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NEW YEAR'S DAY.

BY MISS SEDGWICK

'Say, to be just, and kind, and wise,  
There solid, self-enjoyment lies.'

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'I wish I could find a solution for one mystery,' said Mary Moore to her mother, as during the last hour of the last night of 1834 they sat together, not over the inspiring embers of a nutwood fire, as in good old times, but within the circumambient atmosphere of a grate glowing with Schuylkill coals.

'Is there but one mystery in life that puzzles you, Mary?' asked her mother.

'One more than all others, why Lizzy Percival is so tormented.

'Lizzy tormented? she seems to me the happiest girl of all our acquaintance.'

'Mother! Did she not begin with the greatest of all earthly plagues – a step-mother?'

'A step-mother, my dear child, is not of course a plague.'

'But Lizzy's was, you know, mother.'

'A plague to herself, undoubtedly, but the greatest of all blessings to Lizzy.'

'A blessing to Lizzy! what do you mean, mother?'

'I mean that the trials of Lizzy's childhood and youth developed and strengthened her virtue; Lizzy's matchless sweetness of temper, was acquired, or at least

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perfected, by the continual discipline which it required to endure patiently the exactions and indolence of her step-mother. In short, Mary, Lizzy has been made far better by her relation with her step-mother. She has overcome evil, and not been overcome by it. I wish, my dear Mary, you could realize that it is not the circumstances in which we are placed, but the temper in which we meet them; the fruit we reap from them that make them either fortunate or unfortunate for us.'

‘Well, mother, I suppose if I were as old, and as wise, and above all, as good as you are, I should think as you do, but in the meantime, (an endless meantime!) I must account such a step-mother as Lizzy Percival’s the first and chiefest of all miseries. And then when it pleased kind Heaven to reward Lizzy’s virtue by the removal of this gracious lady, you know she left behind her half a dozen little pledges, to whom poor Lizzy has been obliged to devote and sacrifice herself.’

‘And this devotion and self-sacrifice has made her the exemplary and lovely creature she is. Her youth, instead of being wasted in frivolity has been most profitably employed. Duty is now happiness to her, and she is rewarded a thousand fold, for all her exertions by the improvement of her character, and the devoted love of her little brothers and sisters.’

‘Well, mother, you are very ingenious, but I think it will puzzle you to prove, that there is more profit than loss to Lizzy in being thwarted in her affections. Never was there a truer, deeper, or better merited love than Lizzy’s for Harry Stuart; never any thing more unreasonable, nor more obstinate than Mr. Percival’s opposition to their engagement, and if I were Lizzy \_\_\_\_\_’ she hesitated, and her mother finished the sentence.

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‘You would take the matter into your own hands.’

‘I do not say that, but I certainly would not submit implicitly, as she does, toiling on and on for the regiment of children, and trying, while she is sacrificing her happiness to appear perfectly cheerful, and what provokes me more than all, being so the greater part of her time in spite of every thing.’

‘Ah! Mary, a kind disposition, a gentle temper, an approving conscience, and occupation for every moment of a most useful life, must make Lizzy happy, even though the current of true-love does not run smooth.’

‘But Lizzy does flag sometimes; I have seen her very sad.’

‘For any length of time?’

‘O, no! because she always has something or other to do.’

‘True, Mary, it is your idlers who make the most of misery, and create it when it is not ready made to their hands. Lizzy will finally have the reward of her virtue; her father will relent.’

‘Never—never, mother. You hope against hope. Mr. Percival is as proud and obstinate as all the Montagues and Capulets together. He is one of the infallibles. He prides himself on never changing a resolve, nor even an opinion; on never unsaying what

he has once said, and you know he not only said, but swore, and that in Lizzy's presence too, that she should never marry a son of Gilbert Stuart.'

'Yes, I know. But continual dropping wears the rock, and the sun, if it were to shine long enough, would melt polar ice. Mr. Percival's heart may be hardened by self-will, but he cannot forever resist the

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continued unintermitting influence of such goodness as Lizzy's. He is not naturally hard-hearted. His heart is soft enough, if you can penetrate the crust of pride that overlays it.'

'Oh, mother, you mistake, it is all crust.'

