

HER CHRISTMAS GIFT

September 17.
I SAIL tomorrow.
I am devotedly thankful to dad for insisting that mother take me away for a while. Perhaps we will remain a year. I hope it may be ten. I hate America, loathe New York, and want to live the rest of my life in Europe—Asia—Africa—anywhere, as far away from Riverside as possible. Mother says I'm a silly little lovesick girl; but dad thinks I need a change.

I'm not silly—and I'm not lovesick. Carl has behaved in a most unbecomingly way.

Just because I motored to Lake Wood with Sam Perkins and his sister is no reason why he should get cross and take that actress-looking person with him everywhere he goes.

Sam's sister says she is a Frenchwoman. I always did hate French, and I'm glad I refused Carl to meet her, glad I snubbed Carl and glad I was out when he called.

Two long, miserable weeks without seeing Carl—and tomorrow we sail. Perhaps I won't see him for months—maybe never again. I wonder if I care.

October 20.
More than a month has passed since I have written in my little diary. I wouldn't write now, only this morning a letter came from Carl, and I just have to record it.

Carl says he is lonely; he misses me, and he cannot understand why I was away to Europe so suddenly.

The letter is full of reproaches for my treatment of HIM, when all the time it was HIS meanness to me that made me so ill, so that I had to get away from everybody.

He does not mention one word about that horrid French creature.

I shall not write. Well—perhaps I will.

November 24.

At first I hated Paris.

London was nice, Vienna stupid, but Paris—impossible, until last Sunday, when we met Mrs. Harmon.

Isn't it strange what a change one day, one hour, can make in a girl's

life?

Mr. and Mrs. Field, friends of mother's, gave a dinner for us. Mrs. Harmon was one of the guests. She looks much better in the evening gown than in her street suits; not nearly so frowsy, and the rouge on her cheeks doesn't show at night. I was appalled when mother introduced me to her, to recognize Carl's French friend. She is his cousin, but she has lived in Paris since she was a little girl.

We had a lovely talk. She told me all about her recent visit to America and how good Carl had been in taking her about.

I like her now that I know her. She says Carl was perfectly miserable over a girl he was in love with, who had gone abroad for the winter. She did not know the girl's name. I blushed furiously when she spoke of it.

That was Sunday. We have seen Mrs. Harmon several times since then. I made mother promise to take me home. She cabled dad, and said she would be thankful to get back to plain home cooking and her own bathroom. Mother is a dear, and so funny.

December 25.
What a happy, happy Christmas day it has been!

The very best I have ever known. Once I said I hated America—New York—but I don't.

I love New York and America, Riverside, home, mother, dad and Carl. Oh, I love Carl best of all!

He has been so sweet, so dear and kind, since we came home two weeks ago. He met us at the pier. I was never so glad to see anybody in my life as I was to see dear old Carl. Dad was there, too.

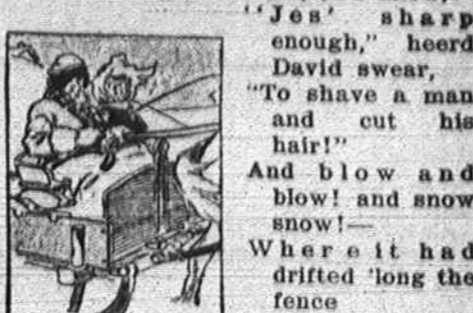
My Christmas gifts are lovely. Best of all is Carl's love and the ring he gave me as a token of his deep, undying love. I think it was sweet of him to give me such a wonderful diamond, besides the candy and books and flowers. It flashes fire as I turn my hand in the light. Daddy says I'm too young to marry, but I shall coax him to let me marry Carl in June. I'm the happiest girl in the world tonight, and Carl is the happiest man. He has told me so himself. I wish everybody in the world were as happy as we this Christmas night.

LAST CHRISTMAS WAS A YEAR AGO

(THE OLD LADY SPEAKS)
By James Whitcomb Riley
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Last Christmas was a year ago, Says I to David, I—says I, "We're goin' to morning service, so you hitch up right away; I'll try to tell the girls jes' what to do. For dinner. We'll be back by two." I didn't wait to hear what he would more'n like say back to me, But banged the stable door and flew back to the rouse, jes' plumb chilled through.

Cold! Wooh! how cold it was! My—Oh! Frost flyin', and the air, you know, "Jes' sharp enough," heard David swear, "To shave a man and cut his hair!" And blow and blow! and snow snow!—Where it had drifted 'long the fence And 'cross the road—some



places though, Jes' swep' clean to the gravel, so The goin' was as bad fer sleighs As 't was fer wagons—and both ways, "Twixt snowdrifts and the bare ground, I've Jes' wondered we got through alive; I hain't saw nothin', fore er sense, 'At beat it anywheres, I know—Last Christmas was a year ago.

And David said, as we set out, 'At Christmas services was 'bout As cold and wuthless kind o' love To offer up as he know of; And as fer him, he rally thought 'At the Good Bein' up above Would think more of us—as he ought—

A-stayin' home on sich a day, And thankin' of him thataway! And jawed on, in an undertone, 'Bout leavin' Lide and Jane alone There on the place, and me not there To oversee 'em and p'pare The stuffin' fer the turkey and The sass and all, you understand.

I've allus managed David by Jes' sayin' nothing. That was why

We's chased Lide's beau, a way—cause Lide She'd allus take up Perry's side When David tack—led him; and so, Last Christmas was a year ago—Er rather, 'bout a week afore,—David and Perry'd quarrel'd about Some tom-fool argyment, you know, And pap told him to "Jes' git out O' there, and not to come no more, And, when he went out, to shet the door."

