

### The Christmas Moon

By Katharine Tynan

Day in, day out, the people of Fairweather village had seen Miss Prissy's face at her high window overlooking the Common. It was a beautiful face and quite young, although it might have been a painted picture, so fixed was it in the window space framed by ivy. Squire Sacheverel's one daughter had had a sad life. Her mother had left her when she was three years old. The village gossips said that she had been married against her will to Squire Sacheverel; that there was someone she loved better; that her husband had discovered after her early death letters which proved that her heart had never been his, and that the bitter knowledge had made him what he was.

These stories might or might not be true. He had been a very handsome, gallant young man and he certainly changed much for the worse after the loss of his wife. He brought up his daughter himself, not sending her to school. Mr. Vane, the vicar, had helped in her education. She had been brought up to tender, even passionate love, but it was a jealous love.

The jealousy had grown in the years. Miss Prissy was a great heiress. Everything she desired was lavished upon her except liberty, and, lacking liberty, other things seemed to give her little pleasure.

She was like Rapunzel or St. Barbara in her tower. Everyone pitied the poor prisoner. The village children used to stand beneath her window, which looked on a secluded part of the Common, and blow her kisses, and she would blow them back again, the color coming to her pale cheeks.

She was seen nowhere outside the gates of Fairweather Manor House except at church, where Mr. Vane, growing older, dined through the service; and there was an old clerk, and the church was very old, and many of the people hobbled in on crutches, being racked with rheumatism. Fairweather village was not healthy. Mr. Vane had sometimes pleaded for his parishioners that the Squire might do some rebuilding and drainage. Drainage was a new idea at which the Squire scoffed. Wasn't there plenty of water about to carry the waste? There was a mad young man, Lord Malden, a neighboring landowner, who had had ideas about drainage and rebuilding the old houses, and he had done it for his village. It should not be done for Fairweather, the Squire said with an oath. He would have no crack-brains spoiling the prettiest village in England. It was a dispensation of Providence that people should have rheumatism. He had let himself and expected to have it worse.

Young Lord Malden, who had come back from doing the Grand Tour, was a friend of crack-brained Jacobins up in London, only needed to write a letter to the Squire about the condition of Fairweather village to make him to the Squire as a red rag to a bull. Jackanapes, popinjay, pert, insolent meddler. The Squire exhausted his terms of vituperation upon Lord Malden without ever having seen him. A pity, the vicar said to one of his old cronies, Madam Ludlow, of the Twisted Chimneys. Lord Malden would have made a fitting husband for Miss Prissy. If only they had the chance they must have loved each other. He knew the treasures of Miss Prissy's heart and mind, and Lord Malden was no mere young man of fashion. He was serious on one side of him though he was so charmingly gay.

"I do not dare to broach it to Sacheverel," he said. "He is such a

mad fellow. He will have his daughter wither upon her stem, and what then is to become of the property?"

"I have long given up any attempt to move Anthony Sacheverel," said Madam Ludlow. "It is a thousand pities for pretty Prissy. She may go in a decline like her mother. I grant you she is healthy as a white rose, but the sadness grows upon her. It could not be otherwise."

She thought hard after Mr. Vane had left her. Lord Malden was her godson, and she very highly approved him. Why should he not marry the Squire's daughter and rescue her from the death-in-life to which her father's jealous love had condemned her?

She went to see Prissy that very afternoon. She was one of the few visitors the Squire tolerated. She was welcomed to find him absent. She walked with Miss Prissy in the gardens, the King Charles Spaniel, who had grown too fat for want of exercise, waddling at their heels. Miss Prissy was wearing a black frock which became her fair beauty well enough, but was sad. They talked of many things—of what people were doing up in London where there was much gaiety, although the cloud on the old King's mind eclipsed the Court, of Vauxhall and Ranelagh, and the new beauties and fashions.