'No, Mary. The human heart is mingled of many elements, and not, as you young people think, formed of a single one, good or evil.'

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The scene changes to Mr. Percival's house. The clock is on the stroke of twelve. A lovely young creature, not looking the victim of sentiment, but with a clear, serene brow, her eye, not 'blue and sunken,' but full, bright and hazle, and lips and cheeks as glowing as Hebe's, is busied with a single handmaid in preparing new year's gifts for a bevy of children. Lizzy Percival's maid Madeline, a German girl, had persuaded her young mistress to arrange the gifts after the fashion of her *father-land*, and accordingly a fine tree of respectable growth had been purchased in market, and though when it entered the house it looked much like the theatrical presentation of 'Birnam woods coming to Dunsinane,' the mistress and maid had contrived, with infinite ingenuity, to elude the eyes of the young Argueses, and to plant it into the library, which adjoined the drawing room, without its being seen by any one of them.

Never did Christmas tree bear more multifarious fruit,-- for St. Nicholas, that most benign of all the saints of the Calendar, had, through the hands of many a ministering priest and priestess, showered his gifts. The sturdiest branch dropped with its burden of books, chess-men, puzzles, & c., for Julius, a stripling of thirteen. Dolls,

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birds, beasts, and boxes were hung on the lesser limbs. A regiment of soldiers had alighted on one bough, and Noah's ark was anchored to another, and to all the slender branches were attached cherries, plumbs, strawberries and peaches as tempting, and at least as sweet, as the fruits of paradise.

Nothing remained to be done, but to label each bough. Miss Percival was writing the names, and Madeline walking round and round the tree, her mind, as the smile on her lip, and the tear in her eye indicated, divided between the present pleasure and

recollections of by-gone festivals in the land of her home,— when both were startled by the ringing of the door-bell.

‘It is very late,’ said Miss Percival, with a look at Madeline which expressed, it is very odd that any one should ring at this hour. ‘Close the blinds, Madeline,’ she added, for the first time observing they were open. The ring was repeated, and as a first, very gently.

‘Whoever it is, is afraid of being heard,’ said Madeline, ‘but,’ bristling up with a coward’s show of courage, ‘there’s nothing to fear, Miss Lizzy,’ she added, ‘and if you’ll just come with me into the entry, I’ll find out before I open the door who it is.’

‘You hold the lamp, Madeline, and I will open the door,’ replied Lizzy, who had a good deal more moral courage than her domestic.

‘Oh, no! that would shame me too much, dear Miss Lizzy.’

‘But I am not afraid, Madeline;’ so giving Madeline the lamp, she sprang forward, and with her hand on the bolt, asked in a tone that might have converted an enemy into a friend, ‘who is there?’

A voice, low, anxious, and thrilling, answered, ‘Lizzy!’

Now indeed her cheek paled, and her hand trembled, and Madeline, naturally inferring that these signals betokened fear, said, ‘Shall I scream to your father?’

‘O ! no, no; not for the world; stand back, wait one moment;’ and while she hesitated whether she might turn the bolt and earnest, irresistible entreaty from without prevailed. ‘For Heaven’s sake open the door, Lizzy; I will not enter; I will not even speak to you.’ The bolt was turned, and Lizzy said with the frankness that characterized her, ‘if I might ask you in, you know I would, Harry.’ Stuart seized her hand, slipped into it a note, and impressed with his lips the thanks that, true to the letter of his promise, he dared not speak, and then hastily retreated, and the door was reclosed.

‘It was Mr. Stuart, Madeline.’

‘Yes, Miss Lizzy, I saw it was; but I promise you I shall not tell.’

‘No, do not, Madeline, for I shall tell papa, who is the only person that has a right to know.’

‘You are quite different from other young ladies,’ said Madeline, with an expression of honest wonder. But not entirely different was Lizzy, for she forgot to finish the little that remained undone, and hastily dismissing Madeline, she hurried to her own apartment, and opened the twisted note Stuart had given her. It enveloped a ring, and contained the following in pencil: ‘Dearest Lizzy—I have been walking before your

window for the last hour, watching your kind preparations for those who are every day blest with the brightest and softest of all lights—the light of your countenance.

