

A Christmas Incident at Santo Domingo.

HOW AN OUTCAST SINNER CAME TO HIS OWN AGAIN.

BY ANNE O'HAGAN.

I.

NOT until she was fifty-five years old did Frederica Carey experience an overwhelming emotion. More than half a century of prosperity and dignity, of worthy affections not too vehemently cherished, and of meritorious activities, had left her a graciously handsome woman. Her gray hair had the luster of its dark youth, her brown eyes the clearness of their early years. The few delicate lines on her face had not marred its wholesome charm of pink and white.

Daughter of the leading citizen of Elmburg in the days when it was a mere town, she had married the leading citizen of the days of its young cityhood. Her husband had made unfortunate investments, and she had been left a widow without wealth, yet with sufficient means to maintain the simple and unostentatious elegance of living to which she had been bred.

It was on the evening of her wedding anniversary that her heart was pierced to its center for the first time in all her years. She sat alone in her library, the light from the reading-lamp glowing about her. The letters of her two married daughters, decorously tender, lay in her lap. She had been looking back over her life with a grateful satisfaction very slightly tempered by the grief of her fifteen years of widowhood. Always she had known upright and distinguished men and women, and had been of them; always she had known orderly affections and had experienced them. In her sorrows there had been no remorse, in her separations no shame. Surely, she thought, the world is very good to the sane and the deserving!

And then her son Theodore came in. She stirred from the review of her blessings and glanced at him.

"Have you had your dinner, Ted?" she asked. "I was sorry you were detained to-night."

There was a scarcely perceptible reproach in her emphasis of the adverb. Theodore repeated heavily after her:

"To-night?"

"Yes. It is our wedding anniversary, your dear father's and mine. I could have wished that one of my children might have been with me."

Theodore sank upon the sofa beyond the circle of light from the lamp.

"Your wedding?" he mumbled. Then suddenly he buried his face in his hands and groaned. "God!" he said. "Your wedding anniversary!"

His mother spoke sharply, fright making her voice almost strident.

"Theodore! What is it? What do you mean?"

He made no answer, but sat huddled against the end of the sofa, his face hidden in his hands. She rose and went toward him.

"I insist upon knowing what the matter is," she demanded, trying to force his fingers down.

He dropped them limply enough and looked up at her. His forehead was wet, his dark hair streaked upon it. In his gray eyes there was a look of agony and appeal such as had never been in any eyes turned toward her before.

Mystified and terrified, she found herself suddenly angry. She shook his shoulder.

"Tell me, tell me!"

He made an ineffectual effort to speak, but no sound came. Then he buried his face in a cushion. When he raised it again there was determination on it.

"Mother, mother," he cried, "I'm ruined! I've got to go away, to run away."

"Ruined? Run away?" Frederica Carey was exasperated at words so meaningless in her vocabulary.

"Yes. I've been—all the money passed through my hands—all the stock certificates——"

"Of course! You were the assistant treasurer of the company."

"Can't you understand? I've been stealing—speculating. Of course I always thought—mother!"

She had drawn away from him, and was staring at him with utter unbelief and loathing, as one looks at a monster

too hideous to be true. Her face was as ashen as his own.

"Mother!" he cried again. "Don't, don't look like that!"

Her hands went out in a gesture of utter repudiation. She stumbled away from him and sank into a chair. The sight of her collapse, the quick understanding of her self-absorbed sense of outrage, gave back to Theodore himself something of poise. He sat up and his voice had a new ring.

"It seemed to me better that you should know, mother," he said, and at the title she struck out toward him with her hand, forbidding it. He drew his breath sharply. "Very well," he said. "At any rate, I thought it best that you should hear it from me. Lincoln—it's no excuse, I know—but he advised the speculations. At first I made some money. Then I lost. Then I borrowed—no, I stole. And now I am ruined; it's all gone, and I'm suspected. I know they've sent for some experts. I'm going to run away."

She raised her head at that, a sudden light in her eyes. For the first time since the revelation she spoke.

"Do you think you can get away?" she whispered.

The boy nodded. A piteous little smile trembled for a second on his lips. After all, his mother cared for his safety!

"Thank God for that! At least one disgrace will be spared me."

The glimmer of yearning hope faded from his face, but to hers returned something of its normal color.

"I should die," she went on, "to think of a child of mine, a Carey, a Townsend, in jail, in those clothes! Ah!" She shuddered and closed her eyes against the vision.

