

MAGGIE'S SECRET.

With another look she placed it between the pages of a copy of *Lore*, and hastened down.

There were many things at Barby Holt that night. Squire Martin Barby, or Grandfather Barby, as the people called him, was a very old man, and his children—always called the old gentleman, and Lady Ursula, his high-born, gentle daughter, always gathered a large circle around them at Christmas. And there could be no other gathering. Christmas was the day of the year when the old gentleman and his daughter would make such mince-pies and turkey-stuffing as grandmothers old house-keeper at Barby.

Well, as I said, there were grand things at the Manor on Christmas Eve. Lady Ursula in her black velvet and white lace, and the young people, the children, and the old gentleman, all gathered around the fire. The old gentleman, as I said, was a very old man, and his children—always called the old gentleman, and Lady Ursula, his high-born, gentle daughter, always gathered a large circle around them at Christmas. And there could be no other gathering. Christmas was the day of the year when the old gentleman and his daughter would make such mince-pies and turkey-stuffing as grandmothers old house-keeper at Barby.

But the Squire's eyes were keen, and after the first moment he returned the grasp with a hearty "God bless you, my boy! welcome home!" and "Welcome to Barby, grandchild," said the kindly voice of Dame Ursula, albeit some tears of joy shone in her soft eyes.

"Cousin Jack! Cousin Jack!" came from twenty mouths, and the favorite grandchild, who had been away for so long, was now home. The old gentleman, as I said, was a very old man, and his children—always called the old gentleman, and Lady Ursula, his high-born, gentle daughter, always gathered a large circle around them at Christmas. And there could be no other gathering. Christmas was the day of the year when the old gentleman and his daughter would make such mince-pies and turkey-stuffing as grandmothers old house-keeper at Barby.

With this thrilling secret in her heart, Maggie sat and shivered another twenty minutes. Then came footsteps, followed by a troop of girls rushing in. "Why, Maggie, where have you been?" cried one. "We wanted you for a Christmas dance."

Oh, Maggie, where were you? Have you seen grandpa's pet—such a rosy little girl when he arrived?—and a row of girls, with forget-me-nots in her hair. "He's a dear!" said a third. "He's a dear," said a fourth. "He's a dear," said a fifth. "He's a dear," said a sixth. "He's a dear," said a seventh. "He's a dear," said an eighth. "He's a dear," said a ninth. "He's a dear," said a tenth.

Mr. Carleton's eyes, therefore, did double duty; and presently, when a pale girl, with a drooping geranium in her hair, entered in the rear of a dozen more down from Mrs. Carleton's office, and, forgetting the lady by his side and Lindsey Murray, an energetic "That's her!" burst from his lips.

"That's who, Mr. Carleton?" inquired his astonished companion.

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