

CICELY'S NEW YEAR ROSES.

There was a noisy whir of a sewing-machine in Madame Levaney's large dress-making establishment. Cicely Leeds' head ached as she bent over the mill she was hemming. She was the youngest seamstress in the room, and she wore her hair hanging in two long braids.

It seemed a pity such girlish shoulders should be learning to stoop, and that her eyes had to bear such a constant strain. The light was particularly bad this afternoon. Every curtain was raised to the top of its big window, but the dull December sky was as gray as a fog. Even the snow on the surrounding housetops looked gray and dirty in the smoky haze.

Now and then Cicely looked up from her work and glanced out of the window. The cold grayness of the outdoor world made her shiver. It was a world of sooty chimney-tops as she saw it, with a few chilly sparrows huddled in a disconsolate row along the eaves. It would soon be time to be going home, and the only home Cicely had now was a cheerless little back bedroom in a cheap boarding-house. She dreaded going back to it. It was at least warm in Madame Levaney's steam heated workrooms, and it was better to have the noise and confusion than the cold solitude.

Cicely's chair was one nearest the entrance to the parlor where madame received her customers, and presently some one passing through the door left it ajar. Above the hum of the machines Cicely could hear a voice that she recognized. It was that of Miss Shelby a young society girl who was one of Madame's wealthiest customers.

'I've brought my cousin, Miss Balfour,' Cicely heard her say, 'and we want to ask such a favor of you, madame. You see my cousin stopped here yesterday on her way East, intending to remain only one night with us, but we've persuaded her to stay over to our party on New Year's eve. Her trunks have gone on, and of course she hasn't a thing in the way of an evening dress. But I told her you would come to the rescue. You are always so clever—you could get her up a simple little party gown in no time. So, on the way down, we stopped at Bailey's and she bought the material for it. Show it to madame, Rhoda. It's a perfect dream!'

Cicely heard the snapping of a string, the rustling of paper, and then madame's affected little cry of admiration. But at the next word she knew just how the little Frenchwoman was shrugging her shoulders, with clasped hands and raised eyebrows.

'But, mademoiselle,' Cicely heard her protesting, 'it is impossible! If you will but step to do door one instant and observe! Evair' one is busy. Evair' one work, work work to zis fullest capacitee. Look! All zis gowns zat mus' be complete before zis New Year dawn, and only two more day!'

She stepped to the door, and with a dramatic gesture pointed to the busy sewing women and the chairs and tables covered with dresses in all stages of construction.

'Only two day, and all zese yet to be teens for zat same ball! Much as I desire, it is not possible!'

Every one looked up as the two girls stood a moment in the doorway. Miss Shelby glanced around in a coldly indifferent way holding up her broadcloth skirt that it might escape the ravellings and scraps scattered over the floor. She was a tall brunette as elegantly dressed as any figure in madame's latest Parisian fashion-plate.

'Why can't you put somebody else off to accommodate me just this once?' she said. 'It is a matter of great importance. My cousin has already brought the material on my promise that you would make it up for her. I think you might make a little extra effort in this case, madame, when you remember that I was one of your first customers, and that I really brought you half your trade.'

The little Frenchwoman wrung her hands. 'I do remember, mademoiselle! Indeed! Indeed! But you see for yourself zis situation. What can I do?'

'Make some of the women come back at night,' answered Miss Shelby, turning back into the parlor, 'and have them take some of the work home to finish. I'm sure you might be obliging enough to favor me.'

Miss Balfour had taken no part in the conversation. She stood beside her cousin, fully as tall and handsome as she, and resembling her in both face and figure, but there was something in her expression that attracted Cicely as much as the other girl had repelled her.

Miss Shelby had not seemed to distin-

guish the sewing women from their machines, but Rhoda Balfour noticed how pallid were some of the faces, and how gray was the hair on the temples of the old woman in the corner, bending over her buttonholes. When her glance reached Cicely, the appealing little figure in the black gown, she could not help but notice the admiration that showed so plainly in the girl's face, and involuntarily she smiled in response, a bright, friendly smile.

As she turned away she did not see the sudden flush that rose to Cicely's cheeks, and did not know that her recognition had sent the blood surging warmly through the sad and discouraged heart. It had been two months since Cicely Leeds had been left alone in the strange city, and this was the first time in all those weeks that any one had smiled at her.

Sometimes it seemed to her that the loneliness would kill her if she knew it must go on indefinitely. But Marcelle's promise helped her to bear it. Marcelle was her older sister, the only person in the world left to her, and Marcelle was teaching the village school at home. In another year the last penny of the debts their father had left when he died would be paid, and Marcelle would be free to send for Cicely then, and life would not be so hard. Just now there was no other way for Cicely to live but to take the small wages madame offered, and be thankful that she was having such an opportunity to learn the dressmaker's trade. She could set up a little establishment of her own some day, when she went back to Marcelle.