Opening them again, she was shaken with passion as she looked at him. She had always been a correct mother, affectionate, sufficiently indulgent; but at that moment she had no sentiment save outraged honor. And in the inexpressible fury she felt was the strongest emotion of her life.

"I am going," he said. "I shall take a new name. I shall pay them back every accursed cent before I die. I had thought of—quitting. But I couldn't."

"Quitting?"

"Yes. Suicide."

"How much have you—taken? Is there no way of saving your name?"

"Fourteen thousand. There's no way of saving me now."

"If the house were mortgaged—sold?

And I have still a few shares of Pennsylvania."

Theodore stopped her with a gesture.

"You know it can't be done. All your little money is in trust, and I'm glad of it. I couldn't have you homeless in your old age."

"Better leave me homeless than dishonored," said his mother bitterly.

The boy looked at her helplessly for a second.

"I was afraid," he began haltingly, "that you would want me to stay and take my punishment like—like a man. If you had wanted that, I should have done it. I thought maybe that it would accord with your ideas of right and wrong. But I am going. I can escape. I shall. And I shall pay them back. And, mother—"

Again the gesture of repudiation. His mother was looking at him with hard and unforgiving eyes. But this time he was blind.

"Mother," he repeated brokenly, desperately, "Beth?"

"You did not think of Beth when you were disgracing your name. Why do you speak of her now?"

"I want you to see her," he begged. "I cannot. Make her understand that I was a fool, a weak rascal, but can't you make her see that there was something decent in me? Don't let her utterly—" He broke down.

"I wish that I might never see her again," answered his mother slowly. "You do not understand what you have done. You have made me a reproach, my name a dishonor. I wish that I might never see a living soul again, much less that girl whom I thought distinguished—distinguished—by you! I wish that I might die before I have to face the world. You, who have known only good things all your life; you, your father's son, your grandfather's, yes, mine! I am glad that you are going away. I am glad that I shall know nothing of your further disgrace, for you are weak and wicked at the core, and dishonor will be your portion."

"Everything you say is probably true," answered the boy, standing and looking down at her with a queer look of misery and defiance, "except the last. I shall not go down. I shall live to pay this back, and then—then it is nobody's business what I do."

He waited awhile, standing beside her. Hope was not quite dead in him yet. He ventured another appeal.

"Somehow," he said—"of course it

was silly—but I had expected you to pity me. Oh, not much, but a little!”

He waited for a second after that, but in the white wretchedness of her face there was no relenting. Her proud lips were tight shut, her eyes directed straight before her.

“All right,” he said finally, and in another minute she heard the door slam behind him and the ring of his footsteps on the flagging. It was not until they had died away down the street that she was stabbed with any sense of loving loss. Then, when the inexorable silence closed about her again, for a breathing-space she forgot the outraged pride of a daughter of an upright race in a sudden burst of longing for her son.

II.

Not until three or four days had passed did publicity come. Then the officers of the County Traction Company, journeying to the substantial dwelling set upon its stately terrace, asked Mrs. Carey for information of her son. She replied, with some appearance of alarm, that she had supposed him absent on a business trip in the interest of the corporation.

Then followed the revelations. That Mrs. Carey fainted was due to no power of hers as an actress, but to the sudden collapse, from sheer relief, of nerves strained to the utmost for three days. She would never have to wait again for these words, never have to live in expectation of this scene! She need brace herself no longer; and so she fainted. The next morning's papers referred to her most gently and respectfully when they chronicled the embezzlement and the escape of her son.

She had read the papers, each word a knife in her heart. She had telegraphed to her daughters. She had left word with her maid that no one could see her, and that she had nothing to say to reporters. She sat alone and fed her soul on bitterness.

There was an imperious ring at the doorbell. There was a swift flow of words, a flurry of skirts, and past the palpitating maid a girl flew down the hall and into the dining-room. It was Elizabeth Darrell. Her face was white save where two disks of excited red burned high on her cheeks. Her fair hair was disordered beneath her big hat.

“It isn't true!” she cried, disdaining all preliminaries. “It isn't true. I know that. But where is he?”

“I don't know,” said his mother woodenly.

“Don't know? Why do you look so, Mrs. Carey? Why do you—you don't believe this—this absurdity?”

Something in her young disdain angered the older woman.

“I know it is true,” she announced briefly.

Elizabeth's wrath flamed.

“How do you know?” she demanded furiously.

“He told me.”

The girl looked at the woman for a full minute with no change of expression. Then she walked slowly to a chair and sat down. She remained quite still for another minute.

“Where has he gone?” she asked dully.

“I do not know.”

