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Volume XIII.

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## MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

BY ANNA KATHARINE GREEN.

It was the last house at the end of lonesome look at night, notwithstanding the crimson hall light which shone

both a busy fellow and a gay one there were many evenings when pretty Letty Chivers sat alone until near midnight. She was of an uncomplaining spirit, however, and said little, though there were times when both the day and evening seemed very long and married life not altogether the paradise she had ex-

On this evening-a memorable evening for her, the 24th of December, 1894 -she had expected her husband to remain with her, for it was not only Christmas eve, but the night when, as namager of a large manufacturing concern, he brought up from New York the money with which to pay off the men on the next working day, and he never TOUNG - LADIES left her when there was any unusual amount of money in the house. But from the first glimpse she had of him coming up the road she knew that she was to be disappointed in this hope, and, indignant, alarmed almost, at the prospect of a lonesome evening under these circumstances, she ran hastily down to the gate to meet him, crying:
"Ob, Ned, you look so troubled that.

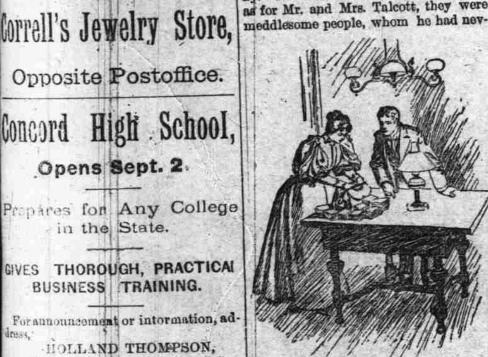
of Nine Teachers. I know you have only come home for a finally came hurried supper. But you cannot leave greatcoat on to give her his final kiss, me tonight, for Tennie" (their only he had but one parting injunction to maid) "has gone for a holiday, and I lurge, and that was that she should lock never can stay in this house alone with the front door after him and then forthat." She pointed to the small bag he carried, which, as she knew, was filled double knock at midnight. to bursting with bank notes.

He certainly looked troubled. It is ard to resist the entreaty in a young bride's uplifted face. But this time he could not help himself, and he said: 'I am dreadful sorry, but I must ride over to Fairbanks tonight. Mr. Pierson has given me an imperative order to conclude a matter of business there, and it is very important that it should be done. I should lose my position if I neglected the matter, and no constitution in I neglected the matter, and no constitution should be should be will you, too, or you are not the now likely to enter from without. given me an imperative order to

keep the money in the house. I have always given out that I intrusted it to Hale's safe over night."

"But I cannot stand it," she persisted. "You have never left me on these nights. That is why I let Tennie go. I will spend the evening at The Larches,

Talcott to keep me company."
But her husband did not approve of her going out or of her having company. The Larches was too far away, and as for Mr. and Mrs. Talcott, they were



by his manner, but as circumstances were, she would have to stay alone, and he only hoped she would be brave and he only hoped she would be brave and the chills in my failed. It have a good sale untersmith's Chill Tonic here, and the physicians of the town prescribe would take continuous the money, which would take continuous the money.

face, "perhaps you would rather hide

"The money, I mean, not the bag. Every one knows the bag. I should never dare to leave it in that." And begging him to unlock it, she began to empty it with a feverish haste that rather alarm-When in need of Fire Insurance, ed him, for he surveyed her anxiously and see us, or write. We represent only first-class Home and Foreign effects of this excitement upon her.

he confined himself to using such sooth-WOODHOUSE & HARRIS.

and put the key back in his pocket. "There, dear; a notable scheme and one that should relieve your mind en-

C. M. LORE. "And when will you be back?" she WANTED. murmured, trembling in spite of herself

herself singing a snatch of song as she



She smiled and held up her ingenuous

"Be careful of yourself," she mur-mured. "I hate this dark ride for you,

and on such a night too." And she ran with him to the door to look out. "It is certainly very dark," he sponded, "but I'm to have one of

She laughed, but there was a choking sound in her voice that made him look at her again. But at sight of his auxiety she recovered herself, and pointing

to the clouds said earnestly:

