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**The Forgotten  
Christmas**

**It Turned Out the Happiest  
One of His Life**

By **CLARISSA MACKIE**

It was very quiet in the stately home of Roger Burdick. Servants flitted noiselessly through the halls, and now and then the chime of a golden tongued clock broke the silence. From the library came the monotone of Mr. Burdick's voice dictating to his secretary.

"That will do for today, Henry," said Mr. Burdick as the young man laid the neatly typed letters on his desk. "Tomorrow morning you may begin on the translation of that Simonoff manuscript. No hurry about it; I shall spend the day at the museum and will not need you for anything else."

"Tomorrow will be Christmas day," said Henry Lees.

"And this is Christmas eve! Well, Henry, that puts another face upon the matter. Of course you will not come tomorrow—and wait a moment, please." He drew his check book toward him and wrote rapidly.

"I wish you a merry Christmas, Henry," he said pleasantly.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Burdick," said Henry, tucking the generous check in his pocket and holding out his hand. "I wish you many happy returns of Christmas day."

For a long while after he was left alone Roger Burdick sat there staring into the glowing heart of the fire.

It was Christmas eve, and he had forgotten.

He closed his eyes, and in retrospect other Christmas eves came and went, from the joyous days of his childhood until the time when he had asked Doris Allen for the greatest gift in her power to bestow and she had refused. That was a black Christmas indeed, and, being a lonely young man, it made him more lonely, so that as time went by he grew to detest the anniversary that brings all hearts together and for a few brief hours makes all men brothers.

"Nonsense!" he chided himself sharply. "I must call up Mr. Hodges and ask him to get out those books for me in readiness for tomorrow. I shall have a busy day."

He drew the telephone toward him and talked with the curator of the museum, who informed him in a tone of reproof that the library of ancient documents as well as all other departments of the institution would be closed the next day.

Roger Burdick pushed back his chair and went to the dining room. Uncle Peter, the butler, had darkened the room, so that Roger in groping for the sideboard, where there was a carafe of water, found himself in the dim coolness of the butler's pantry. The sliding window into the kitchen was wide open, and from that room came the sound of animated voices. Roger's own name mentioned in tones of infinite compassion detained him for a moment.

Mammy Jo was speaking.

"Pore Massa Roger! He's gettin' to look a heap like his Uncle Roger, who's dead, this berry morn' 'cause he loved a lady who wouldn't mah'ry him!"

"Tain't no sense, nohow, fo' him to get mean and cantankerous and stop kep'n' Christmas becaus he's dis-p'nted in love," grumbled Sukey, the housemaid.

"Dat's right, chile; he can't stop Christmas comin' right straight er-long ebery year!"

"Mammy," said Uncle Peter, "is yo' done got a present fo' Masse Roger?"

"Shore! I has!" returned the old woman warmly. "Ain't I been savin' a present fo' him each year and not gittin' no chance to give it to him?"

"Cause why? Chile, dat man has made it a p'int to run away ebery Christ-muss. What he tink I care fo' de dress patterns he ordered sent to me from de store? What Uncle Peter here care fo' de gold spectacles Masse Roger order sent him fo' Christmas? He? Nuffin! 'Tain't de cost—it's de givin' of it dat I pre-ates. I'd rather Masse Roger say like he useter before dat say Miss Allen done give him de mitten-say: 'Hi dere, Aunt Jo, merry Christ-muss to you! I hopes you done got a big turkey. I's got a Christmas ap-pertite!' Nowadays he pertends dere ain't no Christmas. Rut, Peter!"

"Hey!" asked Peter.

"Masse Roger ain't gwine away dis time. He done fergot it was Christ-muss!"

"Lawdy!" ejaculated Peter.

"He shore did. And now all you chilens kin get out dem presents you got laid erway fo' Masse Roger. Dat pore man won't have a yearthly gif to-morrer mornin' 'cept what we gived him."

The other black servants giggled childishly and broke into an excited chorus as Roger Burdick tiptoed out of the butler's pantry, through the dining room and back to his library, where he stood in the middle of the floor and looked around him with the dazed expression of a man who has just awaked from a long sleep.

"Pore Massa Roger!" he repeated softly. "Pore Massa Roger! The man who runs away from Christmas—the poor rich man! God forgive my selfishness."

It came on to snow that afternoon, and soon the air was full of thick

white flakes. Uncle Peter looked from the front door at the flur of white overlaying streets and housetops and uttered a mental prayer that there was to be a "white Christmas."

"Hucum dat wagon a-stop'n' beah?" he queried as a lone cart laden with Christmas trees stopped before the door.

