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THE MANTLE OF ELIJAH.

BY GEORGE LEE.

(CONCLUDED.)

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THROWS SOME LIGHT ON THE DOCTOR'S CONDUCT.

FRANK TROWBRIDGE, Esq., of New York, was a lawyer of twenty-five years' practice. What had he accomplished in a quarter of a century? Several things.

He had acquired wealth; and yet for some reason, sufficient, doubtless, but not expressed in language, the doctor had never accepted one cent of his brother's money, although he knew that in refusing to avail himself of his brother's generosity, he cut Frank to the heart.

He had become the owner of a fine house on Twentieth Street, and had furnished it with elegance; and yet the doctor had never crossed the threshold of his brother's house, although Frank would have considered himself honored by the presence of such a guest. He had married the daughter of a wealthy and honorable family, and she had made him the father of two beautiful daughters; and yet Elisha had not seen them half a dozen times in his life.

He had gained a reputation for shrewdness and professional capacity; and yet his name was seldom pronounced by the doctor, and never in a tone indicative of fraternal pride.

All this was singular, to say the least. There must have been something wrong, either with Frank or the doctor.

Frank Trowbridge, Esq., of New York, was a man whom hard work and the fires of unsatisfied ambition had well nigh consumed. As a young man he had been brilliant, whereas the doctor had been plodding and conscientiously faithful. He had been handsome, whereas the doctor had never been considered more than passably good-looking. He had entered upon the battle of life, fiercely ambitious and determined to gain the highest honors; whereas the doctor had never aspired to more than a competence, nor desired a greater honor than the privilege of preaching acceptably the gospel of Christ, the crucified. So they had separated, and as the years went by, their roads had diverged farther and farther apart. I think the doctor must have had this fact in mind when he said to Elisha that morning at Mr. Hemenway's—the morning after his son had decided to study law—"Good-by; I am going my way and you are going yours.

MAYOR CHRISTMAS.

BY MRS. JULIA M'NAIR WRIGHT.

"While loud huzzas ran up the roof,
Till the lamps did rock overhead,
And holly boughs, from rafters hung,
Dropped down their berries red,
She drave at the rock with sternsails set;
Crash went the masts in twain!
She staggered back at her mortal blow,
Then leaped at it again."

"CAN you see the Mayor? No, you can't. He's at his dinner."

"I can wait," said the gaunt petitioner, capturing her shawl, which the wind, like a tricksy schoolboy, had nearly carried away.

"Wait! O, yes, that's the way with all of them; they wait and waylay him, and talk at him, the minute he's done eating, till I'll be bound he dies of dyspepsia!"

The woman at the Mayor's door had been humble and low-voiced at first—now her face grew defiant, and she would have replied to the servant wrathfully, but a piping, cracked voice quavered out of the distant dining-room, "Maria! Maria! how often have I told you never to send the poor away when they come to see me?"

"There! that's it!" said Maria ungraciously; "come in and wait. Land knows I try to save him trouble."

Mrs. Bundy slipped into the shelter of the wide hall. A great stove of Russia iron, with a royal wood fire in it, was pouring forth welcome heat in the midst. The stove was decorated with black cherubs blowing horns and scattering inky flowers, and with blind goddesses emptying cornucopias. Mrs. Bundy could not appreciate these objects of art, but she sat down near the fire, and the bits of muddy ice that were fringing her dress melted, running into puddles all about her on the floor.

For a few moments the cracked voice that had secured her admission was heard expostulating with or entreating Maria, and then the Mayor came into the hall. A short, wrinkled, bald-headed old man, wearing a swallow-tailed coat, a standing collar with high points that maliciously threatened his eyes; his slippers were too large, and as he walked the heels flapped up and down against the hall oil-cloth; he was wiping his mouth on a red silk handkerchief, and warbled out, in tones like a hoarse robin, "Now, my good woman."

"Sir, I've come to ask a favor."

"Very good," said the Mayor cordially.