"It is going to snow. Be careful as
you ride by the gorge, Ned; it is very

deceptive there in a snowstorm,"
But he vowed that it would not snow before morning, and giving her one final embrace he dashed down the path toward Brown's livery stable. "Oh, why do I feel so!" she murmured to herself as his steps died out in the distance. "I did not know I was such a coward." And she paused for a moment, looking up and down the road, as if in despite of her husband's command she had the desperate idea of running away to some

But she was too loyal for that, and smothering a sigh she retreated into the of the storm that was not to have come

It took her an hour to get her kitchshe was ready to sit down. She had been so busy she had not noticed how the wind had increased or how rapidly the snow was falling. But when she went to the front door for another glance up and down the road she started back, appalled at the fierceness of missus, rough night. !! the gale and at the great pile of snow that had already accumulated on the

of any companionship, and sighing heavily she locked and bolted the door little sitting room, where a great fire was burning. Here she sat down, and determined, now that she must pass the possible, and so began to sew. "Oh, what a Christmas eve!" she thought,

and a picture of other homes rose before her eyes, homes in which husbands sat by wives and brothers by sisters, and a great wave of regret poured over her and a longing for something, she room she made a feint of dragging down hardly dared say what, lest her unhappiness should acquire a sting that would leave traces beyond the passing mo-

The room in which she sat was the only one on the ground floor beside the dining room and kitchen. It therefore was used both as parlor and sitting room, and held not only her piano, but her

Communicating with it was the tiny dining room. Between the two, howing words as were at his command, and then, humoring her weakness, helped her to arrange the bills in the place she had left it burning, as well as the look cheerful and as if all the family

were at home. She was looking toward this entry and wondering whether it was the mist made by her tears that made it look so dismally dark to her when there came a sound from the door at its end so faint that she could not determine its nature and yet so certainly not due to the wind that she felt her heart stand still and

peculiar pains with the fastenings of had been put between some old pamthis door, as it was the one toward the phlets on the bookshelves. all her faculties strained to listen. But front, and taking advantage of the mono further sound came from that direction, and after a few minutes of silent terror she was allowing herself to believe that she had been deceived by her

At supper she was so natural that his face rapidly brightened, and it was with quite an nir of cheerfulness that he rose at last to lock up the house and make received no answer, and more affected Beauchamp's row, and it stood several rods away from its nearest neighbor. It was a pretty house in the daytime, but owing to its deep, sloping roof and owing to its deep, sloping roof and wash up in Tennie's absence, and as she of the kitchen, but the dining room also, small bediamonded windows it had a was a busy little housewife she found lay between her and the scene of her alarm, when to her atter confusion the passed back and forth from dining room noise shifted again to the side of the through the leaves of its vine covered doorway.

The control of the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the ground floor and examined the looks of the three lower doors, and when he saw precipitated into the entry the laws of the three lower doors, and when he saw precipitated into the entry the laws of the three lower doors, and when he saw precipitated into the entry the laws of the three lower doors, and when he laws of the three lower doors, and when he laws of the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she thought so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throught so securely fastened swung violently open as the door she throug burly figure of a man covered with snow and shaking with the shock of a storm that seemed at once to fill the house. Her first thought was that it was her husband come back, but before she

> man in whose powerful frame and cynical visage she saw little to comfort her and much to surprise and alarm.
> "Ugh!" was his coarse and rather familiar greeting. "A hard night, missus! Enough to drive any man indoors.

she feebly asked, thinking he must have stayed it in with his foot, that looked

can't live in a gale like that, specially after a tramp of 20 miles or more.

"I will shut it," she replied, with a half motion of escaping this sinister stranger by a flight through the night. But one glance into the swirling snowstorm deterred her, and making the best of the alarming situation she closed the door, but did not lock it, being more afraid now of what was within the house than of anything that was

The man, whose clothes were drip-ping water by this time, watched her with a cynical smile, and then, without any initiation, entered the dining room, crossed it and moved toward the

enguant to her womanly delicacy. 'All alone, missus?"

