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King Redmon.

Main Street, Paris, Ky.

Good Will Toward All Men

By ETHEL BARRINGTON



N sharp, bleak gusts the wind swept fitfully through Main street, shaking from their vantage points, on roof and porch, great pointed icicles that hung in glistening array, like crystal prisms on a chandelier.

In the road, thick snow had packed and hardened, while the air vibrated with the jingle of bells decorating alike sleighs and runnered wagons. At its head, the thoroughfare widened, to split in four directions, and in one of the triangles thus formed rose the Brick Hotel. It was an exposed spot, one to be avoided in rough weather, affording as it did full scope to the wind to play mad pranks; even, at its wildest, to sweep unfortunate pedestrians before it, like dust before a giant's broom.

Yet on Christmas eve, Maris Favor, returning from the office where the rush of holiday work had detained her far beyond her usual hour, paused, wondering what attracted the crowd of her fellow townsmen. She crossed to the outer edge of the gathering in the roadway, and by a flaring torch, held by a companion of the man who was speaking, she saw a street preacher.

"Good-will towards all men," was the text he preached. "Good-will not alone towards those in our beloved and immediate circle; not alone towards such as we hold in careless tolerant regard, but good-will towards all, whether they have done us good or evil turns. For the advent of the Christ-child, brings with it a brooding spirit of peace to a sin-tossed world.

"Which among you," cried the preacher, his voice risen to accusing note, "which among you, were all secrets known, would not be found to cherish and foster the memory of some special wrong, suffered perhaps years ago, that you hold back, and except when you pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.'"

In the second story of the hotel one of the windows had been raised, and Maris, feeling that curious sensation which is caused by an intent regard, glanced up to encounter the concentrated gaze of the mistress of the hostelry, who leaned a little distance between the parted shutters. Maris, with sullen color mounting to her face, returned the look; power to turn aside being negated by some strange force in the eyes that compelled hers.

She and the woman, who once had been as a mother to her only to slam the door of happiness in her face, continued to stare across the heads of the preacher and his listening audience.

The older woman leaned a little farther and, with imperative finger, beckoned the girl to enter the hotel. The action broke the spell and Maris, with a defiant negation of the head, turned to pursue her way.

"Maris—" The girl could not have told whether or not her name had been actually spoken, or was merely a silent cry, a part of the compelling influence she had experienced. Nevertheless her steps lagged and, though yielding had been far from her will, she presently turned about and entered the Brick Hotel.

The door was open, the sitting-room warm with fire and lamp, and Rachel Castle stood listening, her face turned towards the door.

"So the preacher man forced you to think of me after three years of silence?" The girl's voice quivered under the burden of mingled feelings conjured up by the meeting.

"He made the moment opportune," corrected the other. "I have thought of you always."

"Well, say your say, and let me go." Mrs. Castle moved towards the fire, pushing forward a chair.

"You have grown hard—I should scarcely know you, if it were not for your eyes and hair. Come, sit here, Maris. I cannot stand very long, now."

Unwillingly Maris took the chair indicated, while Mrs. Castle seated herself opposite. In the searching glare of blazing logs, the girl could not fail to remark the change in the other, the figure had become wasted, the face pinched. Her heart stirred uncomfortably. Despite their quarrel Maris owed much to Rachel Castle—the charity of the Brick Hotel had saved her girlhood from the poor-house.

"You have been ill?" she asked.

"For a year; you did not hear?"

The girl shook her head, and her eyes wandered over the room noting the almost imperceptible changes that time had wrought, and welcoming the salient features that lived in her memory; the bookcase, the horse-hair sofa, the marble-topped table with its case of stuffed canaries, many of whom she had fed in life and, last of all, the man's photograph on the mantel, set in its heavy silver frame. She seemed to look long, but in reality after the first moment she could distinguish no single feature, for the hot blinding tears that she would not suffer to fall.

"Ben hasn't changed," said Rachel Castle, following her eyes, "only in

manner—as you have done. He's grown hard, and a bit reckless."

The girl moved restlessly in her chair.

