



Say It To Sylvia

A Christmas Story

By ROBERT STEAD

DAVE HOLDEN chose his homestead high up the foothill valley not only for the shelter of surrounding hills and proximity to groves of spruce and lodge-pole pine. He had another reason for retreating so far from civilization. That reason was Sylvia Palmer.

Dave and Sylvia had been pals together down the plains where both were born. They had attended the same school, the same picnics, dances, country concerts. Many a stary night, with Sylvia at his side, Dave had driven the prairie trails, none too eager to reach their destination. And Sylvia, too, seemed quite content to dally on the way.

It was true there had never been any formal engagement between them. It hardly seemed necessary. They had "gone together" so long that sometime, Dave supposed, and when he was in a position to offer her a home, he would tell her so, and Sylvia would say, "All right Dave. Whenever you are ready." Then she would turn her tempting mouth to him, and he would kiss her tenderly and a little differently, now that she was so soon to be his bride.

But Dave had not counted on a woman's will—and what comes of it. At eighteen Sylvia, having secured her teacher's certificate, applied for and was accepted by a

up with some one of those town sheiks, and I won't care then whether I go farming or not."

"Don't you worry over that. I'm not planning on taking up with any town sheik—not with a big boy like Dave Holden running around loose."

But Dave worried, just the same and by the second term he knew he had occasion for it. Sylvia's talk had turned from crops and country picnics and all things of the land to sport and tennis and particularly one, Jack Fulton whose name was often on her lips. Dave had a feeling of being taken at a disadvantage. Instead of wooing Sylvia for himself he bluntly charged her with having transferred her affections to Fulton.

"I ain't blaming you," he said, sarcastically. "No doubt he is a very fine fellow. But if I meet him some day perhaps we'll see which is the best man."

"He's pretty strong, Dave," Sylvia teased. "Better be careful."

Whereupon Dave lost his temper altogether. "Maybe I should be careful, too. What I'm saying is, either you give him up, or I'm through!"

That was too much for the spirited Sylvia. Whether or not she cared for Jack Fulton, she wasn't going to take orders about it from Dave. Dave never had actually asked her to marry him, although she had given him opportunity enough. "All right; you're through!" she said, and whisked herself out of his presence.

Dave had not expected that result, but he had gone too far to retreat. He had thought that Sylvia would bow to his ultimatum. Her curt rejection hurt his pride more than anything he had thought possible. He felt that he had suddenly lost all faith in human nature, and that life among his old associates would be intolerable. So he drew his wages, gathered up his equipment, and trekked into the foothill country to the very farthest homestead on the map.

He found a place by a mountain stream, cut down spruce logs, and built himself a cabin. When winter set in, he began cutting posts and rails for fencing on his farm. To keep from thinking he worked feverishly, early and late. But then the thoughts would come, in spite of all he could do to stop them, and particularly as the Christmas season drew near his mind would turn to the old farm down on the plains. What ample preparations would be going on in his mother's kitchen! What stacks of food! What happy chatter, sobered a bit perhaps because of the boy who had left home in a huff and never had written back! And Sylvia! Sylvia would be home now for the Christmas vacation. Perhaps this Fulton fellow, would be visiting with her.



"He's Pretty Strong, Dave," Sylvia Teased, "Better Be Careful"

town some distance from her home. She was all enthusiasm and excitement over her plunge into the great self supporting world.

Dave may have shared her excitement, but not her enthusiasm. He told her so.

"Why, Dave Holden, I'm surprised at you!" Sylvia retorted. "I always thought you would be glad to see me get a chance."

"Of course, I want you to have your chance," he explained, "but I'm figuring on fixing a chance for you too. Dad is paying me a man's wages now. In another year or two I'll be all set to take up land of my own, and then—"

She waited for him to put something definite into words, but a certain shyness held him back. Any way she knew what he meant. She gave his disengaged hand a girlish squeeze.