The suddenness with which this was ont, together with the leer that accompanied it, made her start. Alone? Yes, but should she acknowledge it? Would it not be better to say that her husband was up stairs. The man evidently saw

storm lets up a bit, which ain't likely

"I expect my husband home at any time," she hastened to say. And thinking she saw a change in the man's coun-Too delicate to breast such a wind, tenance at this she put en quite an air she saw herself robbed of her last hope of sudden satisfaction and bounded toward the front of the house. "There! I

evening alone, to do it as cheerfully as safer one. "I want to be able," she thought, "of swearing that I have no money with me in this house. If I can bank." And dashing into the sitting



ment's respite from his none too encouraging presence she unbarred the door and cheerfully collect out her husband's

The ruse was successful. She was enshled to fling the notes into a mound
of snow, where they would soon be covered from sight, and then relieved and
feeling more courageous, now that the
money was out of the house, she went
slowly back, saying she had made a
mistake, and that it was the wind she
hated pistols before and scolded Ned
when he bought this one) she started to
her feet and slid her hand into the
drawer. But it came back empty. Ned
had taken the weapon away with him.
For a moment a surge of the bitterest
feeling she had ever experienced passed
over her; then she called reason to her

proceeded to set him out a meal with a she was rapidly setting the table soon

savory repast.
"No beer; no ale. Nothing o' that sort, eh? Don't keep a bar?" he growled, as his lips closed on a huge hunk of bread.

a little cold poison bottled up in a tight in her mind's eye, and she could not

tonished at her own ease of manner in the presence of this fearful guest. "Then let's have that," he grumbled, taking the bowl she handed him, with an odd look that made her glad to retreat to the other side of the room.

"Jest listen to the howling wind," he went on between the huge mouthfuls of bread and cheese with which he was storm, do we?"

eminently fitted for the task.

"Not much," he chuckled. "I s'pose you're too hospitable for that." And his eyes passed from her face to the comfortable firelight shining through the sitting room.

"Is it refrage you want?" she demand.

"Is it refrage you want?" she demand. "Is it refuge you want?" she demand- ward her neighbors, and lifting one of that she would soon be smothered under ed, suppressing as much as possible all the shades, which had all been religious- its folds. Meanwhile no sound came



he cried, his nestrils dilating with an animal like enjoyment that in itself was ly pulled down, she looked out. A swirl of snowflakes alone confronted her. She "Do you know, missus, I shall have to stay here all night? Can't go out in that gale again; not such a fool." Then her to them would not be heard. She was as completely isolated as if the house stood in the center of a desolate

western plain. "I have no trust but in God," she murmured as she came from the window. And, nerved to meet her fate, she went back into the kitchen It was now half past 10. Two hours

and a half must elapse before her husband could possibly arrive.

She set her teeth at the thought and walked resolutely back into the kitchen. "Are you done?" she asked.

"I am, ma'am," he leered. "Do you want me to wash the dishes? I kin, and I will." And he actually carried his plate and cup to the sink, where he turned the water upon them with another loud guffaw, as if enjoying her discomfort.

into the pantry," she thought, "I could shut and lock the door upon him and hold him prisoner till Ned got back." But his fancy ended its flight at the sink, and before her hopes had fully subsided he was standing on the threshold of the sitting room door.

"It's pretty here," he exclaimed, allowing his eye to rove again over every possible to obtain the opportunity of shifting the money from the place where now"— He stopped. His glance had now"- He stopped. His glance had fallen on the Supboard over her husband's desk.

"Well?" she asked, anxious to break the thread of his thought, which was fast calling up a demoniac expression to his gaunt but powerful features.

