

Christmas for Two by Clarissa Mackie



The crowded east-bound train disgorged two passengers at the little red station and then thundered on its busy way.

A long stage, rusty and ramshackle, backed up to the platform and the driver's lusty "All aboard!" brought the girl and the young man hurrying into its dismal depths.

"I s'pose you're for Ferguson's place," remarked the driver as he turned the horses skillfully in the narrow space.

"Yes," said the man rather gruffly. "I thought there would be a carriage to meet us."

"So there has—so there has! Been prancin' around her for two or three hours, but I guess they got disgusted, anyways, they left word for me to stay here till the train came in and if anyone was bound for their place to bring 'em along. The train's four hours late as it is, and I don't suppose them servants want to be kept away from their Christmas dinner."

"How long will it take us?" asked the girl.

"A matter of an hour or so," was the unconcerned reply.

The girl uttered an exclamation of annoyance and she drew still farther away from the vicinity of the morose young man. The latter turned up the astrakhan collar of his overcoat and dropped his chin into its depths.

They had started forth that morning so joyfully—Polly Standish and Derrick Gordon—newly engaged and blissfully happy. Things had gone wrong from the very beginning. Polly's aunt, who was to accompany them, for the short stay at Ferguson's hospitable country house, had failed to put in an appearance, and consequently had been left behind. That was vexatious. Then the train had been delayed by snow drifts and during the four hours' wait in the cold train Polly and Derrick had quarreled.

"Nice Christmas day," volunteered the stage driver in his queer, cracked voice, as they squeaked over the hard-packed snow.

"Very!" returned Derrick, sarcastically.

There was a long silence as the strong white horses plodded up the steep incline of the mountain. Here the snowfall had been light and only served to dust the dark green pines and hemlocks with a white powder.

They had reached the top of a steep incline and were rolling evenly over a level stretch when suddenly, without an instant's warning, the stage crashed down and precipitated the passengers and luggage in an ignominious heap under the driver's seat.

"Are you hurt?" asked Derrick coldly, as he assisted Polly to her feet.

"No, thank you," she said stiffly, as she peered out from the curtained window.

The driver was soothing the frightened horses and his nut-cracker face was knotted anxiously.

"Lost a wheel, by gorry!" he said ruefully. "Smashed it to flinders!"

Derrick had crawled out and stood beside him.

"What is the dickens of a mess—how can you get to Ferguson's place? Are you lost or where are we?"

"Lost?" repeated the driver, his ear thrusting out a short road across—told the usual route to Ferguson's and we ain't near nobody! Ten miles from anywhere. The only thing to do is for me to ride one of the horses into the village and send back another wagon. You and the young lady better get out and move about a bit and keep warm. You might build a fire—there's plenty of fuel." He was unharassing the horses as he spoke.

"Why can't we all ride—or better still, Miss Standish can ride one of them and I will walk beside her. We will get there much quicker and can keep warm and have something to eat. We're almost starved." Derrick glanced quickly at the stage where Polly's pale face was framed in the darkened opening.

"Can't nobody ride Bob-white. A jumpin' kangaroo ain't nothin' to that horse if anybody gits on his back! Just you stay here and make yourselves comfortable and warm and I'll be back in the course of an hour or so." He tethered the ferocious Bob-white to a tree by the roadside. Then from the space under his seat in the stage he drew forth a basket covered with a white cloth.

"This here basket has got a Christmas dinner inside—my wife fixed it up for old Miss Benton down to the ford but I can stop and get another basketful for the old lady. You two are welcome to it." He clambered on to the waiting horse and smiled as his horny hand closed around the generous basket-note that Derrick slipped from his pocket.

"Merry Christmas to you and your wife, sir," he called back over his shoulder before he disappeared around a turn in the road.

Derrick did not dare to look at Polly

Standish; he knew she was sitting proud and defiant with a contemptuous curl on her red lip. Instead, he stared away through the aisles of trees, made into golden paths by the later afternoon sun.

It was too bad that Christmas should have turned out so disastrously for them both. There was to be a jolly party at the Fergusons and in the evening a Christmas dance. Perhaps Ralph Ferguson would send forth another conveyance for them—but it would go by that other road. They were marooned on the short cut.

A glimpse of Polly's woeful face brought a revulsion of feeling. Poor little Polly was cold and tired and he was acting like a brute.

Without a word Derrick approached a small clearing in the middle of which grew a young pine tree.

It was the work of minutes to gather an armful of wood and broken branches and to clear a space of snow. Presently a bright fire crackled cheerily and then Derrick brought cushions and blankets from the stage and prepared a place for Polly.

"Come, Miss Standish," he said politely. "If you will draw near the fire we will have some dinner."

"I'm not hungry," said Polly, holding her hands to the blaze.

"At least you will sit down and wrap this blanket around you—so," insisted Derrick.

"Thank you," said Polly without enthusiasm.

