

"Nor have I, dear. If a match should come about such as you suggest, it was virtually made before you and I ever heard the names of Alec Caruth and Joyce Mirlees."

Of course Mrs. Caruth accepted the invitation to Springfield Park, and equally of course the gathering there was a most delightful one.

If Alec Caruth did not find a present from his former child-friend beneath the spreading boughs of the lighted Christmas tree, he was not wholly discontented. Whilst others were admiring their gifts he managed to whisper a demand for one which was more precious in his eyes than all beside.

"You know what I want, dear Joyce," he pleaded. "Not a gift, only a fair exchange. One true heart in return for another. You have mine. You have had it for years, and you—" He looked inquiringly.

"I am afraid I have none to give you in return," she whispered.

A great fear filled his heart for a moment, but once more Alec Caruth looked at Joyce's blushing face and read the true answer to his petition.

"I believe you say this because, dear Joyce, it was mine already. Tell me, darling, am I right?"

But Joyce did not speak. Nevertheless, Alec was content, and a little later he told his mother that Joyce had given him the best of Christmas presents, her own sweet self.

So the little Rosses lost their former maid and present governess, but kept always their friend in her who soon became Joyce Caruth.

On the Christmas tree at Springfield that year Joyce found the ring that Adelaide had offered her on her twenty-first birthday. The girl sent it to be placed there, and Joyce gladly accepted what she felt to be a token of true cousinly love, and told her so.

In after days, when the once penniless niece was a happy wife, Mrs. Walter Evans was heard to declare that Joyce had improved wonderfully. But then in her eyes wealth and position were the greatest of all claims to respect. Without these all other excellences were as nothing. No need to tell the names of the many who rejoiced to see the

happiness of her who, as Joyce Mirlees, had tried to make others happy, or to say that none of these were forgotten by Joyce Caruth.

Beneath her roof Captain Tyson met his fate in the person of Adelaide Evans, and there, too, Mr. Evans is a frequent guest.

"To think that you should choose one who for awhile was 'only a servant,'" said Joyce to her husband, some time after their marriage.

"Dearest," he answered, "that word servant always brings pleasant thoughts to my mind. As a soldier, I was ever proud to call myself the servant of Queen and country; but I rejoice more when I think of Him who took upon Himself the form of a servant, and came on earth, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Faithful service to an earthly master is right honourable, but to be the faithful, humble servant of God is far better than to be a king amongst men. May it be your lot and mine, dear Joyce, thus to serve."

And with Christmas bells bringing to mind thoughts of the first Christmas morning, Joyce whispered "Amen."

## SOMETHING NEW.

By SOMERVILLE GIBNEY.

Now, girls, a word or two with you respecting Christmas entertainments; for though no doubt papa and mamma are the real givers of the party, yet you probably consider yourselves in a great measure responsible for its success, and this is quite as it should be. Papa finds the needful, mamma sees after the culinary arrangements, and you superintend the preparation of the house and the amusements—a fair division of labour. I have no doubt that many times during this joyous season, when the giving of a party is being discussed, the wish for something new and out of the common in your department will be expressed, something that will provide your guests with pleasant recollections to carry away with them, and that will stamp your party as the party of the season. Now I want to give you a few hints how this wish may be made to end in a triumph at the cost of very little beyond slight trouble and the exercise of good taste. But in order to prevent disappointment, let me inform you at once that I am not going to tell you of any new form of entertainment in one sense of the word. The old ones that have served for so many years have still plenty of life in them, and will serve for many more yet. The standing dish may be the same you have served on many previous occasions. I am going to speak about the trimmings, and you who interest yourselves in these matters will know what value attaches to these. A daintily-arranged lobster salad is much more appetizing than one carelessly thrown together, without any attempt at a picturesque appearance, though the ingredients be just the same in each—and so it is with a party. There are parties and parties. Coming back from one you say, "Oh, it was very nice and pleasant—the usual thing, you know." Coming back from another you exclaim, "It was charming; everything was so pretty and well arranged." And this is what I should wish may be said of yours, and what will be said if you carry out my instructions.

