

The Family Circle.

From the Morning Star.

A Christmas Story.

"Henry," said Mrs. Dixon, as her husband rose from the breakfast table and prepared to go out, "You know that this week Friday is Christmas."

"Yes," replied the husband, "I know," and he moved towards the door.

"Wait a little," said the wife, "I want to talk with you, and she approached him with the baby in her arms. "Here kiss the darling," she said, holding the child towards him, "and don't look so sober." He took the child and gave him a kiss and a toss, and while the little creature cooed and clapped his hands with delight, he returned him to her arms, saying, "business presses me, but I wait your pleasure." "Well then, my dear, you said you knew that Christmas was coming. Have you reflected that Christmas dinners and Christmas presents can not be had without money?"

"I could have no excuse for being ignorant about that subject," he replied smiling, "but have you reflected that Christmas dinners and Christmas presents can be dispensed with?"

"Dispensed with? Indeed, I haven't thought of such a thing—why should I? Don't every body 'ave them?"

"No, my dear, every one does not have them. Thousands will be thankful that day for a loaf of bread and a bushel of coal."

"Well, what of that?" she said coaxingly. "I'm going to be thankful for bread and coal, and for something else too. I know you do not intend to deny me."

An expression of pain passed over his face, and he said seriously, "I am sorry to tell you, Louise, that I am exceedingly pressed for money, and nothing but the greatest care and economy will enable me to meet my creditors punctually."

"But I am sure, quite sure," replied the lady, "that you cannot very much miss the small sum I need. You don't know how I have set my heart on a little dinner party and some pretty presents for our friends, the Browns and Fultons. You know they gave us presents last year, and indeed, it seems no more than justice to return them."

Mr. Dixon sat the door which he had been holding ajar, and pushed thoughtfully. He felt anxious to gratify his wife if possible—

"How much will do?" he said, tenderly regarding her as she stood before him with her baby in her arms.

"I guess a hundred dollars," replied the smiling, but thoughtless wife. "I don't think I can do with less. Mrs. Fulton has everything, and I don't want to give her anything less valuable than costly vases she gave me; and then you know, they set their table so splendidly that I must have some cut glass and covered dishes to make ours look decent. It won't do to be shabby, will it?"

"A hundred dollars may seem a small sum to you, my dear wife," he said, with a look of sadness and displeasure, "but that is worth more to me just now, than a thousand may be next month. I cannot spare that amount without endangering, perhaps ruining, my credit and my business. You certainly cannot be willing to risk so much for the sake of giving presents or dinners to people who do not need them, and will not thank us for our trouble."

"The old story!" exclaimed the lady, her face flushed with anger. "I never ask for money but I hear it. Why don't you do a better business? Mrs. Fulton and Mrs. Brown have every thing they want, and their husbands have no better chance than you have. I declare it is too bad!" and she finished the sentence by throwing herself into a chair and bursting into tears.

Her husband regarded her sadly for a moment, and then without a word opened the door and went out. With hasty steps he pursued his way to the counting room. It was early, and no one was there but a boy, who having made the fires, was sweeping and dusting the rooms. He seated himself at the desk, and opened a book. He tried to run up a column of figures, but it was no use. His thoughts were otherwise engaged, and he closed the volume and bowed his head on his hands.

Mr. Dixon was doing business as a dry goods merchant in one of our small cities. He commenced without capital, and being obliged to compete with those who had had a hard struggle to sustain himself. But he was honest, industrious and economical, and so far he had succeeded in supporting his family and steadily increasing in business.

The time of which we speak, was one of those which often occur in the commercial world when money is scarce, business dull, and every man is obliged at whatever sacrifice, to pay his debts.

Mr. Dixon was hard pressed. He had met some losses through the failure of men who were his debtors, and he knew that nothing but the greatest exertion and care would save him from a total wreck in his business.

As he sat there with his head bowed on his hands, he remembered the unjust and bitter words of his wife, and his heart writhed as it had never done before. He had struggled bravely with the world, he had toiled early and late; it was his highest ambition, his greatest pleasure to make her happy, and was this the reward? When troubled and distressed, was he, instead of sympathy and love, to meet reproaches and unkindness at home? He felt utterly disheartened and tempted to give her the money she had asked, and to let everything go by the board.

