

## HER CHRISTMAS MORNING.

"Everything is done, mother! The candy came out fine and I know Uncle Frank will like it. I polished those apples and they are as rosy-cheeked as they can be and here are some nuts. Now you sit right down and if there can possibly be anything left to do, just mention it and I'll do it right away."

"I don't think of anything else now, dear," answered Mrs. Dean. "I have such an industrious sixteen-year-old daughter."

"Sixteen this very day," mused Lucile, "and I don't feel one bit different from usual. I've always thought I'd feel very grown-up and dignified at sixteen."

"I suppose most girls consider their sixteenth birthday a day to be longed for. Do you really like our birthday present? I wanted to consult you about getting it but I thought that it would take all the sweetness out of the surprise if you knew about it."

"Do I like it? Well, I guess I do! I've wanted a chain and a La Valliere ever since I can remember and it seems too good to be true that I really have such a dear one. But wasn't it expensive, mother?" she asked, after a pause.

"Well, yes, but we wanted to get a nice one if we got any and your father thought the occasion warranted a little extravagance I am glad you like it."

"I do like it, mother."

The quiet absorbed reply caused Mrs. Dean to look at her daughter. Seldom did she become gloomy or downcast, this sunny, cheery girl, but now she was clearly in a pensive mood. She had helped faithfully and untiringly to put the house in order for the coming of her uncle, who always spent Christmas with them. Maybe she is just worn out and tired, thought Mrs. Dean.

"Hadn't you better be quiet and rest a little while before Frank comes, Lucile? You look tired."

"Oh, no, I'm not tired!" answered Lucile, arousing herself from her reverie with a start. "I'm going to wake up and try to get the spirit of 'just before Christmas,' if I can. I have hardly stopped to think that tomorrow is really Christmas day, but I suppose it is."

"You were thinking seriously of something, were you not? Can't you tell me about it? Maybe I could help you."

"It's nothing, truly. I was thinking the darkest, brownest thoughts I could, I guess; but I'm not going to any more, that is, after I tell you. Well, it's about what Miss Williams told me Friday. You know Margaret Lowrey

and I are together in music. Well, Margaret is going to college next year and specialize in music and probably take vocal. Miss Williams said that it would be so nice if both of us go together and take the same course. She said we could help each other and increase the value of the course to both of us. I've been thinking of it, but of course I know that I can't and I'll not consider it any more. My, how fast this day has gone! It's almost time for father and Uncle Frank to come. Why, there they are now!" and with a shout of hearty welcome she ran outside to meet them. Now if it will just snow! she thought.

That evening the family went to church and Lucile, all her despondency gone, joined in singing the lovely Christmas carols, ages old, whose melodies warm hearts and breathe peace and love and joy.

Long after Lucile had left them for the night, Mr. and Mrs. Dean talked of her and of her prospect of going to college. There were certain financial conditions which might be overcome before the following autumn, but unless they were, it would be impossible for her to go. They were interrupted in their talk by a soft knock at the door.

"I wonder if you know what you are discussing so late and so earnestly," said Mrs. Dean's brother, entering the room.

"We were talking of Lucile," answered Mrs. Dean, "you know she finishes High School in the spring and we were trying to devise ways and means for a college course."

"I guessed it and I have a suggestion to make which I want you to receive in the same spirit in which it is given. I have more than enough money for myself and why not let me help pay Lucile's college expenses? It will only partially pay a debt of gratitude which I owe you for sharing with me so generously the comforts and pleasures of your home. Won't you let me do it?"

"Yes, this is like you, Frank," answered Mr. Dean, "and although I know your love for Lucile and your desire to help us prompts your offer, it shames me. If I had been responsible for our financial reverses I would feel it more deeply—"

"But you are not responsible for another man's acts, nor could you act in any way unfitting a gentleman after the deed was done," interrupted Mrs. Dean's brother.

"No, I did the best I could, and for Lucile's sake I accept your offer, if I find it impossible to pay her expenses next autumn; provided you allow me to become legally your debtor to the amount you advance," responded Mr. Dean.

