

The ROANOKE NEWS

VOL. XXII. WELDON, N. C., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1891. NO 38



THE UNEXPECTED GUEST.

An Odd Christmas Story of Twin Houses.



RUDOLPH BOULANGER was very eccentric, very peculiar. He was learned and rich but conspicuously lacked common-sense. Nevertheless he was lucky to an extent passing belief. Other men toiled faithfully for years and used the best judgment, but their ventures failed. Fate was their relentless enemy. Boulanger would do something which in the eyes of the wise stamped him as a fool and yet his seemingly brainless act would bring him a small fortune.

His boyhood was one of ease, his father being in good circumstances and requiring nothing more of his son than that he should go to school and college and learn from books all that he could. Rudolph had a splendid memory, and absorbed printed knowledge as readily as a sponge sucks up water. He gave no attention to anything except books until the death of his father compelled him to think how he should live and pay his bills. The fortune left him was modest, and his friends, knowing what a lamentably impractical person he was, advised him to put his money in a savings bank, not to marry, and to live economically. He rejected their advice with scorn. He wished to travel abroad and enjoy luxuries. He invested nearly all of his fortune in a gold mine. His friends were horror-stricken. They said his money would surely be lost in the wildest scheme, and that, as he was utterly incapable of making a living, he would be obliged to go to the poorhouse, and eventually, perhaps, to the retreat for imbeciles. But to the surprise of the foreboders the mine soon proved to be one of the richest on this continent and in a few years Rudolph possessed a half million dollars. Henceforth his career was marked by a succession of lucky blunders. He would buy real estate in a wilderness where only the remains of Indian tribes could be persuaded to dwell, and in a year's time a railroad would be run through his land and he would sell building lots at a handsome profit for the establishment of a village. He did other things equally absurd, but made money every time.

In spite of his many eccentricities he secured for a wife a beautiful and accomplished girl. How she ever allowed herself to marry him was a marvel to those who knew them. But they appeared to live happily together. Their children, twins named James and Edith, were sensible like their mother.

The family resided in a fine country mansion about a mile from the outskirts of Boston. Their nearest neighbor was a well-to-do farmer whose son, John Hendrickson, a sturdy and practical young man, fell in love with Edith Boulanger when she was eighteen years old. But Mr. Boulanger wished his daughter to marry a college-bred man who was the descendant of an old and cultured family. Another require-

ment was that the suitor should either be rich enough to lead a life of elegant leisure or else should be a professional man, doctor or lawyer, admissible, but neither preferred. That Edith should marry a mere farmer was preposterous. However, Mr. Boulanger did not like



"YOU CAN NEVER MARRY MY DAUGHTER."

ment was that the suitor should either be rich enough to lead a life of elegant leisure or else should be a professional man, doctor or lawyer, admissible, but neither preferred. That Edith should marry a mere farmer was preposterous. However, Mr. Boulanger did not like

Hendrickson for a reason that will late appear.

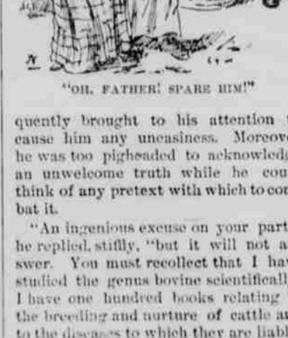
"It will be useless to speak to father," said Edith to John one Christmas eve. "He will never give his consent to my marrying you."

"Nevertheless I will speak to him," replied the bold lover. "He shall know that I dare to face him."

Mr. Boulanger sat in his library when the young man was ushered into his presence. The eccentric gentleman assumed an air of dignity and clothed his countenance with an ominous frown. He believed that his demeanor alone would dishearten his intended victim. But Hendrickson was not awed at all. Aristocratic pretensions had no effect upon the independent American except to make him despise them.

"You can never marry my daughter," said Mr. Boulanger, in weighty tones. "Why?"

"For various reasons. The most important one is that you do not belong to a cultured family and are not college bred. You are neither an *Artium Baccalaureus* nor an *Artium Magister*. Moreover, you deceived me when I bought that Jersey cow of you. As soon as she was in my stable I ordered my hired man to milk her. He reported that he could not obtain any milk. Thinking the pail might leak, I ordered him to go to a tin shop and buy a new, tight pail. He at once obeyed. He placed the new pail under the cow and again manipulated the udders. There was no flow whatever. The cow's bag was small and shrunken. It was a clear case of desiccation. For heeal purposes the animal was useless. I sold her that very day."



Hendrickson could scarcely restrain a shout of laughter.

"There was nothing the matter with the cow," he exclaimed. "I had milked her just before sending her to your place and of course her bag was empty."