They faced each other again. Then the older woman leaned forward.

“Do you care so much?” she said curiously.

“How can you ask me?” replied the girl. “You who must love him beyond all words! Am I never to know where he is?”

“I do not desire to know.”

“And I,” said Elizabeth, “would give everything to know where he is, to go to him, to bring him back here for his expiation, to wait through it, and to make him happy at the end!”

“He has not disgraced your name, and you are young, and heroics are for you.”

“You are his mother!”

“That is it. My son, flesh and blood of me, is a thief and a fugitive. You can know nothing about it.”

Elizabeth sat, the youth frozen out of her face as if it were a flower blighted by the first frost. But by and by her indomitable spirit came back, melting the hardness of her look, almost dissipating its misery.

“Dear Mrs. Carey,” she said gently, “you are right, I do not doubt. I cannot understand your feelings. But neither can you mine. I loved him. We were waiting, playing with our certain knowledge of ourselves and of each other, enjoying our love better because we had never used the words. It was like—it was like—ah, just before the orchards break into their useful leaf and fruit, when they are all a mist of pink and white, and you hold your breath for fear they'll change! Well, we hadn't said the words. But I belong to him, and I shall wait for him; and

because he is your boy you must let me come to you and try to comfort you."

"There is no comfort. I am disgraced." But her voice wavered.

"But he is homeless and forlorn and disgraced and unloved—and he was your son, your little boy!"

"Do not let us speak any longer of it," said Mrs. Carey quickly. "I am sorry for you, but you are young, and—you'll forgive me—romantic. In my day we were not so—so intense. You'll outgrow it. You'll come to blush for your folly, generous as it is. But never, until one of your children disgraces you, will you know what I am suffering. There may be worse to follow—his capture, a trial——"

She shuddered. Elizabeth bent over her.

"You don't know how I have half envied you," she whispered. "To have been his mother, to have cradled his dear little baby head on your arm, to have seen his little boy face shining with the wonder of each day's newness! I never thought to talk like this. But now you make me think that I, in my mere fancy, have had more joy of his childhood than you, you who can think so selfishly of him ashamed, ruined, fleeing! Oh, why did you not go with him?"

She finished tempestuously. Usually there was a delicate reserve beneath even her most impulsive talk, but to-day, in her shocked and jealous anger for the man she loved, she was stirred to relentless self-revelations.

"Will you go?" cried Mrs. Carey, her low voice savage.

But when the door closed upon Elizabeth, her proud, miserable head was bent and she sobbed. A rush of tenderness for the little boy of Beth's conjuring imagination engulfed her. She loved and cherished the memory with a sudden primitive passion that she had never known for the original.

III.

In Canyon Center there are many men whose eyes have the look of the hunted. They are apprehensive of footsteps behind them, they scan newcomers with furtive keenness. They resent any searching inquiry into their habits of life "back East." They sometimes absent-mindedly forget to respond to the name by which they have introduced themselves to the community.

Something seemed to place Carruth in this band when he first appeared in the

town, the last link between civilization and the sun-baked hills and mesas of the desert. Yet something also seemed to differentiate him from most of its members. There was rather the recollection of misery than the apprehension of trouble in his look.

The delicately-balanced code of the place stifled inquisitive curiosity. In Canyon Center a man stands upon his record from the time of his arrival. Carruth's was good. In a place where many men were drunkards, he was conspicuously sober; only a certain charm of manner prevented him from being offensively so. Where many were idlers, he was consistently energetic. Where the population seemed almost equally divided between spendthrift and pauper, he was thrifty. Where it was the custom to be uproarious in mirth and lax in conduct, he seemed to dwell upon some sure height of kindly indifference that removed him from temptation. In a place where half the men were gamblers—gamblers who settled for their day of faro in the saloons and hotel lobbies with a businesslike promptitude in the morning, gamblers who staked their fortunes upon the chance of gleaming copper in places which they did not know among the bare hills, gamblers in cattle that they had never seen—among all these he held steadfastly to sureties.

He was poor when he arrived, but he was both well-educated and trained to business methods. In the big, hideous smelter at the edge of the city, just where the burnt desert began its wavering ascent to the shimmering blue hills, he found some sort of clerical employment, and step by step he mounted until he became the manager's assistant. He knew the details of the business; he knew the mines that sent their product to the establishment. He rode among them, fifty miles a day in the clear-domed waste places of the earth.

Gradually men came to trust him greatly, relying upon his unhurried judgment, his exact honesty. And women liked him for his long, lean frame made hardy by the life of the frontier, and for the inscrutable melancholy of his gray eyes.