"It is, sir, that my nephew, a likely boy, too, will be brought before you tomorrow morning for a breach of the peace, and there's them that will try to lay all the blame on him, sir, as he's young; but he's not in fault."

We will admit that his Honor looked incredulous; but it had seemed to him, in reading his Bible, that God especially guarded the civil rights of the poor. "The righteous considereth the cause of the poor," saith scripture; and the Mayor kept the word in heart and life, listening to all the poor had to say with an "eternal patience" that might be named a genius for doing good.

"Explain the matter to me," said the little old gentleman, gathering his coat-tails under his arms, and turning his back to the stove. "First, where do you live?"

"In Pea Soup Flats, sir,—moved there from the Welling Block."

"Ah! a very bad neighborhood," said the Mayor innocently. "I cannot see why so many flock to those localities."

"Sir," said Mrs. Bundy, with an earnestness that was dignity, "do you suppose we go there from *choice?* Do we like to live where roofs leak, where windows are broken, and heads too, where the streets run slime, and our children

are always falling on broken pavements; where every other house is a groggery, and the air is never still from the noise of quarrelling and oaths, sir? Why do we go where there's dirt, and smells, and disease, and a burial by the poor-master every day? Why, we go because we cannot raise the rent they asks us in decenter places; and God knows we are hard put to it to make it where we are."

"Pity! pity! pity!" sighed the mayor.

"There are things you can do, sir, to better it, I'd think. Is it in the power of the law to clean out them doggeries, where they fight, and gamble, and drink night and day? It was along of that my nephew fell in trouble. He's a lively lad, and works at unloadin' canal boats and the like. Well, sir, you could hardly expect him to stay of nights in my bit of a room, or in the closet he sleeps in off of it. So, sir, one Phil Ryan beguiled him into his groggery, to make jokes and fun for 'em; and while he was there they gets into a fight, but my nephew, Nat, had nothing to do with the fight, nor was he drunk. He tried to peaceify the men, when some one gives notice of the police comin', and away they all runs; but my Ned, not having done ill, didn't stir, and *him* the p'lice nabbed, sir, and will have him up before your honor to-morrow. There's Ryan will make out as Ned made the trouble, because if some one must be punished, he'd far rather it was my lad, as he's not a paying customer, than those roughs who spends their money with him, and had as lief burn his shanty down, if they got mad at him. Now, your honor, don't be hard on my Ned, for if you fines him, we can't pay, and if to prison he goes. sir, we'll starve without his help this bitter weather."

"You may rely on it that I will examine the affair thoroughly, and be as lenient as I can with Ned. What family have you, good woman?" asked the mayor.

"Sure, sir, my husband has been bad a year with a crushed arm. He's a sailor, sir, a common hand, and he slipped as soon as he got well, which is two months since, on the brig *Betsy* out of this port. If ever he gets home alive, I hope we'll move out of these Pea Soup Flats, and see better days; but you know, sir, the season is late, and the weather bad, and the brig *Betsy* is overdue."

"I know all that, but she'll be in safe, never fear. She's sound and well manned. I own the *Betsy*," said the mayor, cheerily.

"The Lord send her safe," sighed Mrs. Bundy. "As to the family, sir, we've my father, and he's past eighty. Then there's my girl Nell, she's crippled; and I've two slips of boys that have had to turn their hands to what they could since my man's hand was hurt. They're biddable boys, and pick up fuel at the ship-yards; and they gather up swill night and morning, and sell it to our Flats folk at a half a cent a bucket. Then there's two bits of young ones—dear knows when they'll do a hand's turn. My Nell was sore set on helping, and I managed at last to get her skein-silk to straighten, and buttons to sew on their cards; but t'was hard work doing it, sir, for folks seems to think we as is poor enough to live on the Flats must be thieves. Not to trouble you more, you'll bear Ned Bundy in your mind, sir?"

"Yes, yes," said the mayor, kindly; "it is Christmas time now, and one must be lenient. Christmas time, my woman—the time of good will for the Lord's sake."