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Your very happy face has made me sad; for my selfish thoughts tell me this happiness is quite independent of me. Shame—shame to me! There is my Lizzy, I have said, giving gifts, and receiving them, making others happy, and made happy herself, and bestowing no thought on me! I have wrapped up this little ring, on which is an enameled forget-me-not, and bade it speak to your heart, the cravings of mine. *Forget me not*, dear Lizzy! The ring is indeed too true an emblem of the endless circle of my sorrows. No beam of light is there in the parting—none in the dawning year for me.’

Lizzy read and re-read the note—very like all lovers’ notes—but, as she thought, peculiar and most peculiarly heart-breaking. The ring she put on her finger, and went to bed, holding it in the palm of her other hand, and before morning she had dreamed out a very pretty romance with a right pleasant and fitting conclusion. The morning came, New Year’s morning with its early greetings, its pleasant bustle, its noisy joys, and to Lizzy its cares; for there is no play-day in the Calendar of an American mistress of a family, be she young or old. Lizzy the *genius loci* was the dispenser-general of the bounties of the season. The children waked her at dawn with their kisses and their cries of ‘Happy New Year, sister.’ The servants besieged her door with their earnest taps and their heart-felt good wishes, and each received a gift and a kind word to grace it.

After breakfast the library door was opened, and the land of promise revealed to the little expectants. Then what exclamations of surprise! what bursts of joy, and what a rush as each sprang forward to pluck his own fruit from the laden tree! Each we said, but little Ella,

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the youngling of the flock, clung to Lizzy and leading her to the extremity of the room uncovered a basket, containing various souvenirs, saying, ‘Papa said we might all *div* something to the one we loved best, and so we *dived* this to you, sister.’

And now in the happy group around the tree, was apparent the blossoming of that fruit which their sister had planted and nurtured in their hearts. ‘Thank you, sister,’ said Julius, taking from his branch a nice book, filled with copies for hum to draw after; ‘how much pains you have taken to do this for me! how much time and trouble you have spent upon it; I hope I shall never feel tired of doing any little thing for you!’

‘O, sister Lizzy!’ exclaimed little Sue, ‘I did not know when I spilt all your beads that you was knitting this bag for me; but you was so good natured that I was as sorry as ever I could be!’

‘Sister, sister, did you paint these soldiers?’ cried Hal, ‘kiss me, you are the best sister that ever lived.’

‘O, Anne, your doll is dressed just like mine; sister has even worked their pocket handkerchiefs. But you have a paint-box, I’m glad of that!’

‘And you have an embroidered apron, and I am glad of that! O papa! does not sister do every thing for us?’

‘She does, my dear children,’ said Mr. Percival who though not of the melting order, was affected even to tears by this little home scene. ‘Come here to me, Lizzy,’ he said, drawing her aside, and putting his arm around her, ‘tell me, dear good child, what shall I give you.’

Lizzy hid her blushing face for a moment on her father’s bosom, and then courageously drawing back her

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head and raising her hand and pointing to her ring, she replied, ‘give me leave, Sir, to wear this gift from Harry Stuart!’

Mr. Percival’s brow clouded. ‘How is this Lizzy?’ did I not long ago command you to dismiss him from your thoughts.?’

‘Yes, papa, but I *could not* obey you.’

‘Nonsense, nonsense, Lizzy.’

‘I tried, Sir, indeed I did, but the more I tried the more I could not!’

‘And so by way of aiding your efforts you wish to keep this gewgaw with a *forget-me-not* engraven on it?’

‘With your leave, Sir, I would wear it. It will make no difference papa. Harry has engraved the forget-me-not on my heart. There it is *cut in*, as the engravers say.’

‘Lizzy’s frankness and perseverance astonished her father, there was something kindred to his own spirit in it. He felt it to be so, and this it was perhaps, that mitigated his displeasure as he paced the room, his hands behind him, as was his wont, when perplexed. – ‘I must not be fooled out of my resolution,’ he thought, ‘ it was very presuming of Harry Stuart to give this ring to Lizzy when he knows my determination is invincible.’ He turned to claim the ring, when Madeline, who a few minutes before entered with a paquet directed to him, caught his eye. He opened it, and found it contained a pair of slippers, Lizzy’s new year’s gift to him, beautifully wrought by her own hands. This was not all, there were several pairs of fine woolen hose which she had knit for him, in her intervals of leisure. They were just such as he liked,

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just such as he could not buy, just such as nobody but Lizzy could knit, at least so he thought, and thanking and kissing her, he said, ‘well, well, Lizzy, wear the ring to-day, and after that’ –

‘I may still wear it, papa?’

