

Holiday Prodigious

By Walter Joseph Delaney

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"MERRY CHRISTMAS!" shouted a voice outside the house of Seth and Esther Marvin at Easton, and in black and blue these estimable persons came to the porch and viewed Uncle Gregory Threals just departing. To the force was tied the fattest, sleekest cat they had ever seen.

"Why, what is this?" inquired Mr. Marvin, staring vaguely.

"Can't you see—fatted calf! It will be for Christmas, only Tom needs it. I'll be over later; good bye all then and Merry Christmas!"

He went his way waving his hand mysteriously and chuckling and shaking with half-suppressed jollity.

"He must mean the boys. Oh, Seth, can it be that they are coming home?" gasped Mrs. Marvin.

"I don't know, but there is some hidden mystery in this action of our relative. You know he always liked Bob and Tom and Ned. Perhaps he has kept track of them."

Mr. Marvin sighed and he had reason to do so. And his loving loyal helpmeet cheerfully echoed the sigh.

Then eyes met and there were mutual tears in them. Then Seth went to the woodshed and came forth again holding a hatchet and a saw.

"Where are you going?" inquired Esther curiously.

"Over to the woods. I'm going to get some evergreen and holly. It is as well to be prepared for a surprise."

Just as fell had set in the three sons of the worthy couple left their home secretly one night after writing a note, honest and respectful, announcing that they had heard of positions in a distant factory, and realizing that a mortgage on the home and hard times were distressing the dear old father they felt at their duty to do something toward the family support.

For three months regularly there had come a draft for quite an amount, but no other word from the runaways.

And now—on Christmas eve—there were three glad, grateful visitors to the little cottage: Tom, Bob and Ned, none more rested under the dear old roof.

The news got about town and the kids were popular and had many true friends. Three, particularly, arrived with their sisters just as the prodigals wished and hoped. And in the evening the same welcome came to the old home—cheery with their chatter at the supper table. Then appeared Uncle Gregory. He winked and blinked at his three prime favorites, the boys, and brought two turkeys for the holiday feast.

"But the fattest calf for the prodigals," he queried chucklingly. "So appropriate, and it will last a week."

And an hour later Uncle Gregory blossomed forth in his most felicitous style. He handed a folded legal looking document to Mrs. Marvin.

"What is this, Uncle Gregory?" she inquired.

"Release of the mortgage these dear lads hoped to pay through their own exertions, but they are only boys, if you want to see them, they are only boys, if you want to see them, they are only boys, if you want to see them, they are only boys."

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The Rag Doll's Christmas

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HERE was once a very, very old rag doll who lived in a nursery. She was so old that she had seen all the children grow up—the boys who were tugs now, the girl who had her hair done in braids, the middle-aged child who had so often left the rag doll out in the garden at night. There was only the baby left—she was the baby's first love.

But the rag doll was very, very old, and one beautiful Christmas time she began to show her age.

Her hair had been combed so much that it had come out, and she was entirely gone. Her pretty pink cheeks had been washed away when the boy tried to teach her to swim in the bath tub, and all her clothes were very unkindly indeed.

The baby never noticed all these things, but the boys did; they all made the most unkind remarks to the rag doll the day before Christmas.

"Look at your dirty face," said the large French doll, "you'll be put out in the attic tonight."

"That's where the old dolls go," said the French doll, "look at your dress," said the jumping Jack, "it is all torn."

"I wouldn't want to walk across the nursery floor with you."

"Did you ever see such thin hair?" asked the hobby horse. "I thought my tail was thin, but it isn't to be compared with that!"

But just then the nursery door opened, and the Christmas Angel came in. You could be perfectly sure that she was the Christmas Angel even if she had been on a gingham apron, because her face shone so through the dark.

"The French doll must go up to the attic," said the Christmas Angel.

"There is a more beautiful new best doll coming."

"Why, the Jack-in-the-box has forgotten how to jump."

You see the Jack-in-the-box had been so excited about the rag doll's dress that he had broken his spring.

"The Jack-in-the-box must go up to the attic, too," said the Christmas Angel.

Then she went over to the hobby horse.

"Poor, old hobby-horse!" she said. "Your leg is very badly broken. I will take you up to the attic until you can be mended."

"There," the Christmas Angel said at last, "the nursery is all tidy, and ready for next year—bitter, dear me, what's this? Why, it is the little rag doll!"

"Oh, please, do I have to go to the attic, too?" said the rag doll. "It's very cold there, and I know the best doll will have the chimney corner for herself—and I don't want the mice to gnaw my toes!"

