

## Her Christmas Pudding

It Opened the Way to an Unexpected Pleasure

By CLARISSA MACKIE  
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Tied snugly in a round bag, the Christmas pudding bubbled merrily in the big pot on the gas range. Young Mrs. Bell tripped lightly to and fro about the tiny kitchen, her heart full of Yuletide cheer and gentle graciousness. It was her first Christmas as a housewife, and the little flat was spick and span with cleanliness.

Laura Bell lifted the pot lid and peered at the fragrant pudding.

"My, but that does smell Christ-massy!" sighed Laura as she replaced the lid and proceeded to wash the mountainous array of dishes in the sink. "I never believed I could antici-pate an enjoyable Christmas away from Lakeville and the home folks, but I begin to think we two are going to have a lovely time, even if we are all alone in this big, strange city."

That night at dinner Timothy Bell leaned back in his chair and surveyed the remains of his excellent meal with manifest approval.

"So the pudding was a success, dear?" he inquired.

"Light as a feather, and so spiky!" said his wife proudly. "I'd show it to you, Tim, only I've tied it up again and put it out on the fire escape to keep cool. I shall boil it for an hour tomorrow, just before dinner, so it will be riding hot."

"Now this is Christmas eve. Do you want to go out tonight?"

"I'd like to go out and mingle with the crowds, although my own shopping was finished a week ago. It seemed strange to prepare my gifts so early and send them through the mail instead of running around with them the way I've always done in Lakeville. I rather miss the excitement and fun of it all. Now, Timothy, dear, don't look so solemn. Really I'd rather be here in New York with you to-day than away out in Minnesota with everybody else if you were not there."

"I've a mind to try it on every man, woman and child I meet in the corri-



"A BLESSED OLD PUDDING."

dors tomorrow," said Laura daintily as she cleared away the meal. "What do you suppose they would say?"

"Probably complain to the janitor," grinned Timothy, gathering a pile of dishes and whisking them into the kitchen. "Hurry up, sweetheart. Let the dishes wait till we come home. Get on your things and let's join the crowd. If we can't have a Lakeville Christmas we'll have the New York kind, eh?"

"Of course we will," agreed his wife.

The Bells enjoyed their excursion into the shopping districts. The broad avenues were ablaze with light and color, and the moving multitudes of Christmas purchasers formed constantly changing pictures that delighted the country bred eyes of Timothy and his wife. More than once Timothy's hand went down into his pocket to add a mite to some Salvation Army kettle on a corner or to dispense holiday comfort to some one whose need of food or warmth was apparent to his observing glance. Once he and Laura conveyed a party of four ragged urchins into a little toyshop and made four children radiantly happy with simple gifts.

When they reached home again the clocks were striking 11 and Laura's eyes were sparkling with happiness, while Timothy felt a quiet satisfaction in the pleasure the evening had brought them. As they waited for the elevator a young man and a girl entered the building and stood near them.

Timothy's keen glance noted that the man was well dressed, but rather thinly clad for the season. His face was thin and pale, as if he had recently been ill, while his dark eyes wore a brooding, discouraged expression that was out of keeping with the spirit of the approaching festival. The girl, who wore a wedding ring on one slender unglowed hand, watched him with a pretty air of motherly anxiety. She was a brown little thing, with hair and eyes of a warm russet hue and a charming face that attracted Laura Bell's attention.

As they glided up in the elevator Laura found herself watching the girl with interest. There was a sad look when the young man's glance was turned away from her uplifted face, and Laura noted little tense lines about the mobile lips. The elevator stopped at the Bell's floor, and as they left the car Mrs. Bell turned with a sudden impulse and nodded in the friendliest manner at the little brown girl.

"Merry Christmas!" she called.

The door slammed as the car mounted, but the brown girl leaned forward and called back in a low, sweet voice, "Merry Christmas to you!"

"I did it, Timothy," sang Laura as they entered their own cozy flat. "I knew some of these flat dwellers were human—even if you doubted it."

"Wrong again and glad of it this time," admitted Timothy as he turned

## LITTLE MERRY CHRISTMAS

How a Wolf's Greeting Saved Black Carston's Life

By GEORGE ETHELBERG WALSH

Copyright, 1919, by American Press Association.

"Merry Christmas!" "Hah! What's that?" The gruff voice took some of the enthusiasm out of the childish frolic, and it faltered somewhat weakly in repetition.

"Merry Christmas, sir?"

