

Grandma's
Christmas Stories



Written By MARY C. UPHAM
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A Christmas Story

Not many years ago there was a happy home in the suburbs of a small city in Pennsylvania, where a baby girl of three years delighted the hearts of a father and mother. It was a home where love reigned o'er the hearthstone, and the sun shone brightly over their humble home, but the saloon claimed the father and the complaints and sorrows that always follow soon ruined the happy home. The cowardly father ran away in his desperation after awakening to his condition, and went to a small village on the New York Central R. R. in the central part of New York, there he struggled on, in his great battle with a drunkard's thirst; rising and falling but ever hoping to conquer. The fond wife now kept her little girl from want by sewing and cleaning. Working harder than her strength could measure, she faced the hospital as the only possible cure, heartbroken at the awful thought of leaving her little girl now six years old alone in the world.

It was Christmas Eve in the city of Syracuse, the streets were alive with busy, happy buyers, the shop windows were ablaze with the glories of the merry time and one almost saw the light of Paradise on the faces of the crowd as loving hearts and hands grasp bundles of great expectations to be taken to many a nursery.

A sad eyed silent man looked on the scene and felt the reflected glory of life and love, and grasp, with another resolution, "Yes, he would do it and wait no longer." Into the store he went and bought a large beautifully dressed doll and gave the clerk an address to send it by express. "You must give me your own address," the clerk said, "for we are not allowed to send by express without it." The poor man hesitated and from mere guess work said, "300 Prospect Ave., Syracuse," "All right," said the clerk and the deal was closed.

In a far away village in Pennsylvania the fond mother sat in tears, on this her last night with her little girl. Tomorrow a long hospital course was to be her lot and

the little girl was to be sent to an orphan's home. She had put the little girl to bed early, when an express package came and she found the doll. The address decided, and her heart was lighter as she concluded to send the little girl to her father. The package was labeled "From father." Oh surely he must be reformed and longing to see her again," so this was how a little girl hugging a doll nearly as big as herself was traveling all alone on the train next day with a little tag on her clothes, with the strange guess work address on it for 300 Prospect Ave. Syracuse. It was a long journey, but the kind conductor gave her constant care and many a kind lady opened her lunch basket and in many ways mothered her; all went well until arriving in the city. It was early in the evening, the express man was commissioned by the conductor to be good to his little charge and not forget her. It was very dark and snowing hard as he placed her in his wagon.

Number 300, Prospect Ave. was aglow with many lights; the large mansion was in perfect order and busy servants were already preparing the table in the large dining room for many guests. The door bell rang and the servant upon opening the door saw with dismay a little girl asking admission. "Get away with ye", he said, "you dirty little beggar and don't come here again." He slammed the door on the poor girl; now the express man never waited to see if this was the place or not and wickedly left her on the steps in the storm. She shivered and cried. When the first guest arrived she went inside the door and asked for her father; of course her father never lived there, he had returned to his village many miles away and this was the guess name he had given the doll never dreaming of all the trouble it would cause. All sorts of lies always cause trouble.

Now the housemaid Bertha was in the hall and her kind heart went out to the child. She was very angry at the porter for keeping the little one out in the cold so long so she smuggled her into the kitchen to warm hearted Bridget. Bridget's room was a warm one in the basement next to the kitchen where the "400" seem to always put their help. Bridget soon had little Nellie eating warm supper and after undressing her put her in her own bed, telling her in the morning she might find her father.