"Why, you dear old thing!" said the Christmas Angel. "You're the same rag doll that I used to play with when I was little. You go to the attic? Why, I just guess not! We couldn't get along without you in the nursery. You are a little mending, but I am not so new, you, and then you shall sit by the very tip-top of the Christmas tree!"

The Christmas Angel lighted one of the Christmas candles so that she could see to sew. Then she took the rag doll in her lap and opened her working bag and set to work.

First she stuffed the rag doll's sides with plenty of cotton so she could sit up. Then she sewed her toes, and put new little white stockings and black shoes on her feet. She took a piece of clean, white cloth and covered the rag doll's dirty face, and painted in blue eyes and a smiling, red mouth and vermilion cheeks. She sewed on a new yellow wig; and then she made a pink and white check gingham dress with puffed sleeves, and a white apron with strings to keep the dress clean, and a pink and white checked sunbonnet to fit under the rag doll's chin and keep her hair tidy.

"I think you will do now, you dear old thing," said the Christmas Angel.

So it came Christmas morning, and there on the tip-top of the tree sat the rag doll quite made new. The children thought her really the most beautiful of all the Christmas things.

For the rag doll herself—why, all the pleasure of her old days was as new to the happiness that was hers now.—Carolyn S. Bailey, in Kindergarten Review.

He Brought a Fatted Calf.

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A Christmas Movie

By ALDEN CHAPMAN

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IF sweet voiced Christmas chiming were echoing out of chorus melodious and reverent and Mabel Durand sat in the parlor of her cozy little flat absorbed in a review of that time the season naturally brought to her.

Her face was not a happy one, for her memories were freighted with a sadness that had shadowed her life for nearly ten years.

She had wedded Rodney Durand, a close friend of her brother, now dead; and both had been employed in the prosperous mercantile house of her father. He, too, had now passed away and Mabel was alone in the world, except for her little daughter, Erma, only ten years old. The little one came tripping joyously into the room at that moment.

"Oh, mamma," she cried, "what do you think? Our neighbor in the next flat, Mrs. Brayton, wants us both to be ready in an hour to go with her to the movies."

Mrs. Brayton had been a cheering element in the lonely life of Mabel Durand for over two months.

Mrs. Durand had more than once during their brief acquaintanceship confided to Mabel the neighbor she seemed to especially like about her past history. It was a tragic one. Two years after her marriage to Rodney Durand her husband had been arrested and sentenced to prison for embezzlement from her father.

"I loved Rodney and I always shall," insisted Mabel. "There must be some mistake in the charges they have brought against him."

"There none," replied her father gravely. "He has disgraced us. He is from me bodily."

Still Mabel hoped and waited and the end of two years when Rodney was released from prison she bore it bravely the reproach of never leaving a word from him.

So Mabel had talked of her broken life and now it was Christmas time again and the occasion brought a remembrance of those days in the happy past when she and little Erma had known a tender-hearted husband and a gentle innocent father.

Mrs. Brayton, clattered casually all the way to the theater and told her she had seen the picture play twice and was greatly impressed by it.

"It is the story of the life of a wronged, misguided man," she said, "and I know it will interest you."

The screen outlined the course of business in a modern counting room. Then as there entered a new figure little Erma pressed close to the side for her mother and exclaimed:

"Oh, mamma, that actor looks just like the picture you have of dear, absent papa."

Mrs. Durand gasped and tottered in her seat. The gentle, soothing hand of Mrs. Brayton steadied and quieted her.

"Do not be startled or excited, dear friend," she whispered. "I had a purpose in bringing you here, as you will soon know, perhaps gratefully. The principal of this movie is Rodney Durand, your husband and my brother-in-law. For his sake I have got acquainted with you; for both your sakes I have brought about this climax."

The story of the embezzlement crime was faithfully depicted and it showed another as the real criminal—her own brother. Her husband had taken his blame, bearing the penalty and reproach to save her brother from disgrace.

At a critical moment her brother had sent a full confession to Rodney, taking the blame for the crime. In plain view Rodney, in the action of the piece, destroyed it.

"Do you comprehend now?" questioned Mrs. Brayton softly.

"Oh, how we have wronged my poor, dear Rodney," sobbed Mabel. "Can you forgive him? Will he ever forgive me? Oh, then I could find him."

"You shall," and when they reached home, Mrs. Brayton left her friend for a few moments to reappear with her brother.

