

The First Born.

A little, little lock of golden hair
Nestled above the tender heart his head
Once pressed—from her soft pillow there
Death took the babe to bed.

Between his cradle and his coffin's smile
—Counted by all but her a sheaf of days,—

Was such a very little while,
Still for her first she prays.

And oftentimes in common household things,
A simple word will fail to show us where
Her heart is, while above it warms and stings
The little lock of hair.

Lucinda's Christmas Vision.

"I wonder if I'll have plush furniture and a velvet carpet in Heaven!" muttered Lucinda Holden, as she plied the broom energetically to the faded rag carpet on the floor of the best room in the old farmhouse. "Some folks believe you'll get the thing you've wanted most on earth, and land knows I've just hungered and thirsted for beautiful furniture, and a carpet your feet'll sink way down in as you walk on 't, ever since I kept house. Jotham says what's good enough for his mother's good enough for me, so rag carpets and cane bottomed chairs have been my lot for the past twenty years. I suppose I'm wicked and rebellious to complain, long's I have enough to eat and a roof over my head; but somehow it takes more'n that to make one satisfied with life. Suppose it does keep the breath in these perishing bodies of ours, seems to me the soul needs something to keep it a-goin', too, and beautiful things to look at, an' to feel on 'em to use every day, too, is the kind of food some souls just about starve for." Lucinda paused to catch her breath, and to skake a large braided mat out the front door. A wistful look was in the woman's eyes as they glanced quickly over the glorious winter landscape spread out before her.

"The Lord favors beauty, too," continued she, "or he wouldn't a' made this earth so lovely to look at, an' he didn't believe in usin' old things till one gets sick an' tired of the sight on 'em, either. For four times a year he just strips the whole earth of its worn out finery, an' rigs her up in new, an' always more beautiful than the last. Goodness knows what I'd do if I couldn't see my eyes on the Lord's handiwork. Just the same, 't would be mighty soul satisfying when one's shut up in the house a good part of the time, to look at somethin' besides mother Holden's faded rag carpets an' patchwork bed-quilts."

"Hello! Mis' Holden," called out a voice as she paused in her soliloquy and was about to close the door. "Here's a letter for ye." Ben down to the village, an' long's I was a-goin' by, thought I'd bring it to ye."

"Much obliged, Mr. Thompson," answered Lucinda, taking the letter from the man's outstretched hand. "How's Mis' Thomson's rheumatism?"

"Fair to middlin', fair to middlin', Mis' Holden," answered the man stamping about in the snow, and swinging his arms back and forth for warmth. "Jotham pretty smart this winter?"

"Pretty fair, Mr. Thompson. Gets a little epilepsy once in a while, but nothin' to speak on," said Lucinda, impatiently fingering the letter in her hand.

"Haint got no bad news, have ye?" questioned the man curiously.

"I haven't, read my letter yet, Mr. Thompson," answered Lucinda with dignity.

"Sho' now, so ye haint," said he, with a good natured grin. "Well, I'll go along an' gin ye a chance, 't swingin' about he tramped off through the snow with a jolly whistle."

Hastening into the house, Lucinda piled fresh logs on the kitchen fireplace, and, seating herself in a comfortable old-fashioned rocker, tore open her letter.

NEW YORK, Dec.—18,—

"Dear Cousin Lucinda (she read aloud):—I am coming to the wilds of Vermont to spend Christmas with you and Jotham. So kill the tatted calf (that is the old hen-turkey), make some of those good, old fashioned pumpkin pies, and let us make merry as we did when we were children and I spent my summers with you at the dear, old farm. To tell the truth, dear coz, I'm tired of fuss and feathers, fashion and frivolity, and long for the simplicity of country life, and the sight of your dear good face. So with this hope to sustain me till I realize my desire, I'll say Au revoir."

"Your affectionate cousin
"MILDRED ROBERTS."

