

THE GLADSTONE BAG.

A CHRISTMAS STORY BY DENZIL VANCE.

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A merry Christmas and a happy New Year! How I hate the conventional greeting! What associations of personal discomfort and vexation the phrase awakens in my mind! For at that festive season I, once upon a time, found myself in a very tight place indeed. My difficulties were caused not by duns or debts. Let the reader judge whether or not my misfortunes were of my own making.

I am a lawyer, and at the time of which I write briefs were neither plentiful nor profitable. The work I did was principally "devil," and the successful man for whom I deviled caused me many a pang of envy; he was so aggressively prosperous and overworked and patronizing. Fortunately I was not quite without private means. When I compared, in calm moments, my lot with his, I was able to see just where I had the pull over him. I was young; he had left behind him many a year the "mezzo del cammin'" on the dreary highway between youth and age. I—may say it without vanity—was quite



A MALE PASSENGER SETTLED HIMSELF.

good looking enough for comfort. To look in the glass when I shaved gave me no unpleasant feeling, rather the reverse. Towsher was short and squat of figure, red of face and going bald at top. His features were blunt and plebeian, mine distinct, and I flatter myself, aristocratic. Towsher was married, and his wife was, like himself, untidy and personally not well favored. I was a bachelor of the temporary and voluntary, not of the confirmed or of the oft rejected, type, for I was in love, and as good as engaged to a lovely, sweet tempered Scotch lassie, whose pedigree was long, if her "tocher" was small.

We were just at the charmingest time of courtship. There was no formal engagement between us, but I had given Annie to understand that she was the one girl in the world for me, and she had somehow conveyed to me that when the time came when I should be able to tell her so I should not be refused.

I was going to spend Christmas with Annie's parents, when I got myself in the terrible fix I am about to narrate.

My destination was Angleterre. As I sped northward on the memorable Christmas eve I felt no presentiment of the coming catastrophe. I may briefly say that I was untroubled even by jealous qualms regarding Towsher's irritating prosperity.

I left Euston by the mail train for Glasgow. Although it was Christmas eve, the carriage was not overcrowded, and I managed to secure a corner seat in a first class compartment. My luggage consisted of a Gladstone bag and a bundle of wraps. The weather was bitterly cold, threatening snow, but I made myself tolerably snug, and by the time we got to Derby snoozed off blissfully. I was dreaming of Annie's blue eyes when, some hours later, I was awakened by the opening of the carriage door and a freezing rush of cold air.

A male passenger, well muffled in a heavy great coat, wearing a deer stalker hat and well tied down over his ears, huddled himself in the opposite corner farther from me. Until then I had had the compartment to myself. I turned round drowsily and in rather a bad temper, for my dream had been a pleasant one, and I rather objected to the thread of it being broken.

My fellow traveler's coat was flecked with snow, and when the train glided out of the station I looked out of the window near me and saw that great white flakes slanted past the pane, driven by a furious wind. The fields and stone walls were deep in snow.

"Confound it all!" I muttered to myself. The amathema included my fellow traveler, who solemnly eyed me and apparently fell asleep. It seemed, as if he had fished from me the comfortable nap I had been enjoying, for from the moment of his intrusion sleep forsook me utterly. So I fell to watching him with a mixture of curiosity and dislike. He was young, about my own age, I thought, with good features, and clean shaven save for a slight whisker. On the floor of the carriage, close at his feet, he had deposited a Gladstone bag of about the same dimensions as my own.

"Confound him! Why didn't he get into another carriage?" I thought as I noted these details. His placid slumber was intensely irritating to me. I felt injured because he was young and well favored, because he slept while I was sleepless, because he had a Gladstone bag that was twin brother to mine, because a few flakes of snow had insinuated themselves under the carriage window. I felt a restless desire to chuck my fellow traveler and his tiresome luggage out of my compartment.

My fellow traveler seemed serenely oblivious of all the discomforts I was ill temperedly enduring. He slept soundly, as only very tired men sleep. As I for the third time mentally confounded him the carriage jolted up on one side, and the whole train was suddenly arrested. The whistle sounded in a shriek as if the engine yelled in anger at its defeat in the battle it had been fighting with the wind and snow. I heard a woman shriek an echo in the

next carriage and voices shouting inquiries.

The line was blocked, and we were stuck fast in a gigantic drift!