"Belike it *is* Christmas time, but I'd most forgotten. Once my poor babes used to break my heart crying for me to get 'em presents, but they've ceased crying for what never comes. There may be Christmas for you, but there is no Christmas for the poor, sir—none, though there is one Lord over all."

No Christmas for the poor! The mayor repeated the words to himself. The woman rose to go, and he led her out through the warm, pleasant dining-room, where Maria had just finished her dinner, and was putting away the

silver. The woman did not look at the table, but perhaps there was a gleam of hunger in her eyes, which the mayor caught, for just as she reached the door he plucked at her dingy shawl, and pulled her back.

"Bless me! sit down and have your dinner. Why pass a table with plenty on it? Sit down! sit down!"

He pushed her into a chair and looked about. An empty bread-plate was near him, so he set that before her, and began to fill it up.

"Beef, butter,—have some chicken? Turnips, potatoes,—take 'em all."

He piled her plate high with all eatables within reach, while Maria looked on aghast. What crowning vagary of her eccentric master was this? Broken, moist shoes resting on the roses of the new Brussels carpet, the battered bonnet and faded shawl hanging back over the walnut chair, patched calico sleeves dropping against the damask cloth—the soul of Maria could hardly endure this Vandal raid.

The woman ate like one that was hungry; but as she ate she thought of lame Nell, the old father, the scrawny babies that had never seen such luxuries or such abundance.

Perhaps the mind of his Honor was *en rapport* with this forlorn mother's; for even as he had divined her hunger, he *felt* the thought of her children.

"See here! see here! we must have something sent to the little ones." He looked about, seized a roast chicken by one leg with his right hand, and caught the morning's paper from the seat of an easy chair, placed the chicken on the paper, and then peered anxiously into the recesses of the carcase. It held less than the Trojan horse—indeed, was empty. "The stuffing is gone," said the little gentleman, "but perhaps mashed potatoes will fill it as well." In went the potatoes, then some biscuits were piled about the fowl, and being still like his grandmother Eve, "on hospitable thoughts intent," he began to fashion an edible pyramid, using sweet potatoes; not being dexterous, the potatoes fell down, slipped from his fingers, rushed into the gravy-boat, and one tumbled upon the floor, whence Mrs. Bundy rescued it, and after a few moments ate it up.

Maria, who had looked on wrathful and perplexed, now came to her master's rescue, and tied up the parcel.

"May you never know want!" said Mrs. Bundy; "you're good to the miserable."

"There are compensations for us all, ma'am," said the little Mayor. "I have this home, and such and such of the good things of this life—that we will not mention; but I am alone, without child or household. *You* have those that love you, even in your poverty. Children—yes, I often think how much pleasanter my house would be, if there were a voice in it beside my own, *and* Maria's and the cook's."

"As for children," said Mrs. Bundy, "there's plenty of 'em you could get for the askin'—nice little critters, left lone and homeless. Ah, I know about it!"

The Mayor shook his head. "Would you part with one of your own, for instance?"

"Mine! well—no. Please God we'll hold together."

So Mrs. Bundy went away, and the Mayor sat down to read his magazine, wherein were stories, and songs, and pictures suited to jolly Christmas. But over all the poetry, and tales, and faces were broadly written the words, "No Christmas for the poor."

And what Christmas would there be for him? Once, with madcap brothers and sisters, he had hailed the merry mornings with delight. Now these snowflakes that scurried past, forerunners of the storm, fell whitely on all their graves. Those old times! Early in the morning his mother sent him forth to bear her bounty to the poor. To no servant was committed the sacred errand from door to door; coming and going, he ran from breakfast until nearly dinner time, carrying good wishes and good cheer. What a glorious appetite he had earned as he fed others! And that mother!—never was she more present to his mind than at Christmas tide. Ah! there had been Christmas for *her* poor; and though she

sat at the head of her board like a queen in her satin and point lace, she was never so noble and gracious as when her hands dispensed glad Christmas to the poor.