The party over and the old Mansion quiet, at mid-night little Nellie awoke with croup. Bridget was soon alarmed and went to her master's bedroom with her story. Now Mrs. Black never had any children around her, she had none and had

grown selfish with prosperity and no one to care for but herself. Mr. Black always a kind hearted man belonging to a large family in the old days of merry boys and girls in the old home, longed for a little baby that might brighten his quiet Mansion, and wanted many times to adopt children but his selfish wife objected to the care, so they had none. He was aroused and although sure of the little girl's mistake, telephoned for their physician and both Mr. and Mrs. Black spent most of the night in Bridget's room working to save the little sufferer's life. The next morning Nelly was carried to Mr. and Mrs. Black's bedroom and put on a cot, where for several days Mrs. Black cared for her. Now we are so made that whenever we can unselfishly care for a sick little child we unconsciously learn to love it and Mrs. Black soon became very fond of this sweet little girl. Mrs. Black bought her new clothes and dressed her doll also. Nelly became less homesick every day although her little heart ached every night for her mother's good night kiss. Nellie was a brave little girl, she felt it her duty that if she wished to please her mamma she must find her father and bring him back to her; every night she asked God to bless them and help her to be brave in this duty. Nellie's faith never waned and although these were dark days for her, she felt that her mother must get well, and she must find her father. Mr. and Mrs. Black now loved the little girl. Mr. Black felt it his duty to hunt for Mr. Denny and after a time found him in a village eight miles away; he was delighted to find that he had reformed and the Methodist pastor gave him all the proof he needed of its being genuine. Mr. Denny was delighted to find his little girl as he had written to their old home and had received no answer and was distressed over his failure to find them. Mr. Black aided him in his search for Mrs. Denny who was finally located in one of the suburbs of Philadelphia to which city she had gone to be cured.

To make a long story short, you will find a happy family in the carpenter's home and little Nelly queen of all; she often visits auntie Black who always has some nice presents for her. Mrs. Black was a very different woman from the one first met with in our story, her selfishness was entirely overcome through the entering of the little child into her home that wintry night of long ago.



FINIS



The Easter Lily

Yes, it was beautiful. Twelve large lilies on one stalk. The florist turned it carefully in his window and declared he never had, in all his experience, seen such a beauty. It was Saturday morning, and his first customer had just arrived, -- St. George's Guild. Yes they were lovely, but ten dollars was beyond their price, so a smaller collection must do. Next a bevy of "Christian Endeavors" rushed in and admired it, but ten dollars for one plant, "No, they couldn't think of it." Then the Epworth League committee came with the same results. Poor florist, what could he do? He would wait until noon and see. A motor stopped at his door and a gentleman jumped out. Yes, that was just what he wanted, never asked the price, and attaching a card to it instructed his chauffeur where to take it and departed.

Benny lay on the lounge sad and lonely. He lived on the corner of "Washington's Alley and "B" Street," the poorest part of the great city. This was his fifth day of pain and agony and he was discouraged. A knock at the door and a man entered with the lily set it on the stand by Benny, gave him the note and departed. Benny's eyes never were so big. For him from the beautiful, as he always called her in his heart, his teacher, going to Europe that morning on her wedding tour, sent Benny this as a goodbye present, as she had only just heard of his fall on the ice. Benny knew she had not heard what the doctor had told him, that he could never walk again.

Maggie, his room companion, whose mother also was a poor wash-woman, came in at last, -- so thought Benny for she was late today. "Oh Benny, what a beautiful lily," and he told her of the giver. "Now" said he "I have named every lily, there are twelve, I've named them after the Apostles. See that one just opening is John. I am glad Judas isn't here, for then he would spoil all the others." Maggie was delighted and said, "Now let us give a treat tomorrow to all the children in the alley.

Hold an Easter service here, I'll make them wipe their feet on the mat at the door, and squat on the floor and we will sing the song we learned at the Mission school when we had one, and you can tell the Easter Story, and I'll read a few verses. Mother will help me, and we will let every child have a smell just as they go out." "Yes" said Benny, "that would be a good closing, but we ought to begin with a prayer." "Yes," said she "you and I will say the "Lord's Prayer." So the Easter service was arranged, and now Benny's mother entered warmly in all the plans of her dear boy, for she had not seen him so happy since his accident.