Here was a cheerful outlook! I dashed down the window and put my head out. As far as I could see was a vast field of snow. The air was alive with swiftly descending flakes. Not a house was in sight. The light from the carriage windows alone illuminated the all surrounding whiteness. The blast howled like a very bad tempered evil spirit. It was a scene of unmitigated desolation.

No chance of reaching Glasgow at the appointed time! And very little chance of eating my Christmas dinner in Angleterre.

"Surely we are not in Glasgow yet?" said a voice at my elbow.

I turned and confronted my fellow traveler. Yes, I was right; the brute had gray eyes. My fancy had not run away with me. The fellow had the impertinence to resemble me to a certain extent, but I may add that he rather than I had reason to be flattered by the resemblance.

"At Glasgow," I retorted irritably. "No such luck; we are snowed up somewhere in the wilds of Dumfriesshire, I don't exactly know where. But nobody in this train is likely to set eyes on Glasgow for hours."

"Snowed up—good gracious me, you don't say so!" rejoined the fellow briskly. "That won't suit my book."

"Nor mine either," I grunted. "I don't suppose any one in this train wants to spend Christmas in a snowed up railway carriage. I'm hungry already," I added, with a retrospective thought of the hasty dinner I had made six or seven hours ago and a prospective longing for the splendid breakfast I had intended to make at Greenock. There was not even a biscuit or a sandwich among my traps.

"Dear me, how unfortunate!" remarked the other placidly. "Well, I mean to get out of this anyhow," he added, with sudden resolve. He seized the Gladstone bag lying nearest him and handed out of the carriage as suddenly as he had entered it and vanished into the whirling whiteness outside.

I heaved a sigh of relief. The man must be made to face such a storm, but that was his affair, not mine, and I saw him depart without the smallest regret.

Well, not unduly to lengthen my story, the upshot of this provoking incident was that for 12 mortal hours we were shut up in the imbedded train. The stoker and one of the guards made their way with infinite difficulty to the nearest signal man's hut, only to find that the telegraph lines up and down were snapped by the furious wind.

Some of the passengers had tea and wine packed in their luggage, and one Christmas hamper was ransacked and the contents cooked on a fire kindled on the snow. But what was one fat turkey and a ham among so many? Of course we fed the ladies and children first, and we did our best to keep them warm with all the rugs we could muster.

But we spent a wretched Christmas day. The snow still fell at intervals. Fortunately the wind dropped late in the afternoon. We had made out that we were 10 miles from the village of Whitecross and some 20 miles from the nearest station.

The thought of spending another night penned up in that comfortless compartment filled us with dismay. The rumor of our plight had reached Whitecross, for about 4 o'clock in the afternoon a couple of stalwart lads, with a rough pony laden with provisions, appeared upon the scene. I asked if there was any descent accommodation to be had in the village, and receiving an affirmative answer negotiated with the relieving party for the transport of my belongings thither. The snow reached our knees, but with the pleasant prospect before me of sleeping in a bed and getting something decent to eat I tramped, or rather waded, out in the wake of the lads. My Gladstone bag and bundle of rags were hoisted on the pony's back. After three or four hours' walking we got to Whitecross, and my guides deposited me at the door of a very small village public house, where they told me I could put up for the night. My clothes were soaked through with snow, but the contents of my Gladstone would afford me a change of attire, and my depressed spirits rose as I entered the Rose and Crown.

It was a queer looking little place, but the sight of a blazing fire in the parlor behind the bar made me forget the bare, sanded floor and the smell of



NOT HELD BY MY TAILOR.

stale tobacco and beer that pervaded the air. In a trice I found myself installed in the one guest chamber the house boasted. A fire was kindled in the high old fashioned grate. Having ordered a meal to be cooked, I unstrapped my Gladstone and dragged out the first garment that came to hand—a rough short coat of Irish frieze. That coat was certainly not built by my excellent tailor. I stared at it in dull surprise. And then it was suddenly borne on me that neither the coat nor the Gladstone was mine. That wretched fellow who had traveled with me from Carlisle had made off with my property and left me in possession of a portion of his bag.

gaily wardrobe. I flung the frieze coat away with an exclamation of disgust and surveyed the various items folded up in the Gladstone with something of the distaste I had felt for their owner. But I was wot to the skin and shivering like a spaniel. It was not a time to stand on ceremony. In five minutes I had donned a complete suit from the Gladstone bag of my unknown fellow passenger, including the despised frieze coat. Then I went down stairs and ate a very fair supper of fried ham and eggs, followed by a good jorum of excellent hot whisky toddy.