Cicely did not hear the final words of Miss Shelby's argument, but a few minutes later madame came back to the workroom with a bundle in her arms. There was a worried frown on her face as she unrolled it and called sharply to her forewoman.

Every seamstress in the room bent forward with an exclamation of pleasure as the piece of dress goods was unrolled. It was a soft, shimmering silk whose creamy surface was covered with rosebuds, as dainty and pink as it they had been blown across it from some June garden. Cicely caught her breath with a little gasp of delight, and thought again of the sweet face that had smiled on her. Miss Balfour would look like a rose herself in such a dress.

The next day Cicely saw the cutter at work on it, and then the forewoman distributed the various parts into different hands. Cicely wished that she could have a part in making it. She would have enjoyed putting her finest stitches into something to be worn by the beautiful girl who had smiled on her. It would be almost like doing it for a friend. But she was kept busy stitching monotonous bias folds.

Just as she was slipping on her jacket to go home that evening, the forewoman came up to her with a bundle. 'I am sorry, Cicely,' she said, 'but I shall have to ask you to take some work home with you tonight. We are so rushed with all these orders we never can get through unless every one of you work overhours. Miss Shelby's extra order is just the last straw that'll break the camel's back, I'm afraid. Try to get every bit of this hand-work done some way or other before morning.'

It was no part of the rose-pink party dress that Cicely had to work on; only more monotonous bias folds. But as she turned up the lamp in her chilly little room and began the weary stitching again, she felt that in a way it was for Miss Balfour, and she sewed on uncomplainingly.

She had intended to write to Marcelle that evening in order that her sister might have the letter on New Year's day, but there would be no time now. She wrapped a shawl around her and spread a blanket over her feet, but more than once she had to stop and warm her stiff fingers over the lamp. It was long after midnight when she finished, and she crept into bed, her head still throbbing with a dull ache.

'The last day of the old year!' she said to herself, as she waded through a newly fallen snow to her work the next morning. 'O Marcelle, how can I ever hold out ten months longer? Nobody in this whole city cares that I caught cold sitting up in a room without a fire, or that I feel so lonely and had this minute that I can't keep back the tears.'

It seemed to Cicely that she had never put in such a wretched morning. The loss of sleep the night before left her languid and nervous. Her cold seemed to grow worse every moment, and madame and the forewoman were both unusually cross. She

felt ill and feverish when she took her seat again after the lunch hour.

Presently madame came in, looking sharply about her, and walking up to Cicely with the rosebud silk skirt in her hands. 'Here!' she said hurriedly. 'Put zis hand on zis. Zis zis woman who do zis always have gone home ill. An' be in one beeg haste, also, for the time have arrive for ze las' fitting. You hear?'

Cicely took it up, pleased and smiling. After all, she was to have a part in making the beautiful rose gown that would surely give Miss Balfour such pleasure. Her quick needle flew in and out, but her thoughts flew still faster.

She had a gown like that herself once; at least it was something like that pattern, though the material was nothing but a lawn. She had worn it first on the day when she was fifteen years old, and her mother surprised her by a birthday party. And they had had tea out in the old rose-garden and had pelted one another with great velvety king roses, how cruelly it hurt! It was a very present pain that made her cry now, not the memory of that old one.

Some one had overturned a chair just behind her, and Cicely's nervousness made her jump forward with a violent start. With that sudden movement, the sharp needle she held was thrust deep into her hand and two great drops of blood spurted out. With that sudden movement, also, silk skirt slipped from her lap, and she clutched it to save it from touching the floor. Before she was aware of anything but the sharp pain, before she saw the blood that the needle had brought to the surface, two great stains blotted the front breadth of the dainty skirt.

She gave a stifled scream and grew white and numb. Almost instantly madame saw and heard, and pounced down upon her. 'I am ruin!' she shrieked, pointing to the stains. 'Neczing will take zem out! Mademoiselle will be so angry I will lose ze trade of her!'

The irate woman took Cicely by the shoulders and shook her violently, just as Miss Shelby and Miss Balfour were announced. They had come for the final fitting, expecting to take the dress home with them.

Madame, still wildly indignant, went storming in to meet them, and poor Cicely shrank back into the corner with her face hidden against the wall. Never in her life had she been so utterly friendless as now.