"I should love to see the world if only my father would approve," said Miss Prissy, with a tremble of her voice, "but I should not greatly desire London, at least, not for long. I should like to see the world and come back here to a house which opened its doors to the neighbors as this used to do. I am weary of the isolation. I am a bird in a golden cage. My father lavishes gifts upon me. Yesterday a fine box of roses and what not from Madame La Mode, in Bond Street. Such a pretty pelisse of velvet lined with fur and a hood to match, for the winter. Who will see me in such things? He cannot know the things I want. Perhaps I do not know myself."

Madam Ludlow said to herself that the girl wanted love. She was twenty—time to be married, Madam Ludlow herself had been married at sixteen.

"There is my godson, Harry Malden, come home from the Grand Tour," she said. "He is a most personable young gentleman, though tinged with Jacobin ideas. You would like him, Prissy."

"My father would never permit me to see him," Miss Prissy said and the color came to her cheeks that were too pale. "He is angry with Lord Malden, who is making the people discontented."

"May I see your wardrobe, Prissy, and the box that has come from Madame La Mode?" Madam Ludlow said, with a change of subject.

She was aware that the girl looked at her disappointedly, but she would not meet her eyes, and presently they were in Miss Prissy's suite of rooms in a gable of the house, one window of which overlooked a secluded part of the Common. People had often wondered that Squire Sacheverel permitted his daughter so much outlook on the world, because, of course, people passed that way from time to time. The shutters of the window by which Miss Prissy so often sat had little oblongs of looking-glass set in the panels so that she could see who came and went, if she chose, without being seen.

Madam Ludlow inspected the contents of Madame La Mode's box. Over the velvet and fur-lined pelisse and hood she lingered. "They would be proper," she said, "for a winter journey."

When she had said it she glanced at the sky, which was of a chill, watery blue. Pale yellow leaves shook on the trees of the Common. The winter was well advanced, but she did not feel it in these rooms, which were luxuriously warm and full of the scent of hot-house flowers.

"I should like to be out in the winter cold, but my father forbids it," Miss Prissy said. "I shall wear the pelisse perhaps going to church. The church is very cold. I shall have no other use for it."

Madam Ludlow had been turning over the dresses and mantles and

### To All the World "GREETINGS"

Tis Christmas for the whole wide world a joyous, happy time for kiddies brown and red and white who live in every clime.

To snowy prairie, sun-kissed isle, mountain, and coral strand, old Santa brings his Christmas cheer to his friends of every land.



hoods and all the pretty things which were no use to Prissy, who wished only that she might share them with other girls. Why, the moth might be in them for all she wear they got!

Madam Ludlow had picked out a lovely garment—of the palest green with a tippet of swansdown.

"I should like to see your golden head in this," she said. "Would you oblige me, Prissy, by wearing it at your window tomorrow afternoon?"

"But why?" Prissy asked, wide-eyed.

"Who knows? Prince Charming might ride by."

Lord Malden supped with his godmother that night, and she talked a good deal of Miss Prissy, whom she called the Enchanted Princess, stirring the young man's curiosity and pity.

"She sits in her window, poor lamb, overlooking the Five Fingers, as they call the paths that run to the pond of the Twelve Apostles," she said. "She sits there brooding or reading a good book. When I last asked her what she had been reading she told me it was Blair's Grave. Not cheerful that for a young thing like her. It had better be Romeo and Juliet. You might chance to pass that way."

"Perchance," he said.

In the evening he was back with his godmother, raving of the girl's beauty and the sin and shame it was that she should be kept a prisoner.

It was winter now, and a thin hoarfrost of mornings on the lawns and hedges and a Christmas moon in the sky, or there was mild, rainy weather when the Hunt was out, and one saw through the leafless trees the scarlet coats and sleek, polished sides of the horses going by.

Lord Malden was not taking the part that was expected of him in the social life of the county. He was a dull fellow, the squire said, and the young ladies wondered when the festivities of his coming-of-age were to be expected. He was absorbed in his dull Jacobin reflections, some said. He was not going to do what was expected of him. Madam Ludlow heard these things said, and smiled.

her old subtle smile, bidding the girls take heart because the galesies were coming.

