Adaptation in Translation: Howells's Short Story "Christmas Every Day"**Mohsine Khazrouni**

Department of English and Translation
Abdelmalek Essaadi University
Tetouan, Morocco

Abstract

The present study aims to highlight the importance of adaptation in translation. To convey the message, translators need to take into account not only the text, but also extra linguistic factors such as the target audience. The present paper claims that adaptation is an unavoidable translation strategy when dealing with texts that are heavy with religious and cultural themes. The translation task becomes even more challenging when dealing with children's literature as the audience is children whose comprehension, experience and world knowledge is limited. The study uses the Arabic translation of the short story "Christmas Every Day" by William Dean Howells (1837- 1920) as a case study. The short story will be translated and the pragmatic problems involved will be discussed. The focus will be on the issue of adaptation. i.e., the source text should be adapted to the target language audience's social and cultural environment.

Keywords Adaptation, Arabic audience, children's literature, translation, equivalence

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Introduction

Translation is generally defined as the process of transferring an idea, a concept, or a thought from one language to another. However, translators are faced with many obstacles when they attempt to convey an idea to the target language. Words denoting cultural specific items pose problems for translators. Baker (1992) states that source language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture. The concept could be abstract or concrete; it may be related to a religious belief, social custom, or even to a type of food. Such concepts are usually referred to as "culture specific". As an example, she mentions the concept 'airing cupboard' in English, which is unknown to speakers of most languages. Thus, it is difficult to translate (p. 21).

According to House, (2015) "Translation is the replacement of a text in the source language by a semantically and pragmatically equivalent text in the target language" (p. 72). To produce the intended effect on the target language audience, translators' task is not only to transfer meaning from one language to another, they need to go beyond the text so that the function of the source language text should be similar to that of the target language text. (House, 2015)

Different text types require different translation strategies. Literal translation, for example, is a typical of legal texts where the content of the text is the most important. In literary works, on the other hand, adaptation (naturalization or domestication according to Chesterman & Wagner (2002) is one of the strategies that can be used. This idea is echoed by House's distinction between overt translation and covert translation. An overt translation is required whenever the source text is linked to the source language and its culture. A covert translation is closely linked to the target language. It enjoys the status of an original source text in the target language. In covert translation, functional equivalence is essential because it involves subtle cultural presuppositions which necessitate the application of a "cultural filter".

Adaptation in Translation

Several authors have investigated the issue of adaptation in translation. Baker, (1992) talks about pragmatic equivalence which deals with the way utterances are used in communicative situations and the way we interpret them in context. According to her, "Pragmatics is the study of language in use. It is the study of meaning, not as generated by the linguistic system but as conveyed and manipulated by participants in a communicative situation" (p. 217).

Adaptation can be defined as the changes translators need to make in the source text so that it suits the target readers' needs and situation. Raw (2012) explains the importance of adaptation as follows:

Whether it is consciously carried out by a translator or not, successful adaptation allows (or even forces) the target readers to discover the text in a way that suits its aim, ensures the optimal reception experience, or simply promotes understanding of a specific

message. (p. 26)

Similarly, Vinay & Darbelne(1995) stress the importance of adaptation when they state that 'if a translator systematically refuses to adapt, it will eventually lead to a weakening of a target text' (p. 41). According to them, adaptation is one of the seven translation procedures that should be used whenever the source text situation does not exist in the culture of the target text. In this case, translators need to recreate a new situation which can be considered more appropriate to the target audience.

Bastin (2014) emphasizes too the the importance of adaptation when he says that "without any doubts that adaptation is the most efficient communicational strategy." (p. 76) He explains that adaptation is an efficient strategy that can be used to solve cultural dissimilarities. For him, what makes adaptation different from translation is the fact that translation is text based because it focuses on meaning, while adaptation is context based because it recreates the purpose. He talks about advertising texts which necessitates that translators and adapters go beyond the content of text and consider the function of the text which needs to be preserved. The function of advertising text is to sell products. Therefore, the success of the translation is assessed based on the impact of the translation on the target culture readers, rather than achieving equivalence or faithfulness.

Domestication and foreignization are two opposing translation strategies suggested by Venuti. Domestication is the case when the translator decides to minimize the foreignness of the source text to make it more appropriate to the target language readers' culture, while foreignization means retaining foreignness of the original text. Venuti, (1995) explains that foreignization refers to a method or strategy of translation which retains some of the the original 'foreign' text. Domestication, on the other hand, assimilates a text to the target cultural and linguistic values.