"That will be fine," she said. "You will make a good farmer, I am sure, Dave."

"Maybe," he admitted. "And may be by that time you'll have taken



"I Am Jack Fulton," He Said "Perhaps You Have Heard of Me?"

Dave turned with a shrug and shoved more wood into his rusty stove.

After all he told himself, he was not so badly off. He had a cabin and plenty of fuel. He had a dog, and a gun, a team of horses, half a dozen yearling calves—

He was taking comfort in such thoughts when suddenly his dog sprang up, barking. Dave was on his feet in an instant, his gun in his hand. Perhaps a deer or a bear had wandered into his little clearing.



May Your Christmas be Very Merry, and the New Year filled with Happiness.

DAVIS & FRASER
Phone 296 or 877.

The Mistletoe Passes

by Touchstone

IN dim ages long ago¹
When the hoary-whiskered druid
Underneath the mistletoe
Spilled the victim's vital fluid,
People who beheld the rite
Felt a certain veneration
For the pretty parasite
Which demanded such oblation.

2
Later, when the authentic thrill
Of the sacrifice was missing,
Mistletoe was honoured still
As a good excuse for kissing.
Gallants with a ready lip
Bussed each pretty maid with unction,
And the custom gave a zip
To the dullest Christmas function.



4
Therefore, though the fogies wear
For the glamour that no more is,
Mistletoe can only keep
Some pale remnant of it glories.
Soon it will be swept away
With the old Victorian lumber
Since it has become to-day
Only a back Christmas number!

TOUCHSTONE.



At that moment came a knock, something which never before had happened on his cabin door. For an instant Dave hesitated, and then he swung the door open. The light fell on the figure of a young man.

"Are you Dave Holden?" the stranger enquired.

"Yes. Come in."

The stranger entered. Dave made him comfortable and gave him his supper, waiting to hear his mission. When they were seated on either side of the hot stove the stranger began. "I am Jack Fulton," he said. "Perhaps you have heard of me?"

Dave's veins seemed to freeze.

"What brings you here?" he demanded. "Can't you leave me here alone?"

Fulton kept his temper. "No, not under the circumstances. Let me tell you—I will be brief. I am the principal of the school where Miss Palmer teaches. All through the term I have seen that she was worried. At last I asked her why. Naturally she was diffident at first, but finally told me. She is wearing her heart out for you."

Dave faced him. "Is this true and why do you tell me? I thought 'Because I'm to be married to a little girl of my own at Easter, and I think that I know how both of you feel. So I got your location from the homestead officials, and took my Christmas vacation to look you up. I hope you are not annoyed by my interest?'"

Dave seized his hand. "And I thought all the time—"

"Never mind what you thought! I've walked in from the nearest town, and I have a team that

can travel you can make the railway station by morning, and eat your Christmas turkey at Sylvia Palmer's. I'll stay and look after your cattle. It will be a real holiday for me."

But Dave had both his hands in his. "My friend! I don't know what I can say—"

"Say it to Sylvia! I'll give you six days to get back. And bring her with you, or I'll charge you for my time!"

"I'll bring her with me—or you can keep the farm," said Dave, who was already climbing into his heavy overcoat.

A fall of snow on Christmas Day is regarded as the sign of a lucky New Year.

Girls who live by the sea have many Christmas resources, and Irish moss makes the best blanc mange and the moss of commerce is not to be compared to that which has been selected and carefully dried.

You may purchase cards in the shops, but why not add the unique touch by making your own, using the more delicate seaweeds?

As soon as taken from the sea, place the weeds in a dish of water and arrange them on the card by slipping it under the water and literally floating the weed into position; then place the card between sets of clean blotting paper and dry under pressure. No paste is needed as the weeds contain a sticky substance.

Straw is said to be used for decoration in Greek homes on Christmas day in memory of the stable of Bethlehem.

Christmas carols originated in the eleventh century, being sung between the scenes of the miracle and mystery plays of the period.