After a while, he struck on another train of thought. He began to question himself whether he had acted wisely and well toward her. Desirous to spare her all uneasiness, he had not informed her of his embarrassment; and thus, while they stood on the verge of ruin, and he contended with the storm which threatened to overwhelm them, she had been, unconscious of the peril, forming plans of pleasure.

He saw that it would have been better to have given her his confidence, and to have prevented the formation of plans, which it was hard to disappoint. He remembered that he had left her in tears, and he did not doubt very miserable, and half his anger melted away into pity and self-condemnation. He wished that he could gratify her—Again and again he ran over the bills which would fall

due in a few days, and the means on which he relied to meet them. He subtracted the one from the other, vainly hoping that there might be a remainder. It was no use. Figures are stubborn things, and will not lie; and he knew, painful as it had been, that he had done right.

Mrs. Dixon sat where her husband left her, weeping with vexation and disappointment, and declaring to herself that she was the most abused and miserable woman in the world. She had set her heart on that party, and had even mentioned it to some of her friends. She had not dreamed of a disappointment. Her husband had always shown himself pleased to gratify her reasonable wishes, and she was sure this was reasonable. "Why," she said, "we might as well never have Christmas, as not to have parties and presents; and then it is downright mean to accept invitations and gifts and never return them." Then she fell to thinking of her father's house, where she had never been denied any thing she wanted. True, her father died when she was eighteen, leaving her a penniless orphan, but while he lived, had he not indulged her slightest wish? Would he have refused her a hundred dollars at Christmas time? Indeed, he would not.

The memory of her father changed the current of her thoughts. Somehow the memory of his unbounded indulgence connected itself in her mind with the sorrow and poverty which followed his death. The book of life was opened before her at a page, which most of all, she wished to forget. She traced her steps as she had gone down into the valley of humiliation, deserted by former friends, scorned and pitied by those who had admired and envied her. She felt again the pain of desertion, the misery of wounded pride, and the fear of actual want. Then she remembered with what joy and thankfulness she had accepted the love of an honest heart, and the shelter of a humble home. Before she was aware, she found herself weeping, not with anger, but with penitence and shame, and thinking not of the Christmas party, but of the many undesired blessings which she enjoyed.

Her babe had fallen asleep in her arms, and as she arose to lay him in the cradle, Mary came in from the kitchen.

"Please ma'am," she said, as she held the door ajar, "will you tell me what we shall have for dinner?"

"I will come in the kitchen directly and see about that," replied the lady, with her back towards the girl.

Mary made a motion as if about to withdraw, then turned again towards her mistress. "Mrs. Fulton's Bridget has been here," she said.

"Ah!" replied the lady indifferently.

"Yes indeed," Mary continued, "and she says, sure they have trouble enough at her house."

"What do you say?" exclaimed Mrs. Dixon, turning her face suddenly towards the girl.

"May be you've heard ma'am," said Mary, noticing her wet cheeks and swollen eyes with surprise.

"I have heard nothing, pray explain yourself."

"Indeed, I am sorry to say the same, but Bridget says he has failed entirely, Mr. Fulton has, and the ladies do nothing but get together and cry."

Mrs. Dixon clasped her hands convulsively.

"How long has this been?" she asked with a trembling lip, and cheek pale as ashes.

"Since last night," Mary continued, "Bridget says Mr. Fulton came into the house and acted like one beside himself. He said they would be turned out of doors, for the house and every thing must be sold. And then Mrs. Fulton screamed and went into hysterics, and he said she ought to feel bad, for her extravagance and folly had ruined him."

"Mary, is this true?" gasped the lady.

"True! Indeed ma'am, it's all true, and more than this; for Bridget says, not a blessed cent of pay has she had for three months, and now small as the hope she will ever get it."

Mary having finished what she had to say, returned to the kitchen, and Mrs. Dixon threw herself on a lounge and wept with sobs of shame as she had never shed before. Was this the family of whom she had been so foolishly envious, this the woman whom she had called happy, and this the man whom she had wished her husband to be like? Her first impulse was to put on her bonnet and go directly to the store and ask his forgiveness. A moment's reflection assured her of the impropriety of such a course, and she concluded that to prepare his dinner and make his home as pleasant as possible, would be more agreeable to him—So she bathed her face and went into the kitchen to give directions about the dinner.