The days turned round to Christmas. December brought Christmas weather, first a great fall of snow that heaped the roads and was frozen over, and stalactites hung on the trees, and poor Robin was a-cold; and always the great white moon at night, although it was sometimes obscured by coming snow.

Madam Ludlow had not seen her godson for a day or two. So far she was not in his confidence, till he strode in a week before Christmas with a portentous frown on his face. The snow had yielded to a soft south wind, and he was splashed with the mud of hard riding.

"I have seen Sir Humphrey Sacheverel, and he showed me the door," he said. "He would not listen to reason. He will not have his girl marry and die as her mother died. He was rough. He was brutal. He said his daughter would obey him. I do not think she will. And now what is to be done?"

"Why, there is always Gretna," said the old lady, and smiled her cunning smile.

"There is always Gretna," the young man replied, and the frown on his brow lifted.

"She will consent?"

"She is in love," he said triumphantly. "She will consent. Afterwards the old man will come round. He will not be separated from his one child."

"He knows nothing of your assignments, of the flower she fung you as you passed below her window; how you stood on your horse's back to kiss her, and the good beast stood like a rock though you forgot him."

"He knows nothing, only that I asked for his daughter. But how did you know? No one is in our secret but Elspeth, Prissy's nurse, who has kept guard. She would not pry on our secrets."

"Nor would I. But I was in love once. I know how these things happen."

Two days before Christmas there was a commotion at Fairweather

Manor. Miss Prissy was not in her bed. There was a rope ladder dangling—left behind in haste—the print of a horse's feet, a note pinned on Prissy's pillow, which had not been pressed.

"I love you, but I also love Harry Malden. You would not listen to him, so we had to do this. When we meet I shall be a wedded wife and you will forgive me. You will have a son as well as a daughter."

The Squire lost time, fuming. They had got a good start of him. Obviously he had carried her away on his horse. She had ridden pillion behind him. The Squire was furious the more that he thought he detected a secret sympathy with the runaways in the people about him. They impeded him, wilfully he was sure. The horses had to be shod for the road. Snow had come on again and was falling in fine, thin flakes.

At last he got off. Fifteen miles on he came on their traces. There was a beautiful black horse, mud-splashed in the stable. The lady and gentleman had taken the only horses the stable contained. They had driven in a carriage, the lady warmly wrapped up in velvet and furs.

"A beautiful couple," said the landlady of the George of Hanover, and smiled maddeningly at the Squire.

All the way he was impeded or thought he was impeded. If he had not cursed so lustily he might have had a fit of apoplexy and so ended the chase. It was no comfort to him that there were other men on the road on his errand. He could not think of other people but only that he had been robbed of his daughter.

He did not spare money. He bought the best horses in the stables, but someone had been there before him and got yet better. He dozed in his carriage for fatigue the fifth day. His eyes ached from looking out at the snow by day and by night under the great moon. He was nearly at the Border before he caught sight of them.

They were topping a hill, and they went over the crest of it before he had time to exult. When he had got to the hill-top he could see them before him on the long, straight road.

### SILENT NIGHT

Silent night! Holy night!  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child!  
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,  
Christ the Saviour is born,  
Christ the Saviour is born.

Silent night! Holy night!  
Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

He thought their horses were going as though they were tired.

He put his head out of the carriage window and shouted to them. He saw Prissy look back. Malden was urging on the tired horses. His were fresh. He had them in his grasp. But as he shouted, something happened. The coach lurched heavily, and went over to one side. Fortunately, the horses did not leave the road. The pin had come out of the axle. The wheel was off.

The Squire stood in the roadway cursing the ostler at the Maid of the Moor. The rascal had had a damned sly, cunning look. He had grinned at the Squire's face. He vowed vengeance on Tom the ostler when he should be finished with this business. These rascals were always on the side of the runaway couples.

He mounted one of the horses and rode absurdly over the Border. In the blacksmith's cottage the other side of the bridge the trunks had just been made man and wife. He was outwitted—a poor, foolish old man robbed, like Shylock, of his daughter.