The room grew dim and whirled about a little; this wrinkled, bald-headed Mayor did not know but he was crying.

Maria was brushing up the crumbs, and narrowly searching to detect marks of Mrs. Bundy's feet on the carpet.

"Maria, are we not very lonesome?" asked the Mayor. "Would we be happier if I brought some children here to make a home for them?"

"Ah, sir, sir—we had enough of that; did we not break all our hearts over doing it, and losing?—and—and—"

Maria broke into husky sobs, flung her apron over her head, and rushed down into the cellar kitchen.

More memories! The Mayor's youngest sister's legacy had been her orphan son. He came to the old man's house a beautiful, winning, spoiled boy, to be doted on and indulged, to grow wild and run away. Ah! what bootless searching! Ah! what bitter loneliness and waiting! What agony of prayers sent after that prodigal! Still ten years, and you are lonely yet, Mr. Mayor; and that recreant nephew may be criminal, or beggared, or hungry,—one of those poor who have no Christmas! The old man's heart was full. When he was unhappy, his best resource was to do something for somebody. He went to the head of the basement stairs and quavered out, "Maria! Maria!"

Maria appeared at the lower landing. She had put her cap high on her head, pinned up her frock sleeves and skirt. *Her* refuge was in work. She set her arms akimbo, and had between her teeth half a yard of celery stalk, with the top leaves on, and as she chewed the end in her mouth, the leaves waved defiance about her face; she was defiant of her sorrow, and would not again be betrayed into its expression.

"Maria! the woman that was here mentioned to me that the poor had no Christmas."

"None of my fault," said Maria.

"We ought to try and help them to happiness."

"No end to your helping," growled the old servant.

"But, Maria, the Lord has said, 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.'"

"Mebbe you consider 'em too much," said Maria, and walked off. She did not intend to be made a party to her master's lavishing time or money on strangers.

The old gentleman was thrown back on himself, and sat down to consider.

He had been elected Mayor of his small but growing city, by a majority so overwhelming that the vote of the townsmen might almost be called unanimous. This expression of the confidence of his compatriots demanded some especial return. The rich did not need anything at his hands, but to the poor he might requite it. The salary was but four hundred dollars; but last year he had lived in plenty, and had surplus of income accumulating in the bank, without this four hundred. Did he want it? No. He would bestow it on the city poor; but how? That was the question over which the Mayor wrinkled his bald forehead, and unconsciously scorched his big slippers, and sat until tea time to determine. No doubt angels stood with gentle promptings on either side of this little man in spectacles and swallow-tailed coat.

Now as this man mused, light dawned on his countenance; he tasted already the blessedness of the coming good. A vision passed before him—a vision of sunshine penetrating dark corners, of glad faces lifted up as the music of Christ's birth-day bells came to them with a meaning; good will, good will in action; bounty and blessing exchanged between rich and poor.

The next three days were busy ones for the Mayor. He was not too busy to remember the case of Ned Bundy—which having sifted, he sent the lad home rejoicing, with an admonition to keep out of grogshops forever after. Over the light of Phil Ryan's *saloon* the police settled like an extinguisher; when Phil was fairly put out, a little cobbler came into his place, for Pea Soup Flats swarmed

with inhabitants, and its tenements were never vacant for a day.

On "the night before Christmas," that halcyon night when friends feasted each other, when children danced about lighted and laden trees, and the Christ-angel stood by all the little beds to smile peace on the sleeping babies, then were those "two slips of boys" belonging to Mrs. Bundy, sent abroad through the many-roomed Welling Block, and the ill-famed Flats, as *avant couriers* of the coming benison. These lads went dancing through the biting cold, joyous in new red comforters and stout new shoes, presented by Mr. Mayor, and were thus earnests of the good about to be.