"Pray, Mary," she said, "be more than commonly careful that the dinner is ready in season. Broil the steak just as you know Mr. Dixon likes it, and be sure the vegetables are on in season to be thoroughly cooked."

"Yes, ma'am," said Mary.

"You know that Mr. Dixon is fond of a cranberry pie. I'll make one myself, Mary."

The pie was soon made and in the oven, and then she swept and dusted the dining room, and arranged the furniture with more than usual care. How dear and pleasant her home seemed, while she performed those household duties. How she wondered that she ever could have been dissatisfied or ungrateful. How she pitied Mrs. Fulton, and wished she had been more prudent.

The dinner hour arrived, and Mr. Dixon came home. A glance into each other's face showed both that there was peace between them. A warm fire was glowing in the grate. The dinner was ready, and he noticed that a small vase of white chrysanthemum flowers adorned the table.

"Has any one been in this morning?" he asked.

"Mrs. Fulton's cook has been in the kitchen."

"Ah! then you have heard of their trouble; but have you heard from the Browns?"

"I have not. Surely nothing has gone wrong with them!"

She paused and noticed in her husband's face a look which she feared to interpret. "Tell me all," she continued, "something sad has surely happened."

"Sad indeed, the saddest thing I ever

knew. When Brown's clerk went to the store, he found him dead in the counting room. He had committed suicide. He left a note saying, that he was ruined in business and reputation, and did not wish to live."

Mrs. Dixon burst into tears, "What did he mean by saying that he was ruined in reputation?" she said.

"It is certain that he had committed forgery, which he found it impossible longer to conceal. Remorse and despair drove him to this terrible deed. His sad and untimely death is much deplored, for he was a young man of great promise, and with prudence and honesty, he might have been successful in business."

Mrs. Dixon arose and threw herself at her husband's feet. "Can you ever forgive me," she exclaimed, "for the unjust and cruel words I spoke this morning?"

"I need forgiveness," he said, tenderly raising her. "I should have told you weeks ago of the trouble that surrounded me, and thus saved you from the disappointment you have suffered. I should have appealed to you for sympathy and help, and in strengthening me you would have been strengthened. The families of whom we have been speaking are overwhelmed as suddenly and as unexpectedly as if a thunderbolt had fallen upon them. I believe those ladies could have averted this calamity, and that they would have done it, if they had been correctly informed in regard to their circumstances. They had been confided in and appealed to, as responsible agents, they would have acted quite differently. Do you not think, my love, that you can have a thankful Christmas without that hundred dollars?"

"Don't speak of it, dear," she said, "if you are pressed you may sell my watch and the piano too, I am sure I can do without them easily enough."

"I hope not to be forced to any such extremity," he said, folding her in his arms and kissing her wet cheek. "But we will henceforth remember, that we are to bear the burdens of life together."

V. G. R.

Authorized Agents.

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THE Subscriber has on hand at his Tannery, No. 135 Union Street, in addition to Leather of various kinds, (his own manufacture,) a quantity of American Seal Leather. Also, 15 lbs. of Col and Tan's Oil. WM. PETERS.

P. S. Hides and Skins from the Country always on hand, for which the highest Market prices will be paid. J. W. P.

EXTRA FAMILY FAMILY.—150 Barrels

Extra and Double Extra Family in store. For sale by JOHN J. WRIGHT, 24 South Wharf.

Christmas Confectionery.

Just opened, a choice assortment of Confectionery—viz:—

CHRISTIANIZED Orange and Lemon SLICES; LOVER'S VOWS; Royal Kisses and Crackers; Nonpareil Chocolate Drops; Almond Talcum Candy; "St. John" Rock Candy; Oatmeal Lozenges; Royal Cakes; Candy Cakes; Platted Rock Candy; Sweet Hearts; Fancy Packets; Mixtures; Sugar Almonds; Barley Sugar; Evertan Talcum; Conversation Lozenges; Peppermint Cakes; And a great variety of Fancy Drops.

S. L. TILLEY, 35 King Street.

DOUBLE Extra Family and Pastry FLOUR

35 lbs. hls. Double Extra Family and Pastry FLOUR, warranted a very superior article, just received and land this day per "Volant," from New York, and for sale by JOHN J. WRIGHT, 24 South Wharf.