Baker and Saldanha (2009, p.4) suggest the following types of adaptation: summarizing, paraphrase, omission: the elimination of part of the text, exoticism: the substitution of stretches of slang, dialect, nonsense words, etc. in the original text by rough equivalents in the target language, situational or cultural adequacy: the recreation of a context that is more familiar or culturally appropriate from the target reader's perspective than the one used in the original, creation: a more global replacement of the original text with a text that preserves only the essential message/ideas/functions of the original . Baker and Saldanha (2009) consider the following most common factors which cause translators to resort to adaptations:

- 'cross-code breakdown' (where there are no lexical or any other kinds of equivalents in the target language);
- 'situational or cultural inadequacy' (where the contexts in the source text does not exist or cannot be applied to the target text);
- 'genre switching' (change from one discourse type to another (e.g. from adult to children's literature)

- 'disruption of a communication process' (the need to address a different type of readership often requires modifications in style, content and presentation) (p.5)

Baker and Saldanha (2009, p.5) insist that adaptation can be carried out under certain conditions. First, the adapter must evaluate to what extent the source text presents new or shared information for the target audience. Second, the adapter must find an appropriate match in the target language. The third condition is related to the meaning and purpose(s) of the source and target texts.

Chesterman and Wagner (2002) propose the following strategies of pragmatic adaptation: 'Explicitness change', 'Information change', 'Interpersonal change', 'Illocutionary change', 'Coherence change', 'Partial translation', 'Visibility change', 'Transediting', and other pragmatic changes: changes such as layout or choice of dialect.

It is worth noting that the dividing line between translation and adaptation is not always clear. While some scholars consider adaptation as an essential part of the translation, others have severely criticized adaptation, considering it a bad phenomenon as it is a kind of distortion or unfaithfulness to the original. Among the proponents of adaptation are Gambier and Gottlieb (2001) who contend that it is unrealistic to ask a translator to create an easily comprehensible text without using any cultural, pragmatic or any other kind of adaptation.

Oittinen (2000) states that the concept of adaptation is like the concept of equivalence. Both are "ill-defined" and "self-evident". He points out that one of the reasons why some scholars have negative views about adaptation has to do with the way they see translation. If they see translation as producing the sameness, then, they must make a clear distinction between translation and adaptation. But if they consider translation as rewriting, then they will find it hard to distinguish one from the other. For Oittinen, translation and adaptation have many things in common though adaptation is very often seen as a version, an abridgement, or a shortened edition which is less valuable than the original. One of the reasons why we need to use adaptation, according to Oittinen, is when we write for children as the readers will "understand better". Oittinen includes adaptation in "the concept of translation", and believes that "All translators, if they want to be successful, need to adapt their texts according to the presumptive readers" (P.78)

Baker and Saldanha (2009) note that the study of adaptation urges the theorists to go beyond the linguistic factors and highlights the role of translators as mediators, creative and communicators. They add that relevance, rather than accuracy becomes the key word, and this necessitates the careful analysis of three important concepts in translation theory: meaning, purpose (or function, or skopos) and intention.

The source text as children's literature

The short story is about a little girl who asks her father to tell her a story. She wants a story about Christmas. He tells her a story of a little girl who asks the Christmas Fairy for

Christmas every day. When her wish came true, she learned that her greed had brought many negative economic and social impacts.

Oittinen, (2000) defines children's literature as "literature produced and intended for children or as literature read by children". (p.61) The case study of the present paper is a text which is written for children. Therefore, the translator of these kinds of texts has to consider not only the meaning, but also the situation and the purpose of the text. To use Oittinen's words, "Situation and purpose are an intrinsic part of all translation" (p.3). The theme of the source text is Christmas which is deeply rooted in the Western culture. The challenge we face here is that the text is loaded with Christmas terms that are unknown to many children in the Arab world. The translator has to create a new situation which preserves the function of the text (teaching children certain values or morals. Puurtinen (1995) claims that genres such as children's literature require the re-creation of the message according to the sociolinguistic needs of a different readership.

Children's literature has a strong influence on children's development and their perception of the world. This led many Muslim scholars to consider Western children's literature a threat to our culture as it transmits cultural values, morals and religious convictions which are not compatible with Islamic and Arab culture. For example, Mdallel (2003) asserts that every nation has the right to choose the texts to be translated for its kids, and it can censor any literature that contains values that are not accepted by the target audience as censorship is considered as a means to preserve one's own cultural identity and avoid being just a copy of the other.