Miss Balfour's disappointed exclamation over the stained dress reached the girl's ears. She heard madame's eager suggestions of possible remedies, and then Miss Shelby's cold tones:

'Now if it had been the bodice, it would not have been so bad. It could have been hidden by some of the ribbons or lace or flowers; but to have it right down the middle of the front breadth—that's too hopeless! There's nothing for it but to make over the skirt and put in a whole new breadth. There isn't time for that, I suppose, before this evening.'

Madame looked at the clock and shook her head. 'Zis women air rush to ze grave now, she said. 'Zis woman half ze night las' night. Zat is why zis girl say she air so nervous zat she could not help ze needle stab herself.'

'I could just sit down and cry, I am so disappointed!' exclaimed Miss Balfour. 'I had set my heart on going to the party, and in that dress.'

Cicely's sobs shook her harder than ever as the words reached her, and her tears started afresh. Miss Shelby's voice broke in: 'I am surprised that you would keep such a careless assistant, madame. Of course you will expect to make the loss good to my cousin. It will ruin your trade to keep incompetent employees. It would be better to let the woman go.'

'It is a young girl which I have jus' take said madame, with another shrug. 'I have feel for her because she was an orphan, and I take her in ze goodness of my heart. Behold how she repay me! Disappoint my customers, ruin my beesiness!'

She was pointing to the stains and working herself up into a passion again, when Miss Balfour interrupted her:

'I should like to see the girl, madame. Will you please call her?'

'Certainly! Willingly, mademoiselle! Zis plaisir shall be yours for to scold zis careless creature.'

Cicely heard and shivered. It had been hard enough to bear madame's angry reproaches, but to have the added burden of Miss Balfour's displeasure was more than she could endure—the displeasure of the only one who had smiled on her since she left Marcelle! A moment later madame confronted her, and Rhoda could hear the girl's sobs.

'Oh, I can't go in! Indeed I can't madame! It nearly kills me to think I have spoiled that lovely dress, and that she cannot go to-night after all. I wouldn't have

done it for the world, for it was almost like having her for my friend. She—she smiled at me—the other day!'

Rhoda looked at her cousin wonderingly. Could it be some one that she knew, who seemed to care so much about her pleasure?

Then her eyes fell on the shrinking Cicely, whom madame was pushing somewhat unceremoniously into the room. Rhoda saw the little blacked gown figure with tear-swollen face, and suddenly the crimson spots on her evening gown held a new significance.

It flashed through her mind that the very life blood of such girls was being sacrificed for her selfish pleasure. If she had not hurried madame so, there would have been no night-work for this poor child, no lagged-out nerves for her the next day.

Suddenly Miss Balfour crossed the room and, to her cousin's astonishment, caught Cicely's cold hands in hers.

'Look up here, you poor little thing,' she said, kindly. 'Now don't cry another tear, or grieve another bit about this. It's no matter at all. I'll just get some new stuff to replace the front of the skirt, and madame can make it over for me next week and send it East after me. I'll pay for it myself, of course, for I'll be very glad to have that silk that must be ripped out. Mamma is making a silk quilt, and those rosebuds will work in beautifully. I shall put it in, blood-stains and all, to remind me that my selfish pleasure may often prove a cruel thorn to somebody else. I don't want to go through the world leaving scatches behind me.'

'Why, Rhoda!' gasped Miss Shelby; but with a proud lifting of her head Miss Balfour went on:

'I realize it is my own fault in rushing you with the work, madame, and the consequences of my own unreasonableness are not to be laid at this girl's door. Do you understand, madame? Not a cent is to come out of her wages, and you are to keep her and be good to her, if you want my good-will. I am coming back this way in the spring, and this gown is so beautifully made that I shall be glad to order my entire summer wardrobe from you.'

'Why, Rhoda Balfour!' exclaimed her cousin again, while madame bowed and smiled and bowed again.

As for Cicely, she went back to the workroom almost dazed, and tingling with the remembrance of Miss Balfour's friendly tones. It was several hours later when she climbed the stairs to her little back bedroom to light her coal-oil stove and make her toast and tea. Her eyes were still swollen from crying, but she had not felt so light-hearted for weeks.

Just inside her door she stumbled over a big pasteboard box. There was a note on top, and she hurried to light her lamp. 'I know that you will be glad to hear I am going to the party, after all,' she read, 'I have found a very pretty white dress in my cousins wardrobe that fits me well enough. As long as you have had such a thorny time on my account, it is only fair that you should share my roses; so I send them with the earnest wish that the coming year may bring you no thorn without some rose to cover it, and that it may be a very, very happy New Year indeed to you. Sincerely your friend, Rhoda Balfour.'

Cicely tore aside the paraffine paper and found six great roses, each with a leafy stem half as long as Cicely herself. She caught them up in her arms and laid her face against their velvety petals. For a moment, as she stood with closed eyes drinking in their summer fragrance, she could have almost believed she was back in the old garden.