"You can go to the service at church tomorrow with Maggie's mother, as Maggie and I can have ours here." "Dear me," said neat Mrs. White, "but I'm afraid if you bring all those thirty children here, my rag carpet will be spoiled." "Never fear that, mother, for Maggie is going to bring over her door mat, and Make every child wipe off the mud before they enter; those that come in barefoot, she said she would have them wash their feet in a bucket by the door. We've got it all fixed. "So that afternoon Benny and Maggie were very busy over their programme. Easter Sunday dawned clear and bright, and as soon as the mothers of Maggie and Benny had gone to church, the diligent Maggie was at her post with mat, bucket and mop, and thirty guests gravely entered the room. After being properly scrubbed and cleaned, they seated themselves on the floor, in grave admiration of the lilies. The programme was carried out even to the last snuff of the flowers. Each lily had a name attached to it. John the youngest, just opening, it's pent-up beauty shining through it; Peter the oldest, but not withered; Thomas, the doubter was the hardest to name; Benny and Maggie liked him so much that they finally decided on one a little bent, just as if he were listening for more facts, and finally every lily was named.

After this unique service was over, Benny and Maggie decided to send a lily to some of the sick people in the alley. "Not all," said Maggie "for you must keep half." "No," said Benny, "I'll just keep four;" so a list was made out of those to whom they were to be sent. Maggie was the messenger. First Grandma Day, who never left her bed, but was always cheerful and glad to see the children; then little Alice with a back always too bad to let her sit up; then Jimmy who had his foot cut off jumping on a freight car; then Mrs. Gray who was always sick and always cross, but then she had many trials, and a drunken husband, the worst of all; but last, old Mr. Jenkins, "dear me" said Benny "he'll swear at you and kick you down stairs, if

he is lame and goes on crutches." "Never mind," said cheerful Maggie, "I'll tuck it under his door with your card." So the happy and grateful little messengers were happy over their mission.

Every one was happy and grateful, "most of them cried," said Maggie as she made her report. "Well," said Benny, "I can't see why I am not as bad off as they are; here I am only ten years old and want to support mother, and now, no legs, no school, only a burden to her all my life."

"Don't say that dear," said Maggie, "for mother says some way our prayers are heard, and God will not forget us."

Monday morning Maggie failed to appear, and soon after Benny heard that she was ill. Now in the long ago, when Maggie's father was alive and well, he was a friend of the great Dr. Worth, who had the large hospital in the city and was the leading physician. Many years ago, when the good doctor just began his practice, Maggie's father saved a sad accident to the doctor when his horse ran away and was stopped by the young carpenter. The doctor never forgot it and always insisted on being called to doctor the family whenever they were ill. It was his life debt, as he always told them, that a lifetime could never pay. So when Mrs. Brown saw how ill little Maggie was, she sent word to the doctor, and he noticed the beautiful lily Benny had sent in marked "St. John." Maggie's mother told the story of the children's Easter and of poor Benny's sad condition.

"May I run over and see him?" he said, and with joy Maggie directed him, so that Benny had another automobile stop before his door, and a large man with slightly gray hair and rosy cheeks and sunny smile stepped into the room. It did not take long before he said, "Why my lad, who said you can never walk?" "Let me see, --the hipbone dislocated and broken below, -- why I'm going to ask you to let me cure you, and don't you ever worry about the pay, for I'm going to do this to please myself and Maggie. Now this afternoon at two o'clock, you and your mother are to come to the hospital, and see what we can do; she may stay with you a few days, so pack a few things you need in a satchel, and my automobile with two young doctors will take you easily. Now, good-bye, we shall be firm friends I know;" and away he flew.

Mrs. White could hardly believe it on her return at noon; that the great Doctor Worth should really have seen Benny was too good,-she ran over to Mrs. Brown's and found Maggie better and full of good news. Maggie said it was the "St. John's lily" that led to it all, and Mrs. White said "Yes," the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father often used such things to work out his great plans;-it was in answer to their prayers.

Two o'clock soon came and a long automobile with pillows and a bed and two young men came with it. Benny was lifted so carefully that he hardly felt it, and the crowd of alley children were all bystanders to the wonderful scene.