The Principle of equivalent effect: (Nida's formal and dynamic equivalence)

Nida (1964) differentiates between formal and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence "focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content. In such a translation, one is concerned with such correspondences as poetry to poetry, sentence to sentence, and concept to concept" (p.159). Formal equivalence necessitates that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language. This means that "the message in the receptor culture is constantly compared with the message in the source culture to determine the standards of accuracy and correctness" (p.159).

Dynamic equivalence is a receptor-oriented approach which is based on what Nida calls 'the principle of equivalent effect', where the 'relationship between the receptor and the message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message'. The message has to be adapted to suit the receptors' linguistic and cultural needs and expectations. Adjustments of grammar, lexicon and of cultural references is essential in order to achieve naturalness. (p.159).

Newmark's (semantic and communicative translation)

Newmark (1988) departs from Nida's receptor-oriented line. He feels that the success of equivalent effect is 'illusory' and that the conflict of loyalties and the gap between emphasis on source and target language will always remain as the overriding problem in translation theory

and practice. He suggests that we can narrow that gap by replacing the old terms with those of 'semantic' and 'communicative' translation (Newmark, 1981, p.38, as cited in Munday 2016).

According to Newmark, (1988) communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the source language. Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the target language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original. (p.14).

Newmark distances himself from the full principle of equivalent effect, since that effect "is inoperant if the text is out of target language space and time" (p.15). An example would be a modern British English translation of Homer. No modern translator, irrespective of the target language, can possibly hope or expect to produce the same effect on the reader of the written target language as the oral source language had on its audience in ancient Greece. Newmark also raises further questions concerning the readers to whom Nida directs his dynamic equivalence, asking if they are "to be handed everything on a plate", with everything explained for them (Munday, 2016).

Data Analysis and Discussion

Original text	Arabic translation
•Well, once there was a little pig --	• كان هناك أرنب صغير.
•I should like to know what's the difference between a little pig and a little girl that wanted it Christmas every day!"	• أود أن أعرف الفرق بين أرنب صغير وبنت صغيرة أرادت ان يكون عيد الأضحى كل يوم!

Muslims believe that pig is impure, unhealthy, and harmful for humans. Muslims abstain from pork because the holy Quran prohibits its consumption. The verse in Surah Al-Baqara says: "He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." [2:173] (<https://quran.com/2/173>)

Therefore, replacing a pig with a rabbit would be more acceptable and appropriate to the target audience.

Original text	Arabic translation
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"Well, what kind of story shall I tell, then?"	"إذن أي نوع من الحكايات تودين ان أروي لك؟"
"About Christmas ".	"حكاية حول عيد الأضحى"

Although Christmas is celebrated in many Islamic countries, I find it more appropriate to replace it with another celebration in the Arab and Islamic world. I have decided to create another situation "Eid Al Adha" for two reasons. First, children do not have enough knowledge of Christmas, and many terms related to Christmas are unfamiliar to them. Second, there are many similarities between rituals of Christmas celebration in the Western culture and Eid Al Adha in Islamic culture. Both are very important occasions in both cultures when kids are happy as they buy new clothes and receive gifts.

Conclusion

The present paper has discussed the importance of adaption when translating texts that contain values and cultural references. Rendering the same content can result in a foreign and incomprehensible translation especially if the text is written for children. In every translation, there are losses and sacrifices. In some cases, translators need to sacrifice the original text for the sake of producing an intelligible and appropriate text for the target readers. Adaptation is the strategy used to translate the "Christmas Every Day" short story. The translation appears as an abridged version of the source story because the researcher believes that translation is a creation. Though many scholars continue to regard adaptation as a negative phenomenon, adaptation is a necessary strategy that needs be used whenever there is a cultural mismatch. We need to create a new situation that is acceptable and comprehensible to the target readers especially when translating children's literature.

Arabic translation

عيد الاضحى كل يوم

دخلت فتاة صغيرة الى غرفة مطالعة والدها كما كانت عادت كل صباح سبت قبل تناول وجبة الإفطار و سألت أباها أن يروي لها حكاية. حاول الأب أن يتملص من رواية الحكاية لأنه كان مشغولاً ذلك الصباح، لكن البنت أصرت و لم تدعه. وهكذا بدأ في سرد حكايته قائلاً :

"في يوم من الأيام كان هناك أرنب صغير"

وضعت يدها على فمه و منعتة من متابعة الكلام و قالت إنها سمعت حكايات الأرانب الصغيرة إلى أن ملت منها .

"إذن أي نوع من الحكايات تودين ان أروي لك؟"

"حكاية حول عيد الأضحى"

رد الأب قائلا: " يبدو لي ان عدد الحكايات حول عيد الأضحى التي رويتها لك يساوي تلك التي رويتها لك حول الأرانب الصغيرة".