Let me imagine, by way of illustration, that you live in a house that has a small outer hall opening into a more commodious one, and that the drawing-room where the party proper is to be held opens out of this, as also the dining-room, where the supper is laid, while the tea-room and ladies'-room are upstairs. The evening has arrived, and with it your

guests. They enter the hall, and are startled and delighted to find they have stepped into the midst of the realms of the Frost Queen, from which, for comfort's sake, the personal presence of Jack Frost has been excluded, although his handiwork is everywhere apparent. They discover the floor is thickly coated with snow. The walls, which they believed to have been covered with some dark wall paper, are now white, with ivy creeping up them, whose leaves glisten and sparkle in the light. Snow lies piled up against the foot of the stairs, as if swept out of the way. The stairs themselves are white and snow-covered, while the balustrades have patches of snow in all their crannies. Fir trees have suddenly sprung up in corners where they certainly gave no promise of growing a few days ago. Robin Redbreasts are perched here and there, as if about to sing, and the whole fairy-like scene is flooded by a crimson glow which does away with any idea of coldness. On going upstairs to the tea-room, you find the snow-storm has raged as violently there as down below, and has produced an equally picturesque effect. And now let me explain how this has been managed, and, remember, I am speaking of what has been done, not what might be done. This is no wild impracticable theory, but an accomplished fact, in which I had a hand, or rather both hands; so do not have any doubt about the result, but follow the directions, and the outcome will be success.

To begin with the floor. The snow we managed with large white dust sheets—very white. It did not matter about them fitting the shape of the hall, because where they were too big we turned them under, and the unevenness gave the idea of the snow lying thicker against the walls. The stairs were treated in the same way, the whole of the steps being covered, and also the landing on which the tea-room opened. For the walls, which were distempered a dark colour, we got several rolls of common white paper and fastened these with paste just below the ceiling, and again on the skirting-board against the floor. In this manner we covered the whole of the walls, and when it came to taking the paper down, a little warm water and a sponge removed all marks of the paste in a few moments, and the walls were not damaged in the slightest. Against this paper,

which of course hung somewhat loosely, we pinned long creepers of ivy, having previously drawn them through water and dipped them in flour. We carried these creepers up about five or six feet, and, when fixed, ornamented them further with Epsom salts and tufts of cotton wool. The handrail on the stairs had a thick covering of the same, bound on with thin white string, and some was also placed in the corners and angles of the balustrades. In most of the angles of the walls we placed small fir trees in pots, the pots of course being hidden beneath cotton wool, and the trees themselves sprinkled with flour and salts. The doorways, from which the doors had been removed, had looped-up curtains of crimson muslin, and above them were large bunches of ivy and evergreens, in which were seated stuffed birds, as if singing. The gas lamps were not turned up too high, and each of them had a crimson cover, so that all the light that was shed on the scene was of a warm red colour. The gas stove in the hall was treated in the same way, and the gleam of red light lying athwart the mimic snow was most picturesque.

Every one of the guests was loud in his admiration, and declared the experiment a complete success. It was something so new and at the same time so pretty. There was one drawback, and the gentlemen were quick to discover it. If they happened to brush up against or even touch any of the numerous patches of cotton wool with their coats, they carried away some of it on their backs, and it was no easy matter to get rid of it, it adhered so closely to the cloth. But this after all was a minor matter. Finally, when the party was over, and it came to setting the house in order the following day, other advantages of our scheme made themselves apparent. We first of all unspinned and took down the ivy, then the cotton wool was collected, and the white paper from the walls, which was carefully rolled up to serve for another occasion; and lastly, instead of the carpets having to undergo a thorough sweeping, the white dust sheets were gathered together with all the litter in them and carried outside, leaving the floors as neat and tidy as if nothing extraordinary had taken place. That, girls, was our plan, and I would advise you to try it if during this party-giving season you are on the look out for something new.