He had been in Canyon Center eleven years, changing from a slight boy of twenty-four or five to a man. Whatever fear had dogged his footsteps at the beginning was gone. He sent no hasty glances over his shoulder now at unexpected steps. And he had resisted the allurements of Southwestern women and

the snares of Southwestern parents who knew of his growing balance in the bank.

There was an air of elation about him just at this time which it was difficult for those who noticed to explain to their satisfaction. The housekeeper of the Mansion Hotel, where he lived, had been pained, on reconnoitering through the keyhole, to see him "positively gloatin' over a bank-book—for all the world like a miser," as she said. She had not waited long enough to see him produce from a clumsy, man-sewed case of oiled paper a small picture of a girl, bare-headed, in the opening of a vine-hung piazza, or she would have seen the look of mysterious elation change to the lover's instinctive, unquenchable rapture, and then fade to utter misery.

Just before Christmas, Carruth was sent to El Paso on business for the smelter. His chief occupation during the journey was to cast up figures on the back of envelopes or the edges of newspapers, and in this he seemed to find a deep and mysterious satisfaction. In El Paso he transacted his business comfortably. He had an evening and a night to spend. He strolled among curio stores, ate sumptuously at a Chinese restaurant, and was again strolling about when the shout of a newsboy attracted his attention.

"Extry, extry!" the boy called, after the more vehement Eastern fashion. "Full account of the bank failure."

Carruth bought one of the papers. As he read the report of the speculations of a trusted official and how these had forced the bank to close its doors that afternoon, his face grew ashen. A number of smaller banks, the report said, would be involved in the failure. Carruth knew that Canyon Center's was one of these.

The paper crackled in his shaking hands for a second. Then he flung it from him and broke into a run which brought him to the railroad station. He knew that there was no train to Canyon Center that night, but there was one to a station thirty miles south, on one of the haphazard branches which the main line radiated into the wilderness. Laying about him to the right and left, falling over people, elbowing them aside, he breathlessly bought his ticket and swung himself aboard this train just before its departure.

On another track the Overland lay, its passengers stretching their legs on the platform. He dashed through them recklessly, and as he did so a tall,

graceful woman caught an older one by the arm and cried:

"Mother, mother! It—did you see him?"

Mrs. Carey turned her patient, tender eyes toward Elizabeth Darrell.

"No, dear," she answered.

"There, there!" cried Elizabeth breathlessly, pointing.

The other train, with Carruth catching his breath on the platform, was just starting. And Frederica Carey, stretching out longing arms toward him, astonished and disconcerted the other promenading passengers from the Overland. They were even more astonished when they heard the younger woman demand wildly of an official the destination of the moving train.

"Santo Domingo?" she repeated after her informant. "Porter!" she cried, running along the platform until she reached their own car. "Porter, get our things out of section fourteen. We've changed our destination. The Pacific can wait. Santo Domingo for us!"

Thus the winter trip of Mrs. Carey, and of her constant companion for the last eleven years, Elizabeth Darrell, was broken short. And the next morning's train for Santo Domingo bore them toward that small shipping station for the mines of the Santo Domingo Range, of which neither of them had ever heard before.

Then for the first time the magnificent faith and love of the young woman faltered. They had been strong enough to penetrate through the crust of habit and pride to the heart of his mother; they had triumphantly overridden all doubts of an ultimate meeting and of ultimate happiness. The abounding belief of the utter idealist had sustained her and Frederica Carey for eleven years. But now, since she had seen him, only one question agitated her.

"Oh, mother," she whispered, using the name they both loved, "what if—what if he should be married—or anything?"

For a second there was something of the selfishness of the unregenerate Frederica Carey in the woman who answered.

"It is possible, of course. But at any rate I shall have my boy again." Then she looked at the stricken, tremulous face beside her—the face still lovely with sweet imaginings and high courage despite all the years of pain—and her heart relented. "Ah, no, no!" she

cried remorsefully. "It could not be, it could not be!"

IV.

It was one o'clock in the morning when the train pulled into Santo Domingo. Theodore Carey, later Carruth, leaped from it before the great wheels had ceased their revolutions. He ran through the deserted main street to a saloon he knew. There he bargained for a horse and was out upon the trail with breathless haste. The men he left behind averred that they would not care to run counter to his wishes that night.

"He sure had the devil in his eyes," said one, returning to an interrupted game.