"Hum!" muttered Lucinda, a little dryly as she toiled her letter and gazed musingly into the fire. "Milly must be either bilious or in love to want to leave her beautiful home and come up here in the dead o' winter. Seems sort o' queer now't I think on't that she never married, an' she's a good deal past thirty, too. Well, she's had plenty o' money, and a fine house filled with beautiful things, all her life, an' perhaps she's just as well off without a husband to tell her when to buy new carpets an' things; an' odd smile crept around Lucinda's mouth as she paused."

The sound of sleigh-bells aroused her, and springing up she hastened to the door, just as a stylish looking woman sprang from the sleigh and came swiftly to ward the house.

"Here I am, cousin Lucy, three weeks ahead of time!" cried she, embracing Lucinda affectionately. "I just couldn't wait, after I had decided to come, so I followed my letter immediately. Oh! how good it seems to see the dear old farm again." Swift tears sprang to Mildred's eyes as she spoke.

Lucinda watched her cousin gravely. "I'm real glad to see you, Milly, though I'm sort o' surprised you should a' wanted to come to this dreary place in the winter, an' leave your gay city."

"I'm tired of its gaiety, Lucy, fearfully tired," answered Mildred, wearily. "Is it your liver or your heart, Milly?" said Lucinda, with a sharp look into her cousin's eyes.

Mildred colored, though she glanced up with a merry laugh.

"A little of both, perhaps, Lucy," said she with a slight catch in her voice.

"I kind of thought so," said Lucinda quietly.

There was a strong resemblance between the two cousins, both having the same fine, brown eyes, dark wavy hair, and the same cast of features. Yet the environment of each had made them seem like creatures of different worlds.

Mildred Robert's straight figure, with its graceful curves, was set off by her rich and fashionable travelling dress. While her becomingly arranged hair, smooth, round cheeks, and clear eyes gave her a youthful, girlish look, which belied her years. Lucinda Holden was but five years older than her cousin Milly, yet she looked fifteen. Her figure was thin and shrunken, with a slight stoop of the shoulders. Silver threads had made their home among those dark brown tresses, and her eyes had a tired, yearning look, that spoke of the soul hunger within. Mildred's sharp eyes followed her about, and she thought to herself with a sudden pang:

"How old cousin Lucinda has grown!"

It was but a few days later that something happened in that quiet household. Something so unusual that Jotham Holden's slow wits could hardly grasp the situation.

Lucinda was down sick with a fever. With flushed cheeks and brilliant eyes, she tossed restlessly upon her pillow, muttering incoherently of "Velvet carpets, plush chairs, the Heavenly city, and the Lord's handiwork."

Such a jumble of words, with no sense nor meaning for Milly or Jotham! With all the speed he was capable of, Jotham Holden started for the doctor, while Milly installed herself as her cousin's nurse. As she watched eagerly for the doctor's arrival she was astonished to see, instead of the usual country practitioner in his old fashioned turnout a stylish looking sleigh pause before the house, and a tall, handsome man of middle age walk briskly up to the door.

Something strangely familiar in the man's looks caused Mildred's heart to throb wildly, as she opened the door. Lifting his hat the man's eyes met her own, and the recognition was mutual. With somewhat heightened color, he held out his hand, saying:

"This is a surprise, indeed, Miss Roberts, to meet you in this out of the way place after so many years. How does it happen?"

"Mrs. Holden is my cousin, and I have come to spend Christmas with her, Dr. Alan," answered Mildred, shaking hands gravely. "And what brings you to this part of the world; I thought you had gone abroad?"

"Force of circumstance causes many changes in one's plans, Miss Roberts, and the death of Dr. Whitney, who was an uncle of mine, was the primary cause of my coming to this little country town, where, for the present, I seem to be the only practicing physician," answered he. "Then with a swift change of tone, he added: 'Can I see my patient now?'"