Higher swung the gladness chiming bells, merrily echoing the happy sweet voices, and beside the little Christmas tree that had been trimmed for Erma, those three earnest souls joined in the joyous kneeling, that their paths would lead together from the threshold of that Christmas eve into broad sunny pastures of love and happiness.

In Plain View Rodney Destroyed It.

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A YULE MESSAGE

Christmas Spirit, Peace and Good Will Should Prevail.

Time to Be Happy and to All Others in the Enjoyment of the Season's Cheer.

On earth, peace; good will—Luke 2:14.

SURELY there is a mystic tie between spirit and nature, between heaven and earth, between God and man. Not strange is it, then, that on the night of the most wonderful birth time has seen, the age and skies should part and song of angels entrance the watchers on Bethlehem's plains.

What is the secret of the unwonted charm brought by this brilliant day in time's calendar? Why is the season charged with such gladness? Why do men and women feel that they can lay down their weary burdens and their faces smile again with the faith and joy of childhood's care-free days?

It is the ray influence of the angelic song of the natal night. "Peace on Earth! To a humbling, distracting, troubled by doubts and fears, wounded by sin and smitten by conscience, God sends a message: 'Fear not, I am your Father. I give you a Savior from sin and misery. You are my children! My heavenly, peace I breathe upon you.' And in the sweet pledge of divine remembrance and Fatherly love of God at peace with men—a wave of tranquil joy floods the world."

But, again, it is an evangel to man of peace with himself. Every man finds discord in his own being. His innermost personality is the seat of antagonism. He is an instrument out of tune. The primal harmony of his spirit is broken. He is at war with himself. His baser strives with his higher nature. Soul and body war against each other. But "on earth, peace," chants the scrupulous choir. Regard the image of God stamped upon you. Turn down the low and base. Let the spirit rule and the body serve.

Finally, the Christmas should breathe the spirit of peace in our business and in all the relations of life. Especially in our homes we can cultivate the Christmas spirit, displacing their frequent discords, fault-finding and contentions with peace and good will.

For this glad time, at least, let us all be better men and women; less selfish, more kindly, easier to live with. And how much happier will we be if this Christmas spirit—its cheer glow and kindly warmth—stay with us all through the year—January, 3, Remembrance.

THE YULETIDE FLAME

Spark in Hearts of People Cannot Be Quenched.

All Have Desire to Make Fellowmen Happy by Gift or Words of Greeting.

NEITHER hatred, nor envy, nor deceit, nor all the legions of ugly human passions that assail the heart, nor rancor between individuals, nor national lust for power, can extinguish it. They may dim but they cannot quench the spark in the heart of man which impels him, as every waking year brings the Christmas, to try to make a few of his fellowmen a little happier. Often it is by the method of the gift, perhaps something that costs hundreds of dollars, maybe only a penny card bearing an inscription of good cheer. Frequently it is some-

thing intangible, the whole-souled word of greeting to the old lady in a shawl who sells you your paper, or the smile of comradeship which you give the conductor who punches your ticket, or the elevator man who takes you up to your office (fellow workers all). It is not giving that counts, not the bestowal of something valued in dollars and cents, the transference of something from your hand to another's. That is a purely mechanical process, which may or may not create happiness. No; it is the longing to give, the desire to be the cause of another's happiness.

To wish to help others is the oldest passion in the world—even a little older than the impulse to overcome others. And it is the deathless passion as well. It needs no Christmas day to keep it alive, but as long as Christmas continues to provide fuel to make the flame of good fellowship burn brighter, that day will continue to be the richest 24 hours in all the year.

Remember NEW SUBSCRIBERS ONLY.

MAY 1st, 1922 for Only 35c

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..The Christmas Store..

This store has been known for years as The Christmas Store of Northville and we are prepared to maintain our reputation this year. Our counters and shelves are full of articles suitable for Christmas Gifts.

Toys, Dolls, Glassware, Dinner Sets, Fine China, Turkish Towels, Bath Sets, Ladies' Furnishings, Children's Garments, Hosiery, Handkerchiefs, Blankets

So many things in fact that space will not permit us to mention them. Come in and make your selections.

Quality Blend Coffee, one pound and 40 cubes of Sugar for only 45c—a Coffee with a wonderful flavor.

Candies in Bulk—Buy as Much as you like.

Christmas Groceries and Canned Goods.

Every Woman visiting our store this week will be given a Shopping Bag.

Remember

This Is The Christmas Store.

M. BROCK & CO.

THE YULETIDE FLAME

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