"I must be going." "It's pleasant to have you, Maris." The woman ignored the suggestion. "We always did sit together on Christmas eve, if you remember—" Then, as Maris offered no comment, Mrs. Castle drifted into memories of small, intimate happenings of their past daily life, of festivities, and social merriment that marked such seasons as the present one.

"I used to fancy that life would be always the same—" she continued, her voice low with the restraint she put upon herself. "Maris—" her thin hand bridged the space between their chairs and softly touched the girl's knee. You can't have lost all your sweetness. You ain't so hard as you would pretend to me?"

"Don't!" The girl rose abruptly, turning her back deliberately to the photograph in the silver frame. "When we parted I thought you hard, selfish unjust—and I kept my resentment alive, burning deep down in my heart—I wouldn't let it die, just as that preacher down stairs said. When there's a thing like that in your soul, the little shoots of tenderness of charity, that keep a woman's nature sweet, are nipped and starved. You are right—I am changed. But tonight, for the sake of what you did when I was a forlorn, motherless girl, I'd like to shake hands. Wait—" She thrust and clasped her hands behind her back as the elder woman rose, a tender longing, suffusing her pallid face, and continued in a strained and breathless sort of voice. "You thought because Ben was your son, you had a right to decide his life; you thought because you had befriended me, you could dictate my life, too. I see, now, that there was force in both arguments. At

once in the snowy streets Anthony Riggs found himself nearer to Christmas than he had been before. The shops were overflowing with holly wreaths and branches of mistletoe, toys and games and candy and nuts. Beautiful gifts were displayed in the windows and many happy, expectant faces were pressed against the plate-glass panes.

"Please, sir," said a small voice at Anthony's elbow, "can't you give me a job carrying your bundles?" "What bundles?" frowned Anthony. "Your Christmas presents—what you're going to buy, sir," said the little boy, respectfully.

"I'm not going to buy any presents," replied Anthony quite fiercely. "Here's something for you—go and buy your own gifts and don't bother me!" He thrust a dollar bill into the eager little fingers and strode on, unmindful of the curious glances of those who had overheard his conversation with the little lad.

A glittering window full of jewels threw a flashlight on his memory. It was in that same shop he had once purchased a ring for Mary Wood. The ring had been returned to him and he had flung it into the farthest corner of his desk. It was there now.

He turned away and sauntered on. In front of his own church, friendly hands drew him into the brightly lighted basement of the edifice where the annual Christmas bazaar was in progress.

There was a merry throng of men, women and children moving to and fro among the booths devoted to the sale of fancy articles, toys and candy. Supper tables occupied one end of the room and in an obscure corner a fortune teller's tent was made of gay shawls. In the middle of the room stood a gigantic Christmas tree, loaded with gifts wrapped in tissue paper.

"Ten cents will entitle you to a gift from the tree," explained his guide. "I don't like presents," said Anthony grimly.

Deacon Smithers smiled quizzically. "Very well, suit yourself, Anthony! There is the fortune teller—perhaps she will predict a happy future for you! There is the supper table, that will insure you a good meal—and the booths—pay your money and take your choice!" He moved away and left Anthony Riggs standing pale and cold in the midst of the happy crowd.

Perhaps it was because he did not know what else to do that Anthony awaited his turn at the fortune teller's tent, and once within its dim recesses he felt foolishly aware that the future held nothing for him that he did not know.

The gipsy's dark head was concealed in the folds of a lace mantilla; from the flowing sleeves of her red velvet bodice, two slim brown arms and hands flashed out and caught his large hand. The lace-draped head bent over his palm.

"You have had much sorrow," said the gipsy in a low musical voice, "but much of it has been your own making! Do the things I shall tell you and you will live to be very happy and see your dearest wish gratified!"

Anthony smiled sardonically. "And the three things I shall do?" he asked.

"The day after tomorrow is Christmas day. Tomorrow night you must make three persons happy. Find three persons who are poor and needy and sorrowful and take them to your home and provide them with a bountiful dinner; have gifts for them and when they have gone away blessing you—then, you may receive a gift yourself."

"What will it be? I don't want a gift—I haven't kept Christmas for years," protested Anthony, as he placed some money on the table.

