

The Free Press Christmas Story

Plum Pudding for Prosperity

MABEL MCKEE

Tell John that she was "broke" would not be an easy task, Julia Anne realized as she hung holly wreaths at all the windows and fastened mistletoe to the chandeliers just as Mother had done through all the years at Christmas time.

Savory, spicy odors filled the whole house. Old Cynthia's recipe books were responsible for these. By following all directions carefully, Julia Anne had managed to make as tasty mince-meat as any firm and inviting a plum pudding as Cynthia ever had made when she had been cook at the Moulter house.

Cynthia, who had "retired from work" since her two sons had obtained jobs, had left her clean little cabin for two days, early in the week to help Julia Anne open the old Moulter house. Her older brother, Doctor John Moulter, had thought it was being opened just for the holidays. His eyes had gleamed joyously when Julia Anne had told him of the plan of having Christmas this year at home instead of at the Lindendale hotel as they had done each year since Mother's death.

Julia Anne wished now that she had said, "I've come home to stay. I'm a fall-up-as-an-artist. I haven't been able to sell a single sketch, or gotten even an order from an editor. All my money is gone, so I'm going to stay, at home."

Worse still, she would have to tell Eric Currie, who had protested her going to New York to try to become an illustrator. She had not come from a successful position in the East, as he had done, to say as he began managing the Curry factory, "It's all the bunk saying there's any other place on this globe equal to Lindendale. Lindendale is the rest of my life."

As for Christmas, Julia Anne was going to pretend to be merry through Christmas although her heart held the tragedy of being told she was a failure. She had promised Mother always to make Christmas merry for her older brother, John, and for Claude, the youngest of the Moulter family, who was only fifteen.

A sharp rap at the door interrupted the girl's dismal thoughts. It might be Claude, who liked Christmas surprises. Hurdled Julia Anne pushed the plum pudding inside the biggest pantry cupboard, smoothed her ruffled dusky curls and went to open the door.

John was on the side veranda shaking the snow from his goat coat. "Pick-up supper Judy!" he laughed. "A late operation to-night, and I want to get back as quickly as possible. Claude will soon be here."

A "pick-up" supper! That meant supper on the kitchen table. Julia Anne hurriedly spread the table, cooked the bacon and eggs, made the toast. John's operation meant relief from his questions of last night, questions about her work, her fellow artists, and so on.

Claude, who arrived in a rush, washed his hands at the kitchen sink. His whistle of surprise over the "pick-up" supper was followed by a hasty question called out to his brother, "Dad, I can coax Cynthia back, can't we keep the house open after Christmas? You know you despise that hotel fog!"

Julia Anne caught the hurried frown with which John hushed Claude. Her insistence, however, made him give the reason why the two brothers could not stay on at the big house. "Finances, Sir," he said soberly. "Didn't mean to tell you until after Christmas. Most of my patients can't pay their bills. The Curry mill is working only one or two days a week. Eric says that if they don't get some big orders soon, they'll have to close down altogether."

Julia Anne gasped rather appalled. John said, "Oh, Judy, it isn't that bad," he hurried to add. "There are other industries in Lindendale. I'll just have to enlarge my field. I've always followed Father's example and rather stuck to Elm Street, and this neighborhood. Now the Curry Enamelling Company is employing most of these people."

Claude boyishly burst in on the conversation then. Eric should have stayed on in the East where he had real opportunities, he declared. If he had done that he would not be growing thin worrying as he was now doing at home.

"Eric isn't worrying for himself," John's voice was sharp. "He's thinking of the factory his father built, and Lindendale. That factory has meant life to all west Lindendale. Of course it crushes Eric now to see the men and women who have been employed thirty or more years in the enamelling works come to need."

He talked on about the new utilities Eric was trying out at the mill. To many other companies were manufacturing colored enamel ware to make it profitable. If the new roofing was successful, however, the mill would remain at work.

As John slipped into his coat, he turned his conversation toward Christmas Day. "How about a little company, Sir?" he smiled eagerly. "I know it's a shame to tell you do all the cooking for us, but since we're to have a Christmas dinner at home, I thought we might have Eric. He's lonely in that big—"

"And how about having Jimmie York?"

Claude interrupted, his voice wailing. "He hasn't even a big house."

"The turkey Mr. Dougherty sent us weighs fourteen pounds," laughed Julia Anne. "Two guests are not enough. Why not each of you invite two or three? There's a peach of a plum pudding, too."