From the blanket Derrick produced a large plate loaded with a generous Christmas dinner. There were turkey and cranberry sauce, stuffing and mashed potatoes and gravy, turnips and celery, and a whole mince pie.

Derrick managed to convey half of the dinner more or less daintily to the pie plate and this he placed before Polly. "Eat," he said sternly. "You will need the nourishment before we reach Ferguson's."

"I am not a child," said Polly resentfully.

Derrick did not reply. He fell to his own dinner with a vigorous appetite and it was not until he turned to give



"This is our Christmas tree, Polly dear," said Derrick, in a low tone.

Polly some mince pie that he discovered that the weary girl had eaten a little of the dinner and then fallen asleep in her nest of blankets.

For a long time he watched the changing lights on her sweet face as the branches tossed in the wind; then, softly he arose and approached the little pine tree standing in the middle of the clearing.

The cones were silvered with snow and it looked like a Christmas tree decorated for a festival.

Derrick opened his suit case and brought out sundry white packages. These he tied to the tree with colored cord. Gay toys for the Ferguson children were added until the little tree stood forth bravely in its fine attire.

"Polly!" he called softly. "Polly!"

Polly sat up with startled eyes seeking his face. For the instant she had forgotten their misunderstanding, but suddenly their light clouded.

"Come here, Polly, and see our Christmas tree," urged Derrick.

Reluctantly she came, a rose flush straining her pale cheeks. But yet her red lips were obstinately set in a straight line.

"This is our Christmas tree, Polly dear," said Derrick in a low tone. "Yours and mine! Shall we be happy and enjoy not only this one, but many, many others after, please God? Say, dear."

"Oh, Derrick, how wicked of us to quarrel when we should be happy! I am so sorry!" sobbed Polly in Derrick's coat sleeve.

"And so am I—and now I'm glad," said Derrick after a time. "Now, let's enjoy our own particular tree before anyone comes! I shall be Santa Claus—and you may be Mrs. Santa Claus!"

"I have things in my bag, too," blushed Polly as she hastened away.

An hour afterward Ralph Ferguson brought a sleighload of merry-makers in search of them. Together they sat demurely on a log before a dying fire. Near by stood a little pine tree, powdered with snow, and dripping with hanging cones.

"You're just in time for the biggest Christmas tree you ever saw," said Ralph as he gathered up the lines and clucked to the horses.

"We've had our Christmas tree," said Derrick mysteriously, while Polly smiled back at him out of happy eyes.

(Copyright, 1916.)

The Real Culprit

☆☆☆
A mistletoe berry
Had caught in her hair!
She wasn't to blame,
She had not put it there,
That mistletoe berry
A-tilt in her hair.

Lips red as a cherry,
It hardly was fair,—
Yet he wasn't to blame,
For it's clear that the same
Was the fault of the berry
That caught in her hair.

THE CALL OF CHRISTMAS

Inspiration of Time Should Bring Us
Deeper Sense of Personal Responsibility.

It is Christmas time, and at this moment the call is to lift up our hearts and welcome the Light of the World, to rest for a while in the glory of that light; not, indeed, forgetting the lessons he would have us learn, nor those great servants of his who taught us to know and love and work, and have passed away; but in thankfulness and adoration seeking to learn more and more how he would have us serve him. The inspiration of this blessed time should bring us a deeper sense of personal responsibility, and of our duty to our neighbor in regard to questions touching the general welfare; and, beyond all, a deeper faith—that faith by which mountains can be removed—and a truer love, a devotion that can bear even the reproach of the cross, if permission may be granted to share in bearing a part of that burden.

The advent of Christ makes us debtors to God and man. It is therefore not for us to question whether others are kind to us, as whether there is love, gentleness, meekness, sympathy and helpfulness in our own lives, or not. With this spirit of the season reflected and perpetuated in the life, Christmas giving will resolve itself into Christ-like giving every day from Christmastide to Christmastide of every year of grace. Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, to suffer, and to die for others, even his enemies. Rising far above the lower aim of getting and gaining solely for self, the grateful heart will ask: "What can I give to my Redeemer who gave himself for me, and what can I do for others, for his sake, and the gospel's?" That is the reincarnation of the Christ spirit, and exalts him who said: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

THE GOOD TIME COMING

Christmas an Earnest of Better Day
When War and Devastation
Shall Cease.

Christmas is an earnest of that better day when the awful waste of war, the devastation of preventable disease and the burdens of poverty which so shame our overabundance shall die out like some evil dream of an ignorant past. Then, indeed, there will be no trace of mockery in the resounding professions of good will; the poet's forecast will take form in that realized state "wherein no lives are seen huddled in lanes unseen," but where a righteous plenty spreads itself far and wide:

"Tis where the home is pure,
"Tis where the bread is sure,
"Tis where the wants are fewer
And each want fed:
Where plenty and peace abide,
Where health dwells heavenly-eyed,
Where in nooks beautiful
Slumber the dead."