It was Christmas eve, and cold. "A green Christmas makes a full grave-yard," is the proverb of our northern land; but the cold of this Christmas week had filled the river with floating blocks of ice, had piled the ice along the lake shore, and would make fearful work for sailors in their ships—for the man at the wheel, for those who handled sleet-mailed shroud, climbed the mast, or held watch on the slippery deck; and still the brig *Betsy* had not made her port, and his honor the Mayor, in his comfort-full house, again sympathized with the soul of Mrs. Bundy, who did slop-sewing in her twelve by fourteen room.

His Honor was not an extravagant man, but on the day before Christmas he spent the four hundred dollars of salary received from an office which boasted rather of dignity than of emolument.

On Christmas morning our good man was busy with the earliest light, reviewing a small procession. Here were the baker's carts, his largest full of noble loaves of bread and fragrant sheets of ginger cakes. To the baker Mr. Mayor had paid one hundred dollars. The smiling baker held the reins of the first cart, and two young men, well known for honesty and kindly humor, drove after him. The Mayor could trust their judgment; they were too quick-witted, and understood the Flats too well to be over-reached; and they would give to every family according to their poverty and number.

Let the bread wagons move on—here is the butcher. The butcher has a hundred and fifty dollars' worth of beef and pork. He has entered into the spirit of the occasion, and has harnessed to his huge wagon four horses, with hemlock branches ornamenting their heads. The butcher, like the baker, has two *aids de camp*, who understand the merits of the present case, love the Mayor, and will deal out his benefits justly.

Here comes the last wagon. Another hundred and fifty dollars worth in this. Coarse, warm shawls, stout shoes, woollen jackets, brilliant red and green scarfs, and piles of woollen stockings, even a few thick blankets.

"Remember," says the mayor to the three in charge of this cart, "these things are for the sick, the aged, and the little ones. You will not give clothing to idle men or drunken women. There are enough of the really needy to take it all."

The carts move on. As they start, the nine men in charge set up a shout—"Three cheers for the Christmas Mayor!" And the three cheers last until the wagons leave that street, and turn to Pea Soup Flats and its adjacent Welling Block, and the little mayor is left standing too happy to notice the wind that whistles about his bald head, and flutters the narrow tails of his coat. He is not a Stoic, and he wipes his eyes on his red silk handkerchief.

The wagons near the places of evil note—the Welling Block, named from its owner, and close against its rear, Pea Soup Flats, lying along the river, its popular designation being unknown to the nomenclature of the city maps, but given from the chief article of diet of a mongrel race of French Canadians, who formed more than half the population. It was a dismal hollow, where the slime and ooze, the reprobates and small groggeries of the city had settled and stagnated. Here was a fine place to find Sabbath-school pupils—children who, taken to school one Sabbath, fell hopelessly away into gutter sports the next, and were rescued by the first stray philanthropist who drifted into their re-

sorts. Here were stout women too delicate to work, and babes with such evident heritage of vice and disease that one shuddered even at the very small chance of their reaching maturity. Here were ragged men chronically out of employment, dreary hags, neglected and despairing, dropping into pauper graves, and a race of bold-eyed wenches, whom may the dear Lord help in His pity! But there were also the decent, toiling, honest, discouraged poor, whom a trifle may destroy, and, thank God! whom a trifle may save.

The men in the wagons well understood all these phases of character. They entered on their rounds with a merry ringing of bells and a cry of "Come, help yourselves." The mayor had told them if the supply fell short of the legitimate demand, to look to him for more; but baker, butcher, and merchant had resolved to have a hand in the good work before they fell back on the mayor.

How the people come running! They had heard the good news, hardly believing—now they saw it. Out of the damp basements, down the broken stairs, from rooms big and little, dirty and clean, they came, the mothers with children hanging to their pitiful garments, sometimes a man, half pleased, half shame-faced, whose wife might be ill in her bed, or perhaps was gone to her grave. What laughing and smiling! The mother carrying the precious meat which she had chosen, the children bearing off the bread, the cake, or perhaps the woollen clothes dealt out to them.

Some were modest. "You are giving me too much—mebbe I'm getting more than my share. My man's in work and brought home flour; you may give me only beef."