'Marcelle, dear,' she murmured, 'I can be brave now! I can hold out a little longer, for she wrote, Sincerely your friend.'

The little room was glorified in Cicely's eyes that night by the flowers she loved best. She ate her scant supper at it she were at a festival, sent a little letter of thanks that made the tears come to Miss Balfour's handsome eyes, and afterward wrote a bright, hopeful letter to Marcelle that lifted a burden from the elder sister's heart. Marcelle had been half-afraid that Cicely would be growing bitter against all the world.

'Think of it, sister!' Cicely wrote. 'American Beauties are a dollar apiece, and I have six! There is a music teacher who has the room across the hall from mine. She is at home this week with a cold on her lungs, and tomorrow when I go to work I am going to loan her all my beautiful roses. It's too bad to have them 'wasting their sweetness on the desert air' all day while I am gone. So she shall have them until I come home at night.'

Madame Levaney gave no holiday to her employees on New Year's day, but Cicely did not care. She left her roses at Miss Waite's door with the announcement

that they were hers for the day, but that she would have to call for them and claim them at night. The oddness of the arrangement and the quaint way in which Cicely made it won Miss Waite's heart, and when she heard the girl's step in the hall that evening, she opened the door.

'Come right in!' she called, cordially. 'I can't spare the roses until after supper, so you will have to come in and eat with me. You've no idea how much I have enjoyed them!'

Cicely paused timidly on the threshold. There were the gorgeous American Beauties in a tall vase in the middle of the table, between some softly shaded candles. And there was a bright lamp on the open piano, and a glowing coal fire on the grate. The little table was spread for two, and a savory smell of oysters stole out from the chafing dish Miss Waite had just uncovered.

'We'll celebrate the New Year together and drink to our friendship in good strong coffee,' said Miss Waite, lifting the steaming pot from the hearth. 'Draw your chair right up to the table, please, while everything is hot.'

Only one who has been so cold and hungry and homesick as Cicely was can know how much that evening meant to her, or how the cheer and the warmth of it all comforted her lonely little heart. The best of it was that it was only a beginning, and there were few nights afterward, during that long winter, when the warmth and light of Miss Waite's room was not shared for a while, at least, with the little seamstress.

The roses lasted more than a week; then Miss Waite helped Cicely to gather up the petals as they fell, and together they packed them away in a little rose-jar, according to an old recipe that Miss Waite read out of her grandmother's time-yellowed note-book.

Then Cicely brought Miss Balfour's note. 'I want to preserve this, too,' she said, dropping it in among the dried rose-leaves. 'You told me that Rhoda means 'little rose,' and that line, 'Sincerely your friend,' was as sweet to me that day as the flowers themselves. As long as I live I shall think of her as an 'American Beauty.'

She lifted the little rose-jar for one more whiff of its faint, sweet fragrance, and said slowly, as she closed it again, 'And as long as I live the thought of her will help to take the sting out of all my thorns.'

The Bear Remembered.

That beasts are sensible of kindness and remember it is proved by many interesting incidents. The following from the Home Monthly is a pleasant illustration of benefits unthought of:

A woodsman who was fond of pets found a young cub bear in the woods, half-frozen and nearly starved, its mother having probably been killed by hunters.

He took the little orphan home with him, and it soon became as playful and affectionate as a kitten. Every night he had a romp with it on the floor of his cabin, and upon his return from his day's work in the woods the cub would greet him with the uncontrollable delight that an affectionate dog displays when his master comes home.

But as the bear grew older its wild nature began to assert itself, in spite of its fondness for its benefactor, until finally one day it disappeared in the woods and did not return.

The man hunted long and carefully for his pet, searching every nook and ravine for miles about his cabin, but without success.

Two or three years afterward he was going through the woods to his work, unarmed and without even his ax, which he had left the night before at the place where he was chopping. As he was passing through a heavy growth of young evergreens an enormous female rose up before him. Behind her were two cubs, and the mother was furious at having been disturbed, and mad with fear for the safety of her young.

The chopper was utterly without means of defense, and even before he had time to realize the extremity of his position the bear was upon him. But just as she reached him a complete change came over her. Instead of attacking him she began licking his hand and rubbing affectionately against him. She was his long lost pet, and had not forgotten him.

When he had recovered from his fright sufficiently to go on toward his work the bear went, too, and for more than a mile she followed him. Then feeling, apparently, that she had done all that courtesy and her sense of gratitude required, she left him and went back to her cubs.

When a friend comes to you and says; 'Now I want you to tell me the truth,' prepare to lie, or else say something disagreeable.