He spluttered. He burst into tears. He was suddenly old and feeble as he sat down in the chair in the blacksmith's cottage of Gretna. Prissy's arms were about his neck. She was fondling him. He had no power to resist her. The thing had broken him.

So he said afterwards to explain his surrender. But he did not look a broken man when he said it. He looked like a man who had found his youth again. Perhaps he knew in the back of his mind that he had inflicted a cruel wrong on the child he loved. He had been told so many times, more or less politely, by many people, but especially by Madam Ludlow, for the what he would not take from a man. And it was the Season of Peace and Good Will. And Malden and Fairweather within a ring fence would make a noble property. Suddenly he Squire would take from a woman made the discovery that he wanted an heir. He had wanted one all the time. He had been a cantankerous, selfish old man, wronging those he loved best.

He left the young things to their honeymoon and went back, under the Christmas moon, by slow stages to Fairweather to make ready for their homecoming.

What becomes of the pieces when dawn breaks?  
They go into mourning.

### Christmas Brings Much for all Ages

(By Katherine Edelman)

Christmas is a time of joy for the old as well as for the young. If it is given only to youth to enjoy many of the pleasures that Christmas brings, age finds its compensation in the wealth of the memories that the day awakes. At no other time does such hallowed and lovely remembrances of days that are past stir the heart. Again, we live in the land of childhood; we revel in its happy, carefree hours we stand before candle-lit Christmas trees that thrilled us in the long ago. With swift steps we travel across the bridge of time and space and clasp hands with those of other years. Again we live happy hours of comradeship and understanding that were ours.

Through the year we may have forgotten how rich we were; we may have failed to recall the many lovely joys that have come to us through the years. But at Christmas it is different. Absent friends and joys, as well as those that are near, bring us joy and cheer. Even those who have passed into the land beyond seem to be with us today; the power of love and memory seems to have pierced the veil that hid them from our view. Dear and half-forgotten memories of hours we spent with them bring them very close.

Yes, Christmas holds much for the old. And its greatest gifts are for those who have laid up a treasure for lovely memories day by day.

### Carols Succeed Dances

The Protestant carols which today only mean hymns are, technically speaking, the survival of actual dances and scenic games which took place around the crib, a custom which became abused during the Middle Ages with the miracle plays, and was eventually forbidden. But there is still to be found a relic of the sanctity of the Christmas "carol-dance" as a religious expression of joy, in the minstrel that takes place before the high altar of Seville Cathedral, in Spain.

Christmas, therefore, at the dance season is both religious and pagan, indeed there are many legends that describe the saints as dancing in heaven.

That this Dance season happens to coincide with the old pagan festivals of the Saturnalia, probably accounts for the element of abandon and feasting we have incorporated in our Christmas festivities—and one author, Epiphanius points out that Dec. 25 was the culminating date of that feast of miracle, when all Rome ran riot in a sort of carnival; and the point is worth nothing, especially in view of the gradual paganizing of the Christmas festival.

### GYPSIES AND CHRISTMAS

Gypsies credit the Christmas-born with powers of divination, ability to remove the "evil eye" and various other attributes.

What place in the West Indies does a confectioner resemble?  
Jamaica (jam maker)



Hang the HOLLY High for Christmas

Merry Christmas to you all if near or far away,  
How I should like to peek at you this happy holiday,  
What are you doing, tum-tumping a drum?  
Or are you blowing a big brass horn?

And have you been eating your candy canes  
Since the earliest hour this morn  
Are you trying to do the circus stunts  
That your funny old clown does so well?  
Have you looked at all your new picture books?

Are you reading the stories they tell?  
Have you eaten dinner, that jolly feast?  
Did you hear Santa's bells in the night?  
When jack-in-the-box sprang up with

a grin  
Did he give your fat pup a great fright  
I hope my message reaches you, both near and far away;  
I wish you all great happiness this joyous Christmas Day.

### To All Little Boys and Girls