John whistled his way out of the room, and Julia Anne and Claude were left alone, he to confide boyishly that John liked Christmas parties like the ones they had when Mother was in the big house. Tears came to his eyes as he talked. Boyishly he tried to hide them by offering to wipe the dishes so he would have an excuse to stay in the kitchen, where he could smell the pudding.

The closeness to his sister made him confide that John had said he wished Julia Anne could stay in Lindendale, if only she could paint here. "We would not want anything to interfere with your career, Judy," he smiled. "John's terribly proud of your painting. He has that little picture you made of Mother years ago hanging in his office. And sometimes he says that when he is rich, he's going to hire you to paint him a hundred pictures."

"What kind of pictures?" Julia Anne's voice was low.

"Pictures of people and places he loves," explained Claude. "Dad and Mother, the old cabin at the lake, Dad's old car. The doc's funny that way about people and places he loves."

The next morning Julia Anne took from the great box which had carried them from New York, the disappointment, as she termed them, the pictures which had brought her only failure. The most famous art dealer who had seen them had been most kind to her. "No one is buying pictures now," he had said. "Even the best-known artists are having hard sledding."

One picture of which Julia Anne was especially fond, was "Autumn," a creek scene; the creek in which she, and John and Eric had fished. The old art dealer had said the colors in it were almost perfect. Another which had almost made the grade with a magazine editor was a portrait of Mother with Claude's big shepherd dog. Also there was a tiny painting of Father at the wheel of his old car, his medicine case on the seat beside him. Julia Anne had called it "Eric's Real Physician."

Other pictures came from the big box—the Christmas dinner—one said—the painting of Grandmother pouring tea. Julia Anne studied them all for minutes, for hours. Her decision to give these as Christmas gifts had come right after Claude had told how much John thought of her pictures.

She would give some of these pictures to the family friends—old Doctor White, who had once been Father's partner; Cynthia, Mother's cook; and Mrs. Minster, who had been bedridden so many years. All these people of Lindendale, like John and Claude, thought Julia Anne a real artist.

The portrait of Mother would go to Claude, the one of Father to John for his office. Eric should have the one of Grandmother pouring tea, for close to the teapot was the quaint cookie jar and sandwich plate, which he had termed his "best pals" long ago. Eric whose own grandparents had died when he was quite tiny, had loved Grandmother very much.

Carefully she wrapped the pictures in tissue paper, tied them with gold cord, and tucked in a sprig of holly. That evening she told John that she had decided to give pictures to all the family friends.

"Great, Judy!" he beamed approval. "As I said last night, I'm sort of short of funds now. But I had saved for Christmas. Now we'll take that money and buy the new car for the old man."

Before John could say more, Claude was holding the portrait of Mother before him. The youth did not say a word, just hung the portrait above the piano and sat down to look at it, adoration on his face.

"Sometimes you can't say anything, Judy," John found his voice first. "You're too moved."

Breakfast followed, and then the three "Moulter children" went together to deliver the gifts to old Doctor White, Eric, old Cynthia, and all the others. They shook hands all around with the

old people at the county home, and then drove on with their gifts to the orphanage.

They took Julia Anne home after that. While Claude and John were away on the older brother's necessary calls she flew about getting the dinner ready. She had just started laying the table when an imperative ring took her to the door. A few minutes later she was talking with Eric, a taller, thinner Eric than she had known in the old days, and a stranger.

The stranger told her why he had come. He was the head of a chain of stores. The enamelling company had been trying to secure a contract from him. He had stopped that morning on his way to a lodge miles farther on to tell Eric he did not like the article submitted. They were not individual enough to attract customers. He had been there when Eric's Christmas gift, the portrait of Grandmother pouring tea, had arrived.

"I want him to make us some teapots and cookie jars just like those in the picture," he said. "Same pattern, same colors. You're the artist who made them and I've come to see if you'll design some other clever ones for him, teapots, jars and bowls that everybody will buy."

He walked about the rooms in the Moulter house, looking at the pictures. While Eric talked to Julia Anne, would she, who painted portraits and landscapes so beautifully, stop this work for a little while to design for the Curry mill? "It will mean work at the mill every day," his eyes shone. "It will—"

Julia Anne turned from him to call the head of the chain stores. "The Curry Enamelling Company has just signed me up as designer. Did you say the contract is to be for a year?"

"For five of them if you can keep up this work," he returned. "And let me tell you, young lady, you're wise in turning to designing. I know scores of excellent artists in New York who are starving because they won't take up other work."

