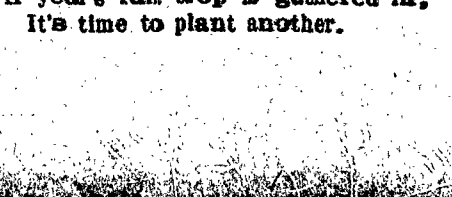
A Unique Magazine.

"By George! I must buy this magazine and take it home."

"Why? It's just the same as the one you got the other day. It has 153 pages of advertising and twenty-one pages of reading matter, which is made up of—"

"Hold on, now, you're going to make a mistake there. I admit that it has 153 pages of advertising, all the 'ads' being just like the ones in the other magazine, I bought, and that it has twenty-one pages of reading matter deftly sandwiched in, but there the similarity ends. This one actually has three articles which are not about the war."

Reflections of a Bachelor.



Here's for a year of hope and cheer
Which no ill luck can gather in;
A year's full crop is cared in;
It's time to plant another.

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