The thirty-mile stretch that lay before him, rough, bare, and sandy, he rode like a madman. He talked to himself, to the great stars, to the black expanse above him and the mystery of waste about him.

"I won't have it, I tell you!" he cried. "I won't have it. All these years for this—to lose it all for another man's dishonesty! I won't have it!"

Then he laughed aloud—a laugh that startled the hard-spurred beast beneath him.

"God!" he said. "What an ironist you are! To destroy my chance of restitution for another fool's thieving!"

Still galloping, he planned more quietly.

"The fool just got off," he reasoned. "Canyon Center won't hear of it until to-morrow morning. There can't be a run on the bank, the doors can't be closed, until after that. I'll have my money to-night."

It was five o'clock when he drew rein at an adobe house on the hill at the hither edge of the city. He had ceased his ravings, and his bronzed face was set in lines as hard as metal.

In answer to his ring a head appeared at a window. It was Rallson's, the cashier of the Copper and Silver Bank of Canyon Center.

"Rallson, it's I, Carruth!" said Theodore steadily. "Will you put on something? I want you."

"All right. Wait a minute."

Rallson felt as sure of Carruth as he did of himself. In an instant he appeared in the doorway.

"Come to the bank," said Theodore in an even voice. He had the cashier's arm in a grip of steel. "Come quietly, or I'll kill you."

The other hand showed a gleam of metal. Rallson nearly dropped dead of shocked surprise. Then he began to sputter. Then he looked at Theodore. Here was a madman, he decided. Wisdom counseled humoring the man until they reached help.

"I want my own money, that's all," declared the madman. "And I must have it before morning. You can learn my balance, you can open the safe. I must get it and be out of here before daybreak."

Rallson tried to think, tried to plan, to reason; but he could not. And then he heard the voice he knew and liked going on with a new note of pleading in it.

"Rallson, you know how I've slaved for it, how I've saved for it. It's mine—made of my muscle and my mind. Well"—Theodore paused, and the half-lie had greater effect when it followed—"I came here to hide. You know how straight I've lived; you see that whatever brought me, whatever damned folly or crime, I'm a man now. Well, they're on my trail at last. I've got to have the money and go."

His heart smote him when he thought of the closed doors of the bank, the consternation among the shops and saloons, among the ranches and mines beyond the town. But after all, his thousands would avail nothing in that panic. And he would not be cheated of the moment for which he had lived every hour of eleven years.

Rallson looked at him, trusted and liked him as ever, pitied him with quick sympathy.

"I'll do it," he said. "We'll date your order back to yesterday, and that may save me."

Twenty minutes later, on a fresh horse from Rallson's own corral, Theodore had set forth again for Santo Domingo. The next morning the doors of the Copper and Silver Bank of Canyon Center were suddenly closed after receiving a telegram from El Paso. In the general confusion Rallson's irregular action of the night before was overlooked. His explanation that Carruth's balance had been withdrawn just before closing time of the day before was not questioned.

V.

At Santo Domingo the two women lost the trail. They did not know for whom to inquire. They did not even

dare to describe too closely the person whom they sought. A sudden fear that even now he might not be safe from pursuit had assailed them. The station agent, the hotel people, and the loafers of the town were all ready with garrulous suggestions, but none brought the two any nearer the object of their search.

Christmas, the third day of their pursuit, found them still in the forlorn little town at the edge of the hills.

"It is all my fault," Elizabeth said remorsefully. "You might have been comfortable at Santa Barbara this minute but for me and my craziness. It was probably not Ted at all. And if it was, he's swallowed up out there in that awful desolation that is alike at every point. I'm sorry. When I am eighty I may have learned to distrust my impulses."

"That was Ted," said his mother simply. "And having seen him, you don't think that I could have gone on? You don't know a mother's heart, my dear."

So generous was Elizabeth's nature that it did not even occur to her that Mrs. Carey herself had not known a mother's heart until she, Elizabeth, had uncovered one in the mere organ of circulation with which the older woman had been so long content.

To pass the woful time they went to church—the tawdry, evil-smelling little church of Our Lady of All the Angels. The soft-eyed Mexicans were there in bright-colored groups, gently sibilant over the waxen image in the toy manger at one side. The sisters from the hospital were there, somber and serene, and a few of the American families had come in.

Mass was nearly half over when Theodore Carey entered the church. He was on his way back, and, thanks to a

wreck on the direct line to Canyon Center, he was going again by way of Santo Domingo. He wanted "to have it out with Rallson" in any way that Rallson demanded. The certified check to the Elmburg County Traction Company was speeding due east from El Paso. So was a hopeless letter to Elizabeth Darrell.