"ليس هناك فرق، لكن حدث عيد الأضحى أكثر أهمية"

بجهد كبير توقف الأب عن ما كان يكتبه وقال " حسنا إذن، سأروي لك حكاية حول تلك الفتاة الصغيرة التي أرادت ان تكون مناسبة عيد الأضحى كل يوم طيلة السنة. هل تحبين سماعها؟"

ردت البنت " أحبها جدا" و جلست منتظرة سماع الحكاية .

حسنا إذن، في يوم من الأيام كانت هناك بنت صغيرة أحببت عيد الأضحى كثيرا لدرجة أنها تمنّت لو كان عيد الاضحى كل يوم طيلة السنة. فجأة، ظهر جني وأكّد لها ان بإمكانه ان يحقق لها أي أمنية أرادت. قالت البنت انها تتمنى لو كان عيد الاضحى كل يوم. حقق لها الجني حلمها وبان عيد الاضحى سوف يكون كل يوم طيلة السنة .

كانت البنت متحمسة جدا قبل هذا لأنها كانت تستعد للاحتفال بعيد الاضحى العادي الذي يأتي كل مرة في السنة والذي كان موعده في اليوم التالي، فقد عزمّت أن تحتفظ بهذا السر لنفسها وأن تفاجئ به الجميع حالما يصير الأمر حقيقة.

قضت عيد أضحى رائع طوال اليوم، أكلت الكثير من الحلوى حتى انها لم تأكل أي شيء في وجبة الفطور. ذهبت البنت لزيارة أسرتها وأصحابها ، ثم جاءت الى المنزل وتناولت وجبة العشاء، كما تناولت حلوى العيد، بعد ذلك خرجت ثم عادت ومعدتها تؤلمها وهي تبكي لكثرة ما أكلت من الحلوى.

وتابع الأب :

نامت البنت نوما ثقيلا، لكن الأطفال الآخرين أيقظوها لأنهم كانوا يرقصون حول سريرها حاملين ملابسهم الجديدة.

قالت البنت: " ماذا هناك؟" وهي تحك عينيها محاولة النهوض من فراشها .

صاحوا جميعا : عيد الأضحى ! عيد الأضحى ! عيد الأضحى ! ولوحوا بملابسهم الجديدة.

"هراء، عيد الأضحى كان أمس".

إكتفى أصحابها بالضحك، وقالوا " نحن لا نعرف شيئا عن ذلك، عيد الأضحى اليوم. هيا الى الخارج لتتأكدين "

بعد ذلك، أدركت البنت ان الجني قد وفى بعهده وان أعياد الأضحى قد بدأت، كان يغلبها نعاس شديد، لكن كان عليها أن تتحرك .

قالت البنت : " أستطيع أن أخمن ما ذا كان هناك".

حسنا، كان هناك الكثير من الملابس الجديدة ومن الحلوى ، أحس أفراد الأسرة بالنعاس. كان أبوها محتارا وقال ان هذا يبدو له شبيها بما حصل أمس لكنه اعتقد انه لابد ان يكون حلما، وكانت الام على وشك البكاء حين قالت " أنا متأكدة اني لا أعرف كيف سأخلص من كل هذه الأشياء، فاجأ هذا البنت و بدا لها كأنه نكتة ، فأكلت كثيرا من الحلوى حتى انها ترد ان تأكل شيئا في الفطور.

في اليوم التالي، تكرر نفس الشيء، لكن الجميع أصبح غضبانا، ومع نهاية اسبوع واحد، بدأ كثير من الناس يفقدون أعصابهم.

بدأت الفتاة الصغيرة تحس بالخوف وهي تحتفظ بالسر لنفسها. كانت تود أن تفشي السر لأنها لم تجرأ على ذلك. كما أنها استحييت أن تسأل الجني أي يوقف الأعياد لأن هذا سيبدو نوعا من نكران الجميل، واعتقدت أنه يجب عليها أن تواصل على هذا السنة كلها رغم أنها لم تعرف كيف. واستمرت الأحداث، مر عيد الفطر ومرت ذكرى الأعياد الوطنية، لكن الأيام كلها كانت متشابهة، كلها عيد الأضحى.

و بعد فترة، بدأت كميات الفحم والبطاطس تنفذ من الأسواق وأصبح ثمن الأضحية غاليا جدا.