So said some. Others were truthful about their family, giving the statistics of the household fairly; but others again deceived if they could. However, they were dealing with wary men. "Careful there, Betty," cries the butcher; "do not plead three children; you've not a chick or child in the world."

"A shawl for your grandmother, Mag Phail? The old woman was buried last September."

"Away there, you in the red hood! I served you with bread three doors back."

"Don't be greedy after blankets, Mrs. Kitchen. Your man earns good wages and don't drink."

Some were willing to wait their turn, would be pleased easily, and go off with a "Thank you;" others haggled over the meat, as if they were buying it, and made invidious remarks about the size of other people's loaves.

On the whole, every one did pretty well. There was gratitude, cheerfulness, and self-sacrifice in plenty. The wagons made their rounds to general satisfaction, their progress was a benediction, and the men in charge went home twice blessed. Not only that, but from their homes they sent out help for especial cases. Did not the baker's wife run down to the Welling Block with clothes for the baby born that Christmas morning? Who but the butcher's daughter carried jelly and sago to the old woman with the broken leg?—while the draper's boy fairly staggered under the bundle of jackets and wraps he was commissioned to carry to certain fatherless youngsters.

With the smoke of all those unusual dinners cooking in impoverished homes, with every glad child-laugh and deep breath of satisfaction went up a prayer for favor and mercy upon him who "had mercy on the poor."

But this was not all. As the mayor ate his breakfast, his heart glowed within. This was the best, the crowning Christmas, since those child days when all is glad. His charities increased with their exercise.

After the morning meal, the little old gentleman put on his favorite great coat, a coat with wide skirts and pockets innumerable. Fashionable people were wont to smile at the antiquated garment, but the angels regarded it as a beautiful covering that day.

The Mayor chuckled to himself all along the street, like a happy boy; then,

boy-like, he stopped at the toy shops; then he bought toys, common and small toys, but O, so many!—dancing Jacks, and Jacks in boxes; little staring wooden dolls in pink frocks; red tin cups with gilt lettering; tin trumpets and wonderful hopping toads; red and yellow books, that told of Dame Crumb, and Cinderella, and Puss in Boots; red savings banks and wee transparent slates; tin horses, and numbers of squeaking dogs, ducks, and cats, with voices all pitched on the same key, and all partaking of the tone of Mr. Mayor.

The old man's pockets bulged out like those of Santa Claus; he had no pack on his back, but he tied up in his beloved red kerchief all that it would hold. "It will make some of them laugh," he said; so he, too, went toward the Welling Block and Pea Soup Flats, where his loaded wagons had gone before him.

Wonderful how the news of his coming and of his loading spread! The scarecrow children, who never had a toy, flocked like little birds to a wheat-field. Hands held out, shrieks of joy and piping thanks there were, and these little ones did not try to cheat like some of their elders, but rejoiced in their own and their neighbors' good. The kerchief and the pockets were emptied fast; and now up to the frosty sky, and over the sound of bubbling, and frying, and dinner getting, rose a cheer, and the new name that should follow the old man to his grave, and was good enough to be his epitaph: "Hurrah for Mayor Christmas! Three cheers and a tiger for Mayor Christmas!" And that tiger, leaping from a hundred little throats, was more royal and rousing than any that lorded it over Bengal jungles.

But another noise follows the footsteps of Mayor Christmas. These his deeds were not such as could be done in a corner. Already for a day the town had buzzed with the news, and who so emulous of good acts as children? A dozen jolly boys had borrowed a handcart, and had collected playthings through rows of wealthy homes. These youngsters were decorated with merry bells, and some were harnessed to the cart, and some were running alongside; and how they dealt out toys and cakes, apples, pop-corn and candy! They were wary, too, and were not beguiled into giving twice to the same individual. Thus Mayor Christmas was followed by the effects of his good deeds as by a train of light; and perhaps among some of the bright-eyed boys who ran on in his steps was growing up another Mayor Christmas for the years to come.