What impulse led him to the adobe church with the cracked belfry he did not know. He had not been in such a place since last he had accompanied his mother to the family pew in the white-steepled Congregational church at Elmburg. But some superstition of rendering thanks according to formal rite seized him, and here he was in the back of the tinselly edifice with its bright pictures, its toy manger, and its altar candles aureoled in the heavily-incensed air.

He rose and knelt awkwardly enough with the others. He listened to the simple Spanish sermon with a reverence that he had not expected to feel. It was all of love and forgiveness, and of the tenderness of God made manifest in the tender Mother of the Stable—and in all tender mothers, the kind old priest finished by saying.

Theodore smiled a little sadly, a vision of his own outraged mother before him. Still, he understood her better now than on the night when she let him go, unloved, to his expiation of his sin.

There was a murmur across the aisle. He glanced in its direction. He saw a face with hollow eyes—a face transfigured now with a light of a great joy, and then, before the wide-eyed Mexicans, he crossed the aisle and took the fragile old figure in his arms. And across his mother's head, he gazed, with joy and love too deep, too sure, for questioning the miracle, into the radiant face of Elizabeth Darrell.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

Our of the past's black night

There shines one star

Whose light

Is more than countless constellations are.

High in the east it gleams—

This radiant star

Whose beams

Are more to man than all the planets are.

Still be thy light displayed,

Oh, Bethlehem star!

Nor fade

Until the circling systems no more are!

Sennett Stephens.

ETCHINGS

MY FIRST BOOTS.

At Christmas I haunt olden ways
 As at no other season,
 And live again the halcyon days
 When rhythm discounted reason.
 And always on a loaded tree—
 The genus whereon such fruit grows—
 Hung near the tippy-top I see
 A pair of boots with copper toes.

Of books the usual array
 My eager optics greeted;
 A pair of skates another day
 Had my delight completed;
 But soon was added to the toys
 To make me shortly friends or foes,
 The cream of all my boyhood joys,
 A pair of boots with copper toes.

That things to wear could constitute
 A "really truly" present
 I never would agree. Repute
 Had me tagged "*Boy; Unpleasant.*"
 However, it may be believed
 I didn't class footwear as clothes,
 For I went wild when I received
 That pair of boots with copper toes.

To-night I'll tread the minuet
 In shining patent leathers,
 Recalling as I turn Fanchette
 What's said about fine feathers.
 When I first learned to make a bow
 I wore less sightly boots than those;
 I wish that I could wear them now—
 That pair of boots with copper toes!
Edward W. Barnard.

A SPRIG OF MISTLETOE.

ENCASED in paper soft and white, tied
 with a scarlet bow,
 Within a grim old trunk there lies a
 sprig of mistletoe.
 Old guns, the hilts of broken swords, and
 rusted spurs declare
 That no white hand of dainty dame
 had placed the love-gage there.

Oh, strange it looks, that relic of a
 far-off Christmas Day,
 Among the souvenirs of war so deftly
 laid away!

Who were the twain it favored when its
 leaves with silver sheen
 And berries of a pearly hue shone out
 'mid holly green?

I seem to see them dancing in a grand
 colonial hall—
 Her, dark-eyed, grave, and haughty;
 him, gray-eyed, gay, and tall.
 I see the startled crimson sweep up to
 her ebon hair
 As he whirled her 'neath the mistletoe
 and boldly kissed her there!

I hear the call of bugles, the tread of
 marching men;
 I see him pause beside her, and kiss
 her once again;
 Her face, as white as snow-flakes, sinks
 on his blue-clad breast,
 The while her heart turns traitor, and
 hails him as its guest!

How ends the tale, I wonder, of that
 fateful long ago?
 In grief, I fear, since he it was who
 kept the mistletoe.
 And still it holds the secret of some
 heart that bore a scar—
 A waif of love and Christmas joy
 'mid souvenirs of war!
Adela S. Cody.

THE APPLE.

SEE how this friendly, toothsome sphere
 Presents the story of the year.

The tender fragrance of the spring
 Aroused to rapt awakening—
 A breath from bursting copse and
 whin—
 This lingers in the apple's skin.

Beneath, a mellowness that seems
 To call back golden summer dreams:
 The sun-drenched fields, the basking hill,
 The bee's bassoon, the thrush's trill.

But, mingling, is the winy bite
 That speaks of autumn day and night;
 September's varied, piquant moods;
 The crispness of October woods.