

John Glint's Christmas Gifts.

JOHN GLINT sat in his richly furnished apartment looking thoughtfully into the flickering flames. Twilight was deepening, yet John did not heed it, and soon the room was in darkness except where betimes brightened by the fitful waning firelight. His was a solitary figure as he sat alone in the gloom his grey hairs and care lined face showing that time had laid a heavy hand upon him. Time indeed had not dealt gently with John Glint and tonight there was neither the prattle of a child nor the philosophy of a friend to cheer him in his loneliness.

Slowly the old man rose and walked to a window. From the street below sounds came up to him. Eager throngs were passing hither and thither, an unwonted air of bustle seemed to pervade the atmosphere and everywhere he saw happy faces. John wondered at first what it was all about and as he returned to his place at the fire still wondering his glance fell on the calendar. It was the twenty-fourth of December, Christmas Eve.

Yes, it was Christmas Eve once more. Again it was a time of gladness and rejoicing to all the world, as it seemed to John, except himself. Scenes of his past life began to flit before him. He saw himself as he knelt on a Christmas eve long ago, eagerly listening at his mother's knee as she told him the beautiful story of the Child of Bethlehem. He saw himself as he stood a few years later at that mother's grave and he recalled the deep sense of loneliness he had experienced as he looked for the last time in this world on her who had loved and cherished him so much. Then he saw himself leading to the altar the one woman in all the world and when their little home was made complete by the

advent of a baby boy, his cup of joy seemed full. He seemed to see once more the little flaxen haired child the sweet baby lips pursed up for a kiss. He felt the soft tiny arms twine around his neck and tears to which he had long been a stranger stole down his furrowed cheek. What hopes he had entertained for that boy ! Why, he was the subject of his thoughts by day, of his dreams by night. It never struck him that the God-given gift might be taken away, and so he went on working, planning, dreaming, all for his child.

Then the blow fell. The boy had just attained his fifth year when he was stricken down by a fever.

From the first the doctors pronounced his case hopeless yet John did not despair. He could not, would not, realize that the idol of his heart was to be snatched away from him and day by day, night by night, he sat by that little bedside and vainly strove to stay, by the sheer force of his love, the shades of death that were slowly but surely gathering over the little worn form. But all to no avail. The child's pure spirit passed to a better world and John saw all his dreams, all his air castles shattered at a blow.

But a new affliction was yet in store for the now childless father. His wife, prostrated by her grief, fell a victim to the same disease that had carried off his son, and by her death the last tie was sundered that bound John Glint to the better things in life.

All John's sweet visions were over and he tried to forget his sorrow by throwing himself, heart and soul into his business, which now became wife, child, yes even God to poor John Glint, and as he withdrew himself from all the refining influences of life he grew hard and cruel. His one ambition was to obtain and hoard up as much money as he possibly could and in doing so he made use of whatever means came most

readily to his hand. When it was to his own advantage he spurned the rights of others. He crushed, he ground, he did not spare until at last, of all those who had loved and admired him not one solitary friend remained, and now in his old age he sat in his great luxurious mansion a man utterly forsaken and alone.

Still the visions trooped before him and the faces of men long since dead, whom he had ruined, stared reproachfully at him out of the gloom. He shuddered as the conscience which had lain dormant for so many years brought him face to face with those memories of the past. The gold for which he had striven so hard was rapidly growing repugnant to him and he wondered why he had wasted so many years in the pursuit of anything so empty and worthless.

At last the old man gave vent to his sorrow in an agony of sobs, and he resolved to at once free himself from the incubus of all his ill gotten wealth and to make, even at this late hour, whatever restitution lay in his power.

A few weeks after, scare headings in the papers announced that John Glint, the once iron hearted financier, had placed almost all of his immense fortune in the hands of a charitable association for the purpose of alleviating the miseries of the needy poor of the city. People wondered if old Glint had not suddenly become unsound in his mind, but in the little country cottage to which he had retired, far from the roar and turmoil of the great city, John Glint was passing the latter days of his life in peace and happiness. When at last he was gathered to his father, his soul was followed to the Great White Throne by the prayers of the widows and orphans whose sufferings had been allayed and whose burdens had been lightened by his great Christmas gift.