And as he passed the winder, we Saw Perry, white as white could be March past, on hitch his boss, and light A see-gyar, and lops out o' sight. Then Lide she come to me and cried! And I said nothin'—was no need. And yit, you know, that man jes' got Right out o' there's ef he'd be'n shot, P'tendin' he must go and feed The stock or sompin'. Then I tried To git the pore gal pacified.

But gittin' back to—where was we!—Oh, yes!—where David leetered me All way to meet in, high and low, Last Christmas was a year ago; Fer all the awful cold there was A fair attendance; mostly, though The crowd was 'round the stoves, you see, Thawin' their heels and



scrougin' us. Ef 't 'adn't be'n fer the old squire Givin' his seat to us, as in—We stomped, a-fairly perlishin', And David could 'a' got no fire, He'd jes' 'a' dropped there in his tracks! And squire, as I was tryin' to yit Make room fer him, says, "No; the fac's Is, I got to git up and sit 'thout no preachin'. Jes' got word—

Trial fer life—can't be deferred!" And out he put! All way through The sermon—and a long one, too— I couldn't help but think o' squire And us changed 'round so, and admire His gentle ways,—to give his warm Bench up, and have to face the storm.

And when I noticed David, he Was needin' jab-

bin—I thought best To kind o' sort o' let him rest: 'Peared like he 'slep' so peacefully! And when I thought o' home, and how And what the girls was doin' now, And kind o' prayed, 'way in my breast, And brushed away a tear er two As David waked, and church was through.

By time we'd "howdyed" round and shuck Hands with the neighbors, must 'a' tuck A half hour longer; ever' one A-sayin' "Christmas gift!" afore David er me—so we got none! But David warmed up, more and more,

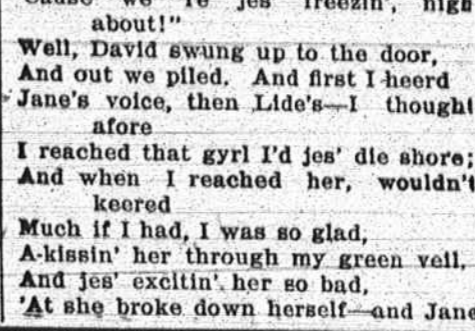
And got so jokey-like, and had His sperits up, and 'peared so glad, I whispered to him, "Spose you ast A passel of 'em come and eat Their dinners with us, Gyrls's got A full-and-plenty fer the lot And all their kin!" So David passed The invite round; and ever' seat In ever' wagon-bed and sleigh Was jes' packed, as we rode away,—

The young folks, mild er so along, A-strikin' up a sleighin'-song, Tel David laughed and yelled, you know, And jes' whirped up and sent the snow And gravel flyin' thick and fast— Last Christmas was a year ago; W'y, that air seven-mild jant we come— Jes' seven mild scant from church to home—

It didn't 'pear, that day, to be Much furdur rally 'n 'bout three!

But I was purty squeamish by The time home hove in sight and I See two vehicles standin' there All to myse'f, And presently David he sobered; and says he, "Hain't that air Squire Hanch's old Buggy," says he, "and claybank mare?" Says I, "Le's git out the cold— Your company's nigh 'bout froze!" He says, "Whose sleigh 's that air, a-standin' there?" Says I, "It's no odds whose—you jes' Drive to the house and let us out, 'Cause we 're jes' freezin', nigh about!"

Well, David swung up to the door, And out we piled. And first I heard Jane's voice, then Lide's—I thought afore I reached that gyrl I'd jes' die shore; And when I reached her, wouldn't keered Much if I had, I was so glad, A-kinnin' her through my green veil, And jes' excitin' her so bad, 'At she broke down herself—and Jane



She cried—and we all hugged again. And David? David jes' turned pale— Looked at the gyrls, and then at me Then at the open door—and then— "Is old Squire Hanch there?" says he. The old Squire suddenly stood in The doorway, with a sneakin' grin, "Is Perry Anders in there too?" Says David, limberin' all through, As Lide and me both grabbed him, and Perry stepped out and waved his hand

And says, "Yes, Pap." And David jes' Stopped and kissed Lide, and says, "I guess Yer mother's much to blame as you. Ef she kin reek him, I kin too!"

The dinner we had then hain't no Bit better'n the one today 'At we'll have fer 'em. Hear some sleigh

A-jin' 'em now, David, fer me, I wish you'd jes' go out and see Ef 'ey're in sight yit. It jes' does Me good to think, in times like these, Lide done so well. And David, he's Me tractabler'n what he was— Last Christmas was a year ago.

Camping Gear. Personal likes and prejudices have much to do with the form of tent chosen. My own preference is for either the A or wedge tent, with the Hudson's Bay model as second choice, for general utility. Either of these is particularly adapted also to winter travel where the tent must often be pitched upon the snow. If, however, the tent is only to be used in summer, and particularly in canoe travel where a light, easily erected model is desired, the Frazer tent is both ideal for comfort and is an exceedingly lightweight model for portaging.—Outing.

Rubbing the Other Way. At the tender age of three masculine conceit had gripped that small boy with a relentless clutch. He had kissed a little girl of three, and she was rubbing her lips vigorously. "You musn't do that again," said the boy's mother. "She doesn't like it. Just see how hard she is trying to rub your kiss off." "Oh, no, she ain't," said the boy. "She is rubbin' it in."

Grandchild of George III. The Grand Duchess Augusta Caroline of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Europe's oldest princess, celebrated her 90th birthday recently. She is the only surviving grandchild of George III.

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