

**A Christmas Stocking**

By Bertha Esmond Ridgeley

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CHRISTMAS and the high cost of living do not make a very harmonious combination," observed Mrs. Ralston, in her quiet, patient way.

"I was just thinking of that, mother," replied her married daughter, Eunice Marsh, who sat with her work basket in her lap, her needle threaded with meandering yarn, and rounding one of her husband's stockings at the heel.

"There! that is done, and I hope it will pass muster as half respectable pinned up to Aunt Mary's mantle." Mrs. Ralston sighed, and Eunice did not act any too cheerful. They were lovable, generous souls, and until the past year or two had never known what it was to skimp and watch the corners closely. The mother picked up the stocking Eunice had placed on the table.

"Come to think of it, Eunice," she said, "we can do better than that. Just run up to the storeroom. Here is the key. You'll find father's clothes and things as they were when he died."

The last years of John Ralston's life had been full of anxiety and struggle. There was a mortgage on the old homestead, and at one time it seemed a foreclosure could not be avoided. Then in some way he secured the money to pay it off, and fortunately it was clear of encumbrance when he died. That was just a month after Eunice married Randal Marsh.

Her heart warmed as she thought of the loyal, whole-souled man who had come into her life at a critical time. It had been generally supposed that Randal had some little means, for he was industrious and thrifty, but when Mr. Ralston died Randal stepped into his place, practical, hard working and self-sacrificing.

The tears fell as Eunice reached the storeroom, and lifted the top of the fancy box she had herself covered, in which her father had been accustomed to store his extra clothing. Randal himself had made the receptacle, and

together they had given it to Mr. Ralston on his last birthday. Eunice removed some articles of apparel tenderly and with care, placed them on a chair, and discovered some handkerchiefs and three pairs of stockings rolled up neatly. She took the top pair, undid it and with satisfaction noted as it unrolled that it was new and whole.

"Why, what can this be!" she uttered, as an envelope fell from the released folds. Her wonderment increased as she picked it up and found it unsealed and inside a written page and a peculiar looking key. Then with staring eyes, breathless, stirred to the depths of her soul, she read:

"After I am gone see that this letter and key are given to Randal Marsh. It has been a secret he made me promise never to divulge, that he gave me money to pay off the mortgage. Poor, noble hearted fellow! he had saved the \$2,000 to build a little home, and gave it feely to benefit us all. Month by month I have saved what I could, and have placed the money in a safety deposit box in the City bank, where there is nearly the amount he gave me."

Eunice with difficulty suppressed a great cry of joy. She could scarcely refrain from rushing downstairs and revealing her marvelous discovery to her mother. As she reflected how much this generous donation would mean to them all, in a transport of happy tears she sobbed forth her love for the worthy helpmate who had so well fulfilled his duty to herself and her family.

Eunice was alive with half-subdued excitement all that evening. She waited when they had reached Aunt Mary's until her mother and the others had placed their little gifts in the stocking bearing a card with Randal's name. All alone, she kissed the precious envelope and slipped it into the stocking.

"A necktie, gloves and a pen knife. That from aunt. Something always useful. A letter, no! a card of greeting, no! Why, what does this mean!" spoke Randal Marsh, and read it as they all gathered about the fire place, and then he knew. Unselfish man that he was, he actually blushed like a culprit detected at the revelation of a sleeping secret of years.

"It means that I have the dearest, most noble husband in the world!" cried Eunice, her arms about him, her lips raining kisses. "Oh, my brave one! my true one! And who in the world today deserves the blessings of Christmas more than you!"



**Had the Wrong Car.**  
My husband deals in old and new cars, and I seldom drive the same car twice.  
The other day I drove an old car downtown, and after doing some shopping started for home. I had not gone many blocks when I discovered I was not driving the same car I had when I left home, and immediately turned back. Where I had taken the car I saw an officer talking to a very much excited woman.  
I offered all sorts of explanations, but it was most embarrassing, for the woman whose car I had taken was my next door neighbor, with whom I had not been on speaking terms for six months.—Chicago Tribune.

