

# Georgie's Christmas Gift

It Was Sent by the Governor of the State.

By EILEEN BRENNAN

"Mamma, isn't papa coming home for Christmas this year?"

"No, dear, papa can't come home for Christmas. We'll have to wait another year."

"Oh, mamma, that's what you said last year, the year before and every year! I don't believe he will ever come."

The mother kissed her little girl and turned away to hide her tears. She had but faint hope that her husband would return to her for a number of years, and when he did he would be broken in spirit if not in health.

Evan Walker had been a bookkeeper in a bank. One day the cashier went to the president and informed him that a shortage of over \$40,000 had been discovered in the funds. Asked if he suspected any one of a defalcation the cashier replied that he did not, but he was going over the books in which the shortage had been carried with a view to discovering the cause. Walker had done the bookkeeping which covered the case, but Walker was above suspicion.

A week later Vail, the cashier, informed the president that he had had an expert accountant at work on the books, had traced the deficiency back several years and had learned just how it had been covered up. Since no one but Walker had had anything to do with the work in question it was impossible that any one else could have committed the embezzlement.

Walker was accused. There was a long drawn out trial, at the end of which half the jury believed him guilty and the other half were in doubt. A compromise was effected. They agreed to find a verdict of guilty and recommend mercy. The judge reduced the sentence from the limit of twenty to ten years.

Walker was innocent of the charge, and there was not sufficient evidence of his guilt to convict him. But there was a weak spot in his case that he had speculated in stocks and had lost some money. On this evidence, together with the fact that he had had exclusive care of the bank's books, the compromise verdict was reached.

When the husband and father was removed to the penitentiary his children were told that he was going on a journey from which he would not return for a long while. This fabrication their mother was obliged to keep up, dreading the time when they would grow to an age when it would be impossible to keep their father's disgrace from them longer.

The Christmas season was the most trying period of all for her. The children always reminded her that she had promised them their father should be with them, and she had wearied of inventing excuses for not fulfilling her promise. On this occasion when her child had reminded her of the promise made the year before she gave up trying to frame an excuse.

A few days later Mrs. Walker took up a newspaper, and her eyes lit on an announcement. Rushing from the room, she ran to her children, folded them in her arms and covered them with kisses.

"What is it, mamma?"  
"Papa is coming home."  
"When?"  
"I don't know."  
"For Christmas?"  
"Possibly. He may come for Christmas, though he may not get here by that time. But he will come, and he will not come broken in spirit, but holding his head high."

"Why, mamma, what can you mean?"  
"I forgot myself. I am so happy that I don't know what I am saying. Oh, my darlings, you don't know what a good thing has happened!"

The mother tore herself away from her children, realizing that she had said too much and dreading lest she should say more. When she had read again and again what she had seen in the newspapers and given herself time to regain something of her composure—her sadness had disappeared—she returned to her children and, folding the three of them in her arms, said:

"We know that papa is coming home, though we don't know that he will come for Christmas. Nevertheless we must make our preparations. Each one of us must have a gift for papa, and we must have a nice dinner and holly and evergreen wreaths and everything that will give us a merry Christmas."

"But, mamma," said Georgie, "suppose papa doesn't come on time?"

A slight shadow passed over the mother's face, but she overcame the feeling that produced it.

"In that case, Georgie, we will defer our Christmas till papa comes."

"And not have any Christmas at all on Christmas," put in the youngest, "not hang up any stockings? What will Santa Claus think when he comes and finds no stockings ready for him?"

"Well, sweetheart, we'll have to do the best we can. We'll have two Christmases—one on Christmas day, the other when papa comes."

This did not please the children at all, and they agreed that their mother must write papa that he must be sure

to come by Christmas without fail, for if he did not Christmas would be all spoiled.

That same afternoon Mrs. Walker appeared in the office of Hawkins & Spencer, attorneys, and was admitted to Mr. Spencer's private office.

"You have seen a notice of Vail's arrest, Mr. Spencer?"

"I have, and I congratulate you most heartily."

"This will free my husband, I suppose?"

"Most assuredly."

"When?"

"That I can't say. Vail has been arrested for embezzlement. This in time will undoubtedly prove that he and not your husband was guilty of that other stealing which he managed to fix on your husband. If he can be induced to confess to that we can get a pardon from the governor."

Mrs. Walker looked disappointed.

"I will see Vail," continued the lawyer, "and learn what may be expected from him. Since I defended your husband I may have some weight in the matter by promising to use my influence in making Vail's sentence as light as possible."