The great hospital was soon reached and Benny was carried on a big elevator to the top story of a big room. After waiting about an hour, a sweet nurse came in, followed by a number of young doctors, who seemed very busy over many little things, --cases of instruments covered up, lest his eyes see them, hot water and the anaesthetic aids to every operation. Then the good doctor came in smiling and greeted his little patient very warmly. "Now, my boy, you will go to dreamland, or rather to a good sleep, and wake up all straight and most well. Don't be afraid only trust that we shall do our best with God's blessing."

When Benny awoke he found himself in a nice little bed in a room with two windows and his mother sitting by his side. He was all strapped up in bandages and the kind nurse in charge had something for him to drink. Now he had been partially awake at times before, but had to be patient and forget how thirsty he was. In the morning he was happy to get a drink of water. The days passed quickly. The good doctor flew in and out, always with a joyful smile for the little boy, who had quite gotten into his heart. His mother came and went, and when the young doctor took him up to the upper room to have his leg dressed, he enjoyed the change and their hopeful remarks. He began to feel he was to be well again, and the old horror of a crippled life was passing.

One day the nurse said, "Something is going to happen today, so, after you eat your breakfast, I've got a surprise for you." Benny wondered what she could mean, and saw the nurse bring in a wheeling chair, lifted down like a bed and covered with pillows. She laid him in it and rang a bell and in came one of the young

doctors, --the one full of fun, whom Benny always liked to be near him. He wheeled the little fellow to the elevator, and up, up they went to a door opening on the roof. Benny heard voices of children and saw some in chairs like his, some on crutches and many in rocking chairs. It was getting warmer and the spring sunshine beamed upon them with a sweet benediction. Every one seemed so busy and so happy. Some were playing checkers, some croquet, and many were looking at large picture books. Benny's friend was called Dr. Jack, and he devoted himself to Benny, wheeled him all around to talk to the other children, and finally left him by another boy, while he went off to other duties.

After a time a party entered as visitors, --two ladies, one the doctor's wife who had often called on Benny, --and the other, --could he believe his eyes, yes, it was "The Beautiful Lady." She was walking all around and speaking cheerfully to every group. Would she remember him? Yes, their eyes met, and astonished was she to find him here. "You dear boy, tell me all about it," and the doctor's wife said, "It is the result of the Easter lily sent to him by his I. O. teacher, isn't it Benny?" and she soon told the story.

The next day the young interne came again to take Benny for another lovely day on the roof garden and said, "Oh, you've gotten a box of oranges from the lady who was here yesterday. Shall I keep them in the refrigerator and then you may have a few each day." "Oh, no," said Benny, "just put six in my room, and take all the rest up with me." "Well you're a green chap. Guess I'll call you the Easter lily for distinction." Benny only smiled and said, "Don't call me a girl's name." The box was carried around by a porter and an orange given to each child. What a treat, and really, Benny enjoyed this better than if he had eaten them all alone. All these busy days, you may wonder what had become of Maggie. She had quite recovered from her illness, and was one day taken in the good doctor's auto, to see Benny. The children spent a happy day together, and Maggie went home satisfied that better days were in store for Benny. The doctor's wife went one day to see Benny's mother, and asked her to come and be her housekeeper, and bring Benny also as an inmate of her home.

Benny now went on crutches and was to enter school at once. The doctor's wife grew very fond of Benny, and planned much for his future. Saturdays he went

with the doctor to the hospital, and always went up to the roof play-ground, if it were pleasant, or to the big attic if the day was cold and unpleasant, to play with the children and help make them happy.

Thus the years passed to his graduation from High School. Benny grew strong and well, and loveable in the Christian principle, that alone makes the true man. His college career was a joy to his mother, the beautiful lady, who was ever his friend, and the doctor's wife.

Years now flew happily, and in due time the happy wedding bells rang out one lovely morning in June, for the greatest surgeon in Philadelphia, --"Doctor Benjamin" Brown was married to Miss Margaret White, whose name had after it the letters, "Wellesley M. A. P. H. Dr."

Every Easter the best Easter Lilies in the market were ordered to Dr. Brown's home in memory of the opening day to his happier life.



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