أصبح الناس فقراء جدا نتيجة شرائهم للهدايا وأضحيات العيد، ولم يستطيعوا شراء أي ملابس جديدة، واكتفوا بارتداء الملابس الممزقة. أصبحوا فقراء جدا إلى درجة أنه كان على الجميع الذهاب إلى ملاجئ الفقراء باستثناء بائعي الحلويات وتجار المواشي. كلهم أصبحوا أغنياء ويتعاملون بغرور. لقد كان موقفا مخزيا.

مل الناس من أكل نفس الحلوى ومن نفس الأطباق وامتألت الأزقة والأحياء بالنفايات المرتبطة بالعيد التي أدت إلى تلوث البيئة وانتشار الروائح الكريهة لأن السلطات لم تستطع التخلص من تلك الكميات الكبيرة من النفايات، وأصيب العديد من الناس بأمراض السمنة لأنهم أفرطوا في تناول اللحم.

وبعد أن استمر هذا الحال مدة ثلاث أو أربع أشهر تقريبا، كانت البنت كلما جاءت إلى الغرفة في الصباح ورأت تلك الملابس الجديدة، وتلك الهدايا المنتشرة في كل مكان، كانت تجلس وتجهش بالبكاء، وفي غضون ستة أشهر أصبحت منهكة تماما، إذ لم تعد تستطيع حتى البكاء، فقط تجلس في غرفة الجلوس وتدير عينيها وتتحسر. تعودت أن تجلس على الدمي حيثما وجدت، كانت تكره النظر إليهم كانت غاضبة وكانت ترمي هداياها بعنف في أرجاء الغرفة.

في ذلك الوقت، لم يعد الناس يحتفظون باللحوم بتلك اللهفة المعهودة، ولكنهم أصبحوا يرمونها من السياج أو من النافذة أو من مكان آخر، كان رجال الشرطة يأتون ويأمرونهم بأن لا يفعلوا ذلك وإلا سوف يعتقلونهم.

لم يعد بمقدور الناس إصدار صوت.

"لماذا لم يستطيعو ذلك؟"

"لأنهم فقدوا اصواتهم لكثرة ما قالوا " عيد مبارك سعيد "

تسرب إلى الناس من سبب كل هذه الأعياد. عانت البنت الصغيرة كثيرا إلى درجة أنها أصبحت تتكلم عن الموضوع وهي نائمة. لم يعد أحد يلعب معها واحتقرها الناس لأن هذا لم يكن ليحدث لو لم تكن طماعا. وفي اليوم التالي، بدأت البنت تنادي الجني لكي يأتي ويوقف الأعياد. لكن هذا لم ينجح. نامت البنت تلك الليلة، وحين استيقظت في الصباح--

قالت البنت "وجدت كل ذلك كان حلما"

رد الأب "لا، كان واقع إلى حد ما "

"ماذا اكتشفت إذن؟"

"لم يكن عيد الميلاد، والآن حان موعد الفطور"

امسكت البنت برقبة أبيها وقالت: " سوف لن تقوم من مكانك اذا تركت الحكاية هكذا!"

"كيف تريدين الحكاية أن تنتهي؟"

"أن يكون عيد الميلاد مرة واحدة في السنة."

قال الأب " حسنا، وواصل :

حسنا، عمت الفرحة كل أنحاء البلاد، وامتدت حتى الى الدولة المجاورة. التقى الناس بعضهم بعضا في كل مكان وعبروا عن فرحتهم، طافت العربات ارجاء المدينة وجمعت كل نفايات الأضحية وتخلصوا منها برميها في النهر. وهذا جعل الأسماك مريضة جدا. كانت كل المناطق عبارة عن نار يحرقون فيها الأطفال هداياهم. لقد كانوا فعلا يستمتعون بوقتهم.

عبرت البنت الصغيرة عن شكرها للجني لأنه أوقف أعياد الميلاد. وكانت تأمل ان يكون عيد الميلاد مرة كل الف سنة، وبعد ذلك قالت كل مائة سنة، ثم عشر سنوات، وفي النهاية طلبت ان يكون مرة كل سنة. فقال الجني ان هذا الاخير هو الطريق الامثل الذي أسعد الناس منذ ان بدؤوا يحتفلون بأعياد الاضحى. واتفقا على هذا. ردت البنت: " تم تسوية الأمر بيننا" وغادرت بسرعة وهي تقفز في طريقها الى المنزل. كانت فرحة جدا.

سال الأب " كيف وجدت الحكاية"

ردت البنت: " رائع، لكنها لم تحب كون القصة انتهت، لكن أمها جاءت وسألت الاب :

"هل ستأتي لتناول وجبة الفطور؟" ماذا كنت تحكي للبنت؟"

"كنت أحكي لها حكاية أخلاقية"

The English Original Text

Christmas Every Day By William Dean Howells.