In spite of her anxiety for her cousin, Mildred's mind was in a tumult of emotion at this unexpected revival of a past in which this man was the principal figure. A past that had been both bitter and sweet. Sweet with the tenderness of a deeper love than her proud heart would acknowledge. Bitter, because of that fatal mistake which had so nearly wrecked her life's happiness. Could it be that late was to give her one more chance?

Beside Lucinda's sick bed the two met daily, and with untiring skill and devotion started anew the life current in that tired frame.

Never in the days of her youth and belated, when surrounded by wealth, the center of an admiring throng, had Milly seemed so adorably sweet and womanly, in the eyes of Dr. Howard Alan, as she did while ministering to her sick cousin. And the woman's heart passed unreservedly into the keeping of this grave-eyed physician, as she worked by his side through those anxious days. So they both knew that the mistakes of the past were forgotten while the future held for them joy unspeakable.

"I've had such a strange dream, Milly," said Lucinda, a few days after the fever had left her. "I thought I had gone to

Heaven to spend Christmas with the Lord. It was such a beautiful city, I just walked along admiring everything. Suddenly I came to a grand mansion, with a shining door-plate on the front of it, an' feelin' sort o' curious I stopped to see who lived there. An' there, in gold letters, was my own name, 'Lucinda Holden.' Almost as if someone was pushin' me, I walked straight into that house."

"O Milly! I never'll forget how lovely it was. Such soft, velvet carpets your feet went down deep at every step. Such beautiful chairs, all cushioned with pleasant shinning silks. An' books an' flowers an' pictures everywhere. I just looked an' till my eyes fairly ached with the glory of it. Then, all at once, I saw someone standin' near me. So kind an' gentle, so tender an' sweet was that face, Milly, I knew 't was the Lord. I sank down upon my knees before Him, an' cried; 'It is so beautiful here, dear Lord, let me stay.'"

"With a smile so sad an' sweet that it pined me through an' through, He answered, softly: 'Not yet,—an' then I awoke.'"

The tears were running swiftly down Lucinda's cheeks, though her pale lips tried to smile as she added, quaintly:

"So you see, Milly, it's sort of hard to have to come back to mother Holden's rag carpets again."

A great flood of compassion filled Mildred's heart, as her cousin's soul lay bare before her. Oh! how blind she had been! With a silent kiss, she passed swiftly from the room and out into the kitchen, where Jotham sat whittling a stick before the fire.

"Jotham Holden, you've very nearly starved that wife of yours to death!" said she, in a fierce whisper.

"Not as I knowed on, cousin Milly. There's always been plenty o' victuals in my house," answered Jotham, with dignity.

"Victuals, victuals!" sniffed Milly, scornfully. "Oh, yes, victuals to feed her body, I know. But what is there in this great empty barn of a house to feed a beauty loving soul like Lucinda's?"

Jotham's eyes followed the sweep of Milly's arm, as she waved it tragically about, then coming back to her excited face, he said, slowly:

"So ye think it's Lucy's soul I've starved do ye? Well, I've thought for some time there was somethin' the matter with Lucinda's in'ards, but I never supposed it was a starved soul. Now what's the prescription for 't cousin Milly?"

Mildred's eyes flashed. "New wall paper, fresh paint and white-wash; then new carpets, new furniture, plenty of books, pictures and flowers," said she, breathlessly.

Jotham whistled, softly. "Gues you think money's a plenty round these parts, cousin Milly," said he.

"But I've got more than I need, Jotham, and I'd willingly share—" eagerly began Mildred, when Jotham interrupted her.

"Oh! I aint so poor, cousin Milly, that I need charity yet. 'So if your prescription's the cure for what's ailin' Lucy, I don't know but we'd better try it,' said he, quietly, going on with his whittling.

On Christmas day Lucinda was to leave her room for the first time. With a happy, excited face Milly dressed her cousin in the dainty, new wrapper she had made for her.

"How you have chirped up lately, cousin Milly!" said Lucinda, watching her curiously. "Nussin' seems to agree with ye. Gues you an' Dr. Alan'd better go into partnership."