The big bearded man stared at the diminutive speaker and for an instant the hard drawn lines on his heavy face threatened to relax, but a moment later a spasm of pain shot across it, and the voice grumbled:

"There isn't any merry Christmas—not in this world! Whoever taught you such an idea? Huh! Merry Christmas! I haven't seen one for forty years, and—"

The little white, drawn face had an intense appeal to it, but it fell upon a hard, stony nature. The forty years of hard life had dried up the well-springs of sympathy, and the gruff miner stammered away, leaving the boy a mute witness to one of the tragedies of life.

A few minutes later the child turned and walked in the opposite direction. There were no tears in the wondering eyes, but the mute cry of the hurt-



WILL JONES

There was a little cry of exultation. The man held within his hand a sample of dull yellowish rock that sent the blood coursing rapidly through his veins. The freshest of the night had unearthed a vein of gold which promised to bring true all his visions of the past.

Deeper and deeper into the bowels of the earth he dug, following the course of the vein and grunting his satisfaction at each fresh discovery. Had he not been carried away by his greed and excitement he would have hesitated and withdrawn from his perilous position. His expert knowledge of mining would have told him that he was courting a terrible danger.

The good fortune which had come to him after forty years of disappoint-ment made him temporarily crazy, and he forgot everything except the gold which he was unearthing. Then a sudden blow from his pick loosened a torrent of sand, and the rocks above his head groaned and settled down.

Carston was instantly alert and realized in a flash his danger. He sprang back toward the mouth of the opening, leaving his pick and samples of gold behind. But the avalanche of rocks and dirt was too quick for him. It fell around and over him until the light of day was shut from view. A heavy bowlder rolled over on his leg and pinned him to the soft sand.

The roar of the descending avalanche subsided, and the miner drew a deeper breath when he realized that all immediate danger was passed. An overhanging ledge had partly protected him, and he had a space of a few feet in which to breathe and move.

The wall of loose stones and rocks could not be very thick, for he saw glimmers of light shining through.

But when he attempted to extricate himself from the prison he found that a worse fate had befallen him than he imagined. His right leg was crushed and held in a vise-like grip by a huge bowlder that had settled down on him.

In vain he tried to move the rock and pull his leg free. But the bowlder was immovable, and the excruciating pain made him faint, sick. For hours he tore at the sand and gravel at his feet and snarled and snarled at the rock which held him a prisoner.

Then, faint and exhausted, he lay back and rested. The pain grew past endurance, and unconsciously he murmured a prayer. When his senses returned he renewed the struggle, but with the same hopeless effort. His position was located far up on the mountain side where no human creature would be likely to stray for weeks or months at a time.

"Black" Carston was a man of iron will and rugged constitution, and he did not yield easily to despair. During the long hours of the day he fought and struggled with almost superhuman effort. Then the pain, loss of blood and exhaustion broke his spirit. With a little sob he dropped his head back on the rocks and resigned himself to his fate.

"So this is Christmas day! Merry Christmas, eh?"

The child's morning greeting had clung to his mind, and it sprang to his lips unbidden again and again. Then his thoughts wandered, and he muttered over in his troubled dreams: "Merry Christmas, merry Christmas! Ha, ha! Merry Christmas, young-ster!"

In his agony he rolled over and wrenched the tortured limb until relief came again through sheer exhaustion.

they had been responsible for his troubles.

Tip-toed the head of the steeple, where the mountainous torrent of the night before had dislodged the bowlders and nearly wiped out his camp, he found his pick half buried in debris. He rescued it from the dirt and gravel, and as a parting thrust at the cruel rocks which had defied him he smote the implement deep into their sides. The pick crashed through the shell of the rocks so easily that the man at most lost his balance.

"Merry Christmas, eh?" he grunted "Merry Christmas!"

He withdrew the pick and started to walk away. A slight ooze of water from the seat caused by his pick attracted his attention. He stared at it and then mechanically stooped to examine the gravel and splintered rock. With a little gasp of surprise he gathered another handful and spread the pieces out on his rough palm. Three times he dug up all he could hold in one palm and repeated the operation.

Suddenly a fierce light shot into his eyes, and his face assumed the eager, greedy look of a wild animal on the scent of some helpless prey. He dropped on hands and knees and dug at the sand and rock until the blood seeped from scorched fingers and dyed the rocks. He was for all the world a wild beast tearing and rending a blood-less victim to death.

Again and again he held the samples close to his eyes and each time grunted with satisfaction. He sprang out of the hole and attacked the rocks with his heavy miner's pick. The blows fell with sharp, metallic sounds; but un mindful of the noise, the miner worked feverishly and stubbornly at the excavation.