Greatly refreshed by these consolations, I returned to my chamber. The experience of the past four and twenty hours had tired me out, and I was far too sleepy to closely examine the bag from which I had taken the warm and dry clothes I had on. As I turned into bed I wondered dreamily if my unknown benefactor was at that moment taking his ease in my garments. My unreasonable dislike of him had abated, now that he no longer vexed me with his presence and obtruded on my notice the unwelcome fact that in creating him nature had chosen to infringe my copyright by duplicating my features and figure.

My sleep that night was the sleep of a worm-eaten man. I did not wake until a pale thread of winter sunshine filtered in at the curtain window. Then, with a start, I remembered the circumstances which had brought me thither. I sprang quickly from my bed. I looked about for my clothes and then saw that the night before I had omitted to send them to the kitchen to be dried and brushed. There they were thrown down anyhow on a chair. I could not possibly put them on, for they were still reeking with damp.

There was nothing for it but to travel on to Glasgow in the clothes I had taken from the Gladstone bag. My own garments could be properly dried and sent on to me at Tighnabruich.

I would then take steps to recover my bag and return that of my fellow traveler. Meanwhile, I availed, exchange was no robbery, and since he had made a stupid mistake in decamping with my wardrobe there was no reason why I shouldn't temporarily appropriate his.

After breakfast I went out into the village to reconnoiter. The snow was deep, but hard and crisp with frost. The wind had fallen, and the sky was blue and cloudless. On inquiry I learned that it would be possible to drive by road to a station on the line beyond the point where our unlucky train was imbedded in the drift. Gangs of workmen were, it was reported, at work on the line, which would most likely be clear by midday.

I went back to the Rose and Crown, strapped up my borrowed Gladstone, left orders with my landlady for the



IX IT WERE CONCEALED MASSES OF JEWELS, transmission of my property, hired a conveyance and drove off in the direction of the nearest railway station. I arrived there in due course, and when I was seated in a compartment labeled Glasgow I congratulated myself that my disagreeable adventure was over. Alas, it was only in its first stage.

The train drew up in the Glasgow station. I gathered up my traps and stepped out of the carriage. But I had not got many paces before an individual of the easily recognized private detective type accosted me. Behind him was a colleague whose movements were accompanied by an ominous clink of metal.

"James Pennequinke, I arrest you in the queen's name," said the first man, giving me at the same time a light tap on the shoulder.

I stared at him and drew myself up to my full height.

"My name is Graham—Angus Graham of the Inner Temple," I said. "You have made a mistake, my man."

The fellow smiled in the most aggravatingly superior manner.

"No mistake; you're James Pennequinke fast enough. It's not the first time we have met. Anyway I'll trouble you to go with me to the station. You'll go quietly, eh?"

"I'm hanged if I will," I retorted angrily. "I've an appointment to keep and don't mean to go fooling around at police stations. There's my card"—I fumbled in my pocket for my card-case—"and my luggage to prove my identity."

"Ah, I've heard of that dodge; paste-board is cheap, and so is printing. As for your luggage—here you, Campbell, just call a cab, will you, and we'll have a look at that down at the station. Now, will you come quietly, or must we put the bracelets on you?"

Wrath though I was, I was forced to comply. A cab was hailed; I, the two detectives, took our seats inside, and that unlucky Gladstone bag was deposited on the front seat.

"If you have arrested me for being in possession of that," I said, indicating the bag contemptuously, "I can easily give you an explanation that must secure my release from custody. The bag is not mine."

"The contents are not, anyway," retorted the detective meaningly.

"What are you hinting at? No, of course the contents aren't mine. They belong to a person who traveled with me the night before last."

in evidence against you," answered the other in his stiddest Jack-in-office manner.

Seeing the fellow was hopelessly obtuse, I resolved to hold my tongue until we got to the station. There I should soon be able to set matters right. Still it was annoying that I should be found in possession of property that was not mine. I racked my brain in trying to remember if the clothes I had on or those in the Gladstone had on them any name or mark to identify their rightful owner. But the effort was made in vain. Indeed I probably had not noticed whether the clothes were marked or not, for I had been too preoccupied and too fatigued to think of the matter.