Fifteen minutes later Uncle Peter hobbled into the kitchen, his eyes showing great expenses of white and his mouth open in amazed excitement. "Lawdy!" he breathed heavily. "Yo' kin never guess what's happened, Josie!"

Aunt Jo looked up from the nuts she was cracking.

"Speak up, nigger," she said calmly. "Masse Roger's done sent up a Christmas tree and a big lot of wreaths fo' de doors and windows. De dora' man's up dere now fixin' 'em. I'm all of a heap, Josie; my stummin' weak."

Aunt Jo pushed a brown pitcher full of cider toward her excited spouse.

"Take some of dat cider, Peter, and ca'm yo'self. If what yo' say is true den Masse Roger done lose his bid. He's crazy, crazy as a loon!"

Up in the drawing room the florist and his assistant were working rapidly, transforming the stiff apartment into a bower of greenery with ropes of evergreen and holly and with festoons about the pictures and doors and wreaths gay with holly in every window. From room to room they went, not forgetting the library and the big hall. When the men had gone the servants formed an awe-stricken group in the dining room, which breathed the atmosphere of Christmas from chandeliers to rooty fireplace.

"Pore Massa Roger! He's mad as a batter," was the general conclusion as they went about their tasks.

Roger Burdick scarcely recognized himself as he whirled in a taxicab from one shop to another, each time emerging with an armful of packages which he put in his cab to start afresh in another direction.

Almost before he knew it the grave student, the man who had forgotten Christmas, had caught the spirit of the Christmas crowd of shoppers. He exchanged laughing glances with other men who were as heavily laden as himself. He whistled cheerily as he went to and fro.

Once he met Hodges, the curator of the museum, and that withered and ancient gentleman was conveying two eager girls and a boy through the toy department of one of the shops.

"My grandchildren," smiled Hodges, and Burdick, who had never given thought whether the curator was married or single or otherwise than a walking bundle of useful information, smiled back and gave a hearty Christmas greeting.

It was while he was puzzling his brain over the choice of an apron for Sukey, the housemaid, that he heard a low, rich note of laughter at his elbow.

He turned and saw Doris Allen, stately and more beautiful than the promise of her early girlhood when he had known her. She had lived abroad for many years with a married sister, and they had never met since that fateful Christmas day so many years ago.

"Roger Burdick!" Doris held out a little gloved hand, and it was immediately lost in Roger's large grasp. "Isn't Christmas the very best season of all? It brings out old friends who appear to be buried the greater part of the year."

"I am just beginning to learn the real blessings of Christmas," said Roger, suddenly feeling very young.

"What are you trying to buy—an apron?" smiled Doris.

Roger nodded. "For Sukey, my housemaid. Which do you like best, Doris, this fancy one with the pink bows or the plain one?"

"I'm sure Sukey would like the pink bows," replied Doris seriously. "Is Uncle Peter still with you, and Aunt Jo?"

"Yes. You know my father's servants remained with me. I'm doing some Christmas shopping for them. There isn't any one else to make Christmas for." He said it quite practically while he was paying the saleswoman for his purchases.

When he turned around the first thing he saw was the beautiful left hand of Doris resting on the counter. She had removed the glove, and on the little finger there shone a lovely sapphire ring, its sole adornment.

"Doris," he said softly under cover of the Christmas clamor about them—"Doris, have you ever regretted that you were not kinder to me that Christmas day long ago?"

Her beautiful hazel eyes were lifted to his for a brief instant and fell beneath the ardor of his glance.

"Roger, I've been mighty sorry that you—that you were not more persistent," she admitted. "You know I was a willful girl and—"

"That's enough, darling," whispered Roger. "Come with me and help me keep Christmas tomorrow."

"I will come to your Christmas tree," evaded Doris. "Now my friends are waiting for me, and I must go." And she vanished as quickly as she had appeared.

"It am de wonderfulest Christmas dis house has ever seen!" cried Aunt Jo as they all gathered about the brilliantly lighted tree the next day. "My hab'ix overtwin' wid dis jubilation." She ended, wiping the tears from her eyes at sight of Roger's happiness.

"And so is mine, Aunt Jo," said Roger as he took Doris by the hand and led her forward. "This has been the happiest Christmas I have ever known. First I forgot it was Christmas; then you, Aunt Jo, made me remember it, and now Miss Allen has given herself to me for a Christmas gift. I shall never forget it!"

"Amen!" said Uncle Peter solemnly.