He started, dropped his eyes, and turning looked at her with a momentary flerceness. But, as she did not let her own glance quail, but continued to look at him with what she meant for a smile on her pale lips, he subdued this outward manifestation of passion, and, chuckling to hide his embarrassment began backing into the entry, leering at her with what she felt was a most horrible smile. Once in the hall he hesitated, hesitated as it seemed to her for a below, emptied them, and, i long time; then he slowly went toward ing, attacked the bookcase. the garment be had dropped on entertantly away into the kitchen. "Oh, God Almighty, holp me!" I say?"

thought she. chair, she tried to calm the beating of soon began to realize that his search her heart and summon up conrage for was bringing him nothing, for/leaving the struggle which she felt was before the bookcase he gave the books one kick, her. That he had come to rob and only and seizing her by the arm, shook her now felt certain, and rapidly running over in her mind all the expedients of self defense possible to one in her situa- "Tell me, or you are a goner." woods, and therefore most accessible to she could hear the man grambing in the kitchen, but he did not follow her tol which Ned kept in his desk. Oh, and all seemed over, when, with a rush only one, and every one who takes it is Why had she let herself grow mad with and he fell, struck down by the very terror when here, within reach of her stick she bad so long been expecting to

For a moment a surge of the bitterest feeling she had ever experienced passed over her; then she called reason to her aid and was obliged to acknowledge

aid and was obliged to acknowledge that the act was but natural, and that from his standpoint he was much more likely to need it than herself. But the disappointment, coming so soon after hope, unperved her, and she sank back in her chair, giving herself up for lost.

How long she sat there with her eyes with his foot the heavy figure before him. on the door, where she momentarily expected her assailant to reappear, she never knew. She was conscious only of a sort of apathy that made movement

difficult and even breathing a task. In vain she tried to change her thoughts. In vain she tried to follow her husband in fancy over the snow covered roads and into the gorge of the mountains. She shook her head, wishing she had point. Do what she would, all was misty see that wandering image. There was blankness between his form and her, and no life or movement anywhere but

here in the scene of her terror. Her eyes were on a strip of rug that covered the entry floor, and so strange was the condition of her mind that she found herself mechanically counting the tassels that finished its edge, growing wroth over one that was worn, till she hated that sixth tassel and mentally gorging himself. "But we're very com-fortable, we twp! We don't mind the this night she would strip them all off and be done with them.

> from the kitchen, only that dreadful sense of a doom creeping upon her—a sense that grew in intensity till she found herself watching for the shadow of that lifted stick on the wall of the entry, and almost imagined she saw the tip of it appearing, when, without any premonition, that fatal side door again plew in and admitted another man at once so ominous and so threatening

This second intruder was a negro of powerful frame and lowering aspect, and as he came forward and stood in the doorway there was observable in his fierce and desperate countenance no attempt at the insinuation of the other, only a fearful resolution that made her feel like a puppet before him, and drove in O God! O God!" she moaned, her, almost without her volition, to her

"Money, is it money you want?" was her desperate greeting. "If so, here's my purse and here are my rings and But the stolid wretch did not even stretch out his hands. His eyes went

beyond her, and the mingled anxiety and resolve which he displayed would have cowed a stouter heart than that of this poor woman. "Keep de trash," he growled.

want de company's money. You've got it—\$2,000. Show me where it is, that's all, and I won't trouble you long after I close on it."

"But it's not in the house, "she cried.
"I swear it is not in the house. Do you think Mr. Chivers would leave me here

alone with \$2,000 to guard?".

But the negro, swearing that she lied, leaped into the room, and tearing open the cupboard above her husband's desk, seized the bag from the corner where they had put it.

"He brought it in this," he muttered, and tried to force the bag open, but finding this impossible he took out a heavy knife and cut a big hole in its side. Instantly there fell out the pile of



old receipts with which they had stuffed it, and seeing these he stamped with hapdful at her rushed to the drawers below, emptied them, and, finding noth-

"The money is somewhere here. You can't fool me," he yelled. "I saw the ed upon her another smile, and still car- and throwing them helter skelter over rying the stick went slowly and reluc- the floor. "Women is smart in the hiding business. Is it behind these books,

They had been, or rather had been But there was nothing for her to do placed between the books, but she had but endure, so throwing herself into a taken them away, as we know, and he waited to take her off her guard she with a murderous glare on his strange

and distorted features. "Where's the money?" he hissed.