Important.



Millionaire (to his daughter—"Tell me, child—that young man who wants to marry you this Christmas, has he got any money?
Miss Innocence—Money, father? Why, he has just given me a cluster diamond ring studded with pearls!
Millionaire—Yes, I know. Has he any money left?

Christmas Omens.

Happy and prosperous will be the babe born at Christmas; long-lived and happy the bride that is married then; and it is very lucky for Christmas to fall on a Monday. It is good to give gifts of many kinds at this season; but let no housewife, be she the most free-handed woman in the world, throw or give away ashes or salt before breakfast on Christmas morning. A bright Christmas means a bright New Year, and may this Christmas be of brightest omen!

A 25 cent reduction
on every pair of shoes
at the Home Shoe
Store Christmas week
as a Christmas present
for you.

THE HOME SHOE STORE

A pair of Baby Shoes
will be given as a
Christmas present to
every baby under one
year of age that will
come in with its par-
ents to do shoe pur-
chasing Xmas week.

Christmas Present at the Home Shoe Store

Christmas is coming and so is New Years. Everybody will be coming in for calendars, but this is my first Christmas in the shoe business and having enjoyed a good trade since the opening of my shoe store I concluded to give to my customers a little more than a calendar. Rather than to invest my money in calendars I'm going to give you a 25 cent reduction on every pair of shoes all Christmas week as a Christmas present. That gives you a chance to buy shoes as Christmas presents for your best friends.

SANTA SAYS, SHOES. You make "grown-ups" happier by giving them something that sometimes they would have to buy themselves and you could not give them anything more pleasing than a handsome pair of shoes, especially if they bare the Home Shoe Store trade mark on the box for they will know that you have been thoughtful enough to give them the best. Come in Christmas week and let us show you a splendid line of shoes.

I wish you A Merry Christmas all,
Who bought shoes of us in Spring and Fall,
And those that did not buy,
I want you to come and try,
And you will find that I don't lie,
As in quality and low prices we're not shy.
You get shoes for your money more,
If you buy at the Home Shoe Store,
As we give the benefit to you all,
Thanking you for the past,
From God you should be blessed,
And for the future I am inviting you
Not to forget me when buying shoes you do.

Wishing you a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year, and don't forget

The Home Shoe Store

1618 Stone Street

J. LANSKY, Prop.

C. A. HECK

Buy Watertown, Wisconsin Rye Flour, Gold Coin Flour. Get some Tankage for your hogs.

I also have Oil Meal, Rock Salt, Barrel and Sack Salt. Give me your order for

COAL AND WOOD

I also handle Feed, Baled Hay and Straw and all kinds of Grain. Give me a trial.

C. A. HECK

Speaking of the Divorce Evil

Trying to succeed in business without advertising is like the case of the man who, trying to cut expenses, divorced his wife and alone attempted to keep house and raise his children. It cost him more money for doctor bills and funeral expenses in a year than he gave his wife in a lifetime.

When advertising is divorced, business success becomes failure.

This paper is building your neighbor's business. He has reasons. He tried advertising and it helped him. It is not an experiment—this paper brings results. Good, hard, convincing results—dollars.

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Report of the Condition

of the

Falls City State Bank

of Falls City, Nebraska.

Charter No. 159, incorporated in the State of Nebraska, at the close of business, Nov. 10, 1916.

RESOURCES.

Loans and Discounts	\$153,911.73
Overdrafts, secured and unsecured	915.93
Banking house furniture and fixtures	13,200.00
Current expenses and taxes paid	4,124.33
Due from nat'l, state and private banks and bankers	\$14,201.82
Checks and items of exchange	1,313.83
Currency	6,488.00
Gold Coins	5,500.00
Silver, nickels and cents	1,714.80
Total	201,470.44

LIABILITIES.

Capital stock paid in	\$ 50,000.00
Surplus fund	10,000.00
Undivided profits	11,790.72
Individual deposits subject to check	\$89,096.53
Demand certificates of deposit	36,011.13
Certified checks	550.00
Due to nat'l, state and private banks and bankers	3,422.06
Total	201,470.44

STATE OF NEBRASKA,)
County of Richardson,) ss.

I, W. A. Greenwald, cashier of the above named bank, do hereby swear that the above statement is a correct and true copy of the report made to the State Banking Board.

W. A. GREENWALD, Cashier.

ATTEST:
GUY P. GREENWALD, Director.
T. J. GIST, Director.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 19th day of Nov. 1916.

JOHN W. POWELL,
Notary Public,
My commission expires November 24, 1915.



Ladies' Suede and Velvet Shoes

H. M. Jenne Shoe Store

When your feet are wet and cold, and your body chilled through and through from exposure, take a big dose of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy bathe your feet in hot water before going to bed, and you are almost certain to ward off a severe cold. For sale by all dealers.