Rudolph was not astonished. Evidence of his stupidity were too frequently brought to his attention to cause him any uneasiness. Moreover he was too pigheaded to acknowledge an unwelcome truth while he could think of any pretext with which to combat it.

"An ingenious excuse on your part," he replied, stiffly, "but it will not answer. You must recollect that I have studied the genus bovine scientifically. I have one hundred books relating to the breeding and nurture of cattle and to the diseases to which they are liable. I have read every one of these books through and can speak with an authority unknown to the empirical farmers in this neighborhood. I know when a cow is in a normal condition; and I say that the Jersey that you sold me was a farrow cow that had long ceased to yield any lacteal fluid."

Hendrickson soon left in disgust. Had he not loved the daughter deeply, he would have objected to marrying into a family the head of which was so great a fool.

It was a sad Christmas eve for the lovers. John bade Edith farewell with the knowledge that a long time would probably elapse before they could meet again.

As for Mr. Boulanger, he made up his mind that his children were being vulgarized by too much contact with rural influences, and the family moved into the city, where they boarded at a hotel during the greater part of the next year. In conformity with his eccentric tendencies Mr. Boulanger, when spring arrived, set about carrying into effect a long cherished plan. He purchased two adjoining building lots in the suburbs of Boston and erected upon them two large square houses that were

built and painted just alike. He also furnished the houses so carefully and arranged their contents so systematically that the interiors of the structures were exactly similar. His son and daughter were twins, he said, and ought to live in twin houses, his design being to have James live in one house and Edith in the other after each had succeeded in getting married. He selected a minister for Edith; but the young lady did not favor her father's plan, and the domicile made as poor progress in his courtship as he did in writing sermons that contained original and interesting ideas.

Finding that his children would not marry immediately, Mr. Boulanger moved with his family into one of the furnished houses and rented the other house to a Mr. Belnap, a friend who also knew John Hendrickson and liked him well.

Meanwhile James Boulanger had acted as a confidential messenger between his sister and her lover and the three, with Mr. Belnap and Mrs. Boulanger as confederates, devised an artful plan by which it was hoped the elder Boulanger might be persuaded to accept Hendrickson as a son-in-law.

At the approach of the holiday season the young farmer came to Boston and became the guest of Mr. Belnap, much to the annoyance of Rudolph Boulanger.

Nothing of interest occurred until Christmas eve. Then in the midst of a blinding snowstorm James Boulanger returned home at midnight. The rest of the family were abed and asleep and James retired to his couch without delay.

An hour later the household were startled from their slumbers by the cry: "Robbers, robbers!"

James Boulanger dashed out of his bedroom and fired his pistol. Old Rudolph was aroused, and with a rifle in his hand ran out of his sleeping apartment on the first floor. Father and son met in the dining-room where much expensive silverware, which it had been hoped would grace the Christmas dinner the next day, had been stored in a sideboard. The silver had not been disturbed.

"We are just in time," cried Rudolph. "The rascals would soon have scooped all of our silver had they not been frightened. I do not hear them, but they have probably not gone from the house. They are undoubtedly armed and may fight desperately."

His ardor was not so great as it was at first. But James was full of prowess and his father reluctantly followed him to the kitchen.

"There he is!" cried Rudolph, as he saw a man dart into an entry that led to the cellar. With hands that trembled violently the old man raised his rifle and fired at random. The room was filled with smoke, and Rudolph was at the same moment filled with confidence. He was not afraid of a robber who retreated as if he were unarmed. Rudolph put another cartridge in his gun and quite boldly opened the door connecting the entry with the cellar.

"For God's sake!" cried a voice in the darkness, "do not shoot again. I am John Hendrickson."

"Ha! it is you, you rascal. Just what I've expected; you've become a robber. I'll dispose of you so that you'll never sell another dried up cow," shouted Rudolph; and again he blazed away, although he could not see Hendrickson.

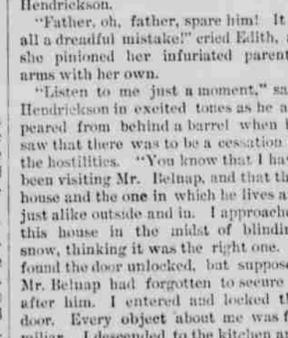
"Father, oh, father, spare him! It is all a dreadful mistake!" cried Edith, as she pinioned her infuriated parent's arms with her own.

"Listen to me just a moment," said Hendrickson in excited tones as he appeared from behind a barrel when he saw that there was to be a cessation in the hostilities. "You know that I have been visiting Mr. Belnap, and that this house and the one in which he lives are just alike outside and in. I approached this house in the midst of blinding snow, thinking it was the right one. I found the door unlocked, but supposed Mr. Belnap had forgotten to secure it after him. I entered and locked the door. Every object about me was familiar. I descended to the kitchen and left my coat and rubbers there. I then returned to the parlor and lighted a lamp. Not feeling sleepy I read for about an hour, having found a copy of the same book which I had been reading at Mr. Belnap's. About one o'clock I went to the bedroom which I supposed was mine, and to my intense surprise found your son in it. He was awake and was after me with a pistol in an instant. You know the rest."

