

## A Yuletide Romance

By T. B. ALDERSON

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**P** OVERTY and pathos, gentility and blighted hopes, aspirations and hidden emotions — all these played a part in the dull experience of the odd ten people who had lived year in and year out at Mrs. Rhoda Markham's city boarding house.

Its proprietress was a good-hearted woman, but the constant grind had worn her out.

As Christmas approached, however, the faded, but faithful old eyes brightened, for, though poor and humble, her little coterie were generous souls and a special purse was her reward when the Christmas tree gave up its treasure.

Miss Myrtle Deane had occupied the best room in the house for over three years. She lived on an annuity of limited volume, and although twenty-eight, retained much of the freshness and charm of girlhood.

Reuben Willis, thirty, and a bachelor, a silent, retiring man, filled a subordinate position in a bank, and, it was said, came of a once wealthy family and his actions showed his good breeding.

"It's bound to be a match," prophesied Mrs. Mayhew, a widow boarder.

"If they only weren't too poor to think of it," suggested Mr. Bascom, who was coarse and practical.

Everybody in the boarding house took part in the preparations for and the celebration of Christmas. The tree was trimmed and the packages of mutual presents piled about its base. Then Bascom started a vigorous propaganda in favor of each person hanging their stocking in front of the fireplace. Miss Deane grew rosy at the suggestion and Willis tried to escape to his room, but it was of no avail.

There was vast chattering and jollity as after breakfast next morning there was an adjournment to the sitting room. The master of ceremonies, Bascom's eyes twinkled as

one after another the stockings were apportioned, for he was a practical joker. Willis noted that his stocking was bulging and heavy. He peered within it, then showed a lump of coal and a raw potato.

Somehow his heart was chilled. Trivial as was the incident, it came like a direct blow in the face. Was the erratic donation a slurring reminder of his poverty? All at once the barrenness of his lonely life overcame him in full force. He went up to his room gloomily.

A servant knocked at the door and handed him a letter. Mechanically he opened it and then sprang to his feet, white to the lips and quivering all over. He stood like one in a maze. There was a second timid summons at the door. Willis opened it to face Miss Deane, a parcel in her hand.

"Will you please step into the hall," she fluttered, and he thought how lovely she looked in her fresh, dainty morning dress.

"Mr. Willis, I hope the practical jokes of Mr. Bascom have not been taken by you as an affront. He did the same thoughtless thing with all of us. And you ran away before we could give out the presents. Here is yours, a trifling gift, but I hope it will please you, because I made it myself."

Willis parted the tissue paper to disclose a pair of knit house slippers.

His heart warmed toward this modest, lonely gentlewoman, who had devoted so many hours to show her friendly esteem.

"I cannot express how I appreciate them," he said, and then a quick impulse swayed him. The letter in his pocket reminded him of a vast change in circumstances and fortune. "They make me think of home," he added in a tone of pathetic reminiscence. "Miss Deane, we would know how to appreciate a home, you and I, wouldn't we now?"

The fair lady sighed. A dim blur of tears crossed her eyes.

"If I had one," continued Willis, coming closer to her, "would you share it with me?"

There was a sob and Miss Deane wavered. Willis tenderly clasped her waist. He knew she had given assent in her shrinking way.

"I have just received a letter from the lawyer of a near relative apprising me of the fact that I have been made his legatee," announced Willis. "It is a fine present, isn't it? But the best gift Christmas can give me is your own dear self!"



## RED CROSS OFFICIAL APPROVES SEAL SALE

Dr. Livingston Farrand, Chairman of the Central Committee, American Red Cross, Expresses Hope That Public Will Give Generous Support.

SALE IS NOW UNDER WAY.



Dr. Livingston Farrand, executive head of the American Red Cross, has given his unqualified endorsement of the 1919 Red Cross Christmas Seal sale, which is now under way and which will extend for ten days under the auspices of the National Tuberculosis Association and its 1,000 allied organizations. A fund of more than \$6,500,000, which will be used in the 1920 educational and preventive campaign, will be raised through the sale of the seals.

Acquainted as he is with all questions of general health community improvement and relief because of the nature of his work and office, Dr. Farrand's endorsement is based upon an expert knowledge of what the National Tuberculosis Association has accomplished and will accomplish in the future. His letter to Dr. Charles J. Hatfield, Managing Director of the National Tuberculosis Association, follows:

"I have been greatly interested in the plans that the National Tuberculosis Association is making for the sale of Christmas Seals during the coming holiday season. The success of that effort is indispensable to the carrying out of the far-reaching plans of the Association in its fight against tuberculosis in this country.

"The American people, in common with the nations of Europe, are becoming aroused to the critical importance of the problem of vitality and conservation of health as the necessary factor in re-establishing the world after the devastation and destruction caused by the war. Of all the preventable diseases, tuberculosis takes perhaps the first place in importance. For that reason I view with keenest sympathy and approval the splendid work which the National Tuberculosis Association is conducting, and I trust that the response of the American people in the Christmas Seal Campaign will be generous and universal. Sincerely yours,

(Signed) LIVINGSTON FARRAND,  
Chairman, Central Committee, American Red Cross."