There was a little cry of exultation. The man held within his hand a sample of dull yellowish rock that sent the blood coursing rapidly through his veins. The freshest of the night had unearthed a vein of gold which promised to bring true all his visions of the past.

"A blessed old pudding," said Laura daintily as she cleared away the meal. "What do you suppose they would say?"

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## LEMONS.

A Slang Expression Leads to a Serious Blunder.

By CLARISSA MACKIE.

Amy Winfield reread the telegram with a puzzled frown, and this second perusal was not enlightening.

Reading lemons by express today. Good-bye!

Why should her lover send an offering of this citrus fruit? And why should he say "Goodbye," and where was he going?

All these questions Amy asked of the empty air, and the empty air made no response. She squeezed the message into a tiny ball and tossed it into the waste-paper basket just as her young brother entered the library.

Short and thick-set and snub nosed and grubby was little Bert Winfield, but he fairly seethed with the desire to impart knowledge of every description, and his fountain of wisdom was perpetually supplied from the various forms of literature that found their source in the discarded books and magazines that he fished from the library waste paper basket.

Amy looked up now with her pleasant smile. "Going anywhere near the station today, Bert?"

"None," returned the seeker after knowledge. "I may go tomorrow, though. Why?" He dropped on his knees beside the table and groped in the waste paper basket.

"I'm expecting a box or a crate or something, I don't just know what."

"What's in it?" demanded Bert, with a brother's privilege.

"Lemons," returned Amy. "What are you going to do with lemons? Somebody been handing you a lemon?"

Amy, reverting to common slang, replied his sister with dignity. "But some one has sent me a box of lemons and—"

"It was Teddy Newton," declared Bert, spreading out the crumpled telegram on his knee. "Ain't he the limit?"

"Say 'is he not' instead of 'ain't,'" corrected Amy, "and how do you know Teddy sent them?"

"Is he not?" repeated Bert obediently. "And I'm reading the telegram, and—"

How the little hands worked the dirt and rocks loose from the bowlder and how the two of them strained and pulled to extricate the man's body from the death trap Carston could never clearly understand, but after an hour of agony he felt himself lying on the surface of the earth with a little, slim, slender creature by his side, gasping and panting from exertion. Tiny drops of moisture trickled on Carston's face, but they were blood from lacerated hands and not tears. The little sobs were dry and tearless.

Carston swooned again in spite of his heroic will to fight back the weakness. In the interval the stars shone down upon him in their cold, hard brilliance, and the soft, cool air filled his panting lungs with healing strength.

They carried the man to the nearest infirmary camp and gave him such medical attendance as he needed. After a week of fever and delirium Carston's strong constitution brought him through successfully. His first thought was of the child who had rescued him.

"Bring that merry Christmas youngster to me!" he almost shouted. "Where is he? Don't keep me waiting."

Rugged old Carston, black by name and character, flung his arms around the slender neck and, with a great sob in his voice, cried: "Merry, merry Christmas! A merry Christmas, youngster, and God bless you."

But even then he did not know that his faint "Merry Christmas" uttered in his feverish dreams when imprisoned in the rocks had first attracted the little singer's attention and was responsible for his rescue. That was long ago, and Carston now celebrates the Christmas season with religious zeal and ceremony, and there is always a little "Merry Christmas" to help him, for nothing could satisfy him but to nickname his rescuer "Merry Christmas."

How Far Can You See?

What is the farthest limit to which the human vision can reach? Power in his book, "The Eye and Sight," gives the ability to see the star Ariel, situated at the tail of the Great Bear, as the test. Indeed, the Arabs call it the test star. It is most exceptional to be able to see Jupiter's satellites with the naked eye, though one or two cases are recorded, the third satellite being the most distinct. Peruvians are said to be the longest sighted race on earth. Humboldt records a case where these Indians perceived a human figure eighteen miles away, being able to recognize that it was human and clad in white. This is probably the record for far sight.

Probably He Wouldn't.

A country rector, coming up to preach at Oxford in his turn, complained to Dr. Routh, the venerable principal, that the remuneration was very inadequate, considering the traveling expenses and the labor necessary for the composition of the discourse.

"How much did they give you?" inquired Dr. Routh.

"Only 45," was the reply.

"Only 45?" repeated the doctor.

"Why, I would not have preached that sermon for fifty!"—Eric-a-Brac.

Hens' Teeth.