William Dean Howells (March 1, 1837 – May 11, 1920) is an American author. "Christmas Every Day" is one of his best-known short stories. "Christmas Every Day" is a short story about a young girl who wished that Christmas would come every day.

The story

The little girl came into her papa's study, as she always did Saturday morning before breakfast, and asked for a story. He tried to beg off that morning, for he was very busy, but she would not let him. So he began:

"Well, once there was a little pig--"

She put her hand over his mouth and stopped him at the word. She said she had heard little pig-stories till she was perfectly sick of them.

"Well, what kind of story shall I tell, then?"

"About Christmas. It's getting to be the season. It's past Thanksgiving already."

"It seems to me," her papa argued, "that I've told as often about Christmas as I have about little pigs."

"No difference! Christmas is more interesting."

"Well!" Her papa roused himself from his writing by a great effort. "Well, then, I'll tell you about the little girl that wanted it Christmas every day in the year. How would you like that?"

"First-rate!" said the little girl; and she nestled into comfortable shape in his lap, ready for listening.

"Very well, then, this little pig--Oh, what are you pounding me for?"

"Because you said little pig instead of little girl."

"I should like to know what's the difference between a little pig and a little girl that wanted it Christmas every day!"

"Papa," said the little girl, warningly, "if you don't go on, I'll give it to you!" And at this her papa darted off like lightning, and began to tell the story as fast as he could.

Well, once there was a little girl who liked Christmas so much that she wanted it to be Christmas every day in the year; and as soon as Thanksgiving was over she began to send postal-cards to the old Christmas Fairy to ask if she mightn't have it. But the old fairy never answered any of the postals; and after a while the little girl found out that the Fairy was pretty particular, and wouldn't notice anything but letters--not even correspondence cards in envelopes; but real letters on sheets of paper, and sealed outside with a monogram--or your initial, anyway. So, then, she began to send her letters; and in about three weeks--or just the day before Christmas, it was--she got a letter from the Fairy, saying she might have it Christmas every day for a year, and then they would see about having it longer.

The little girl was a good deal excited already, preparing for the old-fashioned, once-a-year Christmas that was coming the next day, and perhaps the Fairy's promise didn't make such an impression on her as it would have made at some other time. She just resolved to keep it to herself, and surprise everybody with it as it kept coming true; and then it slipped out of her mind altogether.

She had a splendid Christmas. She went to bed early, so as to let Santa Claus have a chance at the stockings, and in the morning she was up the first of anybody and went and felt them, and found hers all lumpy with packages of candy, and oranges and grapes, and pocket-books and rubber balls, and all kinds of small presents, and her big brother's with nothing but the tongs in them, and her young lady sister's with a new silk umbrella, and her papa's and mamma's with potatoes and pieces of coal wrapped up in tissue-paper, just as they always had every Christmas. Then she waited around till the rest of the family were up, and she was the first to burst into the library, when the doors were opened, and look at the large presents laid out on the library-table--books, and portfolios, and boxes of stationery, and breastpins, and dolls, and little stoves, and dozens of handkerchiefs, and ink-stands, and skates, and snow-shovels, and photograph-frames, and little easels, and boxes of water-colors, and Turkish paste, and nougat, and candied cherries, and dolls' houses, and waterproofs--and the big Christmas-tree, lighted and standing in a waste-basket in the middle.

She had a splendid Christmas all day. She ate so much candy that she did not want any breakfast; and the whole forenoon the presents kept pouring in that the expressman had not had time to deliver the night before; and she went round giving the presents she had got for other people, and came home and ate turkey and cranberry for dinner, and plum-pudding and nuts and raisins and oranges and more candy, and then went out and coasted, and came in with a stomach-ache, crying; and her papa said he would see if his house was turned into that sort of fool's paradise another year; and they had a light supper, and pretty early everybody went to bed cross.

Here the little girl pounded her papa in the back, again.

"Well, what now? Did I say pigs?"

"You made them act like pigs."

"Well, didn't they?"

"No matter; you oughtn't to put it into a story."

"Very well, then, I'll take it all out."

Her father went on:

The little girl slept very heavily, and she slept very late, but she was wakened at last by the other children dancing round her bed with their stockings full of presents in their hands.

"What is it?" said the little girl, and she rubbed her eyes and tried to rise up in bed.

"Christmas! Christmas! Christmas!" they all shouted, and waved their stockings.

"Nonsense! It was Christmas yesterday."