‘I’ll consider of it my child.’

‘C’est le premier pas qui coûte,’ thought Lizzy, and with a light heart and joyous face, she bounded away to perform her next duty. Lizzy’s duties were so blended with pleasure, that she no more separated them, than the naked eye separates the twisted ray of light.

‘Come with me Madeline,’ she said. Madeline followed, marveling at the young lady who, even in her love passages, dared to walk in light. These humble persons are prompt to discern truth and rectitude, and to imbibe its influence from their superiors in station!

In a few minutes Lizzy and her maiden were on their way to Sixth Avenue, where lived a certain widow Carey, who, with her four children, had long been blessed with Lizzy’s friendship. This young lady not contenting herself with setting down her father’s name as a subscriber to the Widow’s Society, literally and most religiously obeyed the command which recognises the first duty of the rich to the poor, and ‘visited the widow and the orphan,’ and not only lightened their burdens, but partook their happiness. The poor feel a sympathy in their joys more than the relief that is vouchsafed to their miseries, for that always reminds them of the superior condition of the bestower. Madeline carried on her arm a basket containing substantial gifts for the Careys, prepared by Lizzy’s own hands, and an abund-

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of toys for the children, contributed by the little Percivals from their last year’s stores.

The young Careys were all at the window, one head over another’s shoulder when Miss Percival appeared, and answered with smiles and nods to their out-break of clamorous joy and shouts of ‘I knew you would come Miss Lizzy,’ ‘I told mother you would come.’

‘And did I say she would not?’ said the mother, while her tears and smiles seemed contending which should most effectively express her gratitude.

‘Lizzy had no time to lose, and she hastily dispensed her gifts; one little urchin was taught to guide, by most mysterious magnetic attraction, a stately goose through such

a pond as might be contained within the bounds of a wash-basin. His brother was shown how to set up a little village, a pretty mimicry of the building in Chicago, or any other of our wilderness towns that grow up like Jonah's gourd, and the two little girls, miniature women, were seated at a stand to arrange their tea-set, and gossip with their pretty new-dressed dolls.

Lizzy, as she paused for a moment to look at them, was a fit personation of the saint of a child's festival; she was not herself too far beyond the precincts of childhood to feel the glow of its pleasures, and they were now reflected in her sparkling eye and dimpled cheek. She looked to the good mother for her sympathy, but her back was turned, and she seemed in earnest conversation with Madeline, whose eyes, as she listened, were filled with tears. 'Why, what is the matter, Mrs. Carey?' asked Lizzy, advancing and laying her hand on Mrs. Carey's shoulder.

'Ah! Miss Lizzy, it's being thankless to a gracious

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Providence to spake of trouble just now, and to you. These flannel petticoats and frocks,' she took up the bundle Madeline had just put down, 'will carry my children warm and dacent through the winter. God bless you, Miss Lizzy!'

'But what is it troubles you, Mrs. Carey?'

'There's no use clouding in your sunshine, Miss Lizzy, this day above all others.'

'But perhaps I can drive away the clouds, so tell me all, and quickly, because you know I must be at home and dressed before twelve o'clock.'

Mrs. Carey did not require urging, her heart was full, and there was a power in Lizzy's touch that swelled the waters to overflowing. Her story was a very short one. When the collector had come for her rent the proceeding evening, he had told her that she must give up the room she occupied at the close of the week, unless she could pay double the rent she now paid, as that had been offered by one of her neighbors. Mrs. Carey thought this a very hard case, as she had herself increased the value of the property by keeping thread, needles, and similar commodities to supply the neighbors, and gracing her window with candies that attracted customers from a school in the vicinity. She could afford, she said, to pay an advance, but double the rent, she could not, and where she should go, and how get bread for her children, she knew not, and now she cried so bitterly that the little objects of her motherly fears forsook their toys and gathered around her. Lizzy's smiles, too, were changed to tears, but she soon cleared them away, for she was not a person to rest satisfied with pouring out a little bootless salt water.