"Since you cannot see it in an-

other light, I accept your terms and Lucile's college course is assured her, at any rate. Let's surprise her with the news. How shall we arrange it?"

"We can put an envelope where she will find it early in the morning and tell her the news," suggested Mrs. Dean.

"That's a good plan!" said her brother.

Lucile awoke Christmas morning to find all the imperfections of the world covered with a gleaming white blanket of snow.

"Ohooo! I just guess I've got the real Christmas spirit at last, I feel so good and 'tingly!' I feel as if I had never a care in the world and nothing but Christmas can make a girl feel like that. And it *did* snow! I believe this world was made just to suit me! Anyhow—I like it. Now I wonder what this is—!" she exclaimed as she saw a letter lying on her table. "I'll see right now," she mused, as she slowly broke the seal, as if loathe to tear down air-castles which she had built around it. Wonderingly, she read aloud: "Lucile, dear, accept with our best love and Christmas wishes the assurance that your dream of a college course will come true. From those who love you."

Her eyes grew misty with love and happiness. She stood motionless, trying to realize what it really meant to her. A sob of thankfulness escaped her, and in the fullness of her joy she could only breathe in tones of gratitude and awe—"Father, I thank thee!"

A. M.

## A MODERN KNIGHT.

Historians tell us that knight-hood has waned, that knighterrantry has died out, that the light of chivalry has flickered. There is one class of people however, with which the historians have not reckoned. This is the simple country people. Among these people, I venture to say, these virtues will never die. At least they have not yet. But pardon these extraneous remarks and I will plunge at once into my story.

On an evening in late summer while the last glow of sunset was fading from the sky, a knight saddled or buggied—I mean hitched his horse to his buggy and started out on a very hazardous undertaking. Lochinvar, I believe, was the name of the knight. His mission was to rescue a certain young lady from an awkward, gawky, old miser for whose gold her father intended to make her marry the next day. She was held captive in the castle of her father and 'twas thence that Lochinvar had started.

It was many leagues to the home of Ellen (for Ellen was her name) and over that long drive Lochinvar thought of the days gone by. He remembered the days when they were in school together, how when the teacher's back would be turned to them he would slyly slip her a piece of peppermint candy. Again they stood beneath the old apple tree and plighted their troth. There was no hesitancy in her voice as she said, "Yes, Loc., I love you and will marry you, but you must understand that I am a suffragette and will take no foolishness."

All these things seemed as if they were but yesterday, and he smiled at the reminiscence. Then he thought of the "old bald-headed galoot," as he termed his rival, and he ground his teeth in rage. This he could afford to do for he had perfectly good teeth. He was now drawing near Ellen's home however, so he drew his horse down to a walk. At last he reached the house. He tied his horse to the gate post and marched boldly up the walk. Coming under her window, which was in the second story, he gave a low whistle. In a moment her window came up and a low, sweet voice trembled, "Is that you Loc.?"

"Sure," came the whispered reply. "Are you ready?"

"I will be in just a minute! Wait! Here catch this."

With these words a suit case flew out the window. Before Lochinvar could move, it struck him in the proximity of his medulla oblongata, and sent him sprawling to the ground, an unconscious mass of knight-hood. The next moment Ellen, who was a very supple young lady, caught hold the limb of a maple tree that grew near her window and swung herself to the ground. As luck would have it she landed right on top of poor Lochinvar, her French heels making semi-perforations in his armor of serge.

"Oh, thank you," she said, "but how did you know I was going to land right there?"

Lochinvar, however, soon recovered his senses and his perpendicular. As soon as he stood up, Ellen began chattering and laughing in anticipation of their coming adventure.

"Be careful," said Lochinvar, "or you will awake the others."

"No danger of that," she replied, "they are all snoring so loud that they can hear nothing else."

They then made a rush for their buggy, jumped in and hurried to Greensboro, where, before the cock had announced the coming dawn, they were married by the justice of the peace.

So where in all antiquity is found a knight more bold than he?

S. S.