Her brothers and sisters just laughed. "We don't know about that. It's Christmas to-day, anyway. You come into the library and see."

Then all at once it flashed on the little girl that the Fairy was keeping her promise, and her year of Christmases was beginning. She was dreadfully sleepy, but she sprang up like a lark--a lark that had overeaten itself and gone to bed cross--and darted into the library. There it was again! Books, and portfolios, and boxes of stationery, and breastpins--

"You needn't go over it all, papa; I guess I can remember just what was there," said the little girl. Well, and there was the Christmas-tree blazing away, and the family picking out their presents, but looking pretty sleepy, and her father perfectly puzzled, and her mother ready to cry. "I'm sure I don't see how I'm to dispose of all these things," said her mother, and her father said it seemed to him they had had something just like it the day before, but he supposed he must have dreamed it. This struck the little girl as the best kind of a joke; and so she ate so much candy she didn't want any breakfast, and went round carrying presents, and had turkey and cranberry for dinner, and then went out and coasted, and came in with a--

"Papa!"

"Well, what now?"

"What did you promise, you forgetful thing?"

"Oh! oh yes!"

Well, the next day, it was just the same thing over again, but everybody getting crosser; and at the end of a week's time so many people had lost their tempers that you could pick up lost tempers anywhere; they perfectly strewed the ground. Even when people tried to recover their tempers they usually got somebody else's, and it made the most dreadful mix.

The little girl began to get frightened, keeping the secret all to herself; she wanted to tell her mother, but she didn't dare to; and she was ashamed to ask the Fairy to take back her gift, it seemed ungrateful and ill-bred, and she thought she would try to stand it, but she hardly knew how she could, for a whole year. So it went on and on, and it was Christmas on St. Valentine's Day and Washington's Birthday, just the same as any day, and it didn't skip even the First of April, though everything was counterfeit that day, and that was some little relief.

After a while coal and potatoes began to be awfully scarce, so many had been wrapped up in tissue-paper to fool papas and mammas with. Turkeys got to be about a thousand dollars apiece--

"Papa!"

"Well, what?"

"You're beginning to fib."

"Well, two thousand, then."

And they got to passing off almost anything for turkeys--half-grown humming-birds, and even rocs out of the Arabian Nights--the real turkeys were so scarce. And cranberries--well, they

asked a diamond apiece for cranberries. All the woods and orchards were cut down for Christmas-trees, and where the woods and orchards used to be it looked just like a stubble-field, with the stumps. After a while they had to make Christmas-trees out of rags, and stuff them with bran, like old-fashioned dolls; but there were plenty of rags, because people got so poor, buying presents for one another, that they couldn't get any new clothes, and they just wore their old ones to tatters. They got so poor that everybody had to go to the poor-house, except the confectioners, and the fancy-store keepers, and the picture-book sellers, and the expressmen; and they all got so rich and proud that they would hardly wait upon a person when he came to buy. It was perfectly shameful!

Well, after it had gone on about three or four months, the little girl, whenever she came into the room in the morning and saw those great ugly, lumpy stockings dangling at the fire-place, and the disgusting presents around everywhere, used to just sit down and burst out crying. In six months, she was perfectly exhausted; she couldn't even cry anymore; she just lay on the lounge and rolled her eyes and panted. About the beginning of October, she took to sitting down on dolls wherever she found them--French dolls, or any kind--she hated the sight of them so; and by Thanksgiving she was crazy, and just slammed her presents across the room.

By that time people didn't carry presents around nicely any more. They flung them over the fence, or through the window, or anything; and, instead of running their tongues out and taking great pains to write "For dear Papa," or "Mamma," or "Brother," or "Sister," or "Susie," or "Sammie," or "Billie," or "Bobbie," or "Jimmie," or "Jennie," or whoever it was, and troubling to get the spelling right, and then signing their names, and "Xmas, 18--," they used to write in the gift-books, "Take it, you horrid old thing!" and then go and bang it against the front door. Nearly everybody had built barns to hold their presents, but pretty soon the barns overflowed, and then they used to let them lie out in the rain, or anywhere. Sometimes the police used to come and tell them to shovel their presents off the sidewalk, or they would arrest them.

"I thought you said everybody had gone to the poor-house," interrupted the little girl.

"They did go, at first," said her papa; "but after a while the poor-houses got so full that they had to send the people back to their own houses. They tried to cry, when they got back, but they couldn't make the least sound."

"Why couldn't they?"

"Because they had lost their voices, saying 'Merry Christmas' so much. Did I tell you how it was on the Fourth of July?"