At the station, in presence of the inspector, I made my statement, explaining how the Gladstone bag had come into my possession. I could see that not a word of it was believed. Then a minute description of James Pennequinke was read out, and with it my own personal appearance, I regret to say, exactly tallied. Another piece of damning evidence was that the frieze coat I wore was marked inside one of the sleeves with the initials J. P.

Worst of all, the Gladstone bag was turned out in my presence, and other articles of attire were discovered to be marked with the same letters, and to my utmost astonishment and dismay the bag itself was ripped open and found to have a false bottom. In it was concealed a mass of jewels, brooches, necklaces, rings sparkling with diamonds and other precious stones. At sight of this treasure the detective who had arrested me, his colleague Campbell and the inspector showed a profane glee.

"Better own the truth," said they all. "You are James Pennequinke, and on the night of Dec. 24 you abstracted these from Northside Hall, near Carlisle."

I asserted my innocence, declaring that until that moment I was even ignorant that the jewels were in the bag.

"The fellow who went off with my Gladstone bag may have stolen the stuff," I said indignantly, "but I know nothing of it. My name is Angus Graham, and I never heard Pennequinke's name until this morning."

"So you say," remarked the detective drily, "but your description fits to a T. You're wearing clothes that belong to Pennequinke, and you are found to be in possession of stolen goods. You will be detained in custody until inquiries can be made."

And in this enlightened country I, an innocent and peaceable citizen, was marched off and consigned to a fireless cell, there to meditate on the cussedness of things in general and my own ill fortune in particular.

Can it be wondered at that I have ever since disliked Christmas and its cant phrases of hilarity and mutual good will?

In the solitude of my cell I meditated on the most advisable course of action I could adopt under the circumstances. I asked for and obtained writing materials and wrote several letters—one to Annie at Tighnabruich. She was an only daughter and motherless, so to her as my hostess that should have been addressed an apology for my non-appearance. The second letter was to Mr. Macpherson, Annie's father, an old friend of my father's. To him I wrote a detailed account of my misadventure and begged him to recommend me a respectable solicitor in Glasgow. A third letter was to a "pal" of mine at the Inner Temple, whom I entreated to come and identify me with as little delay as possible.

That done, I felt easier in my mind, and when night came, in spite of the discomfort of my surroundings, I was able to snatch a few hours' sleep.

My appearance at the police court next morning was the next incident in my tale of woe. There had been no answer to either of the letters I had sent to Tighnabruich, and to my disgust my story did not obtain the credence in court I had counted on. I was remanded for a week that further inquiries might be made.

Sullen and dispirited, I returned to my cell. Late that evening Mr. Macpherson and a friend of his, one Macgowan, a big limbed Scotchman, practicing as a solicitor in Glasgow, appeared on the scene. To them I recounted my adventure. Mr. Macpherson seemed to be immensely tickled therewith and laughed until the tears came into his eyes at the sight I presented dressed in the burglar's frieze coat. If he had not been Annie's father, I should have expressed the indignation I felt. But I put up with either of the matters I had sent him that my situation for the coming week would be somewhat unpleasant.

"Tut, my lad! Macgowan and I will see to that," he replied. "I'll prove that you are Angus Graham, and you shall bring an action for damages against Campbell if you like. As for the jewels, mark my words if they don't win you a friend worth having."

"What do you mean?" I asked sharply.

"Why, don't you know who lives at Northside Hall, Carlisle?" I muttered a surly negatve.

"Why, old Lady Mereswell, my late wife's aunt and Annie's godmother. She's wealthy, she's eccentric, and she's as fond of her jewels as she is of her life. Mark my words if she doesn't indemnify you for the disagreeable Christmas you have spent and reward you for saving her jewels. I shall write to her by tonight's post and tell her what you told me."

When I did obtain my liberty and at last reached Tighnabruich, I was able to think philosophically of my misadventure. My unknown double, James Pennequinke, got safely to America. Presumably he took my Gladstone bag with him. I own I should have liked to see his face when he opened it.

As for the jewels, I see them whenever my wife goes to a big reception or ball. For six months later old Lady Mereswell departed this life, and she bequeathed her jewels to Annie and a legacy of \$20,000 to me "as a mark of her sincere gratitude."

Highest of all in Leavening Power.—Latest U. S. Gov't Report. Royal Baking Powder ABSOLUTELY PURE

FATHER'S CHRISTMAS PRESENTS. ONE CHRISTMAS EVE.

They Were Useful to the Family, and He Saw Little of Them.

