



PLANETARY NEWS

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Christmas Jenny

Mary E. Freeman --- 1888

The day before there had been a rain and a thaw, then in the night the wind had suddenly blown from the north, and it had grown cold. In the morning it was very clear and cold, and there was the hard glitter of ice over everything. The snow-crust had a thin coat of ice, and all the open fields shone and flashed. The tree boughs and trunks, and all the little twigs, were enamelled with ice. The roads were glare and slippery with it, and so were the door-yards. In old Jonas Carey's yard the path that sloped from the door to the well was like a frozen brook.

Quite early in the morning old Jonas Carey came out with a pail, and went down the path to the well. He went slowly and laboriously, shuffling his feet, so he should not fall. He was tall and gaunt, and one side of his body seemed to slant toward the other, he settled so much more heavily upon one foot. He was somewhat stiff and lame from rheumatism.

He reached the well in safety, hung the pail, and began pumping. He pumped with extreme slowness and steadiness; a certain expression of stolid solemnity which his face wore never changed.

When he had filled his pail he took it carefully from the pump spout, and started back to the house, shuffling as before. He was two thirds of the way to the door, when he came to an extremely slippery place. Just there some roots from a little cherry-tree crossed the path, and the ice made a dangerous little pitch over them.

Old Jonas lost his footing, and sat down suddenly; the water was all spilled. The house door flew open, and an old woman appeared.

"Oh, Jonas, air you hurt?" she cried, blinking wildly and terrifiedly in the brilliant light.

The old man never said a word. He sat still and looked straight before him solemnly. "Oh, Jonas, you 'ain't broke any bones, hev you?" The old woman gathered up her skirts and began to edge off the door-step, with trembling knees. Then the old man raised his voice — "Stay where you be," he said, imperatively. "Go back into the house!"

He began to raise himself, one joint at a time, and the old woman went back into the house, and looked out of the window at him.



1]— **Christmas Jenny** --- by Mary E. Freeman

6]— **Model T Coach House** — Coach House Crew Mark Kranz & Jeff Schmittinger

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