

it, and how they had looked in to see Jamie White and found him so delighted with the holly about his room, and they had given him a picture-book, and mamma was going to send him his Christmas dinner.

“And Reggie,” said Constance, “we are to come up here directly after the little ones have gone to bed, and Mr. Barnett is to tell us a story, which he wants you to hear.”

The hours of Christmas day sped on rapidly, and the hour for the late dinner arrived. The meal passed off with many merry jokes and playful laughs, and it was succeeded by a great game of romps—blindman’s buff, puss in the corner, and a famous dish of snap-dragon for the little ones; and when they were safely in bed, the elders of the party adjourned to Reginald’s room, where they drew round the fire to hear Mr. Barnett’s story.

The old man seemed unusually agitated,