"Did you leave the door unlocked?" asked Mr. Boulanger, turning toward his son.

"I declare, I believe I did," said James.

He did not add, however, that he had left the door unlocked purposely and was not surprised by what had subsequently occurred.



Rudolph Boulanger shuddered, not knowing that he had been firing blank cartridges for his use, and was glad that he had not killed an innocent man. He felt that he had greatly wronged John Hendrickson; he observed with alarm the highly-wrought feelings of his daughter; his nerves were too much shaken for him to deny that the twin houses which his eccentricity had

caused him to erect and furnish alike were responsible for the unwelcome occurrence, and he was glad to make peace by giving the intruder permission to marry Edith.

The next day the family sat down to a splendid Christmas dinner in their home, and John Hendrickson, the unexpected guest, was entertained by them in a very pleasant manner.

"It is a fitting occasion for a reconciliation," said Rudolph Boulanger, whose recent experience had made him unusually regardful of religion. "I for one am glad to feel the influence of a



peace on earth." day that has brought peace on earth and good-will to men."

The others acquiesced in the worthy sentiment.

Mr. and Mrs. John Hendrickson and Mrs. and Mrs. James Boulanger now reside in the twin houses, and every Christmas the two families and Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Boulanger dine together in one of the peculiar dwellings.

It is said that on one of the happy occasions Rudolph Boulanger was gently told of the ruse by which he had been deceived, Edith and her husband excusing themselves by saying that there had been love and war and that all tactics were fair in both. It is further reported that the old gentleman forgave the couple, having in the meantime learned from the owner of the Jersey cow that that animal had given a good mass of milk eight hours after she had left the Boulanger farm.

J. A. BOLLES.

More Ravaging Than Time.

Mrs. Cobwiger—Now, my dear, if you will cook the plum pudding just as I tell you, it will keep a year.

Mrs. Brown—Ah! You don't know Johnnie.—Life.

The Absatian "Christ-Child."

In France it is the *Jesus lala-bin*, Christ-child, who comes. Among the Absatians a beautiful young girl personates this character, and, with a bell in one hand and sweetmeats in the other, she goes about the village distributing the coveted gifts among the children.

Wooden Shoes for Kris Kringle.

All over Germany Christmas is celebrated with much ceremony, and hundreds of little wooden shoes wait for Kris Kringle's coming. There is nothing that clings so tenaciously to the childish mind as the advent of Christmas.

IN THE YEAR OF GRACE, 1891.



"How foolish it is, Aunt Sadie, for mamma to try and make me believe that 'Santa Claus' comes down the chimney and fills my stockings. I suppose it worked all right when you were a little girl, but it is such a chestnut now! However, it pleases mamma, so I don't let on that I know."—Life.

Saber Second Thought.

Head of Firm to office boy!—Here, take this box of cigars and distribute them around the office for Christmas.

Office Boy—Yes sir. (Hurries off).

Head of Firm—Hold on. I guess you'd better wait until after I go home.—Life.

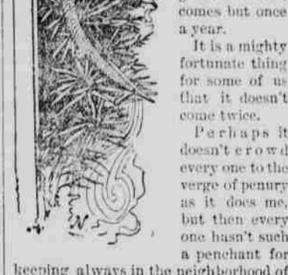
Quite Surprising.

Mr. Green—No, my dear, I will not tell you what I'm going to give you for Christmas. Why can't you women be content to wait and be surprised?

Mrs. Green—Oh, tell me now. If you keep your word, I'll be surprised enough.—Puck.

SOME CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

How a Humorist Secured a Useful Present for His Wife.



CHRISTMAS, as has been said, I think by some great writer, comes but once a year.

It is a mighty fortunate thing for some of us that it doesn't come twice.

Perhaps it doesn't crowd every one to the verge of penury as it does me, but then every one hasn't such a penchant for keeping always in the neighborhood of penury as I have.

While ago my father took it into his head that there was money in raising hogs, so he paid \$10 for some sows, fed them \$50 worth of corn and sold \$75.00 worth of pork. A driving toward a sort of pig penury, says.

One Christmas followeth so close upon the heels of another that the spa of time, after it is past, is but as a ta that is told or a Waterbury watch the night. A Christmas past delighted us not, but a Christmas present is a joy to our soul. And it is the Christmas present, Heaven strengthen us, that we all have to deal with.