Mrs. Walker left him and the next day received a telephone message from him that the cashier had confessed that he was guilty of both deficiencies and would so plead. He had carried the losses in the accounts by going to the bank in the night and "doctoring" the books.

It now rested with the governor of the state to pardon Walker, which was the only way his release could be effected. An application was at once made to that effect, and the head of the commonwealth promised to look into the matter. He consulted the state attorney, who also agreed to look into the matter. But the state attorney had a great many cases to look into and must take them up in turn.

Meanwhile the Walker family were making preparations for a Christmas celebration to be finer than any Christmas they had ever spent. The gifts for papa occasioned the most consideration, for there were few articles that would please him. However, with the mother's assistance the list was completed, and every child had something to offer the returned father.

But Christmas was drawing near, and there were no signs of action on the part of the governor in the matter of the pardon. Mrs. Walker made frequent applications to Mr. Spencer, who did what he could to hasten the matter, but was unable to get any satisfaction as to the date the pardon would be granted.

One day Spencer called on Mrs. Walker to report progress. Georgie was in an adjoining room, unknown to his mother, and heard Spencer tell her mother that he had been to the state capital and seen Governor Brown, who had told him that it would be impossible that Walker should be released before Christmas because there was not time to remove the legal obstacles in the way.

The overhearing of this statement quite broke Georgie's heart. He was naturally a reticent little chap and said nothing to his brothers and sisters about their father not being at home for Christmas, but his little brain was active. He had heard of children writing letters for gifts. Why should he not write to this Governor Brown to let his papa come home in time for Christmas? So he sat down and wrote as follows:

Dear Govner Brown—We expect to have a bully Crismas, but we can't unless papa comes home to spend it with us. I wish you woud give him to me for a Crismas present. I would thank you ever so much. Yours truly,  
GEORGE WALKER.

Georgie addressed his letter, "Governor Brown, the Capital," which practically was as good an address as could have been used. Georgie didn't know where the capital was, but the post-office officials did, and they also knew all about Governor Brown. On the morning of the governor's receipt of the letter he telephoned the state attorney for information as to Evan Walker. The reply came that it could not be taken up before "next week."

"I have a letter," replied the governor, "from Walker's little boy, asking me to let his father come home for Christmas. This one gift I propose to make this year, and if you ever expect another favor from me you'll have to remove all legal obstacles in the way of my doing so."

"All right, governor," was the reply. "I'll attend to the matter immediately."

The state attorney got busy at once, for politically he was nothing without the governor, and in very quick time he presented to the governor papers that enabled him to issue a pardon to Evan Walker which enabled the warden of the penitentiary to set him free.

On the afternoon of the day before Christmas Mrs. Walker was at the penitentiary to accompany her husband to his home. Walker's vindication, taken with his freedom, was a cause of exquisite relief and happiness both for him and his wife. As for the children, they only knew that after a long, long absence they had their father with them for Christmas.

The parents were received with shouts of merriment by the children, who climbed all over their father. The first gift bestowed on that happy Christmas was a silver watch sent through his mother to Georgie as his "other" Christmas gift from the governor.

So passed the first really merry Christmas the family had spent and the first they had spent together in a number of years. And it was the dawn of a new era in their lives. So great was the sympathy for Evan Walker that he was restored to his position and advanced rapidly as some atonement for the injustice that had been done him.

## Echoes Made to Order.

Are you aware that it is possible to make echoes? It is, indeed, easier to make than to destroy them.

In the past men built their great temples and cathedrals with no thought of echoes. Hence, when the preacher preached echoes rolled freely amid the groinings of the roof, down the rows of sculptured columns and round and round the nave.

With wires strung here and with tapestries spread there many of the echoes of the old world buildings have been obliterated. There are echo experts—builders acquainted with the science of acoustics, whose specialty is echoes' destruction. Sometimes their tools are hard.

Today an architect takes thought of the echo. His building is constructed so as to exclude this intruder. And, knowing how to exclude it, he knows how to welcome it also.

Architects are frequently called upon in landscape work to put up summer houses and arrange rocks around them so as to create an echo there. And this they can satisfactorily do.—London Tit-Bits.

