

A CHRISTMAS CONSPIRACY

How Grandmother's Heart Was Gladdened by Remembrances From the Children.

"Grandmother Jessup!" Stella's tone was distinctly accusing; it was evident that grandmother had something to answer for. Grandmother, from her invalid chair, looked across at the girl who stood at her bureau drawer. She had endured years of pain and weakness; but they had not succeeded in quenching the spirit in the frail figure; her voice was as saucy as a girl's. "Not guilty—what is it?" "It's your handkerchiefs. How many dozen have you?" "Seven or eight. You see, I have seven of the dearest grandchildren in the world. It's queer, isn't it, that your nose should be so especially honored when you grow old?" But Stella's gray eyes forgot to laugh back at grandmother's. Something had disconcerted her. She put the handkerchiefs back, made some trivial excuse, and ran up to her own room, where her sister and cousins were holding a Christmas conclave. "I wonder," she burst out, "that grandmother can endure Christmas at all!" "What under the sun do you mean?" Corinne and Isabella exclaimed together. "Corinne, what did you give grandmother for Christmas last year?" "A box of handkerchiefs. Why?" "And you, Isabella?" "An embroidered handkerchief with little weeny initials." "Mollie?" "Two handkerchiefs," Mollie confessed. "There didn't seem to be anything else—except slumber slippers, and Aunt Maria always knits those." "And Laurie and I gave her handkerchiefs—because she's old, and they're the easiest thing to think of! Girls—she isn't old—she's as young as any of us down in her heart, and she loves pretty things just as much as ever. This year let's give her the biggest surprise of her life—a Christmas that will make her really happy." "But how—what—" Corinne stammered. "What do we like best—each of us?" "Jewels!" "Books!" "Hand embroidered!" "Candy!" "Silk stockings!" The answers came in a laughing shower. "Well, then, why not? Grandmother'd love a bit of jewelry from us—chosen just for her. And books—not 'T. L. Lights of Cheer,' as if she were melancholy, but love stories that end well. And why not embroider her something? And if not silk stockings, then a pair of slippers with tiny velvet bows. As for candy, she'd love to have it to pass round, even if she couldn't eat much herself!" "And let Bob and Archie send her their absurd jokes as they do to the rest of us? It doesn't seem—respectful." "But grandma doesn't want to be seemed-respectful," Stella declared. "She'd just love to be counted in with the rest of us, little vanities and jokes and all. O girls, try it once and see!" And that was the way the Christmas conspiracy started. Grandmother's eyes on Christmas morning were proof of its success.—Youths' Companion.

SAID LITTLE SOCRATES.



"Some generous person," said little Socrates Bulginbrow, of Boston, "has been kind enough to send me a copy of Mother Goose's lyrics for Christmas. Do you know, the theory that a representative of the bovine genus at one time leaped over the chief luminary of the night leads to some interesting calculations as to the muscular development of the cows of that time. I have ascertained that they must have been endowed with strength proportionate to that of the flea of the present day."

SEASONABLE PRICES.

Now doth the Christmas shopper With happiness elate, Buy something that was forty-nine, Marked up to ninety-eight.

A Vagrant Christmas Gift

By ALBERT EDWARD CONVERSE

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M R. and Mrs. Jackson Smith understood each other perfectly on the Christmas present proposition. This satisfactory state of affairs did not come about the first year of their wedded life, nor even the second. The third Christmas was almost a hand before Mr. Smith discovered accidentally, but to his intense joy, that Mrs. Smith relished his selection of furs, gloves, curtains, rugs, and so on, no more than did he her choice of smoking-jackets, cravats, mufflers, et cetera.

That their friends could not be taken in on the combination was, however, a thorn in the flesh of each of them. "The worst has happened," said Mrs. Smith, interrupting Mr. Smith's perusal of the paper Christmas morning. "A messenger just brought a present from the Snivelys, and I forgot to put them on my list. It's a book and we've got to send them something."

"Well, what are we going to do about the Snivelys?" growled Mr. Smith. "Jack," said she in a moment, "I've had an inspiration. Why couldn't we send the Snivelys the book that Cousin Lucy sent us? Neither of them will ever know it."

"By George! We'll do it," said Mr. Smith, after considering the proposition. "Where is Cousin Lucy's book?" "It's on the desk," said Mrs. Smith. "Just put our cards in the book and wrap it up neatly. I'll call a messenger boy."

Half an hour later Mr. Smith handed a package, addressed to Mr. Snively, to a messenger boy and saw him depart with it. He was luxuriously stretched out on a davenport when Mrs. Smith came into the room a few minutes later. "Jack," said Mrs. Smith, holding a book in her hand, "I thought you were going to wrap this book up."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Mr. Smith, jumping to his feet. "I did wrap up some book. The messenger has already been here and I gave it to him."

"How long has the boy been gone?" demanded Mrs. Smith. "About ten minutes." "Get your things on. Be quick, and maybe you can reach the Snivelys before the boy and get that dreadful book away from him! How could you have been so careless?"