**JAMES M. LYNCH**  
New York Labor Commissioner  
Arranges to Safeguard Workers



**NEW YORK**—A careful study wide survey of the industries of New York, together with a special survey of factory buildings within the state, is to be undertaken by Commissioner James M. Lynch of the state department of labor in the near future. The work will be under the direction of the division of industrial hygiene.

**GENERAL NEWS.**

**EL PASO, TEXAS**—Skirmishing continues in the suburbs of Torreon between the federal defenders of the place and the rebels in that vicinity. Meantime, Villa is hurrying southwards as many men as he can spare from Chihuahua to reinforce the rebels and attempt to prevent the federals marching on Chihuahua. Reports in Juarez is that Villa has gone south in person but this is denied officially. Big quantities of supplies are being shipped southward daily from Chihuahua. Four hundred rebel cavalry have left Juarez on a special train bound for the City of Chihuahua to reinforce Villa's army. Half an hour after the departure of the cavalry a supply train carrying a large quantity of food steamed out of Juarez for Chihuahua.

**WASHINGTON**—Although Illinois is generally known as a premier agricultural state, the United States geological survey announces her third among the states in the value of mineral production. In 1912 the total value of the mineral production was \$123,000,000, of which coal alone represented more than \$7,000,000. The total value of minerals in 1911 was a little more than \$106,000,000. The report shows that while Illinois produces no iron ore, it is an important manufacturer of pig iron, being exceeded only by Pennsylvania and Ohio. In the production of coal the state is surpassed only by Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

**WASHINGTON**—A resolution has been introduced in the house by Representative Adamson of Georgia, proposing to suspend under certain conditions the act granting free tolls to American vessels passing through the Panama canal. The resolution created considerable attention because of Chairman Adamson's relation to the subject as chairman of the house committee having it in charge and because it is understood to have the approval of the administration.

**NEW YORK**—The arrest made Saturday night of Alvin Simmons on a charge of attempting to extort \$2,000 from the family of Robert G. McCann, whose daughter, Jessie, is missing, revealed that the heart-broken family has been deluged with letters of a similar character as that which caused the arrest of Simmons since the girl disappeared from home a month ago.

**NEW YORK**—Frederic A. Delano, the former president and one of the receivers of the Wabash Railroad, was elected president of the Chicago, Indianapolis and Louisville Railway company, known as the Monon, to succeed Fairfax Harrison, who was recently elected president of the Southern Railway company.

**ROME, ITALY**—The sealing up of the late Cardinal Rampolla's apartments is denounced as a high-handed and illegal proceeding in some quarters. The legality of the act is questioned because it was carried out without the authorization or intervention of the judicial officials.

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**Real Founders of Russian Music.**  
The old saying that a man must devote his whole life to one thing to become really great finds a curious exception in the founders of the new Russian music. The most brilliant men in this work all originally followed other lines. Tschukowsky was a lawyer; Casuar Cui was professor of fortifications in the Military Academy of St. Petersburg and is today lieutenant general of Russian engineers; Borodine was a physician; Rimsky-Korsakov was an officer in the Russian army; Balafout was a timber merchant; Moussorgsky was a soldier, being an officer in one of the most famous regiments, and Sokalsky was in the diplomatic service, being stationed for several years in New York and afterward becoming editor of the principal newspaper of Odessa.—Ladies' Home Journal.

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**The Skepticism of Posterity.**  
There is one very large, very sad and very certain truth about all the relations of past and future. That truth is this—the future will not believe us. It will not believe our most solemn and profound assertions. It will rationalize them or ridicule them. In one way or another it will explain them away, for that is the most certain thing about the attitude of men toward their remote ancestors. They will believe the testimony of material things or of their own conjectures, but never the sworn word of their fathers. Were it not so there would be no room for historical criticism or perhaps for history as a science at all.—Hiltaire Belloc in Pall Mall Magazine.

**Senseless Question.**  
Briggs had hired a horse to take a little exercise. He got more exercise than he wanted, and as he limped to the side of the road to rest himself a kind friend asked him:  
"What did you come down so quick for?"  
"What did I come down so quick for? Do you see anything up in the air for me to hold on to?" he asked grimly.—Chicago News.

**Embarrassing.**  
"Do you ever see the president?" asked Willie of his uncle, who lived in Washington.  
"Yes; nearly every day," was the reply.  
"And does he ever see you?" queried the little fellow.—Chicago News.

**Milk and the Teeth.**  
Milk, because it contains so much lime, is one of the best foods for the teeth, which often decay for the lack of lime.  
They conquer who believe they can.—Old Saying.

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