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'Who is your landlord, Mrs. Carey?' she asked.



Mrs. Carey did not know his name, she knew only that he lived at a certain number which she mentioned, in Leonard Street.

‘I will stop there as I go down,’ said Lizzy, let Johnny put on his hat and coat and go with me, and if your landlord is not cross and crusty, and hard and cold as marble, I will send you back good news by Johnny.’

‘Hard and cold as marble his heart must be, Miss Lizzy, if you cannot soften it.’

Lizzy, after dismissing Madeline with domestic orders, rung at a door in Leonard Street, and no informing door-plate telling the proprietor’s name, she asked for the master of the house, and was ushered into the drawing-room, and received by an elderly gentleman, who laid aside the newspaper he was reading, and gave her a chair so courteously that she was emboldened to proceed at once to business. She told the name of the tenant in whose behalf she was speaking, and her distress at the communication she had received from his agent the preceding evening.

The gentleman said he knew nothing of the matter, that he confided the management of his rents to a trustworthy person, who took good care of his concerns, and never abused his tenants.

Lizzy then, with a clearness and judiciousness that astonished her auditor, stated Mrs. Carey’s circumstances, and the seeming hardships of virtually ejecting her from a tenement of which she had enhanced the value by certain moral influences, for she was sure that it was Mrs. Carey’s good humor, kind tempered voice, and zeal in the service of her customers, that had attracted

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custom[ers] to her little shop, and made it observed and coveted by her neighbors. Having laid a firm foundation in reason (the best mode of addressing a *sensible* man) she proceeded to her superstructure. She described Mrs. Carey, she spoke with a tremulous voice of her past trials, of her persevering and as yet successful exertions to keep her little family independent of public charities; she described the children, dwelt on the industry of these busy little bees, and the plans and the hopes of the mother, till her auditor felt much like one, who from the shore, sees a little boat’s hardy company forcing their way against the current, and longs to put in his oar to help them.

‘She shan’t budge a foot my dear, ‘ said he, ‘ not one foot;’ he rung the bell, wiped his eyes, cleared his voice and ordered his servant, who opened the door, to bring his writing desk. The writing desk was brought, and he wrote, signed and sealed a promise to the widow Carey, to retain her as a tenant on the terms on which she had hitherto rented his apartment, so long as she regularly paid her rent.

‘And now,’ said he, explaining the document, and giving it into Lizzy’s hands, ‘tell me my dear young lady who you are, that come forth on New Year’s morning on such an errand, when all the girls in the city are frizzing and rigging to receive their beaux. Will you tell me your name, my dear?’

‘Elizabeth Percival, Sir.’

‘Percival! – William Percival’s daughter—William Percival who lives at the corner of Broadway and \_\_\_\_\_ Street.’

‘Yes, Sir,’ she replied, smiling at the stranger’s earnestness.

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‘Extraordinary! – most extraordinary!’ he exclaimed, and added as if thinking aloud, ‘I can understand now—he should’—

‘Good morning, Sir,’ said Lizzy, ‘I wish you as happy a New Year as your kindness has made for others,’ and she was turning away with the suspicion that her host was under the influence of a sudden hallucination, when he seized her hand. ‘Stop my dear child,’ he said, ‘one moment-- never mind, you may go now—I think—don’t promise – but I think I shall see you again to-day. It is good—did you not say so? – to make people happy on the New Year. Good bye, my dear child—God bless you.’

Lizzy gave the precious paper into Johnny’s hands, and carefully noting the number of the house, she hurried homeward, resolved, at the first convenient opportunity, to ascertain the name of its singular and interesting proprietor. There was something in his countenance that, together with his prompt and kind answer to her petition, made a deep impression on her.

But she had no time now to speculate on her new acquaintance, it was not far from twelve o’clock, and that, as we all know, is the hour when the general rush of winter begins on New Year’s day.