"Mrs. Smith was almost frantic. Down to the nearest street car rode Mr. Smith, fairly consumed with rage. He had arrived at the downtown district when, with a thrill of joy, he spied the messenger boy. Without waiting for the car to stop, Mr. Smith jumped off and started on a run for the boy.

At the same moment the messenger boy saw him, and, without knowing why he was being pursued, he obeyed his first impulse and ran too. In a moment a dozen had joined in the chase. Down the street came the poor messenger boy, frantically straining every muscle to get away from the mob pursuing him. Suddenly two men from a cross street ran in front of the boy. One threw his arms around the fugitive, holding his fast; the other man seized the package the boy was carrying.

"Why, Snively! This package is addressed to you!" he exclaimed. "Why, so it!" said the man who had caught the boy. In a moment they were surrounded by a crowd. A policeman rushed up and took charge of the boy.

"Hold on there, officer, the boy's all right!" cried Mr. Smith, who had arrived upon the scene by this time. "What do you know about this affair?" said the policeman respectfully, as he recognized Mr. Smith. But Mr. Smith was standing as one lazed. He had caught sight of Mr. Snively with the book under his arm.

"Hello, Smith," said Mr. Snively. "I just now caught this boy, and found him carrying a package addressed to me, so took charge of it. Do you know anything about it?" "Why—why—er—yes," stammered Mr. Smith, trying to collect his wits. "You see, I sent the package." "Well, why were you chasing the boy?" asked the policeman, a little impatiently. The perspiration stood out on poor Mr. Smith's forehead. "I—I was afraid I hadn't given the boy the right address, and was trying to stop him to find out," he blurted in desperation. The policeman looked at Mr. Smith curiously. He was convinced that he was lying, though with what object he could not imagine. "The package has come to the right fellow anyway," said Snively, laughing. "I'm going right home, so I'll take it along with me." "Oh, I couldn't think of allowing you to do that, old man!" cried Mr. Smith. "Just give it back to the boy; he'll take it to the house for you."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Snively. "It's a light package and I don't mind carrying it a particle." Mr. Smith ground his teeth with rage. How was he to get that book away from Snively?

"Snively," said he, my office is only a few doors down the street. Come up and smoke a cigar with me. I've got some good ones." A few minutes later Mr. Smith ushered Mr. Snively into his office.

"Sit down here, Snively," said he, offering his guest a chair. "Let me have your package; I'll put it over here on my desk." He took the book eagerly and put it on his desk out of sight. As he smoked and talked, he racked his brain for a scheme to get Snively out of the room without his book.

"Good morning, gentlemen. Merry Christmas." It was Smith's partner, Perkins, who thus addressed them as he came out of his private office. Suddenly a brilliant scheme took shape in his mind. He proceeded immediately to put it into execution.

"By the way, Perkins, I have a Christmas present for you." As he spoke, he picked up Snively's package and, holding it so that Snively could not see it, walked over the Perkins and handed it to him.

"But—but—" Perkins protested. "Take it and keep your mouth shut, or I'll choke you!" whispered Smith fiercely. "Oh, thank you very much," said the astonished Perkins. "Well, I must be getting home. Good morning."

After talking a few moments longer, Snively rose to go. "Can I trouble you for my package, now?" he said. "Oh, yes," said Smith, going to his desk and searching first calmly and then with apparent annoyance.

"By George! It isn't here," he announced in a surprised tone. Suddenly he sat down and began laughing uproariously. "Do you know what I've done?" he said as soon as he had his mirth somewhat under control. "I gave Perkins your package. I forgot that I took his present home last night, and my wife sent it over this morning with a present for Mr. Perkins."

"Oh, that's all right," said Snively, laughing. "It doesn't make a particle of difference." They parted, laughing good-naturedly over the blunder. Smith arrived home soon after, congratulating himself on his generalship.

"Oh, Jack," cried Mrs. Smith, as soon as he stepped into the house, "I hope you haven't had any trouble!" "Well, I've had just about the most strenuous time I've experienced in many moons," said Smith. "I came out all right though."

"I'm so sorry," said Mrs. Smith. "Now I hope you won't be angry, Jack, but you hadn't been gone but a few moments when I discovered that you hadn't sent Mrs. Snively's book, after all. I found her book lying on the floor by the center-table, where, in some way, it had been knocked off. The only book that is missing is the one that Mr. and Mrs. Perkins sent us, so that must have been the one that you sent to the Snivelys."

Mr. Smith collapsed into the nearest chair. "Ding-a-ling-a-ling," went the telephone. Mr. Smith, still in a dazed condition, rose and answered it. "Hello, is that you, Smith?" said a voice. "This is Perkins."

Smith braced himself for the worst. "I didn't quite understand about that present you gave me down at the office. When I got home I found that it had Snively's name on it."

"Oh." "I thought there must be some mistake about it, so I didn't open it." "You say you didn't open it?" "No." "Thank Heaven!" "What do you say?" "I said that you did right. It was just a little joke on Snively."