Mildred blushed, and laughed softly. "That's just what we are going to do, Lucy," said she.

"Hum!" said Lucinda, dryly, "so he's the man, is he?"

"Yes, dear coz, he's the man," answered Milly, gaily.

A little later, as Jotham Holden lifted his wife's slight figure in his strong arms and carried her into the sitting-room, it seemed to Lucinda's dazzled eyes that her dream had come true. Dainty colored paper covered the walls. A rich, soft carpet was on the floor, and a comfortable couch, bright and luxuriant; while easy chairs were scattered about; a bookcase filled with such a wealth of reading, and on a stand beside the couch where Lucinda lay was a bouquet of lovely flowers.

"O cousin Milly! how can I thank—," cried Lucinda, but Mildred stopped her.

"Thank Jotham, Lucy, dear, for he has done it all. Every bit of it," said she, generously.

The look in his wife's eyes and the clasp of those pale fingers around his own, was a revelation to Jotham Holden that he never forgot.

"I guess I don't want to go to Heaven just yet, cousin Milly," said Lucinda, with a misty smile.—in Portland Transcript.

A Dog Catcher Caught.

A black French poodle was trotting down Fifth Avenue, N. Y., on a breezy, bright afternoon, with a fine, straight young woman. The dog seemed proud of his mistress, and the girl was proud of her dog. While all was peaceful and danger seemed nowhere nigh, a covered wagon, having on its seat two repulsive men, came around a corner. One of the ruffians leaped to the ground and made a quick plunge for the dog, catching it by the hind leg, and whirling it about his head in a circle, running as he did so toward the rear of his wagon. Quicker than it takes to say so, the young woman was in front of the tough, with one hand clutching his coat collar and the other holding the muzzle of a silver-mounted smelling bottle to his face.

"You droop my dog or I'll shoot you," said the girl.

The fellow said: "Don't yer see we're dog catchers? Der dog goes along wid us, see?"

The girl's face took on a more ominous look. The dog, still in the grasp of the man, was twisting to get away, and yelping with pain.



Tired? Oh, No.

This soap



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It's pure soap, lathers freely,
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The clothes come out sweet
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SURPRISE is economical, it wears well.

"If you do not drop my dog this instant," said the girl, "I will fire. Do you hear me?"

The catcher dropped the dog. By this time people were coming up to see the disturbance. The young woman put the bogus weapon into the small chateleine bag that she wore, and accompanied by her dog, pursued her morning walk.—New York Sun.

HEALTHY STOMACH!

Happy Man! Nothing Experimental About Using the Great South American Nerve—What it has done for Thousands it can do for you.

Here are Strong Words from a Reliable Business Man—Read Them.

I have been a great sufferer from indigestion and dyspepsia. I tried many remedies, but obtained very little relief. I saw South American Nerve advertised, and concluded to give it a trial, and I must say I consider it the very best medicine I have ever used. I obtained great relief from the first few doses. I have only used two bottles, and am happy to say it has made a new man of me. I strongly recommend it to fellow-sufferers. C. PEARCE, Dry goods Merchant, Forest, Ont.

How it Felt.

A worthy old gentleman who had never wandered far from his native township before, went to Boston one day in response to an invitation to visit a relative.

The Bostonian in showing his friend about town, took him to the top of a tall office building. They took a look at the marvellous landscape spread out before them and prepared to descend. They entered the elevator. It began its swift journey downward.

Don't be frightened, Uncle Silas, said the younger man, as his visitor grasped his arm, shut his eyes, and held on for life. "There is no danger."

"I wasn't afraid, George," gasped Uncle Silas, after they had stepped out of the elevator, "but I—I left my stomach up there!"

The New Woman.

Now enters upon pursuits formerly monopolized by men. But the feminine nerves are still hers and she suffers from toothache. To her we recommend Nerviline—nerve-pain cure—cures toothache in a moment. Nerviline, the most marvellous pain remedy known to science. Nerviline may be used efficaciously for all nerve pain.