"No; how was it?" And the little girl nestled closer, in expectation of something uncommon.

Well, the night before, the boys stayed up to celebrate, as they always do, and fell asleep before twelve o'clock, as usual, expecting to be wakened by the bells and cannon. But it was nearly eight o'clock before the first boy in the United States woke up, and then he found out what the trouble was. As soon as he could get his clothes on he ran out of the house and smashed a big cannon-torpedo down on the pavement; but it didn't make any more noise than a damp wad of paper; and after he tried about twenty or thirty more, he began to pick them up and look at them. Every single torpedo was a big raisin! Then he just streaked it up-stairs, and examined his fire-crackers and toy-pistol and two-dollar collection of fireworks, and found that they were nothing but sugar and candy painted up to look like fireworks! Before ten o'clock every boy in the United States found out that his Fourth of July things had turned into Christmas things; and then they just sat down and cried--they were so mad. There are about twenty million boys in the United States, and so you can imagine what a noise they made. Some men got together before night,

with a little powder that hadn't turned into purple sugar yet, and they said they would fire off one cannon, anyway. But the cannon burst into a thousand pieces, for it was nothing but rock-candy, and some of the men nearly got killed. The Fourth of July orations all turned into Christmas carols, and when anybody tried to read the Declaration, instead of saying, "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary," he was sure to sing, "God rest you, merry gentlemen." It was perfectly awful.

The little girl drew a deep sigh of satisfaction.

"And how was it at Thanksgiving?"

Her papa hesitated. "Well, I'm almost afraid to tell you. I'm afraid you'll think it's wicked."

"Well, tell, anyway," said the little girl.

Well, before it came Thanksgiving it had leaked out who had caused all these Christmases. The little girl had suffered so much that she had talked about it in her sleep; and after that hardly anybody would play with her. People just perfectly despised her, because if it had not been for her greediness it wouldn't have happened; and now, when it came Thanksgiving, and she wanted them to go to church, and have squash-pie and turkey, and show their gratitude, they said that all the turkeys had been eaten up for her old Christmas dinners, and if she would stop the Christmases, they would see about the gratitude. Wasn't it dreadful? And the very next day the little girl began to send letters to the Christmas Fairy, and then telegrams, to stop it. But it didn't do any good; and then she got to calling at the Fairy's house, but the girl that came to the door always said, "Not at home," or "Engaged," or "At dinner," or something like that; and so it went on till it came to the old once-a-year Christmas Eve. The little girl fell asleep, and when she woke up in the morning--

"She found it was all nothing but a dream," suggested the little girl.

"No, indeed!" said her papa. "It was all every bit true!"

"Well, what did she find out, then?"

"Why, that it wasn't Christmas at last, and wasn't ever going to be, any more. Now it's time for breakfast."

The little girl held her papa fast around the neck.

"You sha'n't go if you're going to leave it so!"

"How do you want it left?"

"Christmas once a year."

"All right," said her papa; and he went on again.

Well, there was the greatest rejoicing all over the country, and it extended clear up into Canada. The people met together everywhere, and kissed and cried for joy. The city carts went around and gathered up all the candy and raisins and nuts, and dumped them into the river; and it made the fish perfectly sick; and the whole United States, as far out as Alaska, was one blaze of bonfires, where the children were burning up their gift-books and presents of all kinds. They had the greatest time!

The little girl went to thank the old Fairy because she had stopped its being Christmas, and she said she hoped she would keep her promise and see that Christmas never, never came again. Then the Fairy frowned, and asked her if she was sure she knew what she meant; and the little girl asked her, Why not? and the old Fairy said that now she was behaving just as greedily as ever, and she'd better look out. This made the little girl think it all over carefully again, and she said she would be willing to have it Christmas about once in a thousand years; and then she said a hundred, and then she said ten, and at last she got down to one. Then the Fairy said that was the

good old way that had pleased people ever since Christmas began, and she was agreed. Then the little girl said, "What're your shoes made of?" And the Fairy said, "Leather." And the little girl said, "Bargain's done forever," and skipped off, and hippity-hopped the whole way home, she was so glad.

"How will that do?" asked the papa.

"First-rate!" said the little girl; but she hated to have the story stop, and was rather sober. However, her mamma put her head in at the door, and asked her papa:

"Are you never coming to breakfast? What have you been telling that child?"

"Oh, just a moral tale."

The little girl caught him around the neck again.

"We know! Don't you tell what, papa! Don't you tell what!"

About the Author:

Mohsine Khazrouni: Department of English and Translation, Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Tetouan, Morocco.

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