**Wars of the United States.**  
A stray paragraph on "Wars of the United States" enumerates 19 wars. Ten of these were conflicts with Indian tribes, of which the most important were probably the Black Hawk war and the Seminole war. If these are called wars, an eleventh might be added—the Modoc war of 1873. The important wars on the list are the War of the Revolution, the War of 1812, the Mexican war, the Civil war, the Spanish war, the War with Germany. The minor conflicts included in the list are: the War with France, 1793; the war with Tripoli, 1803; the Philippine war, 1890.—Outlook.

**Sunburn Remedy.**  
One of the best remedies for a coat of sunburn is sweet cream. The cream is healing and not the least bit irritating to the most fiercely burned nose. The prepared "cold creams" are, of course, healing and bleaching, but are very apt to irritate the sensitive member. Before washing the face rub lightly with ordinary sweet table cream, let stand as long as possible, then wash the face with lukewarm water, using no soap. Sunburn is really painful to some persons and sweet cream lessens the hurt.

**Like Topsy.**  
"What's your name?" said the officer to a young colored lad who joined the ship at the cape.  
"Algon Bay, sir."  
"Where were you born?"  
"Wasn't born at all, sir."  
"Wasn't born at all?"  
"No, sir; was washed ashore in a storm."—Everybody's Magazine.

**Have of Education.**  
I am against all education. It makes women conceited and unkind. And it makes men dull and pedantic.—Frederic Harrison in 1904 to Lady Dorothy, Nevill.

**First Woman Painter Decorated.**  
Rosa Bonheur, the famous painter, was the first woman to be decorated with the Belgian order of the Leopold cross.

**Pity the Egotist.**  
The egotist does not take kindly to criticism, yet because of his exalted opinion of himself is overready to criticize. He is blind to his own mistakes and shortcomings, stubbornly persisting in chosen courses of conduct even after they have cost him dear and their folly has been pointed out to him.

<b>Dr. W.H. McBride</b> DENTIST OVER STATE BANK Red Cloud Nebraska	<b>Dr. R.V. Nicholson</b> DENTIST Office Over Albright's Store Red Cloud Nebraska
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**The Christmas Store**  
1920

**BUY "GIFTS THAT LAST"**

THE best gift at Christmas or any other time is the 'Gift That Lasts'--Jewelry. A gift not only ornamental but useful, and a gift that remains to give its owner pleasure for years. You can select no other that will give such long service and pleasure than some article from our stock of the worlds best jewelry. And one of the best things about jewelry is that it sells at nearly former prices, only at a slight increase due the higher wages. Your dollar buys now nearly 100 cents worth when invested in jewelry than in anything else.

<b>FOR MOTHER—</b> A Ring Wrist-Watch Knives and Forks Brooch Cut Glass Casserole Carving Set Water Set Berry Spoon Coffee Percolator Fountain Pen	<b>FOR FATHER—</b> An Emblem Pin A Fountain Pen Belt and Buckle Watch Cuff Links Tie Pin Ring Watch Chain Auto Strop Razor Shaving Mug and Brush Key Chain Manicure Set	<b>FOR DAUGHTER—</b> A Kodak Wrist-Watch La Valliere Brooch Lingerie Clasps Toilet Set Kodak Album Ring Picture Frame Bedroom Clock Fountain Pen Autopoint Pencil	<b>FOR SON—</b> A Watch Cuff Links Tie Pin Tie Clasp Kodak Military Brushes Safety Razor Fountain Pen Ring.	<b>FOR "HER"—</b> A Wrist-Watch La Valliere Kodak Toilet Set Pendant Necklace Brooch Manicure Set Ring Ivory Clock Santoir Locket Cut Glass Vase Chafing Dish	<b>FOR "HIM"—</b> Cuff Links—Monogrammed Watch Charm Ring Safety Razor Cigarette Case Belt and Buckle Tie Pin Watch Kodak Photo Frame Military Brushes Watch Chain
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