## An Engine That Wouldn't Down.

A light American automobile was sold to a tea planter of upper Assam, a region in the Himalayan foothills with scarcely any good roads and a rainfall of from 300 to 500 inches a year. Six months after it was purchased the planter's native chauffeur drove it into a washout on the Cherapung road during a freshet, and it went rolling 500 feet into the rain swollen river. A week's search failed to reveal any trace of machine or driver. At the end of the rainy season the remains of the machine were found several miles below the point where the accident had occurred. The wheels were gone and the body battered almost beyond recognition, and it was only on the score of sentiment that the planter had the pieces gathered up and taken home by coolies. A month later while on a tour of Assam I saw the salvaged engine and part of the transmission gear set up over a well and actually pumping water to the planter's bungalow on the top of a high ridge.—World's Work.

Have you seen the "KOMEKEL, RUSS" at C. M. Newton's. Price 25c.

## The Man or the Gun?

The man rather than the gun is a nation's military asset, asserts G. Wells, whose essay on "The Common Sense of Warfare" is included in his book, "Social Forces in England and America." "Every penny," he says, "we divert from national wealth making to national weapons means so much less in resources, so much more strain in the years ahead. But a great system of laboratories and experimental stations, a systematic industrial increase of men of the officer-aviator type, of the research student type, of the engineer type, of the naval officer type, a methodical development of a common sentiment and a common zeal among such a body of men, is an added strength that grows greater from the moment you call it into being."

## The Hunter and the Wind.

In hunting against the wind in open forests more game is passed than many hunters would suppose. The animals see the man, note that he will pass them and hide by getting as near to the ground as possible. If they see him after he has passed they evidently realize that the danger is over, though some, mostly the younger, inexperienced animals, then sneak off. Where game is very wild it is often in such localities as I have mentioned only possible to approach them with the wind by outflanking the latter because a big game animal at rest depends on its nose to save it from danger in the direction from which the wind comes and on its eyes to watch the side from which it can get no other warning.—"Track and Tracking," by Josef Remmer.

## Feasted on Candies.

Russian soldiers, according to the author of "Eat, Drink and Be Merry," esteem tallow candies a great luxury. He facetiously describes how they came across a huge store of them among the French baggage on the retreat from Moscow and summarily snuffed them out of existence. "Never were they consumed in such a style before. The enraptured warriors drew them across their mouths—like a bow across a fiddle—and left only the bare wicks as a proof of how easily their coverings, so necessary for lights, can be readily utilized for fivers."

## Under the Green Light.

Cube sugar and ivory piano keys are inspected under the ghastly greenish rays of mercury vapor lamps with greater speed and accuracy than can be attained in ordinary daylight. Any impurity in sugar manifests itself by changing the white to a shade of yellow. To detect hepatitis, plates of the crystallized sugar one inch thick are examined by a man looking through them toward a mercury vapor lamp of the kind which is a familiar adjunct of the galleries of posterized photographers. When thus viewed, according to the Electrical World, the yellow impurities stand out clearly in the bluish green light. The color of ivory varies from the outside to the center of the tusk to such an extent that manufacturers sort the pieces into sixteen different shades. Formerly this sorting could be done only in bright daylight, but with the light of the mercury vapor lamp grading can be done without limitation at any hour of the twenty-four.

## A Military Secret.

The piebe, sitting on the monument beside the first class man, looked across the river from West Point to Constitution island. The piebe was inquisitive. He wanted to know what the government intended to use Constitution island for. The first class man coughed discreetly, blushed and looked around him carefully for eavesdroppers.

"It isn't generally known," he said, "but you're a cadet now. If the signal corps experiments go through successfully they'll use it as an aviary." His voice dropped mysteriously.

"For birds, eh?" said the piebe. "Carrier pigeons?"

"Not exactly," answered the knowing one. "They'll be pigeons, as they call 'em—cross between a carrier pigeon and a parrot—to carry verbal messages, you know. Don't tell."

And the piebe didn't.—New York Post.

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## Sheriff's Sale

By virtue of an order of sale issued from the District Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, upon a decree of foreclosure rendered in said Court wherein Ruben W. Risberg is plaintiff, and Albert F. Larson et al are defendants, and to me directed, I will on the 18th day of January, 1915, at 2 o'clock, p. m., at the east front door of the court house in North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, sell at Public Auction to the highest bidder for cash to satisfy said decree, interest and costs, the following described property to-wit:

South-east quarter (SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ) Section Seven (7) Township Ten (10) North of Range Thirty-two (32) Lincoln County, Nebraska.

Dated North Platte, Nebraska, December 14 1914.  
A. J. SALISBURY, Sheriff.

# Barney Oldfield Breaks World's Non-Stop Road Race Record in a Maxwell

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