The Christmas dinner was just a memory. Eric and the three Moulters were alone sitting close to the grate, in which the fire had burned low. Eric had stayed after the other guests had left so they could plan for the future.

"The milk working every day," John suddenly exclaimed. "Why, that will mean we can have all the hospital improvements Dad had planned for the hospital. Isn't it great? And Judy at home—"

Claude jumped up from his chair impulsively. "What say?" he exclaimed. "Let's all go out and sing Christmas carols to Lindendale."

Julia Anne smiled and slipped into her coat. Why, she was not a failure after all, thanks to John, who had wanted her pictures hung everywhere, and to Eric and Claude, who had given her courage. As for Lindendale—well, it was the most wonderful town in the world because it was home. It took Christmas to make one realize that!

And here is a macaroni stuffing for that holiday turkey. To most of you it is something new. It takes only a few minutes to make but Oh, how tasty!

"MERRY" CHRISTMAS

(The wife of Santa Claus) By BETTY BARCLAY

We hear a lot about "Merry" Christmas and about old Santa, but how about "Mary" Christmas for a change? Her pack is not filled with drums and bells, but with things to eat—holiday goodies, new and delicious.

It is she who suggests such tipples as hors d'oeuvres of pickles and asparagus, a novel cocktail and a macaroni stuffing for the fowl. Even the most expert roaster of turkey and baker of pie will appreciate the following recipes for holiday "specials."

EMERGENCY HORS D'OEUVRES

Thin asparagus tips
Pimientos
Sweet mixed pickles

For each serving, arrange on a small plate six to seven asparagus tips with ends radiating from center of the plate, having tips toward edge of plate. In the center place a selection of several pieces of sweet mixed pickles. Garnish each asparagus tip with a tiny strip of pimiento.

CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL

2 cups cranberries
2 cups water
3 cloves
1 cup sugar
1 cup pineapple juice
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Crushed ice
Maraschino cherries

Cook the cranberries in the water with the cloves until berries burst, or about 5 minutes. Strain through a sieve lined with wet cheesecloth. Add the sugar and stir over low heat until the sugar is dissolved. Cool, and add the pineapple and lemon juice. Pour over crushed ice in glasses. Garnish with sliced maraschino cherries cut in circles. 8 servings.

CREOLE AMBROSIA

(A New Orleans Dish)
2 cups orange sections, free from membrane
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup water
6 drops almond extract

Place oranges in sweetened coconut. Place oranges in serving dish. Combine sugar and water and heat until sugar is dissolved; pour over oranges. Add almond extract and stir well. Fold in coconut. Chill. Serves 6.

CHRISTMAS JAM

3 pounds prunes
3 pounds seedless raisins
3 pounds sugar
3 oranges

Soak prunes in water, cook and stone. Pour two cups of water over the stones and let stand one hour. Pour off this water and add it to the prunes and juice, raisins, sugar, orange pulp and rind cut fine. Cook twenty minutes. Add nuts and cook one minute. Pour into clean, hot jars and seal. Plums in season may be used instead of the prunes.

MACARONI STUFFING

1 pound elbow or short-cut macaroni
4 eggs
3 teaspoons paprika
1 clove garlic
6 tablespoons shortening
4 or 5 onions chopped fine
4 teaspoons salt
4 teaspoons poultry dressing

Cook macaroni about 6 to 8 minutes in 4 quarts boiling water, adding 3 teaspoons salt and 2 tablespoons shortening. Drain macaroni and add melted shortening. Then add eggs, onions and seasoning. Stuff mixture into turkey, not too tight.

This macaroni stuffing is not compact and heavy as are most stuffings, but has a very desirable lightness. It is easily digested, most nutritious, supplying a great deal of carbohydrate, a large amount of mineral matter and some valuable protein.

WHEN POTATOES BREATHE

In the storage of potatoes it was always to be remembered that the potato is a living organism and that there are many practical precautions—many—become of practical importance. One of these is immediately after digging, and the other a period of several days following a sudden rise in storage temperature. To prevent sweating, special attention should be given to the ventilation of potatoes handled in bulk immediately after digging, and also after sudden rises in temperature following a period of steady cool storage. The lower the storage temperature the higher will be the initial rate of respiration; at a sudden higher temperature, sudden rises and falls in storage temperatures are to be avoided always. The early fall is the time to provide all possible air circulation by keeping ventilators and doors open until there is danger of freezing. On warm days doors should be closed and opened only at night when the air is cooler. The amount of ventilation required is that which will keep the potatoes dry. From early December onwards all ventilators and doors should be closed and protected to prevent the potatoes from being frozen.