The turkey has not always been the favorite bird on the Christmas menu, the peacock, in ancient times taking its place on the festive board.

The oldest name for Christmas is "The Feast of Lights," in remembrance of the lighted heavens in which the angels appeared on the first Christmas day.

Christmas boxes got their name from the boxes—made of clay—in which, at Christmas, apprentices had the right to collect gifts of money from their masters' customers.

The use of the Christmas wreath is believed to be traceable to the pagan custom of decorating buildings and places of worship at the feast which took place at the winter

Side-Lights On Christmas

Irish Moss on Cards

Available to Fortunate Ones Who Live Near the Sea

Continued from page 9

What is Her Name?

MARY ANNE



3
Now the maid that's up-to-date
Seldom such a boon refuses;
She declines to complicate
Life by seeking for excuses.
'Tis no more a daring feat
To anticipate the favour
Nor are kisses half so sweet
Now they lack that stolen flavour.



Side-Lights On Christmas

Irish Moss on Cards

Available to Fortunate Ones Who Live Near the Sea

Continued from page 9

What is Her Name?

MARY ANNE

Continued from page 9

What is Her Name?

MARY ANNE

A CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Suggestions For the School Room In Which Old Carols Are Sung and Scenes Acted

A simple fireplace arrangement will make a pleasant and suitable background for the Christmas program herein suggested for the school room. The selections to be read, or acted, group themselves naturally about the hearth. Children love to "dress up" and may do so, for the singing of the Carols, as well as for the acting.

The Christmas carols suggested are old favorites. Others may be substituted or added where the teacher finds it advisable. The program will be briefly as follows:

1. Christmas Music. "It came upon the midnight clear."
2. Selections from Snow-Bound by Whittier.
3. From "A Christmas Carol" by Dickens, the scene, "Bob Cratchit's Christmas."
4. "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

Christmas Music. "Holy Night, Silent Night."

Costumes for the Christmas music can be similar to those used for the Dickens sketch.

"Snow-Bound," a Winter Idyl by John Greenleaf Whittier, should be appropriately announced. Two small pages or heralds might do this, or one of the members of the cast might come before the curtain and give the title.

The poem is too long to be given in full. It would need to be cut. The boys would probably like the first parts, and the girls could take up the part starting with: "Shut in from all the world with out."

We sat the clean-winged hearth about."

Different actions for the group are suggested in the lines: "We sped the time with stories old

Wrought puzzles out, and riddles told
Or stammered from our school book lore," etc.

The aunt and uncle could be given, but perhaps not in full, and the "master of the district school."

"Another guest" could be omitted to advantage and the poem taken up at this point:

"At last the great logs crumbling low
Sent out a dull and duller glow," and finish with the description of the Doctor.

If any slight changes are necessary for the stage, instrumental music could come next, before the youthful pages announce: "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens.

A reader for the descriptive parts will be necessary and he can sit at one side of the stage in front of the curtain.

For it would never do to omit, "Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit, Bob Cratchit's wife, dressed out but poorly in ribbons which are cheap and make a goodly show for six pence," etc.

The first action will be shown in pantomime, where the reader gives the first long paragraph. Mrs. Cratchit's first line starts, "What has ever got your precious father then?"

The dialogue continues in a lively manner until the reader takes up the tale with, "Bob's voice was tremulous as he told them this," and continues with the Christmas dinner, the actors performing in pantomime.

The dialogue starts again with "A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears, God bless us."

The parts of Scrooge and the Spirit seem necessary to the story and can be acted by two children or read by the reader. A last paragraph seems to close the pretty little episode nicely with "Scrooge had his eye upon them and especially on Tiny Tim, until the last."

The song suggested, "Holy Night, Silent Night," would be a happy finish as a sort of benediction, leaving a pleasant and yet reverent thought to carry away home.



"Now, here's a treat for you, Mac. Some whisky twenty-five years old." "Well, it's mighty small for its age."