We were talking about Christmas presents, the girls and mother and I, when father came in. Then we changed the subject just a little bit, because it was father's presents we were discussing. Father sat down by the stove and rubbed his hands—he had just been out at the barn—and a queer expression slowly settled upon his features.

"Say, mother, and Ned and girls," he said, "I don't want any of you to get me any presents. Tain't no use, you know."

"Why, father," said Lena in an aggrieved voice, "we always get you useful presents, don't we? I don't myself believe in things that are not useful."

Father's eyes twinkled. "Yes," he said, "but I sometimes think they are a little too useful, you know."

Nell shrugged her shoulders impatiently, but mother said: "Let father have his little joke. What is it this time, father?"

The old gentleman, having warmed his hands, settled himself back comfortably in his big chair, and his eyes twinkled more than ever.

"Well, let's see," he went on in a rambling manner. "Do you remember the dozen hemstitched handkerchiefs that you gave me last Christmas, Leny? I guess I used one on 'em just once. Some way or other," with a genial, impartial glance at the company, "Leny and Ned have been usin' of 'em, and I've been usin' of Leny and Nell's old torn ones. He, he! I don't know jest how 'twas, but it's a fact. Then, Ned, do you remember the compass you got me for a birthday present last June? It was a nice little compass, and I guess a feller about your size thought so, too, for he's been usin' of it ever since. Then, let's see, there was the silk hat, kerchiefs that mother gave me at birthday and I put it away, choicelike, and the first thing I knew Leny was wearin' of it inside her jacket. Yes, my presents are all useful, a leetle bit too useful, maybe. See the point, don't you?"

Father's next presents had his name written on each of them, and none of us ever again thoughtlessly used the dear old man's things.—American Agriculturist.

Disguised as a Beggar, the Christ Child Seeks Shelter—A German Legend.

Here is a Christmas story that has been told the little children in Germany for many hundreds of years.

'Twas the night before Christmas. A little child was wandering all alone through the streets of a great city. People were hurrying nither and thither, and express wagons were being rattled through the streets. Even the snowflakes seemed happy with the expectation of the coming Christmas morning.

But the little child seemed to have no home and wandered on from street to street. No one noticed him except perhaps Jack Frost, who bit his bare toes and made his fingers tingle. The north wind, too, pierced his ragged garments and made him shiver with cold. Home after home he passed, looking with longing eyes through the windows in upon the happy children who were trimming Christmas trees and hanging stockings for old Santa Claus to fill.

Cold and alone the little wanderer softly tiptoed his way up to a beautiful window through which he could see a tree loaded with gifts and glittering with lights. He tapped on the glass, but a little girl coming to the window frowned and shook her head, saying: "Go away. We are too busy to take care of you now."

Back into the dark street he went. Coming to another happy home, where he heard the song and laughter of merry children, he climbed up the broad steps and gently tapped on the door. It was opened by a tall footman in white hat and gloves. He looked at the child then sadly shook his head and said: "Go down off the steps. There is no room for such as you here."

Again and again the little child rapped softly at door or window pane. At each place he was refused admission. Later grew the night and colder blew the wind. Father and farther the little one wandered. The street was lengthy, when suddenly there shone ahead of him a single ray of bright light. He hurried on, saying, "I will go where the little light beckons me."

He soon reached the end of the street and there straight up to the window from which the light was streaming. It was a poor, little, low house. What do you suppose the light came from? A tallow candle. Looking in, the little one saw standing upon a small wooden table a branch of a Christmas tree. Near the fire sat a lonely faced mother, with a baby on her knee and an older child beside her. She was telling them a Christmas story.

The little wanderer crept closer and closer to the window pane. So sweet seemed the mother and so loving the children that he took courage and tapped gently, very gently, on the door. The mother stopped talking; the little children looked up. "What was that, mother?" asked the little girl. "I think it was some one at the door. Run quickly, dear, for it is too cold a night to keep any one waiting in the storm."

HOLIDAY EXCURSIONS. The Union Pacific will sell tickets at special rates to points within 300 miles at open rates of one and one-third fare for the round trip. Date of sales Dec. 22, 23, 24, 26, 31 and Jan. 1, limited for return passage Jan. 2, 1895. A. M. FULLER, City Agent. Rock Island Playing Cards. No. 601 Kans. Ave. The STATE JOURNAL'S Want and Miscellaneous columns reach each working day in the week more than twice as many Tokela people as can be reached through any other paper. This is a fact.