"Your composition, as a whole," said the professor of literature, "deserves a great deal of praise, but I must object to the expression, 'as fine as hens' teeth'; it is not merely uncouth, but it is common knowledge that hens' teeth do not exist."

"I do not see why they don't exist," muttered the composer. "Don't combs have teeth, and don't hens have combs?"—Chicago News.

Patience, persistence and power to do are only acquired by work.—Holland.

was not he could afford," said Bert kindly. "I heard him tell that the last punk put a crimp in his pocket-book."

"A crimp?" repeated gentle Amy reprovingly. "What is that, Bert—more slang, dear?"

"In-huh!" returned Bert. "What shall I name the dog, Amy? I thought some of calling him Teddy. What do you think?"

"Teddy! Why?" gasped Miss Winfield indignantly. "I forbid you to name him after Teddy Newton!"

"Ah-h!" growled Bert disgustedly. "I meant after Teddy Roosevelt. 'Who'd want to name a dog after Teddy Newton?"

"Perhaps he has a name, dear," suggested Amy. "Have you tried calling him by some name?"

"Sure! I've called him Fido and Lion and Rex and Bruno and Pete, and even Old Dog Tray, and he won't come until he gets ready. He must have a name of some kind. I'm going to begin to call him Teddy—if you don't mind too much, sis," he added magnanimously.

"Call him anything you like, dear," said Amy softly, and something in her tone roused Bert to indignation.

"I won't call him Teddy after anybody, I guess, sis—anybody that will send lemons to a girl and do it by telegram. Well-down, sir; down, I say! Look at him, sis!"

The dog elbowed playfully over his little master, crossed him with news and tongue and loved him with soft brown eyes. "I'll call him Pup for awhile," said Bert, and so the matter was settled.

A week later Amy received another disquieting telegram from her erstwhile lover.

"Why return lemons? Thought to please you." TED.

To which Miss Winfield gave much thought, many bitter tears and the following kind reply:

Returned my own lemons to you. Am much pleased. AMY.

And in due time came the following message:

Lemons not received to date. Chance your mind and keep. TED.

His reply, "Decision irrevocable; goodness—Amy," brought forth one more telegram from Mr. Newton, and it bespoke that gentleman's masterful disposition:

No decision irrevocable where we are concerned. Wait till I see you. TED.

"The impudence!" gasped Amy indignantly. "I shall not see him if he comes! After jilting me in that heartless manner, to endeavor to ignore the matter and make it up—never, never!"

That same day Miss Winfield received an express package containing the objects she had mailed to Mr. Newton—all the books and music and the engagement ring and even the love letters, which any man might have been excused from retrieving when the opportunity offered. But Teddy was square in some things. Amy grudgingly agreed, and so she put the treasures away with a little degree of comfort, for those latter weeks had been full of storm and stress and very different from those earlier, happier weeks of her engagement.

Then one evening when the first frost lay sparkling on the garden Amy, wrapped in shawls, stood at the gate entranced with the witchery of the moonlight. She was there when Mr. Teddy Newton strode up to the gate and in his masterful way took her in his arms and kissed away her protests.

"What is the matter with you, dearest? You've had me half crazy. I just stole the time to run down and try to square our misunderstanding. Surely you don't harbor anger over that little quarrel?"

"What made you hand me the lemons?" sobbed Amy in his bosom, while Mr. Newton cast his eyes aloft in amazement.

"Hand you the lemons? Explain. Tell us all about it. There is some mistake," he soothed her. And so she told the story of the telegrams and the elucidation of that wiseacre, Bert, and when she had concluded Mr. Newton burst into such a roar of laughter that once more her sweetheart was indignant.

"Let me explain—there. After our quarrel I wanted to send a peace offering, and so I bought you the best dog I could find—Lemons by name, if you please. Send him down by express and by a series of accidents have discovered that he went astray—gone from crate—and fetched up at Traymore station. The agent kept him awhile and, being of a charitable nature, sold him to your Uncle Abe, who presented him to Bert—the little rascal! He'll lose the pup, Amy, for he is yours. Didn't you get the letter I sent before the first telegram?"

"Never," said Amy.

"It's ended all right, anyway," commented Mr. Newton philosophically. "Just to prove that his name is Lemons!" He whisked sharply and called the dog by name.

There was a scurrying of little feet on the gravel path, and the bull pup flashed upon them and into their mutual embrace.

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WILL JONES

"OH, ARE YOU ALIVE?"

During the few lucid moments of mind Carston tried to think connectedly and plan for some method of escape, but his strength was unequal to it.

Human nature yielded gradually to the strain. The waking, lucid moments