He raised his heavy fist. She crouched hand, lay such a means of self defense? see fall upon her own head. The man With a feeling of joy (she had always who had been her terror for hours had

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She must have fainted, but if so, her

"Oh, no, no, no!" she cried. "That would be too fearful. He's shocked, stunned; you cannot have killed him." But the tramp was persistent. "I'm 'fraid I have," he said. "I done it before, and it's been the same every time. But I couldn't see a man of that color



"WATER!" SHE CRIED. "BRING WATER!" frighten a lady like you," he explained deprecatingly. "My supper was too him outside the house?"

"Yes," she said, and then, "No; let us first be sure there is no life in him." And, hardly knowing what she did, she stooped down and peered into the glassy eyes of the prostrate man.

Suddenly she turned pale—no, not pale, but ghastly, and cowering back shook so that the tramp, over whose features a certain refinement had exept that she succumbed instantly before him and forgot all her former fears in since he acted as her protector, thought that she had discovered life in those so orbs, and was stooping down to make sure that he was right in this surmise, when he saw her suddenly lean forward and impetnously plunge her hand into

"O God! O God!" she mouned, and lifting the head in her two hands she gave the motionless features, a long and searching look. "Water!" she cried "Bring water." But before the now obedient tramp could respond she had torn off the woolly wig disfiguring the dead man's head, and seeing the blond curls beneath had uttered such a shrick that it rose above the gale and was heard

by her distant neighbors. It was the head and hair of her hus-

They found out afterward that he had contemplated this theft for months, that seh and every precaution possible to a successful issue to this most daring un-dertaking had been made use of and that but for the unexpected presence in the house of the tramp he would doubtless have not only extorted the money from his wife, but have so covered up the deed by a plausible alibi as to have retained her confidence and that of his

Whether the tramp killed him out of sympathy for the defenseless woman or own plans has never been determined. Mrs. Chivers herself thinks he was actuated by a rude sort of gratifude.

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the garment he had dropped on the sing and stooping down drew from underneath its folds a wicked looking a kick to the coat, which stick. Giving a kick to the coat, which stick. Giving a kick to the coat, which books?" he growled, pulling them out books?" only preventive and relief is to keep the Liver active. You must help the Liver a blt, and the best helper is the Old Friend, SIM-

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family of six children cannot live with-it yourself; women always have curi-ways Mr. Geo. W. Kirby, Forest City. ous ideas about such things."
"Yes, let me hide it," she murmured.

But as he saw no way of averting it had chosen, and restuffing the bag with old receipts till it acquired its former dimensions, he put a few bills on top to make the whole look natural, and, laughing at her white face, relocked the bag

tirely!" he cried. "If any one should attempt burglary in my absence and should succeed in getting into a house as safely locked as this will be when I leave it, then trust to their being satisfied when they see this booty, which I shall hide where I always hide it—in the cupboard over my desk."

"By I o'clock if possible. Certainly 'And our neighbors go to bed at 10,

for if it was his duty to obey the orders a muffled knock.

she murmured. But the words were low, and she was glass he did not hear them, sound at the kitchen door, followed by

be had received, then it was her duty to meet the position in which it left her as bravely as she could.

Frightened now in good earnest, but still alive to the fact that the introder was as likely to be a friend as a foe,

could clear her eyes from the cloud of snow which had entered with him he had thrown off his outer covering and looking jug.

had thrown off his outer covering and looking jug.

"Nothing but tea," she smiled, as-

Pardon for the liberty, but I couldn't wait for you to lift the latch; the wind drove me right in." "Was-was not the door locked?"

Shall I shut the door for you?" he asked, with a mixture of bravado and good nature that frightened her more and

"Ugh! Ugh! But it is warm here!"

with a sly look at her trembling form and white face he insinuatingly added,

the struggle going on in her mind, for he chuckled to himself and called out quite boldly; "Never mind, missus; it's all right. Just give me a bit of cold meat and a cap of tea or something, and we'll be very comfortable together. You're a slender slip of a woman to be minding a house like this. I'll keep you company if you don't mind, leastwise until the

for some hours to come. Rough night,

think I hear him now." she cried. she had first put it into another and only get it into my apron I will drop It will be safer there than in any other

her feet grow paralyzed.

Into a mound of snow.

Knowing that her husband had taken ly filled her skirt with the bills which