Lizzy’s toilet was soon despatched. We wish all young ladies would, like her, take advantage of the period of freshness, bloom, roundness, and cheerfulness, and not waste time and art in vieing with (and only obscuring) the inimitable adornments of nature. Sure we are that in all the visiting rounds of this great city, no lovelier group was seen, than that in Mr. Perci-

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val’s drawing-room, our friend Lizzy, the *mother-sister*, presiding over it.

From all that appeared to offer the customary salutations of the season, Lizzy’s thoughts often turned to him that did not come, that could not, must not, but she indulged

a hope natural to the young and good (and *therefore* happy) that all would yet be well, and she met the greetings of the day with a face lighted with smiles, and a spirit of cheerfulness befitting them. Mr. Percival's family being one of the oldest in the city, one of the most extended in its connections, and one of the few who have been residents here for several generations, their visitors were innumerable, and a continual stream poured in and poured out, emitting in its passage the stereotyped sayings of the season, such as

‘Many returns of this happy season to you Miss Percival—may you live a thousand years, and as much longer as you desire!’

‘A fine old custom this, Miss Percival, transmitted by our Dutch ancestors!’

This staple remark was made and often reiterated by some profane interloper who had not a drop of good old Dutch blood running in his veins; alas for the fallen dynasty!

‘A custom peculiar to New York and Albany, they have tried to introduce it in our other cities, but it is impossible to transplant old usages, and make them thrive a new soil.’

‘Charming custom!’ exclaims an elderly friend, kissing Lizzy's offered cheek, and heartily smacking the children all round, ‘it gives us old fellows privileges.’

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‘Uncommonly fine day,’ Miss Percival, much pleasanter than last New Year's, but not quite so pleasant as the year before.’

‘What a happy anniversary for the children! a lovely group here Miss Percival, and the prettiest table (looking at that one which the toys were spread) that I have yet seen.’

‘I guess why,’ replied little Sue, casting a side-long glance at the speaker through her dark eye-lashes—‘nobody but us has a sister Lizzy,’

“Do you keep a list of your visitors, Miss Elizabeth.’

‘In my memory, Sir.’

‘Ah, you should not trust to that, you should have the documents to show. Mrs. M., last year, had two hundred on her list, and Mrs. H. one hundred and eighty, exclusive of married men!’ Lizzy was quite too young to make any sage reflections on the proteus shapes of vanity. She laughed and said she cared only for the names she could remember.

‘What a splendid set-out has Mrs. T.’ exclaimed an enthusiastic lover of the fine arts that minister to eating and drinking, ‘oysters, sandwiches, chocolate, coffee, wines and whiskey-punch.’

‘Whiskey-punch! I thought,’ Lizzy ventured modestly to say, ‘was banished from all refined society.’

‘Shockingly vulgar to be sure – mais, chacun à son goût.’

‘Mrs. L. has a most refined entertainment, champagne and cakes, upon my word, nothing but champagne and cakes!’

‘Ah, but you should have seen the refreshment at the Miss C.’s, quite foreign and elegant, (this opinion

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judicially delivered by a youth who had been once over the ocean, on a six-week’s agency to Birmingham,) soup, patées de foie gras, mareschino, &c. &c.’

‘Is my cousin well to-day?’ asked Lizzy, ‘I hear she does not receive her friends.’

“Tie up the knocker, John, she said  
Say to my friends, I’m sick, I’m dead.”

but, between ourselves, my dear Lizzy, the draperies to the drawing-room curtains are not completed—that’s all.’

While some practiced and ultra fashionable visitors were merely bowing in, and bowing out, some other young gentlemen more ambitious, or more gifted, or more at leisure than the rest, made flights into the region of original remark. One admired Miss Percival’s bouquet, commented on the triumphs of man’s (especially that rare individual Florist Thorburn’s) art over the elements, and noted some very pretty analogies between the flowers and the children. Another lauded the weather, and said that nature had, last of all the publishers, come out with her annual, and the gentlemen had found it ‘a book of beauty.’