CRUEL SCIATICA.

Incessant Pain—Tormented—Racked—Life Despaired of.

John Marshall, Varney, P. O., Co. of Grey, writes these strong words: "For two years I was completely laid up with sciatica. I doctored without any permanent relief. I had given up hope. A friend saw the notice of a cure of what seemed a parallel case to mine, by South American Rheumatic Cure, and knowing my little faith in the efficacy of any remedy, he procured a bottle himself, and brought it to me. I took it, and to make a long story short, it saved my life. In a day or so I was out of bed, and in three days I was able to walk to Durham, a distance of four miles, to purchase another bottle. I am now entirely cured."

Saving Sixpence.

Patric, a thrifty tradesman in the neighborhood of the Dublin docks, was, as the story goes, a man who never spent a penny more than he needed to spend; but he was, nevertheless, as good a man at the making of an Irish bill as any that lived between Bantry and Ballycastle. Having one day urgent occasion to send

a letter to Glasnevin, Patric called a messenger and asked him his price for going such a distance.

"It'll be a shillin'," said the man. "Twice too much!" said Patric. "Let it be sixpence."

"Niver," answered the messenger. "The way is that lonely that I'd never go it under a shillin'."

"Lonely, is it?" said Patric, scratching his head. "Faith an' ye're roight. Now, man, I'll tell ye what we'll do; make it sixpence an' I'll go wid ye to kape ye company!"

A Growing Pension List.

The annual report of Pension Commissioner Evans shows that the names of about fifty thousand new pensioners were added to the rolls during the year, and that there was a net increase of a little more than five thousand in the whole number. The number now borne on the rolls is but a little short of one million—in exact figures 976,014; and the amount disbursed in pensions during the year was about one hundred and forty million dollars. The report recommends the publication of a complete list of pensioners, to aid the detection of fraud.

KIDNEY WAR.

How insidiously it Wages, but how Quick the Surrender, and how the Flag of Truce is Hurriedly Hoisted when that Great General, South American Kidney Cure, Turns his Guns on the Disease.

This is what James Sullivan, of Chatham, Ont., writes: "For years I was a great sufferer from Kidney trouble. The disease became so acute that I was confined to the house, and I was greatly afflicted with insomnia. I was persuaded after using many other remedies without relief to procure a bottle of South American Kidney Cure. I had relief almost from the first dose. I have persisted in its use, and after using six bottles I am well and strong again. I can work fourteen hours out of twenty-four and feel very little, if any, fatigue. It is the best medicine I have ever used."

AUSTRALIAN PLUCK.

A Frontier Life Develops Pluck and Endurance.

Life on the frontier of civilization is favorable to the development of patient endurance of what cannot be helped, and that is about what is meant by the good old world pluck. A good example of this quality is cited by the author of 'A Colonial Tramp.'

All Australian boys are taught the necessity of guarding against snake-bites, and the method of treating them. Two little fellows, six and eight years old, had gone into the bush to play. The smaller one, chasing a rabbit into a hole, pushed in his hand and brought it back quickly, with the head of a most venomous snake attached to one of the fingers.

"Quick, Charley!" he cried, putting down his hand on a stump. "Chop off my finger—the snake has bitten it."

Charley, without hesitation, lifted his axe and chopped off not only the damaged finger but two others as well. Then the boys ran into town, over a mile distant, to a chemist, who plunged the bleeding stumps into the strongest ammonia and afterwards dressed the hand. Think of that, my staunch young fellow, and then try the effect of ammonia on a little scratch.

A Compensation.

Ethel—Tommy Prescott's mamma is deaf. That must be awful!
Johnnie—Oh, I don't know. I'll bet she never tells him that little boys should be seen and not heard!

DR. WOOD'S

Norway Pine Syrup.

Rich in the lung-healing virtues of the Pine combined with the soothing and expectorant properties of other pectoral herbs and barks.

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