Thus in Pea Soup Flats and the Welling Block all were glad; and there was scarcely a case of drunkenness or fighting in those places on a day usually so prolific of them, when *real* Christmas could not come. Now, the cart and the pockets being empty, all went to dinner.

At the home of Mayor Christmas, Maria was rejoicing in a new cloak and bonnet, and the black cook was radiant over a gown and turban. As for Mayor Christmas, he did not stop to ask whether any one had made him presents. God had sent him that day a happy heart, and an appetite like a resurrection of his boyhood. When dinner was over, he sat down in his big chair, laid his feet on the fender, spread his red handkerchief over his bald head, and got ready to drop asleep musing of the Mother and the Babe who made the first Christmas, so many centuries ago.

But the chair was near the window, and the window looked upon the street. A loud-voiced man went hurrying by. "A ship in distress! She's lost! She'll never make her port!"

Then came another, hallooing "A tug! Has a tug gone out?"

And another, "The people are crowding to the piers and cliffs!"

Then Christmas Mayor felt in his soul that it was the brig *Betsy* that was driving on to ruin; and he knew already that Mrs. Bundy and Ned, and the "slips of boys" were gone out in the cold, to watch the headlong careering of the vessel that carried the sailor Bundy. Ah! here was the *Betsy* coming in behind her time, to be wrecked on Christmas day.

"Bring me my telescope, Maria; the *Betsy* is running to ruin in the icy waves!"

Maria brought the telescope. She got the fur cap, collar, and gloves, the favorite great coat, and the fur-lined moccasins, and wept as the good man put them on, and went out with a heavy heart. The wind had all day been cold and high; in the two hours since noon it had risen to a gale, and was now far out on that inland sea a tempest, lashing into fury the mighty waves. All who know the great lakes, know their terrors in a storm. Each autumn ships are wrecked and sailors drowned, and the dangers are greater as the season grows late; and latest of all vessels was the *Betsy*, coming in on Christmas day.

There was no doubting what craft it was that away out on the lake lifted its spars against a dull gray sky, as it toiled up on some mountain wave, and now plunged down as if to destruction in a trough of the sea, and shuddered into sight again, reeling and trembling like a gladiator almost worsted in the strife.

The lower part of the pier, the low cliffs upon which part of the city was built, the low shore to which the ice was clinging, grew dark with throngs of town's people, all in an agony of fear and horror for the incoming brig. Among the crowd stood "Mayor Christmas" and the Bundy family, and nothing would suit the old man but to have Ned tie the famous red kerchief about his chill bare throat, and then the Mayor made Mrs. Bundy wear the cape of his great-coat, which he vowed he could spare as well as not. There was praying, and weeping, and shrieking among the crowd; and still the brig drove on in unparalleled danger, being now lost to sight, and then looming up again, just as all had despaired.

There are stout hearts in seaport towns; and amid all the perils of ice and storm, steam was got up on the best tug in port; and, well manned, it set its head valorously toward the harbor's mouth.

It was high time to send out aid, for the *Betsy* was tossing and pitching so wildly that it was evident her rudder was unshipped; the wind drove her directly toward the harbor, but that was narrow, and not to be entered by the disabled vessel, unless help was afforded. The tug, unable to live in the heavy sea, went as far out as possible, and still the *Betsy* plunged on, the sport of wind and wave.

The Mayor was groaning and wringing his hands.

"Was your ship insured, Mr. Mayor?"

"Insured, yes; but I could afford to lose her in any case. But the men, the husbands and sons who are in the brig—ah! neighbors—there's the trouble."

Like Winstanley, he cried out in his heart:

"O, thou brave skipper blithe and kind!
O, mariners bold and true,
Sorry at heart, right sorry am I,
A-thinking of yours and you."