"Is that so? Well, I'll bring the package down to the office with me in the morning." "Thank you. Good-by." "Thank heaven," said Smith as he hung up the receiver and once more settled himself in comfort. "Christmas comes but once a year!"

LITTLE 'RASTUS ON SANTA CLAUS WILBUR D. NESBIT

Mah mammy say dat Sandy Claus come Ter good 'n' boys, En bring er 'ho'n en er big red drum, En yuther toys, En why white chilluns gets dem new I caln' on'stan' I guess I knows what Sandy Claus do— He see'n han' man!



Las' yeah he clomb down ouah stovepipe W'enst I's ersleep, En fetch some oynages—but half ripe— En 't'he toy sheep, En one dese jomp' jacks—broken, dough— But den, my lan'! 'Bout dishyere Sandy Claus—I des know He see'n han' man!



I as' my mammy ef Sandy Claus ain' Done know des how Ter men' dem toys, en' fix dey paint, En she say: 'Now, Don' worry, chile, 'bout de white folks, 'cause Hit's de good Lawd's plan.' So I guess dat mah Mistah Sandy Claus— He see'n han' man!

REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE DAY

Puritans of England Made Christmas Illegal and Declared It a Misdemeanor to Be Gay.

English Puritans of the seventeenth century guarded against looking upon the rosy side of life. Because Christmas is really a survival of the Celts' Yule, and is not the actual anniversary of the birth of Christ, they refused to countenance Christmas festivities. Not only did they refuse to recognize the day, but they made laws to that effect.

The parliament of 1644 passed an act ordering all law abiding citizens to observe December 25 as a solemn fast, to be spent in silent atonement for previous Christmas days that had passed in riotous living and merry-making.

Naturally the community did not share in these hard and fast rules, and many a turkey was surreptitiously killed, and many a plum pudding quietly boiled. But, worse betide the unfortunate offender against the act were he luckless enough to be discovered.

Soldiers were sent to search the houses of those suspected of harboring such delicacies as mince pies, etc., and many were the pitched battles between disagreeing sections of the public.

UNDER THE MISTLETOE

To ask a girl if you may kiss her before doing it is an insulting way of laying all the responsibility on her.

In a man's opinion a kiss is an end that justifies any means.

You needn't be afraid of a mere kiss. Thousands are exchanged daily by people of the highest reputation.

The kissed girl fears no mistletoe. A kiss is as good as a smile—and a good deal better, too!

The ideal kiss is the kiss that is never given. A kiss too soon may be a full stop in the tale of love.

The child who doubts about Santa Claus has insomnia. The child who believes has a good night's rest.

Origin of Christmas Tree. The Christmas tree is supposed by great numbers of people to have originated in Germany, but from a reliable source we learn that the Christmas tree came in the first instance from Egypt, and its origin dates from a period much earlier than the Christian era. The palm tree is known to put forth a branch every month, and a spray of this tree with 12 shoots on it was used in Egypt at the time of the winter solstice as a symbol of the completed year.

CASTORIA. CASTORIA.

Advertisement for Castoria medicine, featuring a bottle illustration and text: 'CASTORIA For Infants and Children. Mothers Know That Genuine Castoria Always Bears the Signature of Dr. J. C. Hutchins. In Use For Over Thirty Years CASTORIA'.

Dry Goods, Etc.

Advertisement for Lyon & Company: 'LYON & COMPANY. FOR THE HOLIDAYS. OUR NEW STOCKS are in readiness for your every Christmas need. We have made a special effort this Holiday Season with a larger and more attractive stock. We can supply a gift for every member of the family from the oldest to the youngest. Just a few items of the many to help make your selections. FOR MEN. Neckties in all the new and varied styles and colors. Silk and Lisle half Hose, all colors. Gloves in Kid and Wool. Sweaters for the big man or the little tots, and a great many other useful things, no space here to mention. Handkerchiefs for every-one in Linen, Silk and Cotton. FOR WOMEN. Silk Hose in all the new Evening and Street Shades. Kid Gloves, Woolen Gloves and Mittens. Silk Scarf Girders, Boudoir Caps, Jewelry—All the new and fancy Hair Pins and Combs. Leather Bags, Party Boxes, Silver Mesh Bags and Coin Purses—Silver and Gilt. NECKWEAR. Cuff and Collar Sets, Collar and Vest Fronts, Fancy Bows, Roses, Ruching and Frillings. Everything of the newest and special values. SILK WAISTS. Every lady will be pleased with a beautiful Silk Waist, Crepe de Chine, Wash Silks and Soft Messaline Waists in all the light colors, Black, Navy and White. SILKS. Our Silk department for Waists and Dresses is most complete, in all the new colors for street and evening, with the Chiffons, Laces and Marabouts to match. Blankets and Comfortables. No gift is so much appreciated as a handsome warm Blanket or Comfortable. FURS, COATS AND SUITS. The continued warm weather has forced us to put the knife in prices now. All Coats, Suits and Furs at January reduction prices. This department must be kept moving. Now is your time to buy at greatly reduced prices. Lyon & Co. Bellefonte'.