"Time you did, then! Don't forget—"

Anthony Riggs' Fortune

by Clarissa Mackie

"Christmas comes but once a year—and when it goes I'm glad of it!" misquoted Mr. Anthony Riggs, looking sourly at the toe of his slipper.

As Anthony Riggs lived all alone in the big house, there was no one to reply to his unpleasant remarks. Downstairs in the kitchen his one servant clattered noisily about her work. Everywhere else in the house it was very quiet. And there is no silence like that of a great house which has once known the joyful clamor of a large and happy family.

Years ago Anthony had had a love affair, but it ended most unhappily. The girl had married another man and Anthony Riggs had been left to develop into a morose old bachelor—and not so very old at that.

"Christmas comes but once a year—and I'll try to get as far away from it as I can," misquoted Mr. Riggs once more, as he kicked off his slippers and reached for his shoes. When he was buttoned tightly into his fur-lined ulster and his sealskin cap was pulled down over his ears there was nothing to be seen save a pair of very bright brown eyes and an aristocratic nose.

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"Time you did, then! Don't forget—"

or you will lose your last chance of being happy. And stay—" A slim hand arrested his going.

"Yes!" Anthony's voice was very cold.

"Be sure to have that ring in readiness—you may need it!"

And the next instant Anthony found himself elbowed out of the tent by impatient waiters at the door, and without another glance about the decorated room he left the church and went home, much perturbed.

Of course, Anthony Riggs knew that the fortune teller could be none other than some member of his church who was familiar with more or less of the detail of his life and habits. He was surprised at his own lack of indignation because his private affairs had been discussed by a stranger—indeed, he almost felt a glow of gratification that he was still numbered among those to whom something wonderful might happen.

"I'll try it, anyway," said Anthony that night as he blew out his candle. "It can do no harm."

It is a simple matter to make poor people happy. Anthony Riggs found it so. The day before Christmas was marked by a series of galvanic shocks for the servant maid in the basement of Anthony's fine house. Before night the pantries were filled with delicious viands and the smell of spices and mince-meat pervaded the house.

Anthony's three persons became six, for it was so easy to add another one and still another to the little company he had invited. They were old men and women and they enjoyed the feast of good things with a pleasure that made Anthony's heart ache as it had never ached since the day when Mary Wood had sent back his ring.

At last he sent them home in carriages laden with the remains of the dinner and with many gifts that would add comfort to declining years. The best gift of all was that Anthony Riggs had promised not to forget them—they would be their benefactor till they had passed into the hands of the great benefactor.

When he was alone in the brightly lighted parlor, with the blaze of the chandelier falling on the silver threads in his black hair, Anthony thought



"And You—You Meant What You Promised?—That Happiness Would Come to Me?"

of the bitter years he had wasted—years in which he might have made many persons happy. The reward of good deeds was warm in his heart this night and he forgot that there was not one to offer him a gift with loving words. He had received the greatest of all gifts—the love and gratitude of his fellow men.

The door softly opened and a woman crept in, small, slender woman with dusky hair and dark eyes shining like stars.

Anthony Riggs did not look up. He had forgotten that the fortune teller had promised him a gift that night. On his little finger was a small ring set with a single pearl.

"Anthony!" The visitor's voice was low and musical.

"Mary Wood," said Anthony hoarsely; and then with a glance at the black lace draped about her head, he added:

"You were the fortune teller last night?"

"Yes."

"And you—you meant what you promised?—that happiness would come to me?"

"It has come, Anthony," she faltered drawing near to him. "We were so mistaken—you and I—and the years have been long. I am free now—they said you needed me and that night when I saw your bitter face I knew you needed the influence of a greater love than mine before we met."

Anthony Riggs took his sweetheart into his arms. "I have found the greater love, Mary, and its root is pity. My love for you will be better and worthier because of my love for the poor and needy. And tomorrow—tomorrow you will marry me and become my Christmas gift in truth?"

"Yes," said Mary Wood.

And so Anthony Riggs slipped the little pearl ring on her finger.

(Copyright, 1910.)

A Way Out of It.

Anna was making Christmas presents.

"Oh, dear, this doesn't look nice," said she.

Little Helen, looking on, remarked in a sympathizing tone:

"Oh, well, auntie, you can give it to some one who is near-sighted."