LONDON HATS.—A few cases Gents' SATIN

HATS, best quality and latest style, received ex "Midnight," and for sale Wholesale and Retail by D. H. HALL, 41 King Street.

NOTICE.

DO hereby forbid any person or persons from harbouring or trusting my wife CATHERINE on my account, as I am determined to pay no debts of hers contracting after this date.

THOMAS H. CRAWFORD, Hampstead, Queen's County, January 1, 1887.

EXTRA SUPERFINE Family FLOUR

200 bbls Extra Superfine Family FLOUR, just received and land this day per "Volant," from New York, and for sale by JOHN J. WRIGHT, 24 South Wharf.

CORIOTYPES! CORIOTYPES!!

Invented and Patented by the Subscriber.

THE CORIOTYPE is a picture taken on Leather; and, while it equals the Ambrotype or Daguerotype in correctness, it far exceeds them in durability. The "Coriotype" has all the appearance, softness, and richness of an oil painting.

THE SUBSCRIBER has recently fitted up his rooms, in New York, to take Likenesses on Leather, Glass, or in the common Daguerrotype style. He has been honored with the patronage of His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor and many other dignitaries, and he assures all who may favor him with their patronage that he will give them a picture which will last for ages. Call and examine specimens.

JOHN A. MACE, Coriotype Artist, King-street, Carleton sept 30

GILFORD S. REED, Druggist, Fellows

Building, 8 German Street, Agent for New Brunswick.

R. GOLDING'S CHEAP BOOT AND SHOE STORE!

No. 51, Prince William Street.

THE Subscriber has received by Steamer "Europa" and Packet Ship "Middleton" from Europe, his Fall and Winter Stock of Ladies', Misses' and Children's FINE BOOTS, SHOES AND SLIPPERS; Gentlemen's CLOTH, Congress, and Button BOOTS; Carpet and Felt SLIPPERS of all kinds; Ladies', Misses' and Children's CLOTH BOOTS, Shoes, and Lined Heels, and Spring Heels. ALSO, all kinds Ladies' Misses' and Children's Cashmere, Pannella, and Leather BOOTS, SHOES AND SLIPPERS, which will be sold at the lowest possible price for Cash.

HOME MANUFACTURE.

Mens' Kilt, Kin, and Neats Leather BOOTS, Sewed and Peg, Pump and Double Sole Boys' home made Boots of all sizes. Constantly manufacturing all kinds of Ladies' Cloth, Pannella and Cashmere, Congress, and Lace BOOTS. Ladies would find it to their advantage to leave their orders, as the subscriber has constantly employed experienced Ladies' Boot Makers.

Ladies', Gents', Misses' and Children's RUBBER BOOTS and SHOES of every description, and will be sold twenty-five per cent. less than last years' prices, and of a superior quality. A liberal discount made to wholesale purchasers. (Nov. 29) R. G.

A SUPERIOR AND GENUINE VEGETABLE COUGH CANDY

F. H. Y. MACER'S Vegetable COUGH CANDY, For curing, Coughs, Colds, Croup, Irritation of the Throat, Hoarseness, and all the ailments of the Lungs, and all complaints attendant on Consumption. It is particularly recommended to the attention of Public Speakers, Singers, and all persons who use the voice freely. The pleasant taste and power of which is sufficient to relieve the most violent Cough, and all complaints attendant on Consumption. There has been no such medicine in the market since the introduction of a GENUINE ARTICLE only one that each one would try for himself, for society and for his own health.

Good Medicine should be made public. Even those who do not possess such virtue are held at such exorbitant prices that they do not come within reach of the poor; while they, above all, are the most liable to suffer from the consequence of neglect and exposure. Do not the poor suffer daily? It is true they do, for the proprietor of the Vegetable Cough Candy has obtained this difficulty by inventing a medicine composed of the most valuable ingredients of which is sufficient to relieve the most violent Cough, and all complaints attendant on Consumption. It is particularly recommended to the attention of Public Speakers, Singers, and all persons who use the voice freely. The pleasant taste and power of which is sufficient to relieve the most violent Cough, and all complaints attendant on Consumption. There has been no such medicine in the market since the introduction of a GENUINE ARTICLE only one that each one would try for himself, for society and for his own health.

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