The interest grew intense; the storm increased. The light-house keeper made haste to light his lamps, while yet it was possible to get to the tower along the pier. The waves drove higher and higher, and now their great crests dashed up ninety feet to the top of the light-house, and curled and fell over it, the beacon glimmering dimly through the swirling foam. All the ice along shore was broken up, and the blocks crashed and ground against the pier and the shipping that lay safe moored in the harbor. Dashing on like a race-horse, the *Betsy* neared the coast; the helping boat darted and turned as if coquetting with the distressed brig; then a shout uprose from the lookers-on, for a great cable was got ready to make fast, and the tug in a few moments would have the *Betsy* in tow.

Hope now—trembling, painful, but better than the late despair, and the excitement grew wilder as ship and tug came nearer, and now each lay, as if taking breath, just at the harbor's mouth; but here the pass was narrow, the waves were pounding and flinging themselves a hundred feet into the air, and an island, on which many a stout vessel had made shipwreck, lay on the opposite side of the channel, rendering it narrow and unsafe.

"She will win in!" cried some. Hardly were the words gone forth, when an enormous wave tossed brig and tug like cockle-shells. There was no chance of

helping, and the smaller craft, with a few tremendous efforts, ran into smoother waters and was safe, while the *Betsy* lay quivering in the grasp of the storm. Only an instant for suspense was left. The brig was tossed up high on a wave, hung for one brief second trembling, and came down with a prodigious crash across the unflinching granite of the pier, lying rent and broken; the shattered stern upon the stones, the prow thrust down into the seething low water inside the harbor.

A great cry rose up, not from the seamen in peril, but from those who watched their fate. The tug put about and made towards them, and strong men rushed with ropes and helping hands along the wet, ice-mailed pier. The men in the *Betsy*, meanwhile, were climbing the sloping sides of their doomed vessel, and striving to make their way from her to their friends.

Nearly all were safe, when one person was seen to falter, slip, let go his hold, and drop down into the waves. Without a second of hesitation, the man just behind plunged in after him, and the spectators cheered the valiant deed. The next thing that could be seen from shore was the rescue of these men, who, rising and struggling among the waters, seized the ropes cast to them, and were drawn up alive, then passed along by the crowd, and dripping and almost senseless, were taken into a small house upon the wharf. To this house pressed the Christmas Mayor, and near him followed Mrs. Bundy. Murmurs ran along the throng that all lives were saved, and already the heart of the Mayor sung for joy. Every one gave way before the little old gentleman as he bobbed in to see the rescued men, and Mrs. Bundy, taking advantage of the opening, got in also. Without doubt, the rough tar who had so bravely cast himself into the jaws of destruction to save a fellow man in the very moment of his own escape, was the husband of Mistress Bundy. But the saved man, who was he? Courage now, Christmas Mayor, your vessel never brought freight so rich before; here is your prodigal returned, a nephew in whom your soul may indeed be glad.

Bundy went to his lodgings in Pea Soup Flats a popular man that night, and felt almost overwhelmed at the good fortune that lay before himself and his family; while all the little boys, and big men, too, loudly cheered the carriage that took home "Christmas Mayor" and his nephew. Maria, softened and benevolent to a wonderful degree, spread again the festal board—nothing was too nice or fine to grace the joyous hour of this return.

"See, Maria," said the Mayor, "the Scripture has again come true; 'He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.'"

Holidays have come and gone time and again to the "Christmas Mayor," but his house has never been lonely since the wreck of the *Betsy*. The once prodigal nephew is the dutiful son of the good man's age, and little children hang their stockings in chimney-corners, and dance about Christmas-trees, and hear rare tales; and one can see that they have conquered even the grim Maria in the happy home of the "Christmas Mayor."

MARRIAGE.

UNTIL God makes man over again, the belief in the sacredness and perpetuity of marriage will be one of the unshakable things. Men and women may, by shrewd sophistry, destroy their own faith in God's arrangement. But it is not a matter of reasonings or of philosophizings, not a question of whether the world could be made better than God has made it or not. The oracles of the human soul all speak in favor of the purity and perpetuity of marriage. Men may forsake the oracles and live like brutes; men may forsake the oracles and build socialisms out of their own fancies; it is all the worse for them. But the intuitions, the loves, the moral impulses of the race are on the side of marriage.