For my part I never know what to buy. Only once have I had things all cut and dried for me. A little while before last Christmas I gave my celebrated funny lecture in a New England village, doing a one night stand for the benefit of the L. S. R. G. S. S. H. society of the brick church with shingle roof situate on the west side of the street as you leave the town. The name of the



organization I found was the Ladies Sewing, Reaping, Gossiping and Sending socks to the Heathen society. Which Heathen society they sent them to I never learned.

Quite a good many people listened to my remarks, without more signs of pain than I have noticed everywhere. As one of the committeewomen remarked, facetiously, afterward, "There was more in the audience than there was in the lecture."

I noticed that no one seemed to be putting on overshoes, while I was slowly running down, or letting the cat die, as you might say, and after I had got off my final bon mot and didn't have a single bon mo' to get off, I sat down, but everybody stayed. Then the president of the society came to me and said: "Mr. Hood, our society has been making an autograph quilt. Ten cents to put your name on a block, you know. It's got over 400 blocks into it, and we've raised pretty near \$50 for the heathen now. We thought, while everybody was here and it was so near Christmas, we'd have you auction the quilt off."

So I got up and held up the quilt and stepped on the edge of it and fell down, and everybody applauded and seemed to think it was a real clever thing to do. Mr. Hood then spoke in substance as follows:

"How much am I offered for this quilt? It is a well-made quilt and is strictly non-partisan. The names, you will notice, are in blocks of five; it is designed for protection; it won't tangle if you're careful of it, will keep silver bill or any other man warm, and how much am I offered for it?"

Then everybody laughed quite a lot and nobody bid. I thought that they were afraid to speak up, so I said: "Well, now, I'll just start it at five dollars. Who'll make it six? Going at five—at five. Give me the half. Five I have; six will you give me? Going at five-five-five-five-five-five. Give me a quarter somebody. Five I have; do I hear the quarter? Five I have—going at five. Must I knock it down for such a paltry sum? Five I have; make it five dollars and ten cents. Five I have. Are you all done? Going, once—going, twice—going, twice—going, three times. Won't some one please bid?—and sold to a poor, misguided fool of a funny-lecture man for five dollars." And then the society all crowded

around me and thanked me, and said that I was such a clever auctioneer, and if I hadn't been there to run the auction they wouldn't have got half so much. So they deducted a fiver from my fee, said they didn't understand about the "blocks," so I'd have to pay my own hotel bill, and then they left me alone with my quilt.

I tried to give it to the landlord, but he said: "Oh, hades, I wouldn't have the dumb thing around the house!"

So a bright idea struck me, and I sent it home to my wife for a Christmas present. She keeps it up on the spare bed, and I notice that folks that come to see us nowadays, expecting to stay several months, always begin to weaken along about the third night, and we never had a guest yet who could stand that quilt with four hundred names on it for more than a week without going stark mad.

CHARLES NEWTON HOOD.

HURRAH FOR CHRISTMAS.

HURRAH for merry Christmas with its mistletoe and holly!

And trolly feasts of goodly cheer whenever you is here!

Hurrah for good Kris Kringle, too, who brings his sleigh of treasures!

To all the children's stockings with such crawling measures.



Call the trees we love to praise 's Christmas best! Brightest, when the stars with joy divine and then are seen to lightest; when gifts are sent and pleasure crowned are these who are reading—but those who are those who know the sweeter bliss of giving.

The girls and boys all Christmas joys with ecstasy exclaim; The bells are rung at Christmas charms clasp little hands delighted—But out how all who then recall sweet child's hands memories clinging.

Have you the fun of anyone when Christmas bells are ringing.

When cool winds blow and leave the snow and weather bleak and dreary; The Christmas tree appears in homes of merriment and glory; And how bright reflect its light and merry on our minds.

White frosts above look down with love glad angels and Kris Kringle.

Hurrah for merry Christmas when we all are O, so jolly; And your joys bring with brightest rays on mistletoe and holly; And please our hearts and publishings make the feasties rounder growing; And good Saint Nick fills stockings quick with treasures overflowing.

H. C. DODSON.

The Boston Girl's Christmas.

She tossed her Christmas toys aside, Her face with disappointment frowning. "Oh, dear!" the little maiden sighed, "I did so want another frowning!"

—Jury.

Everything is Lovely, and—

Mr. Knowlton—And now wouldn't you like me for a Christmas present?

Miss Allen—Certainly, if you'll hang yourself on the Christmas tree.—Puck.



ROUGH ON SANTA CLAUS.

Ivy—Say, Dolph, I hope Santa Claus is honest.

Dolph—Why?

Ivy—Cos them's my new stockings, and I don't want them stole.—Once a Week.

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

"I don't expect ter git nothin', gents; in it; but I jest hang it up because I think it's de proper ting ter encourage and keep up dese old and time-honored customs."—Puck.