NOT SO LUCKY

Friend—My mother-in-law has visited my house only once since I got married. Friend—Man, you're lucky. Friend—Lucky? She's never left.

MAN OF PROGRESS

Leaders of men have ever been precedent speakers. Timid people, no matter how able, never make leaders. Fearlessness and originality are characteristic of all men of progress. They have no reverence for the old simply because it is old; with them it is always a question of pushing forward, of improving on the past, instead of slavishly copying it.

CANADIAN MINING EXPENDITURES

In addition to contributing over \$277,000,000 to the national wealth, the Canadian mining industry provided a rich market for other industries by reason of its purchases of consumable stores and equipment and expenditures for freight and insurance. Figures compiled by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics show that the total value of purchases during 1934, as computed from returns made available, amounted to \$70,883,000, and not only emphasize the great purchasing power of the Canadian mining industry but also reveal the diversity of its purchases, the value of which is of ever-growing importance to the economic welfare of Canadian industry as a whole.

Purchases by the metal, mining and non-ferrous smelting and refining industry totalled \$60,670,000 and comprised 85 per cent. of the total for the whole mining industry. Of that amount the value of purchases by the gold mining industry alone constituted 29.4 per cent., or \$23,994,000. The magnitude of certain particular expenditures is reflected in such items as \$3,139,000 for electric power; \$11,797,000 for freight; \$8,671,000 for coal, oil, and other fuel; \$5,311,000 for explosives; \$4,154,000 for lumber and timber; \$2,301,000 for chemicals; and \$1,050,000 for rock drills and parts. Other interesting items include \$1,665,000 for pipes, fittings, plumbing supplies and valves; \$2,343,000 for electrical equipment and supplies; \$385,000 for stationery, office equipment, etc.; and \$58,400 for hospital equipment.

Ontario led the provinces with expenditures totalling \$25,072,000, or 46.1 per cent. of the total; British Columbia (including Yukon) came second, with purchases to the value of \$17,531,000, or 23.1 per cent., and Quebec was third, with \$9,714,000.

WHAT YOU BELIEVE

Some young people will tell you that it makes no difference what one believes. It is what he does that matters. The things one does, however, depend very largely on that which one believes. The worker who is sure that his employer will fall before the end of the month, so that he will never receive his salary, is not likely to work enthusiastically. The chances are that he will not work at all.

If you believe in God, our faith influences your life. If you are sure of immortality, you have courage for enduring the hardest experiences. Those who do not believe in God nor in a future life are bound to live differently. All that you do depends on that which you believe in. All that you do depends on that which you believe in. All that you do depends on that which you believe in.

Love stops not to think how much must be given and what may be kept; it gives all.—H. W. Webb-People.

J. Cadesky OPTOMETRIST WILL BE IN ACTON ON Monday, January 6 Anyone suffering from Eyestrain, Defective Vision or Headache should not miss the opportunity of consulting this eyesight specialist. Appointments may be made with Mr. A. T. Brown, Druggist. CONSULTATION FREE Office Hours: 9 a. m. till 4 p. m.



The Gift That Keeps on Giving Why not present your family with a Family Income Policy for this Christmas so that their future Christmases will be assured, even if you are not here to provide for them? If you are spared you will enjoy the income yourself in later years. It's truly the Gift That Keeps on Giving. Let us tell you about it and we'll gladly have the policy ready for Christmas presentation. Ask us about Children's Thrift Policies to start them right in life. We Can Give You Insurance Service for Every Need F. L. WRIGHT GENERAL INSURANCE TO ONE AND ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Free Press Offers You A Great Subscription Bargain that SAVES YOU MONEY and gives you year-long enjoyment Here is a real offer that will save you money... Give yourself and your family lasting enjoyment and entertainment the whole year through... This is all you have to do. Select any 3 of these famous Magazines Together with your local Newspaper and you will receive the whole 4 publications for one year from the date we receive the coupon. Here is the amazing combination low price. Our Guarantee to You! This wonderful offer is available to old and new subscribers to this newspaper. We guarantee the fulfillment of all magazine subscriptions and you have positive assurance that this generous offer is exactly as represented. Renewals will be extended for full term shown. MAIL COUPON TODAY Please clip list of Magazines after checking 3 Publications desired. Fill out coupon carefully. Gentlemen: I enclose \$3.00. Please send me the three magazines checked with a year's subscription to your newspaper. NAME STREET TOWN AND PROVINCE