The morning wore on. Mr. Percival returned to his home, having made a few visits to old friends, and claiming as to the rest his age’s right of exemption. He sat down and pleased himself with observing his daughter’s graceful reception of her guests. Her cordiality to humble friends, her modest and quiet demeanor to the class technically ycleped beaux, and her respectful and even deferential manner (a grace, we are sorry to say, not universal among our young ladies) to her

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elders. In proportion as Mr. Percival's heart overflowed with approbation and love for his daughter, he was restless and dejected. The ring had revealed her unchanged affection for Harry Stuart, and he began to perceive that there was a moral impossibility in her withdrawing that affection in compliance with his will. He felt too that his absolute will was no reason why she should. Harry Stuart, if man could, deserved her, and he was obliged in his secret heart to acknowledge himself the only obstacle in their happiness—happiness so rational! so well merited!

These were most uncomfortable reflections to a father essentially good hearted, though sometimes the slave (and victim as well as slave) of a violent temper. It was not wonder that he exclaimed in reply to a passing remark 'that this was a charming anniversary, so many new friendships begun, so many old ones revived.'

'Pshaw, Sir, that is mere talk, you may as well attempt to mend broken glass with patent cement, as broken friendships with a New Year's visit.'

'O! Percival, my dear friend,' interposed a contemporary, 'you are wrong. I have known at least half a dozen terrible breaches healed on New Year's day. Depend on't these eminences from which we can look forward and backward—these mile stones in life which mark our progress, are of essential service in our moral training. One does not like when he surveys his journey *to its end* to bear on with him the burden of an old enmity.'

'It *is* a heavy burden,' murmured Mr. Percival, in an under tone. Lizzy caught the words, and sighed as she made their just application.

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'Mr. Percival,' said a servant, 'there's a gentleman wishes to speak with you in the library.'

'Show him into the drawing-room.'

'He says his business is private, Sir.'

'This is not day for business of any sort,' grumbled Mr. Percival, as he left the room, in no very auspicious humor for his visiter.

The morning verged to the dinner hour. Miss Percival's last lagging visiters had come and gone, but not among them had appeared, as she had hoped from his intimation, the kind landlord who had so graciously granted her the boon she asked, and whose manner had excited her curiosity. 'There was something in his face,' she thought, 'that impressed me like a familiar friend, and yet I am sure I never saw him before—heigho! This new yearing, after all, is tedious when we see every body but the one we wish most to see—I wonder if papa will let me continue to wear this ring, if he should' – Her meditation, like many a one, more or less interesting, was broken off by the ringing of the

dinner-bell. Her father did not answer to its call. The children forsook their toys and became clamorous. The bell was re-rung. Still he came not. Lizzy sent a servant to enquire how much longer the dinner must wait. The servant returned with a face smiling all over and full of meaning, but what it meant Lizzy could not divine, and before he could deliver his answer, the library door was thrown open, and within, standing beside her father, she saw the landlord her morning friend, and behind them Harry Stuart. All their eyes were directed towards her, and ever did eyes of old or young look more kindly.

‘Come here, my dear child,’ said her father. Lizzy

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obeyed. ‘Keep your ring, Lizzy, and give Harry Stuart your hand, as for as my leave goes, it’s his for life.’

‘What can this mean?’ thought Lizzy, confounded, and not restored to her senses by her lover seizing her hand and pressing it to his lips in the presence of a stranger. Her father interpreted and replied to the embarrassment and amazement expressed in her countenance.

‘This gentleman is Harry Stuart’s father, Lizzy! We were once friends, and are again, thank God. I have been a fool, and his as been – foolish. Now look up boldly, my girl, and give him a kiss, and I’ll explain the whys and wherefores afterwards.’

The story afterwards most frankly told, was very like the stories of most quarrels among honest men. It had originated in mutual mistakes, and been aggravated and protracted by suspicion and pride, till the morning of the New Year, when conscience was awakened by the thrilling voice of that anniversary, and all the good feelings stirred by the charities of the season, and when Lizzy like a dove of peace was guided by Providence to the presence of Harry Stuart’s father, and fairly made a perch on his heart. And after a little reflection, he obeyed the impulse of the sight of her sweet face, and the revelation of her character had given him, and availing himself of the privileges of the day, he sought an interview with Mr. Percival. Mutual expressions and mutual concessions followed, and when nothing more remained to be explained or forgiven, Harry Stuart was sent for, and Lizzy admitted to the library, and the day ended with the general acknowledgement that this was to these reconciled friends, and united lovers, the happiest of all happy New Years.

